

When they will say, “Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.”

The Restoration of Israel

by

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A booklet written to consider the promised restoration of Israel, the reasons for their fall from grace, and the things that happened to Israel as an example for us, and were written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come. We will look at how world events will be affected by the spiritual battle that accompanies the coming fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles, a reality that will affect all on whom the end of this age has come.

The Restoration of Israel

Introduction

This booklet is written to consider the future of the nation of Israel and their eventual restoration. It will consider the fact that a time of great tribulation is coming upon the earth that will affect the nation of Israel and the land, tribulation that will see the people of Israel partially driven into exile once more, a time that affects every nation in the world, and especially the church which is the body of Christ. It is the scene described in scripture that accompanies the last years of this age before the return of Jesus, a time described by Jesus, and a time that will see the outworking of God's promise to Israel which in turn will affect the whole world.

The story of God's dealings with Israel and the things that happened to them **have been written for us as an example, and were written down for our instruction upon whom the "ends of the ages have come,"** Paul wrote, (1 Corinthians 10:11) that we might not make their mistakes. Such is the importance of this story.

This topic is surrounded by controversy and differing opinions. For that reason some would seek to perhaps avoid the subject but doing so does not prevent the reality from happening, a reality that all on whom the end of this age has come must face. The contents of this study, however, need to be weighed. I share what I hope will give insight and understanding to help the reader. It comes with the prayer that the Holy Spirit, the Teacher, will confirm what is of Him, understanding that must be found in, and concur with scripture.

A great spiritual battle surrounds the days in which we find ourselves, a battle that not only affects Israel but which affects the whole world.

Satan endeavours to prevent us understanding what God is doing and his opposition to it, trying to cause confusion, ignorance and deception. But God does not want us to be unaware of what is yet to take place in His plan and purpose. Indeed He has told us beforehand what is to unfold.

This booklet may be used as a bible study and scripture references are given that all that is being stated can be checked against scripture to see if what is being said is so. It is not meant to be an easy read but hopefully each Chapter

can be treated as a study in its own right and so considered in more manageable portions.

The focus of world events is already upon Israel, upon Jerusalem, and in particular upon the Temple Mount. We might ask the question, "Why?" This booklet will endeavour to find some of the answers to that question that lie within the scriptures.

Events are now unfolding so fast that some detail is unfolding each day as we watch the news. In that sense the message is urgent and topical.

So let us begin.

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CHAPTER ONE

Amongst Christians there are differing beliefs and understandings as regards the expected future of the nation of Israel. Some consider that the church has replaced Israel, a belief referred to as 'Replacement Theology' which considers that natural Israel, that is 'Israel after the flesh', those born of the nation of Israel, have no future in God's plan. On the other extreme there are those who would put Israel in a higher place in God's plan in this age than the body of Christ, the true church, that is itself comprised of both Jew and Gentile.

The Commonwealth of Israel

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul explains that the "Gentiles in the flesh", those who were formerly called "Uncircumcision" by the so called, "Circumcision", were at one time separate from Christ, excluded from **the commonwealth of Israel**, and strangers to the covenants of promise, but in Christ Jesus they have now been made into "**one new man**" through the new birth that is available in Jesus through faith.

Paul explains that Christ Jesus "has made both groups into **one**, having broken down the barrier of the dividing wall, that He might reconcile them both into **one body, to God through the cross**, by having put to death the enmity that had existed, so that through Jesus we might have access in one Spirit to the Father." Paul says, of the saints, those who are now saved by grace, through faith, are therefore no longer strangers and aliens, but "fellow citizens and part of God's household in whom the whole building is being fitted together, and growing into a holy temple in the Lord, being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." (see Ephesians 2:11-22) Although God chose Israel to show forth His salvation He is bringing salvation to all mankind.

This is the wonderful reality for all who are saved in this age, whether Jew or Gentile.

That God Might Have Mercy On All

At this time, like the 'Gentiles in the flesh', individual members of Israel also need to be born again of the Spirit of God, because 'Israel after the flesh' have been broken off because of their own disobedience to God's conditional covenants with them. Nevertheless, for corporate Israel the unconditional

covenants of promise, as regards the nation of Israel itself and the land, still remain. Scripture is clear, there is still a future prophesied for natural Israel. The sobering fact is that only a remnant will be saved, for Isaiah cried out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved." (Isaiah 10:22 & Romans 9:27) Being born Jewish at this time does not guarantee their salvation, yet they remain chosen as regards the promises.

Regarding the certainty of Israel's future in God's plan, Jeremiah prophesied, "Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so its waves roar; the Lord of hosts is His Name: 'If this fixed order departs from before Me,' declares the LORD, 'Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever.' Thus says the LORD, 'If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all of Israel for all they have done,' declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 31:35-37)

Israel's Spiritual Blindness

Those who consider that God has rejected the nation of Israel misunderstand that God still has a future plan for them as a nation, yet He desires them to seek Him **individually**. Anyone born an Israelite, may be born again by the Spirit in this age, just as anyone born a Gentile can, yet **corporately** as a nation God is also seeking that Israel might turn to Him, and turn they will for God has made a covenant of promise with their forefathers. But as to the timing of their restoration we must seek the answer in scripture.

When writing to the saints in Rome Paul makes it very clear that God has not rejected His people, Israel, but that by their transgression salvation had come to the Gentiles, a reality that he says would make them jealous, but Paul also spoke of **a future day when Israel would receive her fulness**.

Paul writes, "**I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not!** For I am also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew, or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 'Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone

am left, and they seek my life.’ But what does the divine response say to him? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’” (1 Kings 19:18 & Romans 11:1-4)

Speaking, then, of those Jews who had already believed and those who will believe in this age so as to constitute part of the household of God, the church, Paul says, “Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace, and if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.” (Romans 11:5-6)

Speaking of those of Israel who had not believed the gospel, Paul explains, “What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect [*the chosen*] have obtained it, and the rest were blinded, just as it is written: ‘God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear to this very day.’” (Romans 11:7-8)

In this letter to the church in Rome Paul was quoting the words of Moses, words that Moses spoke to Israel after they had experienced their miraculous deliverance from Egypt and miraculous provision during their forty years in the wilderness, yet they still did not believe or understand! (see Deuteronomy 29:4) **Their unbelief had sadly brought about their spiritual blindness!**

Paul quotes Psalm 69 that speaks prophetically of Israel’s rejection of their Messiah, yet prophesies of their eventual salvation, where David says, “Their table shall become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bend their back forever,” (Psalm 69:22 & Romans 11:9-10) and Paul concludes, in agreement with this Psalm, “I say then, ‘Have they stumbled that they should fall?’ Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!” (Romans 11:11-12)

It is important we understand this lesson that Paul was wanting the church in Rome to grasp, so that we do not misunderstand the present condition of natural Israel, those born after the flesh as Israelites, that their condition will continue throughout this age: “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own estimation, that blindness in part has happened to Israel **until** the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” (Romans 11:25)

It is important we understand what Paul declares, “And so **all Israel will be saved**, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’ (Romans 11:26-27)

To rightly understand the future destined for Israel, and its timing, we must realise that Israel’s future extends into the age to come, a future that the church is also going to be part of, His plan for the coming age that God is working out in this. Paul wanted the church in Rome to understand both the present affect of the gospel and the certainty of God’s covenant promise. He explained, “Concerning the gospel *Israel* are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers, for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable!” (Isaiah 59:20 & Romans 11:28-29)

What Paul is explaining, is that it is because of God’s mercy, that not only have the Gentiles received new life but that Israel will receive new life too: “For as **we** were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained **mercy** through *Israel’s* disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the *same* **mercy** shown *to us* they also may obtain **mercy**. For God has committed *all* to disobedience, that He might have **mercy** on all.” (see Romans 11:30-31)

Paul concludes with obvious wonder: “**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!**” (verse 33)

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CHAPTER TWO

In this Chapter we begin to consider the future that lies ahead for Israel in God's plan as revealed through prophecy of scripture. We will see that this plan is not restricted to Israel alone but is about God's desire that all men might be saved.

Israel's Partial Hardening

In his letter to the church in Rome Paul speaks of **an olive tree**, describing Israel as the branches of this olive tree, describing the root as being holy. Using this figure to describe the effect of the salvation coming to the Gentiles through Jesus, Paul explains that natural branches had been broken off and some branches of a wild olive tree have been grafted in.

The olive tree Paul is speaking of is made up of all those counted as righteous from before Israel became a nation, all the righteous that go back to Abraham and before, the very root being God Himself.

Speaking of Israel and the olive tree, Paul says that we can therefore say, "Branches were broken off that *we* might be grafted in." (Romans 11:19) Paul told the saints in Rome that he did not want them to be uninformed, "that a **partial hardening of Israel *had* happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles *had* come in."**

 (Romans 11:25)

Israel is only partially hardened because it is possible for any individual Israelite to still be saved in this age. It is those of natural birth only, born as part of the nation of Israel, that are at this time corporately cut of from the olive tree because of their corporate disobedience, that the church might now be grafted in. Natural Israel as a nation remains corporately under the curse of the law yet with a promised restoration in the future, a future God is still leading them towards.

Many misplace the time of the restoration of all Israel, when natural Israel will yet be grafted back into the olive tree, with many Christians having a wrong expectation of the salvation of all Israel in this age, a misunderstanding that not only prevents them understanding the church's place in the purposes of God correctly, but causes them to misplace their prayers and efforts contrary to God's plan and purpose.

As we know, scripture is not a matter of our own interpretation, but must be understood by way of revelation by the Holy Spirit, and be found agreeing with scripture that the Holy Spirit Himself brought forth through men moved by Himself to write. (see 2 Peter 1:20-21) So we need to look at prophecy of scripture with the help of the Teacher, the Holy Spirit, and see what He has to tell us as we consider Israel's future, **for He has told us the end from the beginning.**

The End Declared from the Beginning

As we consider what is to unfold in God's plan for Israel, and the salvation of mankind, we can be assured the future plan and purpose of God is certain. It will not be stopped.

God has imparted to us through prophecy of scripture that which is to unfold in His foreknowledge; that which is in accordance with His plan and purpose. **Nothing can prevent God's purposed plan coming to fruition.** Even its timing is fixed, a time known only to the Father. There is no 'plan B' and God has not had to change His original plan. All that is transpiring in the world is in accordance with it.

So it is we find in scripture what God has ordained for the nation of Israel and the future of all mankind.

God's Conditional Covenant Promises to Israel

As Israel was birthed as a nation God made a covenant with His chosen people through Moses. As we read of this covenant and its conditions we see that although He gave them a choice He knew they would be unable to keep the covenantal conditions and fulfil the Law, telling Israel the consequences that lay before them because of their future disobedience after being led into the Promised Land. Only in Christ can any man walk in righteousness and the Law only proved the weakness of man's condition without Him.

The Old Testament tells us that in time, because of Israel's disobedience, the ten northern tribes of Israel, corporately bearing this name, were taken captive by the Assyrians. This began in 740BC. Other than a remnant, only the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin, known together as 'Judah', remained in the land until they too were taken captive, this time by Nebuchadnezzar who

took Judah captive into Babylon, beginning in 597BC. Just as God had spoken to Moses of Israel's future, they were taken into captivity and it was during this captivity that God spoke to Daniel about the future of the whole house of Israel.

Daniel's Amazing Revelation

During the time of Judah's captivity in Babylon, when Daniel was seeking God and praying for his people, Israel, as a result of Daniel's intercession the angel Gabriel was sent to Daniel to give him insight and understanding as regards Israel's future, a future that includes that which is yet to unfold, for **we are still living in the middle of what Gabriel told Daniel was to unfold.**

So it is, God has not left us unaware of what He has done, what He is doing and what He is going to do. Just as Daniel was able to discover what God was about to do in his day, so can we.

Daniel had read the prophecy in the book of Jeremiah that told of Judah's captivity in Babylon that he was part of, as only lasting seventy years. Speaking through Jeremiah, the LORD prophesied, "And this whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon **seventy years.**" (Jeremiah 25:11)

As the end of that seventy years was drawing to a close, having read this prophesy in the book of Jeremiah, Daniel began to intercede for his people when Gabriel appeared to him. The angel Gabriel was sent to give Daniel understanding and Gabriel told him to "know and discern" what was Israel's future. (Daniel 9:25)

Seventy Weeks Have Been Decreed

Gabriel told Daniel that "**Seventy weeks have been decreed** for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and anoint the holy place," and that "**to the end there will be war**" for "**desolations are determined!**" (Daniel 9:24)

[The word translated as 'weeks' actually just means 'sevens' and refers to weeks of seven years.]

Daniel was being told that there will be no lasting peace for Israel, peace that will not come until the coming of their King, the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, their Messiah, for until the end there will be war for desolations are determined. It is now in our day that we find ourselves living in the latter period of this prophesied future for Israel that Gabriel disclosed to Daniel and this prophecy has, therefore, great significance to our very own future.

