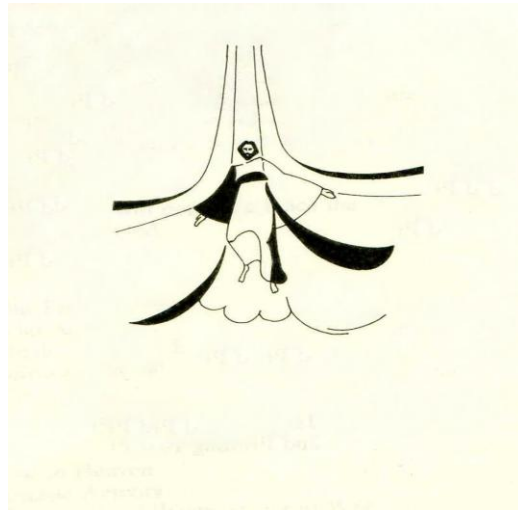


# ***Covenant of Glory***



***Roland Pletts***



# **COVENANT OF GLORY**

***Roland Pletts***

*The author worked in churches and missions in Central Africa for four decades.*

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*Front cover – Gen 15:5-18 22:15-18  
"Look toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them."  
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## Preface

This book explains the manner in which the Lord Jesus Christ will come, the conversion of the nations, and the establishment of his Kingdom in the world. This book does not set a date for this but it explains the times and seasons in which we live and the unfolding of Biblical prophecy in current events. Let me say right at the start that the Father, the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the Godhead; Jesus our Jewish Messiah Yeshua is Saviour and Head of the Church. (Acts 17:20, Romans 1:20, Col 2:9)

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:1,2; ***"of the times and the seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night"*** and verse 4 ***"But ye brethren are not of darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief"***. KJ Bible

This book is written to help understand the manner in which the Lord will come so that we are fully prepared to meet the Lord in His Glory and to enter his Shekinah Presence. This book is not about escaping the tribulation in rapture, nor about "Kingdom Now" theology, nor about religious fundamentalism or sectarian fanaticism. It does not set dates for the second coming but it does explain the times and seasons. It shows the manner of His coming and how to prepare for him.

The first followers of Jesus believed that he will return to earth. The first Christians died for this truth, the early Christian church Fathers believed it and the scriptures teach it; Jesus is coming back to earth. This book teaches the Biblical truth about Christ's return to earth, to his followers, to judge the world and to establish His Kingdom over all others. More and more believers are coming to understand this.

***"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like a Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."***

*Daniel 7:13-14*

This scripture makes it clear that Christ's Kingdom will rule over all others and will not pass away. Yet over the years the subject of his return and the nature of his kingdom has become a topic of disagreement among believers. Different views have caused division. How could this happen?

Differing views have come out of a "*Western Mindset*" which is very different from the *Hebrew* way of thinking. There is a vast difference of approach between the two. "Western thinking" is rooted in *Greek/Roman* thinking. It has impregnated Church theology so much that it has influenced the way we structure our churches, how we believe key issues, the way we practice our faith and even the way the scriptures have been translated and interpreted. It is very difficult for Christians to shake off western patterns of thought that are entrenched in our churches over many centuries. To even question them is considered by some to be sacrilegious. As a young Christian I had a "*Gentile*" mind and this was reinforced by my theological studies. As I grew older the Holy Spirit gradually replaced that mindset with a "*Hebrew*" mind. This brought different understanding.

Things in this book may be new to you. That is because this book considers scriptures in their *Hebrew/Jewish* context. The types, shadows and allegories found in scripture have to be understood from a Jewish point of reference. The roots of the Bible are Jewish. To properly interpret the Bible one has to view it through Jewish eyes. Biblical shadows, figures and prophecies have Jewish origins not western. A section of the Western church interprets scripture to mean that Jesus is returning to take the church away from a world controlled by Satan. However, early Jewish believers always considered the return of Jesus as coming back to earth to establish His Kingdom. He is not coming to rescue a defeated church but he is coming to rule and reign in a victorious church. The emphasis was always on God's Kingdom coming to earth. The need to be rescued from persecution did not arise for believers were already in the severest tribulation possible and daily laid down their lives for him. Escapism comes from Western thinking, the need to escape reality, to dodge difficulty, to have an easy life. Jesus prayed "Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is Jewish thinking. Over the years focus in church has been mostly about "going to heaven" but Bible truth is that Jesus is coming to establish his Kingdom on earth and the whole of creation will be regenerated and changed until everything is restored and heaven and earth come into perfect