Gabriel explained to Daniel that the first **sixty nine weeks** would begin with a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem that at that time laid in ruins, and had been for seventy years since Nebuchadnezzar had sacked Jerusalem destroying the temple, and taking Israel captive into Babylon. Gabriel explained that these **sixty nine weeks** of years would end with the coming of the Messiah, the Anointed One, but that He would be cut off and that both the city and the sanctuary would *again* be destroyed! (Daniel 9:26)

What an amazing prediction Daniel was being given; that the Messiah would come, but be “cut off”, and that, although the temple would be rebuilt, it would eventually be destroyed again! Just as God had told Israel through Moses, of their future before entering the Promised Land, we see that Daniel was being given revelation of what lay ahead for the nation of Israel.

Daniel was at this time an old man. Earlier in Daniel’s life Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. That was seventy years earlier. Daniel was now being told that although the temple would be rebuilt it would be destroyed again - even before it had been rebuilt! And just as God, through Moses, foretold Israel of their future after their entry into the Promised Land, Daniel was being forewarned of their future to the very end of this age.

We need to understand that despite being told what is yet future God still gives a choice to us as **individuals**. We need to choose God’s will, even when knowing what is to come. Moses laid before Israel the choice between life and death, exhorting them to chose life, although **corporately** God knew that Israel would go astray.

It is important for each of us to know that the inevitability of coming events does not deny us the choice to exercise our own will that affects our own future - our personal eternal salvation.

Choosing Life, Not Knowledge for Knowledge Sake

As we consider prophecy there is an important lesson we must learn. **God is not wanting us to have knowledge of what lies ahead for knowledge sake.** Each of us are part of the unfolding plan and purpose of God and He is wanting each of us to walk in His will in that unfolding plan and that we might have part in the consummation of the ages in the resurrection. He wants us each to choose eternal life - His life - a choice that always begins 'today'.

As we make this choice of true life we then find ourselves being part of what God is doing to bring about His ultimate purpose.

The Accuracy of the Prophecy of the First Sixty Nine Weeks

The predicted timing of the sixty nine weeks of years contained in the prophecy given to Daniel has been proved completely accurate by history, so much so that many doubting historians and commentators have suggested that the book of Daniel must have been written with hindsight!

The question is posed in scripture, "You may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'" to which the answer is given, "When a prophet speaks in the Name of the LORD, if the thing does not come true, that is the thing the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously." (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)

This tells us that we only know if prophecy is true if it comes to pass, yet the LORD also said of His prophet, "Whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My Name, I Myself shall require it of him!" (Deuteronomy 18:19) **It therefore behoves us to ask the Lord for all discernment, to pray that the eyes of our hearts might be opened by the Holy Spirit, that He might teach us and grant us revelation as to what is truth and what is error, so that we are not unaware of what lies ahead. We need to ask the Father to give us spiritual understanding and wisdom in all discernment, to buy eye-salve that we might see.**

To the natural mind and intellect prophecy is written in such a way that without spiritual understanding the truth it contains remains hidden. It is the nature of prophecy that it can be misinterpreted and intellect alone is insufficient to conclude accurately what is being foretold. We also need spiritual wisdom so as not to misapply prophecy to the wrong historical events. Many books have

been written on the prophetic that have been proved incorrect; books that have proved to be misinterpretations! For some, this causes them to chose to ignore prophecy all together but this is the wrong reaction. God has placed prophecy in scripture for a reason. **He not only wants us to be aware of His plans and purposes but He wants us to understand what He is trying to bring about in His purpose; His desire that all men might be saved. He desires that we walk not only in His will but walk with Him in bringing this about, for we who are His are part of Him and He is part of us**

So, as we read what Gabriel was telling Daniel let us each ask the Holy Spirit to give us understanding as to just what is being said, asking Him for revelation that prophecy is not misunderstood.

Understanding What Gabriel is Saying

With this understanding we can now look in more detail at what Gabriel told Daniel.

This prophetic understanding was given to Daniel “in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent that made him king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans,” the kingdom of Babylon. (Daniel 9:1)

Gabriel, having explained to Daniel that, **“Seventy weeks have been decreed** for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place,” was told, **“So you are to know and discern** that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he [*the prince who is to come*] will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and **on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate**, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” (Daniel 9:24-27)

The Decree to Restore and Rebuild Jerusalem

The decree to rebuild Jerusalem that Daniel was told of we find mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah who tell of the decree of Cyrus in 537BC, (Ezra 1:2-4) the decree of Artaxerxes in 458BC, (Ezra 7:11-26) and the decree of Artaxerxes in 444BC. (Nehemiah 2:5-8 and 17-18). The first two decrees refer to the rebuilding of the temple whilst the third deals with the rebuilding of the Jerusalem, beginning with its walls.

Even In Times Of Distress

Nehemiah records the difficulties and dangers that came from the surrounding enemies of Israel as they began to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. The builders were in such danger that those who worked had to carry weapons to protect themselves. (see Nehemiah 4:16-18) In this we see that there is always opposition to what God has ordained!

Seven and Sixty Two Weeks

It is uncertain why the 'sixty-nine week period' is divided by Gabriel into 'seven weeks' and 'sixty two weeks' - 49 years (7 x 7 years) and 434 years (7 x 62 years). Some consider the first seven weeks to be the time it took to restore and rebuild the walls and the city of Jerusalem. The whole sixty-nine weeks, however, marks the close of the Old Testament as regards its timing.

The Messiah Will Be Cut Off

Without making this study too complicated we know by comparing history with scripture that from the time of the decree being made to restore and rebuild Jerusalem by Artaxerxes to the crucifixion of Jesus there was indeed this time-span of sixty nine weeks of years. There are many suggested and slightly differing calculations by bible scholars but for simplicity we here accept the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy.

The People of the Prince Who is to Come

Gabriel then told Daniel that the “people of the prince who is to come” would destroy Jerusalem and the sanctuary, the holy place, (Daniel 9:26) and that the prince would make a “firm covenant with many for one week.” (verse 27)

Because Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in AD 70 by the Roman armies led by Titus many simply assume that the ‘*people*’ referred to in this prophecy were the Romans and the *prince* who is yet to come must therefore also come from Rome. This view is the one most commonly taught and accepted without question by Christians, but is it correct?

Luke records the words of Jesus that speaks of when Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies, “that her desolation is at hand,” a time when those in Judea would need to flee to the mountains. (Luke 22:20-21) This can rightly be attributed to AD70 because Jesus goes on to say that at that time Israel “will be led captive into all the nations and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” (Luke 22:24) The dispersal of Israel among the nations we know from history was indeed fulfilled.

The interpretation that the prince who was to come will therefore be a Roman would seem logical but as we consider Israel’s future as prophesied in scripture we will see that Jerusalem will be attacked once more. Rather than assuming it is Rome who this prophecy is referring to we need to ask the question, **‘If Jerusalem will yet be destroyed again along with the holy place - the sanctuary - being destroyed once more, could there yet be another ‘people of the prince who is to come’, another people other than the Romans who will destroy Jerusalem and the holy place, and a ‘prince’ who is not Roman?’** If the ‘prince’ this prophecy is speaking about does not come from Rome, but a yet future people who will attack Jerusalem, our expectation is greatly changed.

Matthew records in his gospel the words of Jesus where He prophesies of the **“abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”** as being the time when “those who are in Judea” would need to “flee to the mountains” - again. (see Matthew 24:15-21) We know this is speaking of an event that is yet future for we have not yet seen the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel. This sign, Jesus told us, would usher in “a great tribulation such has not occurred since

the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.” (Matthew 24:21) Again, a yet future event.

[Some Christians hold to a preterist view of prophecy that considers events described in the bible as having already happened including the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. It is an assumption based on little known detail. Such an interpretation concludes the accounts in Luke and Matthew as describing the same event and the world being in great tribulation ever since AD70. This view holds that Israel finds its continuation in the church from AD70 with the prophecies of the book of Revelation having already happened in the first century AD. A reading of the book of Revelation soon reveals this is just not so. Such is the need for spiritual understanding and confirmation that we must obtain from the Holy Spirit as our Teacher as we study prophecy of scripture.]

So it is that we still must look to a future time when Jerusalem will be attacked again for on the wing of abomination will come one who makes desolate. As to the timing of this event Gabriel told Daniel that it would occur half way through a week of a covenant made with many.

The Week of the Covenant with Many

This prophecy in Daniel 9:27 causes confusion to some bible scholars because they assume the ‘week’ when a covenant will be made with many is the ‘seventieth week’ of the prophecy that was being explained to Daniel. However, this is not what Gabriel is saying but is purely an assumption many bible scholars make.

Daniel is told that in the middle of the week of the covenant made with many there would be a stop made to “sacrifice and oblation,” and “**on the wing of abomination would come one who would make desolate.**” (verse 27)

Jesus said that the great tribulation would begin when the **abomination of desolation** is seen standing in the holy place, (see Matthew 24:15) which from Daniel 9:27 we know is halfway through the ‘week of the covenant made with many’.

Thus, like placing jig-saw puzzle pieces in their correct location we must ensure our understanding of a particular scripture fits with all other scriptures.

The Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 9:27 is just one of several scriptures where Daniel speaks of the “**abomination of desolation**,” the sign that Jesus said would trigger a time of “**great tribulation** such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world,” until that time, “nor ever shall.” (Matthew 24:21)

Jesus disciples had asked Him, “When will these things be and what will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3) In answer, Jesus began to explain events that were going to unfold, explaining that, “when you see the **abomination of desolation** which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place,” then “those who are in Judea” should “flee to the mountains” for then there will be “**great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until that time, nor ever shall.**” (see Matthew 24:15-21) **Israel, we see, will have to leave Jerusalem just as they did in AD70.**

Jesus explains that it is during the great tribulation that the “gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a witness to all nations, and then the end (of the age) shall come,” (Matthew 24:14) and that “unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” (verse 15)

The Great Tribulation

It is to the book of Revelation that we look for detail of the great tribulation. From the book of Revelation we see the breaking of the first five seals describes the **great tribulation** and the breaking of the sixth seal announces that the “**great day of the wrath has come**,” (Revelation 6:17) the seventh seal describing the seven trumpet judgments of God’s wrath and the wrath of the Lamb. (see Revelation 6:1 to 8:13)

The breaking of the sixth seal describes that there will be a great earthquake; and the sun will become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon will become like blood, and the stars of heaven will fall to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind as the sky will recede as a scroll when it is rolled up. (see Revelation 6:12-14)

The End of the Age - The Return of the Lord

As the disciples sat on the Mount of Olives Jesus told His disciples that “**immediately**” after this time of great tribulation, “the sun would be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken,” for “**then** the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and **then** all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:29-30) We see that what Jesus told His disciples and what the Revelation describes is the same, both speaking of Jesus second coming **immediately after the great tribulation when Jesus returns to catch away His saints at the resurrection of the righteous dead.**

What is being described is the coming of Jesus in the clouds with His angels to catch away His church, the angels gathering “together the elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.” (verse 31)

The Wrath Of God

We see that the sixth seal, as well as describing the return of the Lord also announces that the day of God’s wrath had come, when “the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, *will hide* themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and *say* to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’” (Revelation 6:15-17)

So it is the nations that remain upon the earth will mourn along with natural Israel who also remain upon the earth, for “every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him,” [*Israel*] (see Revelation 1:7) We see that **Israel remains on the earth when the church is caught away.**

The coming of Jesus in the sky to catch away His elect is, therefore, not the end of Israel’s seventieth week, for those not part of the church are left upon the earth and this includes natural Israel. The prophesied wrath of God has come, wrath that the church is not destined for, but which those who survive on the earth will have to pass through.

So it is, natural Israel remains upon the earth with all who have not believed the gospel of the Kingdom that has been preached in the whole world as a witness. Hence the 70th week continues. **God is still dealing with Israel.**

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[Many bible scholars describe the whole of Daniel's 70th week as the 'great tribulation' but scripture never mixes up the time of 'great tribulation' with the time when the 'wrath of God' is seen, these being two separate three and a half year periods which are always distinguished, one from the other. We see, therefore, that the wrath of God follows the great tribulation of the first half of the 70th week, the wrath of God describing the latter half of the 70th week.

Israel is seen to remain on the earth after the 'great tribulation' comes to an end for they have to go through the second half of the 70th week, the time when God pours out His wrath upon the earth.

The time of 'great tribulation' is sometimes confused by many with the time spoken of by the Old Testament prophets as the "day of the Lord", but the day of the Lord refers to the wrath of God being poured out. This is spoken of by the Old Testament prophets because Israel will be there in that day.

The 'great tribulation' is caused by Satan having great wrath because he knows his time is short, (see Revelation 12:12) the church being here during this time of great tribulation, but the church is not destined for wrath - the wrath of God, (see 1 Thessalonians 5:9) and the catching away of the saints occurs before this.]

CHAPTER THREE

Understanding God's Dealings With Israel

The story of Israel is one that reflects our own disobedience and rebellion against God as seen in the disobedience and rebellion of the people that God chose to reveal Himself to. In this story we can see a reflection of the whole of mankind's condition.