harmony. The Western concept that we are here and God is somewhere far away in the universe is so strong that the reality of there being only a veil between us is not understood. Few westerners are able to grasp the deep significance of Hebrew terms such as "*clouds*" and "*Presence*". These Biblical terms portray spiritual reality and to understand them one must grasp their original meaning and then remain within that for their future fulfilment. This book looks at the return of the Lord and our "*meeting in the air*" with a Hebrew mind, not a Gentile mind. Other Biblical truths such as **Covenant**, the role of **Israel**, the nature of the *tribulation* and *millennium* have been lost by many Christians because of our Western theology. I also explain the great significance of **Daniel chapter 9**. This is vital for us to understand what will happen. I have tried to focus on Hebrew concepts so as to show how they will be fulfilled in real terms. If we get out of our "Gentile Mindset" into a Jewish Mind we will see things very differently.

This book may look complex to someone unfamiliar with scripture and possibly daunting to read. However, there are no short cuts to understanding these things, one has to make the effort and take the time to grasp their reality. Pray; pray earnestly and the Lord will open your mind and heart to things you may not have considered before. The Holy Spirit is the true Teacher. These things cannot be grasped without prayer. My aim in presenting these notes is to impart Biblical revelation about the coming of Jesus in a manner you may not have considered. There is the joyful prospect of his return and also the promise for a *great harvest* at his return. Therefore, we need to understand how he will come and what to expect when he does. May this quicken within you a great expectation and yearning for the Lord. This book is really two books. Book 1 tells about the manner of Christ's return. I share Biblical terms which explain the manner of Christ's return. It is vital to grasp the teaching in the first part so as to understand the second. Book 2 is about the Covenant of God in which I share aspects of Covenant and how Jesus "cut" the Covenant and will return to fulfil it. It deals with the correct understanding of Daniel 9. Both are important if one is to fully grasp what will happen. The title of this book comes from scriptures in 2 Corinthians in which the apostle Paul wrote of the "Covenant of Glory" and the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (3:6-18 4:1-6)

Jesus is coming in Glory but first he had to go through his sufferings then enter his glory. Lk 24:25,26 1 Pet 1:10,12.



## **BOOK 1: HOW JESUS WILL COME - INTRODUCTION**

I received Jesus as Lord in 1965 and after a period of preparation went into Christian ministry. For four decades I worked in Africa in church and mission work. I ministered in Pentecostal and "Charismatic" Churches, Independent and Indigenous Churches as well as many traditional historical Churches. I had opportunity to minister with people of almost every denomination. I have come to value the rich diversity of the Body of Christ. From early in my conversion I was especially captivated by Biblical prophecy and the Lord's return. I was invited into many churches throughout my homeland in African and abroad and did a great deal of public teaching on it along the lines I had been schooled in.

In 1974 I had a significant experience that influenced my spiritual understanding. I was a minister in a small country church and it was my custom after the day's work to go for long walks and pray as I walked. Late one night I was kneeling and praying out in a field when God allowed me to see something that was truly amazing. The Lord had shown me that my country was going to experience a cruel war and many thousands would die. I was very burdened about this and was interceding for my people. Suddenly a group of huge luminous forms radiating a clear translucent light appeared above me. They shone with an iridescent beauty that lit the darkness like glowing "supernatural clouds". They were huge in size but totally unworldly in nature not being solid yet having form. They flew towards me and when they were above me sped away at great speed. I knew immediately that I had seen something from the spirit realm that reflected the glory of God. After they had left and while still on my knees I asked the Lord what I had seen. The words that came to my mind were; "I have shown you angels flying swiftly on a mission in this land". I recalled that I had read something like these words in the book of Daniel chapter nine. I began to earnestly search the scriptures concerning the return of the Lord Jesus coming in "the clouds". As I did I discovered things I had not read in any books and gained new insight into the Bible. For many years I continued to study Biblical prophecy. The Lord showed me key scriptures such as Daniel 9 and others but I had difficulty understanding the actual manner of the Lord's return so I stopped further ministry on it but in my heart I earnestly sought revelation.