The story of Israel tells of God's covenant promises and how, despite their disobedience, in His grace and mercy He will nevertheless bring forth a people for His own possession not just from Israel but from all the nations of the earth.

It is a story that confirms that there is no good thing that dwells in any of us, that is in our flesh, just as Paul confessed. (see Romans 7:18) It is a story that confirms mankind's desperate need for a Saviour.

Israel's Dispersal Among The Nations

When God brought Israel out of the land of Egypt where they had been in slavery for four hundred years, He brought them into covenant relationship with Himself, adding to the unconditional covenant He had made with their forefathers, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In contrast, the Mosaic Covenant that He established through Moses was conditional upon their obedience, and which necessitated that provision also be made for their sins to be covered when they transgressed, as surely they would. Hence the sacrifices and offerings also laid out as part of the Mosaic Covenant.

The story of Israel's escape from Egypt relates that for forty years Israel wandered in the wilderness because of their unbelief. It was only an eleven days journey from Horeb [*Mount Sinai*] to Kadesh Barnea on the edge of the Promised Land, but God was unable to lead them straight into the land He had promised to them through Abraham because of their unbelief, unbelief that led them to believe the lie that they could not achieve what God told them they could do. God, therefore, had to wait for the next generation to arise.

Israel had rebelled against the command of the LORD, and had grumbled in their tents, saying, "Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy

us.” (Deuteronomy 1:26-27) Hearing the sound of their words, God was angry and took an oath saying, ‘Not one of these men *of* this evil generation shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers.’ (verse 35) For the same reason of unbelief we later learn that not even Moses would enter the Promised Land, only Caleb and Joshua. (see verses 34-38)

In their unbelief Israel had thought their children, their “little ones”, would become a prey to their enemies, even though God had said to them regarding the land, “I will give it to them, and they shall possess it.” (verse 39) In His anger, therefore, the LORD swore, “No one from this evil generation shall see the good land I swore to give your ancestors except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land he sets his feet on, because he followed the Lord wholeheartedly.” Speaking to Israel Moses said, “Because of you the Lord became angry with me also and said, “You shall not enter it, either. But your assistant, Joshua son of Nun, will enter it.” (Deuteronomy 1:35-37)

So it was that Israel had to turn back, condemned to wander in the wilderness for forty years until the time came for the next generation to enter the land of promise.

God’s Covenant With Israel in Moab

When this new generation had reached the edge of the Promised Land once more, to Moab, and before they entered the Promised Land God reaffirmed the covenant He had made with Israel at Mount Sinai. With many warnings, and recounting the journey that had brought them there, Moses began to teach the children of Israel in preparation for their entry into the land of promise.

At Mount Sinai, through Moses, God had given Israel the Mosaic Law and in particular the Ten Commandments. Now Moses repeated the Ten Commandments to Israel but not without telling them that because of their disobedience they would not live long in the land and, **“the Lord will scatter you among the nations, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord shall drive you.”** (Deuteronomy 4:27)

This prophetic prediction of Moses in the foreknowledge of God might surprise us but God was setting before Israel the offer of blessings or cursings, and it

was Israel's choice that would dictate the future set before them, not upon God's predestined decision.

With many warnings Moses told Israel that they were a holy people, chosen to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth because of His love for them, and because of the oath He had sworn to their forefathers. (see Deuteronomy 4 - 7)

With many instructions in preparation for their entrance into the Promised Land Moses set before Israel the blessings that would result from their obedience and the curses that would overtake them if they were disobedient.

The list of curses included the curse that the **"LORD will scatter you among the nations, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth,"** telling them that there they **"would find no rest."** (Deuteronomy 28:64)

This was not the first time Israel had been told of the consequences they would suffer if they disobeyed God's commandments, the LORD was only reiterating the consequence for not obeying the commands He had given them at Sinai, the consequences for having idols and making graven images and not revering His sabbaths and His sanctuary. (see Leviticus 26:1-2)

At Mount Sinai the Lord had told them of the blessings that they would enjoy if they were obedient, (see Leviticus 26:3-13) but also told them of the consequences, with great detail, if they did not keep His commandments: "I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings. I myself will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. **I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins.**" (Leviticus 26:31-33)

God's Promise of Eventual Restoration

Whilst warning Israel of the consequence of their disobedience, however, the Lord nevertheless tells them of His never ending and available mercy and forgiveness. Moses explains, **"But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors - their unfaithfulness and their hostility toward Me, which made Me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies - then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember My covenant with Jacob and**

My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.” (Leviticus 26:40-42)

We see that although the LORD had warned Israel, in His foreknowledge He also promised their restoration: **“They will pay for their sins because they rejected My laws and abhorred My decrees. Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking My covenant with them. I am the Lord their God. But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the Lord.”** (Leviticus 26:43b-45)

Now in Moab, speaking to this new generation, Moses went on to prophesy that Israel would indeed experience both the blessings and the curses set before them that day and when they brought to mind all of the things that would come upon them when they found themselves in all the nations where God would banish them, Moses told them that He would restore them - but only **when** they returned to the Lord and obeyed Him with all their heart and soul in accordance with the commandments given that day. (see Deuteronomy 27-30)

The Covenant to be Reaffirmed in Canaan

Such was the importance and centrality of God’s Covenant with Israel that they were charged by Moses and the elders of Israel to reaffirm this covenant on entry into Canaan, after they had crossed the Jordan.

They were told to place the blessing upon Mount Gerizim and the curse upon Mount Ebal, two mountains that were centrally located in the land of promise into which they were entering. (see Deuteronomy 11:29) The mountains were located on either side of Shechem which had been Abraham’s first stop on entering the land of Canaan, where the oaks, or terebinths of Moreh were. It was here that Abraham built an altar, for the LORD appeared to him there, declaring, **“To your descendants I will give this land.”** (see Genesis 12:6-7) Such was the significance of this place now chosen by God.

Israel were told to set up large stones and coat them with lime, and write on them the words of the law. (see Deuteronomy 27:2-3) Israel were given precise instructions, to set up altars and to sacrifice peace offerings and rejoice before the Lord. On Mount Gerizim the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah,

Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin were to represent the blessings of the law, whilst on Mount Ebal, the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali were to represent the curses. (see Deuteronomy 27:4 to 28:14) Being given detail of the curses and blessings Israel was thus told of the consequences for their disobedience.

The Unforgivable Sin

Moses told them that should any man, having heard the words of the curse, say in his heart he has peace to walk in his stubbornness, the LORD would never be willing to forgive him! (see Deuteronomy 29:19-20)

The Promise of Restoration

Nevertheless the LORD promised restoration to Israel after the blessings and curses had come upon them once they had returned to the LORD their God to obey Him with all their heart and soul, according to the commands made to them that day in Moab. (see Deuteronomy 30:1-6)

The Fulfilment of the Curse

So Israel entered the Promised Land and all that they had been forewarned of, of both the blessings and the curse, did indeed fall upon them! As we have seen, the history of Israel as recorded for us in scripture tells of the ten northern tribes, known collectively as 'Israel', being taken into captivity by the Assyrians which took place between 740BC and 722BC. (see 1 Chronicles 5:26, 2 Kings 15:29, 2 Kings 17:3-6 and 2 Kings 18:11-12) Although a few from the ten northern tribes humbled themselves and returned to the land these ten northern tribes remain in exile to this day. Often referred to as the 'Lost Tribes of Israel', their return still awaits.

Known collectively as 'Judah', the two southern tribes of Israel, were taken into exile in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. After the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged Jerusalem, resulting in tribute being paid by King Jehoiakim of Judah.

King Jehoiakim, however, subsequently refused to pay tribute to Nebuchadnezzar which led to another siege by Nebuchadnezzar culminating in the death of Jehoiakim and the exile of King Jeconiah, his court and many

others with them. Jeconiah's successor, Zedekiah and others were exiled in a later deportation. Thus Judah was taken into exile into Babylon.

Although Judah's exile in Babylon was to only last 70 years, resulting in them returning to the land to restore and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple that had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, Judah were again going to be taken captive into all the nations after the crucifixion of Christ.

It is a matter of history that Israel were taken into captivity into all the nations of the world, and banished from their homeland after the Roman army led by Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 70AD.

Jesus Himself foretold that there would be great distress upon the land and anger towards the people and that they would be led captive into all the nations and that Jerusalem would be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles had been fulfilled. (see Luke 21:23-24)

Many Jews were taken as slaves after the destruction of the Temple in AD70. This was the first of two major revolts against the Romans by the Jews that took place in Judea. The so called 'Bar Kochba' revolt was fought between 132AD and 136AD. The Roman Emperor, Hadrian, assembled a large Roman force from across the Empire to crush the latter Judean revolt, a force that invaded Judea in 134AD under the command of General Sextus Julius Severus made up of six full legions.

Extensive depopulation of Judea resulted, more so than during the first Jewish-Roman War in 70AD. Over half a million Jews perished in the war and many more died of hunger and disease with many captives sold into slavery.

What Moses had foretold had come to pass! And what Jesus had told His disciples would happen, had happened. Israel were to spend the next, nearly two thousand years, in exile!

Just as God had said regarding the land, "I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled over it," (Leviticus 26:32) it had happened!

For nearly two thousand years Israel were to be in exile but in our day the partial return from many nations has been taking place.

We may now look again to prophecy of scripture to see what is next to unfold, “For the LORD God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7)

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CHAPTER FOUR

Israel's Partial Return To Their Land

We have seen that God always reveals His plans through the voice of His prophets before it comes to pass, even those reliant on His foreknowledge of man's choices. Just as God said that Israel would go into exile, He also declared that He would return them to the land, but with this realisation we need to understand that their full restoration will only come once their hearts have been changed. Before this happens Ezekiel prophesies of their partial return to the land.

God had declared to Israel, "I will not break My covenant with you," (Judges 2:1) "I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob," (Amos 9:8) yet "I will shake the house of Jacob among all nations!" (Amos 9:9)

Jeremiah prophesied, "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when it will no longer be said, "As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,'" but, "As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and **from all the countries where He had banished them.**" For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers.'

'Behold, I am going to send for many fishermen,' declares the Lord, 'and they will fish for them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them from every mountain and every hill and from the clefts of the rocks. For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity concealed from My eyes. **I will first doubly repay their iniquity and their sin**, because they have polluted My land; they have filled My inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable idols and with their abominations.'" (Jeremiah 16:14-18)

To this day, wherever they are, Israel remembers their deliverance from the land of Egypt, when each year they celebrate the Feast of Passover and partake in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, recalling how God led them out of Egypt. But God has declared this deliverance will be superseded by an even greater deliverance when the whole house of Israel are restored to their land "**from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.**" (Jeremiah 16:15 & 23:7)

In our day we only see a partial return of the southern tribes of Judah. The return of the whole house of Israel still awaits, “‘For behold, days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah.’ The Lord says, ‘I will also bring them back to the land that I gave to their forefathers and they shall possess it.’” (Jeremiah 30:3)

Israel’s Return Begins

Over the last hundred years or so we have seen the regathering of Israel to the land and the reestablished of Israel as a nation.

Large-scale immigration of Jews to the land of Israel began in 1882, which was at that time still under the occupation of the Ottoman Empire. Systematic persecution of Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe saw many thousands return to Israel between 1904 and 1914 but it was after World War I, when the British had driven the Ottoman Turks out of the land of Israel, and after the ‘Balfour Declaration’ of 1917 had promised to support the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, many thousand more Jews returned to the land of Israel that was still called Palestine from the time of the Roman occupation.

More persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe saw more Jews arrive in Palestine in the 1920’s, as even greater numbers came back to their land before World War II.

On 25 April 1920, a resolution was passed by the San Remo Conference, an international meeting of the post-World War I Allied Supreme Council made up of Great Britain, France and Italy with representatives from Greece, Japan and Belgium, an outgrowth of the Paris Peace Conference. Held at Villa Devachan in San Remo, Italy, the San Remo Conference raised the Balfour Declaration to the level of an international treaty and so the rights given to the Jewish people to reconstitute their ancient national home were enshrined in international law in fulfilment of God’s covenant promise. It was to Britain that a League of Nations mandate was granted to administer the land of Palestine.

After the slaughter of 6 million Jews in the ethnic cleansing undertaken by Nazi Germany during World War II, many Jews looked again to return to their

own land but Britain frustrated these efforts contrary to God's will. Nothing could, however, now stop the return of Jews from **many** nations of the world, from Africa and Asia as well as Europe.

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly had passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel [*Eretz or Aretz from the Hebrew for land*]; the General Assembly requiring the inhabitants of Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State was irrevocable.

On the 14th May 1948 the British Mandate expired and the modern State of Israel was established by the Israeli 'Declaration of Independence' which then led to its acceptance by the United Nations on 11th May 1949. This was to lead to more than 200,000 immigrants arriving from North America alone but first, on the 15th May 1948, the Jewish insurgency that had begun in 1947 was transformed into a conflict between Israel and the Arab states following the Israeli Declaration of Independence the previous day. Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, and expeditionary forces from Iraq entered Palestine to try to prevent Israel from carrying out its plan!