Then in 1994 the Lord opened my spirit to receive understanding as to

how he will return and establish his Kingdom on earth. It did not come from my own knowledge but from his Spirit. It is not how I was taught he will come, I never read it in any book or ever heard it - it came from the Lord - and I know he has shown others the same insight he showed me. It happened during a gathering in which the Presence of the Lord was very powerful and the Holy Spirit very evident with much blessing. When I asked the Lord why he was pouring out His Spirit in such a powerful and dramatic manner I received a quiet reply in my spirit; *"I want my people to be ready for me when I return"*. Then suddenly my spirit opened and I saw the Lord standing in the midst of us. He wore a long cream robe with a wide sash around his waist. Next, quite unexpectedly I instantly received understanding of how He will come. I knew the moment I received it that it came from Him and as I tried to fully comprehend it there was a Prophetic Word spoken directly to me by the visiting speaker. A couple of months before this I nearly died in very unusual circumstances. He knew nothing about any of this and no one else knew either. This man of God came right to me and gave a detailed account of this event. Then he gave an instruction from the LORD that He was now giving me a new beginning and new understanding and wanted me to carefully consider the revelation I had received. Over many months I searched scripture and concluded that what the Lord showed me is more Biblical than anything else I had ever considered. I shared it with mature men and women with whom I was linked. All approved it. After this I attended a seminar of leaders and a man who knew nothing of this walked directly up to me and gave me another instruction from the LORD that I must share the message he had given me. There were more exhortations from the Holy Spirit and I shared it widely. In 2000 I had a time of upheaval in my life and I stopped. Then in 2010, after a great spiritual conflict, the Lord again told me to continue to share it. All teaching must be supported by scripture and flow with Biblical truth. The inerrancy of the Bible is our foundation. I have found in sharing this that many people have received it and have had confirmation as they sought the Lord. I believe this teaching was given by the Lord, was immediately confirmed by a direct word from him, is established in scripture, was tested by mature believers and I was commissioned by Him to share it. I do so in simple obedience. So before going further I ask you the reader to right now pray and ask the Lord to open your heart. To understand what He may say you will need to put away some aspects of "Western Theology" and get into concepts of "Hebrew Theology".

## **THE UNVEILING OF JESUS**

***"When Jesus returns to earth he will come in exactly the same manner He left. He will simply step out of the invisible realm and appear to believers. They may be in their homes, or in prayer, or worshipping together. He will come to each individual believer or group of believers who love him and are looking for him. He will appear in the same way he did after his resurrection and will be real and visible and will meet with His people in the same way he did during the forty days of His resurrection. When he comes he will change and empower his people and through them will establish His Kingdom in the world."***

He will reveal himself to believers and release his power and glory into them. They will rise and declare Him in all nations with great power and mighty miracles. His power and glory will fill the whole earth.

For forty days after his resurrection Jesus lived on earth with his people, he taught them, instructed them, ate with them and did many other marvellous things. He was real and could be seen and touched. Satan could not attack him, neither could his enemies. He could appear instantaneously wherever he wished with no restrictions: in a garden, in private homes, by the seaside, on the road. Meeting with them he simply appeared "out of the air". He appeared to individuals, and groups, and then a crowd of 500 saw him. Multitudes of deceased saints also arose and appeared to people! But only believers saw Christ, there is no record of any unbelievers seeing him. His Presence in resurrection transformed the disciples and His Holy Spirit gave them power to witness the gospel to all nations.

This was a *preview* or foretaste of what will happen when he returns. When he went away he promised to come back and establish his Kingdom. The angels said he would return in LIKE MANNER. As I will show, this referred not only to the way in which he departed but to the manner in which he had been with them for the forty days. The SAME Jesus will return in the SAME way. (Acts 1:11 NIV Bible) We are told quite clearly that the state in which he was taken into heaven will be exactly the same as that in which he returns to earth. In other words the same Jesus who was crucified and then rose in resurrection and walked with them for forty days will

appear as he was then. Just as he came to believers at that time so he will return to his people wherever they are. Believers will see the Lord for he will be visible and will reveal himself wherever he wishes, whether to individuals, small groups or large congregations. Nowhere in the entire world will be out of his reach although not everyone will be able to enter his presence, only believers. Those who love him will see him. He will return and appear to all who are looking for him. If he is your Lord and if you are alive on earth at this time you too will see him. One day as you are going about your daily tasks he will suddenly appear in your presence. It could be at any time.