This war culminated in armistices which left the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem occupied by Egypt and Transjordan.

Israel were again confronted by Egypt, Syria and Jordan in June 1967, a 'Six Day War' which saw Israel annex land still occupied under the 1949 armistices, land the United Nation still refuses to accept as rightfully belonging to modern state of Israel although they only regained this territory that had previously been allotted to them.

Despite continued opposition from the United Nations Israel has declared its self determination that the land they now occupy is the national home of the State of Israel with Jerusalem as their capital.

Today the population of Israel stands at over eight million with approximately double this number of Jews remain amongst the nations.

Following nearly two thousand years of exile we have seen the Jews beginning to return to the land, gathering from many nations to part of the land that God promised to Abraham. Israel's restoration to the land has begun but their spiritual restoration awaits. And more prophecies await fulfilment before Israel can be restored fully and just as God has declared, "Even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined." (Daniel 9:26)

Many hold to a false hope for Israel's future, one that takes no account of their coming trouble and distress. Israel has already partially returned to part of land promised under covenant to Abraham, but the return of whole house of Israel lies after more war and tribulation. Israel still remains under the curses that God said would come upon them until their hearts are changed and they seek Him with all their hearts that He might restore them.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Jacob's Trouble

Following our consideration of the history of God's dealing with Israel we now look at the present day and the days that lie ahead. Now partially returned to the land of promise Israel find themselves surrounded by Islamic nations many of which are intent on their total destruction. Within their borders, to control Palestinian opposition, they have built a security wall to control access from the so called 'West Bank' and their border with Gaza remains heavily militarised.

Although Israel's full restoration is assured Jeremiah declared that it will not come before they experience a time of great distress - **Jacob's Trouble**. "Now these are the words which the Lord spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah: 'For thus says the Lord, I have heard a sound of terror, of dread, and there is no peace. Ask now, and see If a male can give birth. Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in childbirth? And why have all faces turned pale? Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And **it is the time of Jacob's trouble**, but he will be saved from it. It shall come about on that day,' declares the Lord of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from off their neck and will tear off their bonds; and strangers will no longer make them their slaves. But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their King, whom I will raise up for them. Fear not, O Jacob My servant, declares the Lord, 'And do not be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar and your offspring from the land of their captivity. And Jacob will return and will be quiet and at ease, And no one will make him afraid. 'For I am with you,' declares the Lord, 'to save you; for I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, only **I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly, and will by no means leave you unpunished.**' (Jeremiah 30:4-11)

God still waits for their hearts to change and for His 'chosen people' to seek Him with all their hearts. Sadly within the nation of Israel sin still abounds whilst they behave like other nations who do not know God. Because Israel's iniquity was so great, and their sins so numerous, God declared, "I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy," (Jeremiah 30:14) but God declares in His love and faithfulness, "**I will restore you to health and I will heal you of your wounds.**" (Jeremiah 30:16-17)

Through Isaiah God also spoke, “I will not contend forever, neither will I always be angry, for the Spirit would grow faint before Me, and the breath of those whom I have made. Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry and struck him. I hid My face from Him and was angry, and he went on turning away in the way of his heart. **I have seen his ways, but I will heal him.**” (Isaiah 57:16-18)

Such is the extent of the amazing grace and love of God, and His promise remains that He spoke through Moses: **“For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.”** (Deuteronomy 4:31)

So it is that we see the clear promise of Israel’s restoration but this day is yet future. Before that day Israel remains under judgment and a time of great trouble still awaits them!

A Day of Chastening

We see that the whole house of Israel will pass through this time of chastening in which the LORD will “destroy the nations” where He has scattered them but will not destroy Israel completely, although God says of them, **“I will chasten you justly and will by no means leave you unpunished.”** Despite God saying that their “iniquity is great” and their “pain is incurable” because their “sins are numerous”, He still declares, **“I will restore you to health and will heal you of your wounds.”** (see Jeremiah 30:9-17)

Jesus Spoke Of This Day of Distress

Jesus spoke of the coming ‘day’ of distress describing this as the beginning of the greatest tribulation **“such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world”**, until that time, **“nor ever shall.”** (Matthew 24:21)

Jesus explained to His disciples that this ‘day’ would commence when the **“abomination of desolation**, which was spoken of through Daniel, the prophet,” is seen **“standing in the holy place.”** Scripture says, as regards understanding this crucial event, “Let the reader understand.” (Matthew 24:15) This seems to suggest understanding will not be required from others but it will be obvious to those seeking God’s understanding as these awesome events unfold.

As to its affects upon Israel Jesus then issues a warning of significance for those restored to the land, saying, “Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to get anything out of his house, and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak.” (Matthew 24:16-18) Such is the immediacy of the need to flee!

Like a wildfire that is blown by such strong winds that those affected can hardly escape from it, it seems the suddenness and devastation that come upon those in Judah when the abomination of desolation is seen is of a similar nature. Jesus warns “those who are in Judea”, saying, “Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days,” adding, “Pray that your flight might not be in winter, or on a Sabbath.” (Matthew 24:19-20)

Despite the immediacy of the response needed it seems there will be an expectation before the event giving sufficient time for those living in the land to pray.

Some would suggest this describes the events of 70AD when Jerusalem was attacked by the armies of Rome, but this ‘preterist’ belief [*preterist*, meaning, *it has already happened*] discounts the reality the scriptures speak of as regards Israel’s future distress that have yet to take place, and so this misleads many.

The great tribulation will see the rise of the man of sin whose authority will come from Satan himself. In figurative language the Revelation says that “when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Revelation 12:13-17)

The focus of Satan’s wrath is not only Israel but the church which is the body of Christ.

Prior Warnings of This Coming Day

As we have seen Daniel was given understanding and instruction by Gabriel of this very time, saying, “Oh Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight and understanding.” (Daniel 9:22) Daniel was told that before the **abomination of desolation** is seen a “prince who is to come” will make a “firm covenant with many for one week”, and in the middle of that week “he will put a stop to sacrifice and oblation”, and “**on the wing of abomination will come one who makes desolate.**” (Daniel 9:27)

Jesus also described the events that come forth as birth pangs before this day. (see Matthew 24:8) This life changing event will not come out of the blue but on the back of increasing rebellion against God and troubles amongst the nations and a shaking of the earth resulting in earthquakes and extremes of weather.

Jesus Himself exhorts us through His teaching to His disciples, to “learn the parable of the fig tree. When its branch has already become tender and put forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. Even so, you too, when you see all these things” - all the things Jesus described that would precede this time - “recognise that He is near, right at the door,” (Matthew 24:32-33) for Jesus’ return immediately follows the time of great tribulation. There is particular pertinence to this parable because, in scripture, Israel is often figured as a fig tree.

Jesus therefore exhorts us through this same teaching to “be on the alert,” and though He says we will not know the day of His coming, He clearly infers that we are to recognise the season. (see Matthew 24:42)

As these serious days approach we are not to be overwhelmed by them but to pray, asking God for the strength in Him that we need to be able to go through them. Jesus warns us, “**Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you unexpectedly; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.**” (Luke 21:34-36)

A Despicable Person

As Daniel is given more understanding of this coming time of great tribulation he is told of the “despicable person” who will arise, and from whom, “at the appointed time”... forces will arise, to “desecrate the sanctuary fortress and do away with the regular sacrifice”, those who “will set up “the **abomination of desolation.**” (Daniel 11:21 and 31)

So it is that we know these acts of aggression of this ‘prince’ must be seen before the abomination is set up. (see Daniel 11)

Initially described as a ‘prince’ on whom “the honour of kingship has not been conferred,” Daniel is told that he “will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue,” thus making him a king! (see Daniel 11:21)

After the abomination that makes desolate is set up Daniel is told of this king, “The king will do as he pleases and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god,” speaking “monstrous things against the God of gods.” (Daniel 11:36) “He will show no regard for the god of his fathers... nor for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all!” (verse 37)

Daniel is told that this will be when “Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people” - Israel - “will arise”, so that “**there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time.**” (Daniel 12:1)

This time of **distress** is described in a similar way by Jesus as a time of “**great tribulation such as not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, now ever shall.**” (Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:21)

As we seek to be prepared, therefore, we can learn from the answers Paul gave to the church in Thessalonica who were concerned that this day had arrived without their knowledge. Turning to Paul they ask him if the “day of the Lord” had already come. (see 2 Thessalonians 2:2)

As “sons of light”, Paul explains, those who belong to Christ are not to be concerned that this ‘day’ overtakes them like a thief. Paul reassures the church in Thessalonica, saying, “you brethren, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you like a thief, but you are sons of light and sons of day... so then, **let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.**” (see 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6)

Amazingly, despite the magnitude of the events that unfold, “While they are are saying, ‘Peace and safety’ then destruction will come on” the world “suddenly, like birth pangs upon a woman with child.” (see 1 Thessalonians 5:3) Like a thief!

We are already seeing mankind turning from God, considering they are the author of their own future and the means of their own salvation, blinded as to the coming reality and deaf to the warnings God is giving.

Paul exhorts us through his second letter to the church in Thessalonica, “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way, and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.**” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-17)

This exhortation is as much for us now as it was for the church in Thessalonica in Paul’s day. Let us understand that ‘he’ who now restrains is Michael who stands guard over Israel and it will not be until he is taken out of the way that the man of lawlessness will be revealed. The future is in God’s

hands, as are events necessary to bring Israel to repentance, and for men's hearts to be opened to receive the good news of the Kingdom of God that is available for any who might call on Jesus Name.

Future Events We Must Yet See

Scripture is clear, there are events that must precede the great tribulation and the coming of the Lord. The lie that the return of Jesus might happen at any time has made for stirring sermons, although in a personal sense this is true as none of us know the day or the hour our souls might be required of us. Just as in Jesus story of the rich man laying up treasures on earth when God said to him, "You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?" (see Luke 12:20) But **as regards the coming day of Christ all prophecy must first be fulfilled.**

We must first see :-

- It is on the wing of abomination that **one will come who makes desolate.** (Daniel 9:27)
- This abomination is seen standing in the holy place. (Matthew 24:15)
- **A despicable person** will arise on whom the honour of kingship has not been conferred. (Daniel 11:21)
- Forces from him will arise and desecrate the sanctuary fortress. (Daniel 11:31)
- They will do away with the regular sacrifice. (Daniel 11:31)
- They will set up the abomination which makes desolate. (Daniel 11:31)
- **This king will exalt and magnify himself above every god.** (Daniel 11:36)
- **He speaks monstrous things against the God of gods.** (Daniel 11:36)
- And after the abomination of desolation is seen standing in the holy place then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until that time, nor ever shall. (Matthew 24:21)

And this all takes place before Jesus returns for Jesus says that it is "... **immediately after** the tribulation of those days... then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky... and He will send forth His angels... to gather together His elect... from one end of the sky to the other. (Matthew 24:29-31)

We see that Jesus taught, that the return of the "Son of Man" comes "immediately **after** the tribulation of those days," not **before**, as many

Christians would teach in hope they would not have to contemplate going through such a difficult time. (see Matthew 24:29) Knowing that the church is not destined for the wrath of God we need to be clear that the great tribulation is not the 'wrath of God' but the wrath of Satan, knowing his time is short, and in Christ our lives are in His hands.

From what Paul writes, we see that the 'lawless one' cannot be revealed because of the protective restraint of Michael. We also see this 'lawless one', the "son of perdition", is the one Jesus "will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming." (2 Thessalonians 2:8) This we see taking place when Jesus returns to the earth with His saints to confront the beast and the false prophet. (Revelation 19:15)

All events are in the timing of God but we see the coming of the "lawless one" is "in accord with the activity of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders." (see 2 Thessalonians 2:9) **And the rise of the beast, often referred to as the 'antichrist', will precede the coming of Christ.**

In the next Chapter we can consider the scriptures that tell us more about the beast - the man of sin.

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CHAPTER SIX

A Little Horn Speaking Boastful Words

As we have seen a despicable person will arise, who will exalt himself over every so called god, speaking monstrous things against the God of gods. Paul describes this man as the 'man of sin' and the 'son of perdition'. He is described in visions and dreams that Daniel the prophet experienced, being referred to as a '**little horn**'.