When the King returns he will come in the power of his Kingdom, which will grow and fill the whole world. By his PRESENCE he will empower his people and through them rule the nations. His people will be set free from carnality that works death, into glory. The Kingdom of God will then come with resurrection power into all the earth. The Presence of the King in his people will assure victory. There will be no mistaking the risen Lord when he reveals himself - he will appear in risen glory to his people and will be real and visible. He will reveal his Glory to his people. Through his people he will reveal himself to the world. His people will display his glory having been changed and empowered.

The unveiling of the risen Lord is the next step in God's unfolding plan. The Presence of Christ will bind Satan and leave him powerless to deceive the world. Over the last two thousand years the gospel has gone into all nations. Through faith in Jesus Christ salvation has been made available to all the families of mankind and there are now devout believers in every nation. They form the Body of Christ, his Temple. It may seem in places small and insignificant but it is the bridgehead to which Jesus will return. The Lord has established a world wide net that covers all nations.

The gospel of the Kingdom will be preached for a witness to all nations and then he will return. At his coming his people will be represented in all nations throughout the world. Believers are citizens of his Kingdom and it is to them that Jesus will come. When he returns he will be with his people not just in his Spirit but in Real Visible Presence. It is that simple, He will step through the veil. When he does he will release his power into his people. True believers are the base through which he will work in the next great event in God's plan - to take the world for Jesus. He will himself return to

direct it. Believers proclaim the gospel but only the King can establish the Kingdom. His people will establish his Kingdom but not without Him as King. When the King comes his church will be transformed and empowered. The return of the King will break the powers of evil, demolish the rulers of darkness, destroy the wicked and blow the systems of the world wide open. First the chaff will be destroyed. Then, *in his Presence*, there will be the greatest harvest ever seen! Millions will turn to him and the world will witness the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. The age of miracles and resurrection power will fully come. This is what the prophets of old saw when they described the Glory of God filling the whole earth.

### **HE HAS ALREADY COME IN THIS WAY**

Before anyone says this is not possible let me say that since his resurrection and ascension Jesus has appeared to people in this way. Not only that but this is how angels come, they just step out of the Spirit realm into our presence. Let us look at some of the appearances of Jesus.

1/ Jesus appeared to the apostle Paul. (Acts 9:3-5, 1 Cor 15:8) This appearance happened in the very near vicinity of Paul. The people with him heard the Lord's voice and saw the evidence of the Lord's presence but did not see the Lord. Paul saw the Lord and it totally changed him.

2/ Jesus appeared to the apostle John. (Rev 1:10-18) This was so real that John fell down as if dead and needed to be touched by the Lord's hand.

3/ Jesus appeared to Stephen. (Acts 7:55,56) As he was stoned to death he saw heaven open and the Lord Jesus appeared in glory. Jesus did not appear in the upper atmosphere. Heaven "opened" before Stephen and Jesus appeared standing on the right hand of power ready to receive him. (Matt 26:64) To fully understand this one must grasp the reality of spiritual dimensions. Heaven is not necessarily far away in another part of the distant universe, heaven is in another dimension very near and superimposed upon this one. Scientists know that many dimensions exist. The spiritual dimension is not far away but very close with only a veil or "cloud" between.

4/ Jesus has appeared to believers throughout the church age and many have had visitations and seen the Lord.

When sharing this message in different places I have met people who have had visitations from the Lord. These appearances were more than visions or dreams.

One man in Swaziland told me how the Lord appeared to him. While he was driving his car he was in earnest prayer when suddenly he saw somebody sitting next to him in the front seat, yet he was alone. When he turned to look he saw it was the Lord Jesus. He was so close that his knee rested against the gear lever. The Lord spoke directly to him.

A lady I knew saw the Lord sitting on her bed. He reached out his hand to her. On another occasion she felt his beard on her cheek. Many others have felt the Lord touch them or have had similar visitations.