In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel saw in a dream and visions four great beasts coming out of the sea; the sea of nations. The first three beasts represented Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece (Javan). The fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong had large iron teeth, devouring the first three beasts and crushing and trampling them down with its feet. This fourth beast, Daniel was told, had ten horns among which a **little horn** came up among them. The **little horn** then pulled three of the first horns up by their roots. (see Daniel 7:1-8)

The Fourth Beast With Ten Horns

In the book of Revelation John saw this same beast having **ten horns**. (Revelation 17:3) John is told that the **ten horns** represent ten kings who "receive authority with the beast for one hour." (see Revelation 17:12) These kings he was told, "have one purpose... to give power and authority to the beast." (Revelation 17:13)

From Where The Little Horn Arises

Three years later, whilst Belshazzar was still the king of Babylon, Daniel had yet another dream that brought increased understanding. In this dream Daniel saw a male goat with one large horn. This male goat magnified himself after he had struck and shattered a ram with two horns, but his large horn was broken off and in its place came up four conspicuous horns and out of one of them came forth a **rather small horn**. (see Daniel 8:5-9)

Daniel then saw this **small horn** magnify itself to be equal to the Prince of the host, and it "removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down." (Daniel 8:11) It seems clear that this is the same

little horn of the previous vision. Each of Daniel's visions and dreams gives increased detail on the one preceding it, each one being linked to the other.

Daniel explains that it is "on account of transgression, the host will be given over *to the horn* along with the regular sacrifice and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper." (Daniel 8:12)

What Daniel was being shown was the rise of the antichrist, for this **small horn** carries the same descriptions as we have seen describe the **little horn**.

Daniel was then given an interpretation of this vision of the he-goat and the ram. Daniel is told that the goat represents Greece (Javan) and the ram representing Media and Persia.

Today 'Javan' would equate to what was Macedonia and Western Turkey as most Bible Atlas's show. although most versions of the bible wrongly translate the name 'Javan' as being 'Greece'. Medo-Persia would today equate with Iran and Iraq. (see Daniel 8:20-21)

After the he-goat arises and has attacked the ram with two horns, its "conspicuous horn" is broken off. We then see four horns arise in its place from this same nation "representing four kingdoms", and from these "**a king will arise**," a king, "insolent and skilled in intrigue", having great power, one who will "destroy to an extraordinary degree." Daniel is told that he will prosper and do his will, destroying "mighty men and the holy people," and "he will magnify himself in his heart". He "will even stand against the Prince of princes" - Jesus Christ. (Daniel 8:23-25)

Although we can equate these events reflected in events that occurred in the time of Alexander the Great as many bible scholars and historians do, this prophecy is clearly placed at "**the time of the end**", at the "**final period of indignation**", and "**the appointed time of the end**," (Daniel 8:17-19) not back in history as some suggest.

The Little Horn and the Beast

Scripture uses figurative language to describe powers and personalities so as we consider the 'little horn' that will rule in the last days of this age. we need to keep in mind that this man will be head of an empire, a world power. The 'little horn' is on the head of this end-time fearsome beast, of which it is part, having

arisen from a world power described also as a ram. This fearsome beast that John saw in the 'Revelation' is described as being "like a leopard, and his feet were those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion, and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne and great authority." (Revelation 13:2) The Revelation describes this beast as having seven heads, as well as having ten horns, (verse 1) and before the 'little horn' arises John saw "one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed." (Revelation 13:3)

John was told, "**The beast that you saw was, and is not, and it is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction**, and those who dwell on the earth will wonder... when they see the beast, that was, and is not, and is to come." (Revelation 17:8)

The angel, in describing the beast to John, tells him that the seven heads on the beast represent "seven kings; five *having* fallen, one is, the other has not yet come."

The Beast With Seven Heads

So it is that we can look back in history and identify five kingdoms that had been and gone at the time of the Revelation, kingdoms that had played a major roll in world events and the history of Israel, the five kingdoms being Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Greece (Javan). At the time John saw the Revelation the Roman Empire was the ruling Empire in the world but John was shown that a seventh was yet to arise, one which would appear to receive a fatal wound, but which would regain the power it lost.

After the fall of the Roman Empire history tells us of the rise of the Islamic Empire that culminated in the Ottoman Empire that appeared to be dealt a fatal blow when it collapsed after the First World War. But in our day we are seeing the reemergence of Islam as a world power centred on Turkey, a dominance that has yet to be fully established if indeed this is the seventh head on the beast described in the Revelation.

John sees that the whole earth will be amazed by this beast that rises again, and so they will worship "the dragon because he gives his authority to the beast, and they worship the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast and who is able to wage war with him.'" (Revelation 13:4)

Being parts of the one beast the actions of the beast are the same as that of the little horn upon its head: “And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty two months.” And “He opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His Name and His tabernacle - those who dwell in heaven...” and “it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.” (Revelation 13:5-7)

As we compare the visions of Daniel, the prophecies of Jesus and the teachings of Paul, it becomes clear that this **‘little horn’** is the **“man of sin”**, the **“son of perdition”**, **the antichrist**, and part of **the beast** that is described in the book of Revelation.

Some might try to divorce the **‘little horn’** from the beast on which this horn is located, suggesting they are separate entities. but it seems the beast represents the kingdom of the antichrist whilst being personified in the **little horn** itself.

We are given a very detailed picture of this **man of sin** who instigates and causes wars, the one who, “All who dwell on the earth will worship... everyone whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.” (Revelation 13:8)

Daniel Describes the Beast

- The beast is dreadful and terrible.
- Is exceedingly strong.
- Has great iron teeth.
- The beast devours.
- He breaks in pieces.
- And tramples down the other beasts under his feet.
- This beast is different from all the beasts that were before it, kingdoms which themselves were headed up by a man. (see Daniel 7:7)

Scriptural Descriptions of the Little Horn

Scripture also gives much detail regarding the **little horn**, details given to Daniel that are mirrored in Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians and applied to the dragon in the book of Revelation.

- He is describes as a **little horn**: “I considered the horns and, behold, there came up among them another **little horn**.” (Daniel 7:8a)
- He comes up among the ten horns.
- He comes up after the ten horns: “the ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from his kingdom and another shall arise after them.” (Daniel 7:24a) “The beast coming up out of the sea, **having ten horns** and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems...” (Revelation 13:1)
- The **little horn** plucks three horns out by their roots: “Another horn, **a little one**, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots.” (Daniel 7:8b)
- The **little horn** has eyes like the eyes of a man: “In this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man...” (Daniel 7:8c)
- He has a mouth speaking great things: “...and a mouth speaking great things.” (Daniel 7:8d) and “...that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that uttered great boasts...” (Daniel 7:20a) “**He will exalt himself above every god speaking monstrous things against the God of gods.** (see Daniel 11:36) **He will magnify himself above them all.** (see Daniel 11:37c) He “exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship.” (2 Thessalonians 2:24a)
- The **little horn** in appearance is greater than his fellows: “...its appearance was larger than its associates.” (Daniel 7:20b)
- **He makes war with the saints**: “...and the same horn was making war against the saints...” (Daniel 7:21a) “...and he went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” (Revelation 12:17)
- The **little horn** even **overpowers the saints**: “...prevailing against the saints.” (Daniel 7:21b) “And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.” (Revelation 13:7)
- **He is different from the other horns**: “The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from his kingdom and **another shall arise after them, and he will be different from the first ones.**” (Daniel 7:24a) “...the beast coming up out of the sea having ten horns...” (Revelation 13:1a)
- **He will speak words against the Most High**: “He shall speak words against the Most High...” (Daniel 7:25a) “He exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
- **He shall wear down the saints of the Most High**: “...and he shall wear down the saints of the Highest One...” (Daniel 7:25b) “And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.” (Revelation 13:7)

- **The little horn shall attempt to change times and the law:** "...and he shall attempt to change the times and the law." (Daniel 7:25c)
- **The saints are given into his hands for three and a half years:** "Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time, and times and half a time." (Daniel 7:25d) "...and authority to act for **forty two months** was given to him." (Revelation 13:5)
- **He comes out of the kingdom of the he-goat:** "And out of one [of the four horns] came a little horn." (Daniel 8:9a) [*In the interpretation of this vision given to Daniel, he is told this kingdom is 'Javan', which today would equate to Western Turkey and not Greece as most bibles translate the word 'Javan'.*]
- **He grows exceedingly great** - towards the South, towards the East and towards the beautiful land: "...[he] grew exceedingly the south, towards the east and towards the beautiful land. [*Israel*]" (Daniel 8:9b)
- **He grows up to the host of heaven:** "It grew up to the host of heaven and he caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth and be trampled upon." (Daniel 8:10)
- **He magnifies himself to be equal the Prince of the host:** "It magnified itself up to the Prince of the host." (Daniel 8:11a) He "exalts himself... displaying himself as being God!" (2 Thessalonians 2:4b) **He stands against the Prince of princes.** (see Daniel 8:25d)
- **He removes the regular sacrifice from Him [the Prince]:** "It removed the regular sacrifice from Him..." (Daniel 8:11b) He does "away with the regular sacrifice." (Daniel 11:31)
- **Because of Him the place of the sanctuary is cast down:** "...and the place of the sanctuary was thrown down." (Daniel 8:11c)
- **And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn** along with the daily sacrifice [*the continual*] (see Daniel 8:12a)
- **He casts truth to the ground:** "...and it will fling truth to the ground." (Daniel 8:12b)
- **He will do what he wants and prosper:** "...and perform its will and prosper," (Daniel 8:12c) and "prosper and perform its will." Daniel 8:24c)
- **He will carry out his will for 2,300 evenings and mornings:** "How long will the vision of about the daily sacrifice [*the continual*] apply and the transgression that horrifies, so as to allow bot the holy place and the host to be trampled. And He said to me, 'For 2,300 evenings and mornings, then the holy place will be vindicated.'" (Daniel 8:13-14)
- **He will be insolent and skilled in intrigue:** "A king will arise being insolent and skilled in intrigue." (Daniel 8:23)
- **His power will be mighty, but not by his own power.** (see Daniel 8:24b)

- **He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.** (see Daniel 8:24d)
- **Because of his cunning he will cause deceit to prosper by his hand.** (see Daniel 8:25a)
- **He considers himself superior:** “He magnifies himself in his heart.” (Daniel :25b)
- **He destroys many whilst they are at ease.** (see Daniel 8:25c)
- **He will be broken, but not by human power...** (see Daniel 8:25e) He will come to an end and no one will help him. (see Daniel 11:45b) “The lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of his coming.” (2 Thessalonians 2:8) “...and from His mouth comes a sharp sword... and the beast was seized and... thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.” (see Revelation 19:15-21)
- **He is a despicable person:** (see Daniel 11:21a) “...the man of sin, the son of perdition.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- **On whom the honour of kingship has not been conferred.** (see Daniel 11:21b)
- **He comes in a time of tranquility and seize a kingdom by intrigue.** (see Daniel 11:21c)
- **Overflowing forces will be swept away before him and also the prince of the covenant.**(see Daniel 22)
- **After an alliance is made with him he will act deceitfully.** (see Daniel 11:23a)
- **He gains power with a small number of people.** (see Daniel 11:23b)
- **In a time of peace he will enter the richest parts of the realm and accomplish what his fathers nor his ancestors ever did.** (see Daniel 11:24a)
- **He distributes plunder, booty and possessions.** (see Daniel 11:24b)
- **He devises plans against strongholds, but only for a time.** (see Daniel 11:24c)
- **He will stir up his power and heart against the king of the South [Egypt?] with a large army.** (see Daniel 11:25a)
- **He then returns to his land with much plunder and [now] sets his heart against the holy covenant.** (see Daniel 11:28)
- **At the appointed time he will return to the South [Egypt] and ships from Kittim [Cyprus] will come against him so therefore he returns and becomes enraged at the holy covenant and take action, so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.** (see Daniel 11:29-30)

- **“On the wing of abomination will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction...”** (Daniel 9:27b) **Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress and do away with the regular sacrifice, [continual] and they will set up the abomination that makes desolate.** (see Daniel 11:31)
- **By smooth words he will corrupt those who act wickedly towards the covenant.** (see Daniel 11:32a)
- He will do as he pleases and **he will exalt himself above every god speaking monstrous things against the God of gods.** (see Daniel 11:36) **He will magnify himself above them all.** (see Daniel 11:37c) “There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty two months, and he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His Name and His tabernacle, that is those who dwell in heaven.” (Revelation 13:5-6)
- **He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers...** but honour a god of fortresses, a god whom his father did not know, honouring him with gold, silver and precious stones and treasures. (see Daniel 11:37-38)
- **[He shall have no regard] for the desire of women.** (see Daniel 11:37b)
- **He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god,** giving honour to those who acknowledge him, causing them to rule over many, parcelling out land for a price. (see Daniel 11:39)
- **He will be attacked by the king of the North and the King of the South.** (see Daniel 11:40a)
- **He will enter countries, overflow them and pass through them.** (see Daniel 11:40b)
- **He will enter the Beautiful Land [Israel] and many will fall, but these will be saved out of his hand; Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. [present day Jordan]** (see Daniel 11:41)
- **He will attack other countries including Egypt,** gaining control over hidden treasures of gold and silver and all the precious things of Egypt. (see Daniel 11:42 and 11:43a)
- **The Libyans and Ethiopians will follow him** but rumours from the East and North will disturb him. (see Daniel 11:43b and 11:44a)
- **With great wrath he destroys and annihilates many.** (see Daniel 11:44b)
- **He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain.** (see Daniel 11:45a)

Listed above is the amazing detail given to us of the ‘**little horn**’ in scripture and Satan himself we see will be motivating world events through this man in his great wrath!