5/ As Christians approach the time of physical death the Lord comes to them and appears. I have read many testimonies of this and been told by family and friends how their loved ones saw Jesus as they were dying; as they approached death some saw departed loved ones who came to meet them. Some believers who have had "near death" experiences have said they met Jesus in a bright cloud. I have been with believers as they die and often there has been some kind of manifestation of His Presence.

6/ I personally knew martyrs who shortly after they were killed were taken into this cloud for it became visible. (Rev 11:12) On 25<sup>th</sup> November 1987 sixteen missionaries were hacked to death in Zimbabwe on their mission farms called New Adam and Olive Tree. I was privileged to personally know them and to have baptised one of them. They were killed because of their Christian witness in the community. Eye witness accounts described what happened that dark night. Immediately after the first group were killed a bright "cloud" lit up the front garden and the farm house. It stayed for a while and then dispelled. Shortly after this when the rest were killed at the second farm the same thing happened. A bright "cloud" settled, lit the whole area, stayed for a while and then left. This was confirmed by those who were there. What would the people have seen if they could have looked "into" the Cloud? Who was in the cloud?

7/ The Lord appeared during the great Revivals through the centuries and there are numerous accounts of people who saw him. I have been in at least

one gathering in which believers saw a bright light like a cloud right behind me for the full length of ministry.

9/ I have also read accounts of missionaries who have reached remote people and shared the Gospel with them only to be told by the people that they had already had a "visitation" from the Lord.

8/ I have heard accounts of how the Lord has appeared to people resulting in their conversion. One such account was when a large class of African children were having daily prayers. Suddenly a bright cloud appeared outside the window and next thing Jesus was standing in the class room. The children knew it was Jesus because he was carrying a Bible. It seems the Lord spoke simultaneously to each child. The teacher was unable to get the attention of the children during this time. Then the children told the teacher that Jesus was standing next to her yet she was unable to see him. As a result of this many parents believed in Jesus because of the children's witness to them. I have heard that many people in recent years have had similar appearances. Wherever I minister people stop and share with me.

We will never know how many people to whom the Lord has appeared down through the centuries. Possibly many thousands have seen him. I believe this continues to happen and will increase more and more. There is no reason why the Lord cannot appear to people especially if they have no Bibles, churches or other means of finding him.

Let me also point out that this is not new but that the Lord appeared to people in OT times. He appeared to Abraham, talked to him and ate with him. (Gen 12:1, 17:1, 18:1) The Lord also appeared to numerous other people at various times throughout the OT. These visitations were life changing.

None of these people to whom the Lord appeared were taken away but his visitation impacted and changed them in profound ways. He will continue to appear to His people especially as we approach the time of his "Parousia" or Coming. As you continue to read this book I will show that there is much in prophecy that points to a time in which the Lord will once again appear to his people; He will step through the veil and appear in His Cloud of Glory.

## **THE SCRIPTURES CONFIRM HE IS COMING IN THIS WAY**

This may be new to you but it is in fact quite Biblical. In the following notes I will show that the terms such as "coming on the clouds" and "caught up in the air" are metaphors; terms derived from Biblical figures. The Bible gives examples of what they really mean. They are to be interpreted spiritually and they illustrate Biblical reality which helps us to understand deeper aspects of the return of Jesus. I will show that his promise to return to earth will be fulfilled in an amazing manner by him simply stepping back into the visible realm and empowering his people to take the world. When he comes he will heal the rift between the natural and spiritual realms and after purging the earth will unite and harmonise the two dimensions into one perfect New Creation.