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Temple of God

As Paul refers to the 'man of sin' taking "his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God," (2 Thessalonians 2:4) many are looking for a temple to be built in Jerusalem. But will a future temple be built in Jerusalem?

In the Greek there are two different words that are translated as 'temple'. One is the Greek word 'hieron' and is used in the gospels to describe the entire temple building with its precincts; the outer court, the holy place and the holy of holies. It is never used in a figurative way in scripture.

The second Greek word translated 'temple' in the New Testament is the word 'naos'. It is used in the bible in different ways...

- Of the inner sanctuary within the temple that only the priests could enter, the 'holy place' and the 'holy of holies'.
- It is used metaphorically by Jesus of His own body, (John 2:21)
- Paul uses it metaphorically in regard to the universal church, the whole building "being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:21-22)
- Paul also uses it as regards the local church, (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)
- As well as for the body of the individual believer. (1 Corinthians 6:19)
- It is used in the Revelation where visions of the temple are seen and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are seen in the New and Heavenly Jerusalem. (Revelation 2:21)

In Paul's letter to the church in Thessaloniki he refers to the temple as the 'naos' - the inner part of the wider temple. The temple (*naos*) mentioned by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 as the seat of the man of sin is regarded by some as a rebuilt literal temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, but this may just refer to the Temple Mount itself which is itself the holy place.

Exactly how the abomination is manifest, therefore, may be uncertain but we can be sure that it will be upon the Temple Mount, the place that remains at the very centre of controversy between Jews and Islam.

The Temple Mount

The Temple Mount is known by Muslims as the 'Haram esh-Sharaf' meaning the 'Noble Sanctuary'. By the Jews it is called 'Har HaBáyit', meaning 'Mount of the House'.

According to the rabbinical writings of the Talmud, it is the place where God gathered the dust of the ground to form Adam.

In earlier times it was called **Mount Moriah**, considered to be the place where Abraham took Isaac to sacrifice him! Abraham was told by God, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." (Genesis 22:2) Jewish tradition holds to this being the place.

Mount Moriah was also where the angel of the Lord commanded King David to go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Ornan was willing to gift this site to King David but King David insisted on buying the site for its full value. He gave Ornan 600 shekels of gold to buy what was going to become the site of the first temple. (see 1 Chronicles 21:18-26)

Recorded in scripture as being the same place where the LORD appeared to his father, David, "on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite," (2 Chronicles 3:1) in 957BC it was King Solomon who built the first temple, "the house of the LORD," on **Mount Moriah**, in Jerusalem, the same site that had been Ornan's threshing floor.

After the destruction of the first temple that Solomon had built, by the Babylonians in 586BC, the second temple was restored and rebuilt in 516BC on this same site. This was in fulfillment of "the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah", when the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, who proclaimed, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to **build Him a house** in Jerusalem, which is in Judah." (Ezra 1:1-2) This temple was later to be extensively enhanced by King Herod which was referred to by Jesus as, "My Father's house". (see John 2:16)

Towards the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, on the occasion that Jesus' disciples pointed to the temple buildings, Jesus prophesied, "Truly I say to

you, not one stone here shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.” (Matthew 24:2) And just as Jesus prophesied, Herod’s temple was destroyed in 70AD when the Romans sieged Jerusalem and caused its destruction.

Today the Temple Mount site lies within the area controlled by the State of Israel but with administration of the site remaining in the hands of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, an inalienable and charitable endowment under Islamic law, that was agreed a few days after the Six-Day War of 1967 in a meeting held to preserve the status quo between Jew and Muslim.

Until Jesus returns the Temple Mount will remain the focus of Satan’s controversy with God, and also as Jesus prophesied, Jerusalem will continue to be “trampled underfoot until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled.” (see Luke 21:24)

Will a New Temple Be Built? Let the Reader Understand.

Many consider a new temple will be built upon the Temple Mount. The modern-day organisation, the ‘Temple Institute’ in Israel, have plans for building a third temple in place of the Dome of the Rock shrine, or by its side.

An attempt by the Jews in the third century to rebuild a temple on the site, only resulted in it being utterly destroyed by two earthquakes in 363AD, leaving the site desolate and used as a rubbish dump! Can a temple be built without it being in the Lord’s ordained purpose? Would such an act being repeated be itself, an abomination and a transgression?

It was after the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 638AD that Caliph ‘Omar ibn al Khatab’, disgusted at the filth covering the site, had the site thoroughly cleaned. Then, by 691AD, the Islamic shrine called the ‘Dome of the Rock’ was built on the site of an earlier Roman temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, that in turn had been built on the site of the second temple that stood in the lifetime of Jesus’ walk upon the earth. The temple to Jupiter that the Romans built included a Roman colony on the site of Jerusalem’s ruins.

Speaking of the ‘**abomination of desolation**’, Jesus only refers to it standing in the ‘holy place’. This would suggest the site is itself holy. Would a third temple being built upon this site have a mandate from God? Or would even this act contribute to bringing about desolation once more?

According to Daniel's prophecies about the 'abomination of desolation', they are linked to sacrifices being stopped. (see Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11) Will sacrifices, therefore, have to be reinstated? It seems we can do no more than reiterate the words of Jesus, "**Let the reader understand.**" (Matthew 24:15)

The Scriptural Third Temple

Scripture does speak, however, of another temple being built on the Temple Mount but this is built after Israel is restored. We find the detail for this temple in the prophecies of Ezekiel after he speaks of the restoration of the "whole house of Israel." (see Ezekiel 39:25-29) Ezekiel goes on to describe by way of prophecy the detail on this temple, the measurements of the Inner Temple, its chambers, and the glory of the God of Israel filling this future temple. (see Ezekiel 40-43) This prophesy speaks of the altar of sacrifice and the offerings. Just as in the time of the rebuilding of the temple in Ezra's day, only those priests will be able to serve in the temple who were considered as 'clean'. (see Ezra 2:62 and Ezekiel 44:15-31)

Ezekiel speaks of the glory of the Lord coming into the "house by way of the gate that faces toward the east," (Ezekiel 43:4) declaring that "**this gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.**" (Ezekiel 44:2) This is the gate by which Jesus, her coming Prince, shall enter Jerusalem, the Eastern Gate, which is to this day bricked up! (see Ezekiel 46:2) And will be until He enters the city by the Eastern gate which leads straight onto the Temple Mount.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

The Times of Jerusalem's Desolation?

As we consider coming events it is important for us to understand the times of Jerusalem's desolations, both past and future. Luke tells of the time Jesus rode into Jerusalem on what is now known as 'Palm Sunday'. Descending from the Mount of Olives Jesus wept as He saw the city! (Luke 19:41) Jesus then declared, **"For the days shall come when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognise the time of your visitation."** (Luke 19:43-44)

In the days that followed, as Jesus was teaching in the temple, Jesus said, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that her **desolation** is at hand!" (Luke 21:20)

Not One Event But Several

However, what we see described in scripture is not one event that tells of her desolation but several, different events which we need to distinguish from each other.

In Luke's gospel Jesus describes the first desolation of Jerusalem, saying: **"Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."** (Luke 21:21-24)

We see from history that the event Luke speaks of took place in AD70, when Jerusalem was besieged by Rome, and which led to Israel being led captive into all the world with Jerusalem being trodden underfoot for the last 2000 years. Luke records Jesus then going on to speak about His second coming describing the worldwide dismay among nations that will accompany the time

before His return: **“Then there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and waves,”** (verse 25) describing events of a far bigger affect than those of AD70 with **“men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things that are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heaven will be shaken!”** (Luke 21:26)

Jesus then told His disciples a parable, **“Behold the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they put forth leaves you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near. Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near.”** (Luke 21: 29-30)

In scripture the fig tree is representative of Israel and the trees represent all the other nations. The focus of this parable is Israel, and Jesus adds, “Truly I say to you, this people [*Gk. genea meaning ‘race’*] will not pass away until all things take place.” (Luke 21:32) [*‘Genea’ is sometimes translated as ‘generation’ but is better translated as ‘race.’*] Jesus was emphasising that Israel would remain as a nation until His return and would not cease to be a nation before God. A reality that has been fulfilled despite their diaspora throughout the nations.

In his gospel, Matthew also tells of Jesus foretelling of events that are to come at the end of the age, but unlike Luke’s gospel Matthew does not describe the events that occurred in AD70, the desolation that resulted in the Jews being taken captive into all the world, but only tells of events that were to come at the **end of the age** and which speak of the “abomination of desolation” which Luke’s gospel account does not mention. Luke only speaks of Jerusalem’s “desolation” that followed Rome’s siege of Jerusalem in AD70 led by Titus, whereas Matthew speaks of a yet future event.

Jerusalem’s Second Time of Desolation

Whilst Luke tells of Jerusalem’s first time of desolation, Matthew’s gospel speaks only of her coming desolation at the end of the age, with Matthew’s gospel recording the disciples asking the Lord, “What will be the sign of Your coming and of the **end of the age?**” (Matthew 24:3) Matthew tells of Jesus’ answer to these questions going on to speak of “hearing of wars and rumours of wars” of “nation *rising* against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places famines and earthquakes.” (verses 6&7) Jesus speaks of these things as being “merely the beginning of birth pangs” that precede the end of

the age. (verse 8) Jesus then goes on to describe times of tribulation, His disciples being killed and hated by all nations on account of *His* name, with a falling away and a betrayal and hating of one another with many false prophets arising to mislead many, causing the love of many to grow cold. (see verse 9-12) Jesus adds, **“But the one who endures to the end, it is he who will be saved,”** (Matthew 24:13) going on to declare, **“This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a witness and THEN the end [of the age, not the world] will come.”** (Matthew 24:14)

The Abomination of Desolation

Placing these things as yet future Jesus said, “Therefore, when you see the **abomination of desolation** which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place, **THEN** let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains,” (verse 16) a need to flee just as Luke records, but not speaking of AD70 when the Jews were “led captive into all nations,” but speaking of the future **abomination of desolation** which triggers **“great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall.”** (Matthew 24:21)

Unlike Luke’s account of events that we know took place in AD70, in Matthew’s gospel Jesus speaks of this dispersion being in a time when “for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short,” (verse 22) with some saying, “Here is the Christ” or “There He is”, with false Christs and false prophets showing great signs and wonders “so as, if possible, even the elect,” (verse 24) concluding with the **“coming of the Son of Man”** “just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west.” (verse 27) Matthew’s gospel is clearly describing a different time and event to Luke, culminating with Christ’s return.

Matthew’s account tells of “the tribulation of those days” **IMMEDIATELY** ushering in the return of Jesus with His angels “who gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.” (see Matthew 24:29-30)

In comparing these two gospel accounts we see both **a past and a future desolation of Jerusalem**, the first leaving no stone upon another, but a **second** that the prophet Zechariah also speaks of which describing only a **partial** exile taking place with Jerusalem still partially occupied.

Coming Attack upon Israel and Israel's Second Exile

Zechariah speaks of this coming day when God, “will gather **all the nations** [*not just Rome as in AD70*] against Jerusalem. This does not describe the events speaking of Israel's exile that took place nearly 2000 years ago, but Zechariah prophesies, **“Thus declares the LORD... Behold I am going to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling to all the peoples around”, a prophecy that speaks of a “siege... against Jerusalem” and “against Judah”,** God saying, **“I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples,”** and **“all who lift it will be injured, and all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.”** (Zechariah 12:1-3)

This future invasion is not to be confused with a yet more distant and different invasion of Israel prophesied by Ezekiel which culminates in Israel's restoration. (see Ezekiel 38&39) This prophesied invasion we will consider later.

Zechariah is describing a future but **partial** exile, God Himself declaring, “I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, **and half the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.**” (Zechariah 14:2) We see that on this future occasion Jerusalem will continue to be inhabited.

Jacob's Trouble

When the ‘abomination of desolate’ is set up and those in Judea need to flee again just they did in AD70, Jeremiah prophesies, “Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it.” (Jeremiah 30:7) Such is the horror of this coming time it is described by Jesus as “great tribulation such as has never occurred before.” (Matthew 24:21) It is a time that for Israel will last seven years, being the ‘seventieth week’ that Daniel was given to understand. (see Daniel 9:24-27) [*We will discuss this further in a future chapter.*]

As we have seen, Jesus says of this time that many will be looking for Christ's return, and “false Christ's and false prophets will arise showing great signs and wonders to mislead, if possible, even the elect,” (Matthew 24:24) for Jesus has not yet returned and the church is clearly still on earth at this time.

Luke does write of the time that immediately precedes the return of Jesus but in a separate place in his gospel to the one where Jerusalem's desolations are described, saying, "Like the lightning that flashes from one part of the sky" which "shines to the other part of the sky", when those who are looking for His coming will say, "Look there! Look here!" (see Luke 17:22-24) causing many to "long to see... the coming of the Son of Man."

Daniel, who speaks of the abomination of desolation, was also told of wars that take place before the abomination of desolation is set up, wars that effect the nations that surround Israel (see Daniel 11:21-31), wars which now appear to be imminent and reflected in conflicts beginning to take place amongst the Islamic nations that surround Israel.

Israel remains the focus of all these wars which in due course will lead to the 'man of sin' becoming enraged by **God's covenant** with His people, "the holy covenant". Daniel prophesies, "He will... become enraged at the **holy covenant** and take action... and show regard for those who forsake the **holy covenant**." (see Daniel 11:30)

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CHAPTER NINE

War in Heaven

As we consider events past and future it is important to recognise that these reflect what is happening in the spiritual realm, in the heavenlies. The end of the age is a time of great distress that begins with a war that first takes place in the heavens: “Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels *waging* war; and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven,” the great dragon being “the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan.” (Revelation 12:7 and 9)

As we consider the events which are to be played out upon earth we see that behind these events are spiritual forces that impact on this time of great tribulation, tribulation caused by Satan knowing that his time is short: “**Woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has come down to you having great wrath knowing that he only has a short time!**” (Revelation 12:12)

Satan Personified In The Fourth Beast

We have already considered the rise of a fourth beast that has ten horns and seven heads that Daniel saw, (see Daniel 7:7) which we see being described in the book of Revelation as a “**great red dragon** having seven heads and ten horns,” (Revelation 12:3) Satan himself being personified in the fourth beast that Daniel speaks of.

We see that it is as a result of war in heaven that causes Satan to be thrown down to the earth itself, along with his angels! The effects of this war in the heavenlies is thus played out in the events on the earth at the very end of the age in the most dramatic way.

Satan we know was cast out of the highest heaven, the third heaven, when he rebelled in the beginning, (see Isaiah 14:12) and from there he took up his place as the prince of the power of the air, in the first heaven. (see Ephesians 2:2) It is after a war in the first heaven above the earth Satan is now cast down to the very earth itself!

So it is that **the fourth beast with ten horns is seen personified by Satan himself** in the vision John saw of Satan standing against **a woman about to**

give birth, “a woman clothed with the sun, and moon under her feet, and on her head twelve stars.” (Revelation 12:1)

This symbolism of a woman that represents Israel can be understood through the dream that Joseph had, in which he described “the sun and moon and eleven stars... bowing down to me,” that foretold of Joseph’s destiny in Egypt and the subjection to himself of his father, Jacob, and his sons who were to become the tribes of Israel. (see Genesis 37:9) In the Revelation we see that the ‘son’ this ‘woman’ would give birth to, will “rule the earth with a rod of iron”, a ‘son’ “caught up to God and His throne,” (Revelation 12:5) which clearly speaks of Jesus Himself. In this figurative language the ‘woman’ is seen as being Israel and the ‘son’ she gives birth to as being the Lord Jesus Christ, who will indeed “rule the earth with a rod of iron” when He returns to the earth as her King. (see Revelation 19:15)

The ‘woman’ - Israel - we see, flees “into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God, so there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days” - for three and a half years, (Revelation 12:6) speaking of the first half of Daniel’s 70th week.

The Order of Events of Daniel’s 70th Week

This prophecy from the book of Revelation points to the time of the great tribulation during which Israel will be protected “from the presence of the serpent”. The vision figuratively describes that during this three and a half year period, the ‘serpent’ is seen pouring “water out of his mouth like a river, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood” - trying to destroy her. But the earth helps the woman by “drinking up the water that the dragon poured out of his mouth.” (Revelation 12:15-16) Then, “enraged with the woman,” the dragon goes off to “**make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus**” - the church. (Revelation 12:17)

This first three and a half year period of Daniel’s seventieth week sees Satan opposing Israel and then making war with the saints, the end-time church, with Israel being protected from being totally destroyed.

It is in this time of great tribulation when the “good news of the Kingdom of God shall be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end [*of the age*] shall come.” (Matthew 24:14)

The time of the 'great tribulation' is when the end-time church "lead the many to righteousness," having "insight", and so giving "understanding to many," as Daniel prophesies. (see Daniel 13:3 and Daniel 12:33)

After the distress of those days and before God pours out His wrath, Daniel was told, "Everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued, and many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake to everlasting life." (Daniel 13:1-2) This is the first resurrection - the resurrection of the righteous - and catching away of the saints, which is often referred to as the 'rapture' from the Latin to 'catch away'.

Satan Having Great Wrath

Understanding the correct order of the 'seventieth week' is important. The **great tribulation** of those days is caused by the devil, "having great wrath, knowing that he only has a short time." It is the first half of the 'seventieth week'. The 'great tribulation' is not the 'wrath of God' that is yet to follow. Many bible teachers do not make this distinction between the 'great tribulation' and the 'wrath of God', referring to the last seven years of Daniel's 70th week in its entirety as being 'seven years of tribulation' yet these separate periods of 'great tribulation' and 'God's wrath' are never referred to interchangeably in scripture.

Israel, we see, will be protected from Satan as he tries to destroy Israel and wipe them off the face of the earth whilst the church will "overcome Satan because of **the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony**" and because "**they do not love their lives even unto death.**" (Revelation 12:11) This is the churches finest hour for "**the salvation, and the power, and the Kingdom of *their* God, and the authority of His Christ *has come,*" when the accuser of the brethren has been thrown down to the earth. (Revelation 12:10)**

The Return of Jesus - First In The Clouds

"Immediately after tribulation of those days" (Matthew 24:29) - the great tribulation, the return of Jesus is first a coming in the clouds with His angels. Jesus will first return in the clouds with His angels to catch away His saints made up of the dead in Christ at the resurrection of the righteous, and the catching away of those who are still alive at His coming: "**For the Lord**

himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

As those who are Christ’s are caught up to heaven to be with the Lord, God will pour His wrath upon those who remain upon the earth at His appearing in the sky when **“all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,”** (Matthew 24:30) saying, **“hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! because the great day of Their wrath has come! And who is able to stand?”** (Revelation 6:16)

The time of God’s wrath is about to begin which sees natural Israel remain upon the earth as God pours out His anger in judgment upon all nations, but not before a remnant of those of the twelve tribes of Israel are sealed and thus protected. (see Revelation 7:4-8)

So this first half of Daniel’s 70th week concludes with the first resurrection, the resurrection of the righteous, “when many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life,” (Daniel 12:2a) when those of the church who are alive and remain at the coming of Christ in the air are caught up to be with the them in the air. (see 1 Thessalonians 4:17)

The second half of Daniel’s 70th week is about to begin.

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CHAPTER TEN

What scripture tells us is that Jesus first comes in the sky with His angels to catch away His elect before coming with His saints to the earth three and a half years later after the wrath of God is poured out on those who remain upon the earth. **The time when God will pour out His wrath in anger and judgment is the last three and a half years of Daniel's 'seventieth week'** after which Jesus will return to reign upon the earth itself, as Israel's long awaited King, returning to restore Israel and gather them from all the nations to Himself.

The Wrath of God

Paul made it clear, the church is not destined for wrath (see 1 Thessalonians 5:9) but as Jesus taught, the church will be on earth during the time of great tribulation, that precedes it. The wrath of God will come upon all those those who remain upon the earth and this includes natural Israel, and all those who have not responded to the gospel of salvation.

Scripture calls the wrath of God, the 'Day of the Lord'; the great day of the "wrath of the Lamb" and "who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:16-17)

The Day of the Lord

Because Israel remains upon the earth after the catching away of the saints and the resurrection of the righteous when Jesus returns in the sky, we can understand why the Old Testament prophets speak much of this 'day' - the "**Day of the Lord**" when God pours out his wrath upon the nations!

Zephaniah prophesied, "Near is the **great day of His wrath**, near and coming very quickly. Listen! **The day of the Lord!** In it the warrior cries out bitterly. **A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and battle cry** against the fortified cities and the high corner towers. And I will bring distress on men so that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord, and their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung! Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on **the day of the Lord's wrath**. And all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy." (Zephaniah 14-18)

Though the wrath of God will be poured out on all nations there will be those who escape through this time, and not be killed, and a remnant of natural Israel will go through this time for Jesus is yet to return as their King: “**For the day of the Lord** draws near on all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you! Your dealings will return on your own head... but **on Mount Zion there will be those who escape** and the house of Jacob will possess their possessions.” (Obadiah 15-17)

As you have done, it will be done to you.

For those left upon the earth after the catching away of the church Jesus spoke of this separation, of those who would come through the time of God’s judgment when He would pour out His wrath and those who would not.

Speaking of His coming in the clouds with His angels to catch away His saints, Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation 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; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to 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? 38 And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been 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; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or

a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:31-46)

This judgment of the nations is often misplaced by bible scholars who apply it to the church in this age whose sins have already been judged at the cross and whose salvation is by faith through grace and not by works. The separation of the sheep and goats applies to those **within** the nations and not whole nations as some misinterpret this scripture, and it is based on works. This judgment figuratively speaks of those who will be spared from God’s wrath to remain on the earth at Jesus coming to the earth itself as King of kings.

The Remnant of Israel Who Will Escape

Because those of natural Israel remain upon the earth at the coming of Jesus in the clouds, to ensure their safety before the wrath of God is poured out upon those who also remain on the earth, **a remnant of Israel** will be “sealed, **one hundred and forty four thousand** from every tribe of the sons of Israel,” (Revelation 7:4) twelve thousand from the tribes, of Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin. They are described as “bond-servants of God.” (see Revelation 7:3-14) God knows who this remnant is. Whether it is a literal number who are sealed we do not know, but it is the perfect and righteous choice of God. [*This is a separate and distinct 144,000 to those found in Revelation 14:1-5*]

Coming upon the earth is the wrath and anger of God. “Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?” As “His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him.” (Nahum 1:6)

“For the LORD’S indignation is against all the nations, and His wrath against all their armies”, prophesies Isaiah, saying, “He has utterly destroyed them. He has given them over to slaughter.” (Isaiah 34:2)

God’s judgments are described by seven trumpet judgments and seven bowls of wrath, each judgment being described twice. In just one of God’s judgments, described in the Revelation as bowls of wrath being poured out upon the earth and trumpet judgments of the great and terrible day of the

Lord, just one of these trumpet judgments of God causes a third of mankind to be killed! Yet even so, no one was found to repent of their evil deeds during this time of wrath. (see Revelation 9:18 and 21)

Jerusalem, Oh Jerusalem

In the time of the 'wrath of God' Jerusalem still remains the focus of world events. The book of Revelation tells us that for forty two months the "holy city" will be trodden underfoot whilst "two witnesses" will prophesy within. Clothed in sackcloth these two witnesses have authority to "shut up the sky in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying." (see Revelation 11:2-6)

[Are these two witnesses, witness to the history of Israel, Enoch and Elijah, who have both never died, but been taken? - see Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11:5 and 2 Kings 2]

Only when they have finished prophesying will the beast be able to make war on them and kill them: "And their dead bodies will lie in the street of **the great city... where also their Lord was crucified.**" (Revelation 11:7-8) Because the words these two prophets speak forth torment those who dwell on the earth there will be great rejoicing and making merry, and the sending of gifts to one another. Their merriment will not last long, however, for after three and a half days they will come back to life and be caught up to heaven! (see Revelation 11:9-11) In that hour of judgment a great earthquake will destroy a tenth of the city and seven thousand will be killed by the earthquake. (Revelation 11:13)

Jesus is yet to return to the earth itself, to the Mount of Olives (see Zechariah 14:4) that overlooks Jerusalem and the Temple Mount but unlike when Jesus returned in the clouds with His angels He is yet to return with His saints - His church.

The Battle of Armageddon

Despite experiencing the wrath of God those on the earth do not repent. So it is, "the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies" will assemble "to make war against Him! [*Jesus*]" (Revelation 19:19) This last act of rebellion will see "spirits of demons performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for this war of the great day of God, the

Almighty... And they *will* **gather to the place which in Hebrew is called Armageddon.**" (Revelation 16:13-16) Satan is still stirring up rebellion against God in the hearts of men

'Armageddon' is the name of the gathering place in readiness for the battle that is often referred to as the "*Battle* of Armageddon". This gathering place lies north of Jerusalem but the battle itself is to be fought at Jerusalem, in the valley of Jehoshaphat. (see Joel 3)

The Final Battle

Ezekiel prophesied of this battle declaring that in the "latter years", after Israel will "come into the land that is restored from the sword" and been "gathered from **many** nations to the mountains of Israel that had been a continual waste." (Ezekiel 38:8)

This last battle sees the seventh trumpet judgment of the wrath of God, a battle that culminates with Jesus returning to deal with Satan, the beast and the false prophet.