### **DEFINITION OF BIBLICAL TERMS**

#### **THE "PAROUSIA" - THE "PRESENCE" OF CHRIST**

The Greek word "**parousia**", translated as "coming", is listed in Strong's Concordance 3952 as "a being near". It conveys the meaning of not just an arrival but the subsequent "being present with" or "being alongside". In Vines Expository Dictionary it is defined as "**PRESENCE**", para, with, and ousia, being - and denotes both an arrival and a consequent **PRESENCE WITH**. Wherever the word "coming" (parousia) is found in scripture it must be understood as "presence". It is significant that it is used of a bodily as well as a spiritual presence. The word was applied to Paul in 2 Cor 10:10 to denote his personal presence with the Corinthian church and of Christ on the mount of transfiguration. (2 Pet 1:16-18) If we use this definition the scriptures reflect a better concept of what the "coming" of Jesus Christ really means. Instead of him coming to rapture his people away from the world it has the meaning of him coming to be present with and alongside his people in a period during which his PRESENCE will be felt in a new and powerful way. To say he is coming and going away again violates the very meaning of the word. He is coming and remaining, abiding alongside us. Throughout these notes when the word "**parousia**" is referred to it will be considered as Christ's "presence" and subsequent "being alongside" and remaining with his people. The word "coming" should be understood as his abiding "Presence".



The "**Presence**" is by no means only a New Testament concept but is at the heart of the Old Testament. The Lord promised Moses that "His Presence" will be with him. (Ex 33:14) It was "His Presence" dwelling with his people in the Tabernacle that was central in the OT covenant and became the all sufficiency of God to his people. The Hebrew word **Presence** is the exact same word for **Face** (Strong's 6440 paneh). When Moses entered the Cloud he saw the Lord "**Face to Face**". The Cloud held the Presence of the Lord and He was *visible*. In the New Testament this took a further development when for believers "his presence" becomes a living reality experienced by the indwelling of the Lord through his Spirit. Every individual believer becomes the Tabernacle for God. However, when Jesus returns at his "parousia" his Presence will be in his corporate body of people in a new way. It is in his Presence that we will see him "Face to Face".

In a very real way Christ's Presence has been with the church for the last 2000 years. Just because he has not been visible does not diminish his Presence. His Presence with and in His people is at times so powerful and real that it is unmistakable and overpowering. However, to fulfil the real meaning of this word there must come the time when this Presence becomes visible and tangible. The parousia is the return of the Lord Jesus to be *with* his people. It is not just an invisible manifestation of Christ when there is his spiritual "presence", or even an outpouring of his Spirit, but it is his VISIBLE appearance to his people. The apostle John made this clear when he wrote that believers should abide in him so as not to be ashamed when he "appears" at his parousia. (1 John 2:28) This word "**Appear**" is defined in Strong's Concordance 5319 (**phaneroo**); "to render apparent, to manifestly declare and show oneself". Vines Expository Dictionary says that the word means more than to appear; it is to be revealed in one's true character. It was used of Christ's appearances immediately after his resurrection, and I will show that those "appearances" are significant in understanding his return. (Mk 16:12,14, John 21:1,14). After his resurrection God granted that he was made visible to believers. (Acts 10:40,41 NAS) This was a preview of what will happen at his return when he will APPEAR to his people who will then enter his PRESENCE and see him Face to Face.

Another word used for Christ's *appearance* at his *parousia* is "**epiphaneia**" (2015) and it carries with it the idea of brightness and **splendour**. (2 Thes 2:8, Titus 2:13,14) The people of that time used to

refer to the visit of an emperor or dignitary as his "coming (parousia) in splendour", for this was how they used the word. So it has been defined as "a visible manifestation in *splendour* of a hidden deity by personal appearance and deed of power".

Yet another word used is "**apokalupsis**" (Strong's 601) which means **revealing** or **unveiling**. It assures us that a day is coming when the veil will be lifted from our eyes and we will see God's glory in Christ unveiled. (2 Thes 1:7, 1 Pet 1:13, 4:13) We will consider deeper aspects of these words later for they describe the day when Christ will be *present with* his people, *unveiled* in visible *appearance* and *splendour*.

He will then usher in the Day of his Reign as King and will rule with his people and through them subdue the whole world to the Kingdom of God. Throughout the Bible the emphasis is on the Kingdom of God ON EARTH. Through the centuries the focus has been on "going to heaven" but that does not change the promise that Christ will return to earth.

If we examine the prophecies, and especially the shadows and types of both the Old and New Testaments, we will find that there is a great weight of support for this; and that it is far more Biblical than what is often taught. We need to see the whole pattern and strategy of God as he reveals his plan through progressive events which bring his Kingdom ever closer. We need to consider the manner in which previous events took place so as to understand how future events will come to pass.