What is described by Ezekiel is an attack after the partial restoration of Israel had first taken place, having been gathered from many nations, but not all. Just as Daniel was told, "**to the end wars are determined,**" (see Daniel 9:26) so this is the final battle taking place in the very land of Israel itself. (see Ezekiel 38&39)

Israel To Be Attacked One Last Time

Through Ezekiel God says "in the last days" **after** they have been restored from many nations, that a "mighty army" will come up against "My people Israel like a cloud" from the "remote parts of the north", and "many peoples with *them*." (see Ezekiel 38:15-16)

This invasion concludes with God Himself destroying the invading forces in His wrath with a "great earthquake", and in His judgment, hailstones, fire and brimstone being rained down upon the invading forces. (see Ezekiel 38:19&22)

This war, we see, is also described in the Revelation communicated to John on the Isle of Patmos, as the 'seventh bowl of wrath'. The earthquake is there described as being so great "**such as there had not been since man came**

to be upon the earth” and the hailstones so huge they weigh **“about one hundred pounds each!”** (see Revelation 16:17-21)

God’s Sacrifice Upon The Mountains Of Israel

Scripture describes God’s intervention as a “great sacrifice” upon the mountains of Israel, the area known to us as the ‘West Bank’, which we see is the culmination of God’s great anger and wrath.

Ezekiel prophesies, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field, “Assemble and come, gather from every side to **My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you**, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, as though they were rams, lambs, goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. So you will eat fat until you are glutted, and drink blood until you are drunk, from **My sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you**. You will be glutted at My table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all the men of war,” declares the Lord God.” (Ezekiel 39:17-20)

God describes the reason for this awesome judgment saying, “And I will set My glory among the nations; and all the nations will see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them. And **the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God from that day onward**. The nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me, and I hid My face from them; so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I dealt with them, and I hid My face from them.”” (Ezekiel 39:21-24)

This sacrifice is also described in the Revelation, the day when Jesus returns to the earth with His Bride, His coming to **“tread the wine press of the fierce wrath of God.”** (see Revelation 19:7-16)

The Great Supper of God

John says, “And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, ‘Come, gather together for **the great supper of God**, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of

horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small.” (Revelation 19:17-18)

As we compare these two prophetic scriptures we see they are describing the same awesome judgment.

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

John describes that he saw, **“the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.”**

Still in rebellion, this final war, often referred to as the ‘battle of Armageddon’ is the final of the three ‘woe’s’ of the wrath of God and the Lamb that the Revelation speaks of. As Jesus Christ returns to the earth as her Lord and King the beast is **“captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.”** And the rest of those gathered to make war with Christ **“were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”** (see Revelation 19:19-21)

The Restoration of Israel

This invasion of Israel concludes with the full restoration of the **“whole house of Israel”**, and them THEN being gathered from **“all the lands of their enemies”** to “their own land”, leaving **“none of them there any longer,”** (see Ezekiel 38&39)

In the letter of Jude, the brother of both James and Jesus, he speaks of this coming of the Lord in judgment with His saints, quoting from the Book of Enoch: “About these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied saying, **‘Behold the Lord comes with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly manner, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’**” (Jude 14-15 *seemingly quoting from the Book of Enoch, Chapter 1:9*)

Zechariah also prophesies, the Lord has “come and all the saints (holy ones) with Him.” (verse 5) describing this day as a “unique **day** which is known to the LORD.” (verse 6)

The coming of Jesus to the earth in judgment sees the whole world system, likened to ‘Babylon the Great’, built upon the deception that manifest when the tower of Babel was built, which was “**remembered before God, to give her the cup of wine of His fierce wrath.**” (Revelation 16:19b) This is the culmination of the God’s wrath - His final judgment. Jesus has returned not only as King of all Israel but King over all the earth, coming as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” (Revelation 19:17)

Ezekiel prophesies that now **the full and final restoration of the “whole house of Israel,”** will be seen, God bringing all of Israel back to “their own land” and **leaving none of them any longer among the peoples.** (see Ezekiel 39:25-29)

His Feet Will Stand on the Mount of Olives

As Jesus returns to the earth, His feet standing “on the Mount of Olives which is in front of Jerusalem on the east,” the “Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley so that half the mountain will move toward the north and the other half to the south.” (Zechariah 14:4)

The Cleansing of the Land

The aftermath of this final battle that Ezekiel prophesies will require the land to be cleansed following the “great supper of God.”

“Then those who inhabit the cities of Israel will go out and make fires with the weapons and burn *them*, both shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, war clubs and spears, and for seven years they will make fires of

them. They will not take wood from the field or gather firewood from the forests, for they will make fires with the weapons; and they will take the spoil of those who despoiled them and seize the plunder of those who plundered them,' declares the Lord God." (Ezekiel 39:9-10)

Ezekiel prophesies in detail of this required cleansing of the land, saying, "On that day I will give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will block off those who would pass by. So they will bury Gog there with all his horde, and they will call it the valley of Hamon-gog. For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. Even all the people of the land will bury them; and it will be to their renown on the day that I glorify Myself,' declares the Lord God. 'They will set apart men who will constantly pass through the land, burying those who were passing through, even those left on the surface of the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. As those who pass through the land pass through and anyone sees a man's bone, then he will set up a marker by it until the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. And even the name of the city will be Hamonah. So they will cleanse the land.'" (Ezekiel 39:11-16)

From this prophecy we see that a period of time is being described. This is not just an instant event, for after the 'great supper of God' the land will need to be cleansed and those of Israel who are still found in the nations need to be gathered.

The Ingathering

"Thus says the Lord God, 'Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name. They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their *own* land with no one to make *them* afraid. When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them *again* to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,' declares the Lord God."

Those who had fled into the wilderness after the abomination that causes desolation had been set up, will also be gathered from the wilderness. Where exactly this 'wilderness' is to be found we might only speculate but scripture suggests they will return from the land of Midian where Mount Sinai is located.

Moses spoke a blessing over Israel: "Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death, and he said, **The Lord came from Sinai and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints** (holy ones)." (Deuteronomy 33:1&2)

Described in Moses' blessing is the bringing of Israel from Mount Sinai to the Promised land as in Moses day, but will part of Israel now be found hiding in the wilderness on Jesus' return.

Habakkuk takes up this theme in his prayer; "Lord, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy. **God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran.** Selah. His splendour covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise. His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand, And there is the hiding of His power. Before Him goes pestilence, And plague comes after Him. He stood and surveyed the earth. He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered, The ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan under distress, The tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling. Did the Lord rage against the rivers, Or was Your anger against the rivers, Or was Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, On Your chariots of salvation? Your bow was made bare, The rods of chastisement were sworn. Selah. You cleaved the earth with rivers. The mountains saw You and quaked; The downpour of waters swept by. The deep uttered forth its voice, It lifted high its hands. Sun and moon stood in their places; They went away at the light of Your arrows, At the radiance of Your gleaming spear. In indignation You marched through the earth; In anger You trampled the nations. You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For the salvation of Your anointed. You struck the head of the house of the evil To lay him open from thigh to neck. Selah. You pierced with his own spears the head of his throngs. They stormed in to scatter us; Their exultation was like those who devour the oppressed in secret. You trampled on the sea with Your horses, on the surge of many waters. I heard and my inward

parts trembled, at the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, and in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, For the people to arise who will invade us. Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places. (Habakkuk 3)

The Redeemed of the Lord Shall Return

The word of the LORD, spoken through Isaiah the prophet, speaks of Israel's victorious return to Zion itself, whilst reminding them from where they have been restored: "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him.' For the Lord will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody. 'Listen to Me, My people; and give ear to Me, O My nation: for law will proceed from Me, and I will make My justice rest as a light of the peoples. My righteousness is near. My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands will wait upon Me, and on My arm they will trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath. for the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner, but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished. Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law: Do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their insults, for the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool, but My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation.' Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Are You not the arm that cut Rahab apart, and wounded the serpent? Are You not the One who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; That made the depths of the sea a road for the redeemed to cross over? **So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.** 'I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die,

and of the son of a man who will be made like grass? And you forget the Lord your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; You have feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, when he has prepared to destroy. And where is the fury of the oppressor? The captive exile hastens, that he may be loosed, that he should not die in the pit, and that his bread should not fail. But I am the Lord your God, who divided the sea whose waves roared. The Lord of hosts is His name and I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, that I may plant the heavens, lay the foundations of the earth, and say to Zion, **“You are My people.”** “Awake, awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, and drained it out. There is no one to guide her among all the sons she has brought forth; Nor is there any who takes her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up. These two things have come to you; Who will be sorry for you? Desolation and destruction, famine and sword? By whom will I comfort you? Your sons have fainted. They lie at the head of all the streets, like an antelope in a net; They are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of your God. Therefore please hear this, you afflicted, and drunk but not with wine. Thus says your Lord, the Lord and your God, who pleads the cause of His people: ‘See, I have taken out of your hand the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of My fury; You shall no longer drink it but I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you, who have said to you, “Lie down, that we may walk over you.” And you have laid your body like the ground, and as the street, for those who walk over.’” (Isaiah 51)

Jesus’ Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem

The Eastern Gate that leads straight onto the Temple Mount, has been sealed for centuries in fulfilment of the word; “This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the Prince; the Prince, He shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; He shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.” (Ezekiel 44:2-3) We now see that Jesus will enter the city with great rejoicing. **“The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”**

Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord

Just as Jesus' first entry into the city of Jerusalem, in the days of His earthly ministry, when He came riding on a donkey, descending from the Mount of Olives, the crowds crying out, "**Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the LORD; Hosanna in the highest,**" (Matthew 21:9) Jesus now descends again from the Mount of Olives, but this time riding on a white horse. And just as Jesus prophesied they will again say, "**Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.**" (see Matthew 23:39)

Ezekiel was given a vision of this amazing event, just as he had seen the temple's destruction following the abominations that had been committed there, this time he sees "**the glory of the Lord coming into the house by the way of the gate facing towards the east.**" (Ezekiel 43:3&4)

Ezekiel was told of the Temple Mount, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever." (Ezekiel 40:7a)

"They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more. **Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry.** I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow." (Jeremiah 31:11-12)

Jerusalem Will Be Lifted Up

The huge earthquake that accompanies Jesus' return to the earth itself, sees the Mount of Olives "split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley so that half the mountain will move to the north, and the other half to the south." (Zechariah 14:4) The land "will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the King's wine presses." (Zechariah 14:10)

Just as Isaiah had prophesied, "**In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills,**" and "all nations will stream to it." (Isaiah 2:2)

Water Flowing From The Temple

“It will come about,” Zechariah prophesies, “That living water will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea” - *the Dead Sea* - “and the other half toward the western sea,” - *the Mediterranean Sea*. (Zechariah 14:8)

Ezekiel describes this scene; “I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side. As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. He asked me, ‘Son of man, do you see this?’ Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, ‘This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.’” (Ezekiel 47:1-12)

The Future Temple

In “visions of God” Ezekiel was shown the Temple of the Lord that will be in Jerusalem in that day: “Son of man, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and give attention to all that I am going to show you; for you have been brought here in order to show it to you. Declare to the house of Israel all that you see.” (Ezekiel 40:4)

The Temple was described to Ezekiel with great detail (see Ezekiel 40:5 - 42:20) and then Ezekiel was shown the glory of the Lord filling the Temple: **“And the glory of the Lord came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple.”** (Ezekiel 43:4-5)

Ezekiel describes the altar and offerings that will be required in that day, (see Ezekiel 43:13-27) when **“The Lord will be King over all the earth,”** (Zechariah 14:9a) and “it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. In that day **“HOLINESS TO THE LORD”** shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.” (Zechariah 14:16-21)

The Division of the Land

With Jerusalem raised up as the chief of mountains, and the land made into a plain, it will be “for a possession in Israel” with allotments for each of the tribes of Israel and an allotment “set apart to the LORD” of “25,000 cubits in length and 10,000 in width.” (Ezekiel 47:9 and Ezekiel 47:13 - 48:29) **“The city from that day shall be “Jehovah Shammah” - “The LORD is there.”** (Ezekiel 48:35)

Jerusalem, the Chief of Mountains

Now it is to Jerusalem that all the nations will come. **“All the nations will stream to it. And 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; That He may**

teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.' For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war." (Isaiah 2:2-4)

Isaiah was shown, **"The Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.** Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried unto another, and said, **'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.'**" (Isaiah 6:1-3)

The time prophesied by Isaiah had come, "To gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and see My glory. I will set a sign among them and will send survivors from them to the nations: Tarshish, Put, Lud, Meshech, Tubal and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have neither heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the nations. Then they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a grain offering to the Lord, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,' says the Lord, 'just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord. I will also take some of them for priests and for Levites,' says the Lord. 'For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me,' declares the Lord, 'So your offspring and your name will endure and it shall be from new moon to new moon and from sabbath to sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me,' says the Lord. 'Then they will go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind.'" (Isaiah 66:18-24)

The Millennial reign of Christ has come. Israel has been restored with Jesus now in her midst as her King, the righteous from the first resurrection reigning with Him in their immortal bodies, and the nations that remain after His judgment following His return, now learning the ways of the Lord.

Israel has been restored but this is not the conclusion of the ages, or God's plan for all mankind. The consummation of the ages is yet to come, a time also prophesied in scripture.

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Colin Winfield - 2019