### **COMING IN THE CLOUDS - Luke 21:27**

What does it mean, "He is coming on clouds"? What would you think if I said to you "My head is in the clouds" or "I am walking on clouds"? Would you think that I am suddenly flying up in the sky? No, I am using common English idioms. So too when Jesus said he was coming "in the clouds" he was using a term that every Jew was familiar with.

When Jesus spoke to the high priest he confirmed that he would "come on the clouds of heaven in power and glory". (Matt 26:64, Dan 7:13) He taught in parables and figures of speech. He was the master of metaphor. Many

things that he taught were not openly revealed but had to be received and understood by the Spirit of God and the Biblical definition of the terms he used. When we consider his teaching about his return we must not try to understand it in a natural way, but must interpret it from a Biblical perspective. He was NOT referring to the clouds of vapour that bring the weather, but to clouds of "power and glory". In this way he gives us the clue. We therefore need to look at Biblical clouds of God's power and glory to understand what He meant.

## **THE OLD TESTAMENT CLOUD**

Throughout the Old Testament God revealed his power and glory in a CLOUD. The cloud represented the supernatural "Presence" of God with His people; in crossing the Red Sea, in the wilderness, indwelling the Tabernacle, filling the temple, and so on. The cloud was the VISIBLE PRESENCE of God dwelling with his people. The cloud was visible but could not be approached by everyone. In fact God warned the people not to come too close; but Moses approached it and even entered it. When he went into the cloud he met with God, FACE TO FACE. The cloud was the visible manifestation of the "Presence" of God and those who were able to enter the cloud saw God! The Cloud is a portal into the Lord's Presence. It is not up in the sky, it is the Cloud of His Presence when He comes to his people.

The prophet Ezekiel saw God in a cloud and described His majesty and power. When Isaiah went into the temple he saw the Lord high and lifted up and the glory of God filling the temple like smoke. This was the cloud of God's glory. The CLOUD displayed the visible PRESENCE of God, the place where God functioned, where God's Glory was revealed and where God met with his people. Please take time to read and think on these scriptures.

Ex 13:21,22, 14:19-24, 16:10, 19:9,16-21, 24:15-18, 33:9-11, 34:5, 40:34; Lev 9:23,24, 16:2; Num 9:15-22, 12:5-8,14:10, 16:19, 42; 20:6; Deut 31:15; 1 Kings 8:10-12; 2 Chr 5:13, 14, 7:2; Ezk 1:4-28, 10:3,4, 43:1-5. Isa 6:4.

The Tabernacle, or Tent of Meeting, became closely identified with the Presence of God. The cloud came to rest in the Holy of Holies and there God dwelt with His people. (Ex 25:8,30, 33:9-14)

## THE SHEKINAH GLORY OF GOD

The visible manifestation of the "Presence" of God among his people became known as the "**Shekinah Glory**". Nelson's Bible Dictionary describes it as the visible manifestation of the presence of God. Although the word is not found in the Bible it occurs frequently in later Jewish writings. It refers to the instances when God showed himself visibly, as for example on Mt. Sinai and in the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple. The Shekinah was a luminous cloud which rested above the Ark within the place of worship, the Holy of Holies, and lit up the room.

The New Bible Dictionary describes it as "the radiance, glory, or presence of God, "dwelling" in the midst of His people". The Shekinah, the nearest Jewish equivalent to the Holy Spirit, became, with other Old Testament ideas and derivatives, Word, Wisdom, etc, a bridge between man's corporeality and God's transcendence. It is used by the Rabbi to signify God Himself. It underlies the concept of God dwelling among His people. The glory of God, "kabod" in Hebrew and "doxa" in Greek, is another name for the Shekinah. It is the cloud of the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament, therefore, the Cloud represented the VISIBLE PRESENCE of God dwelling with his people. It is the environment of God, the place in which he dwells and functions and meets with his people. The Cloud rested in the Holy of Holies and was closely associated with the Ark of God. Once a year the high priest went into the sanctuary and met with God. The "Cloud" was God's special VISIBLE PRESENCE and GLORY abiding with His people. Jesus said he will return on the "clouds of glory". He was using Biblical terms to convey something real. Although the Cloud may not be visible any longer, it is still real in that the presence of God can at times still be felt and sensed. I know people who have seen it during times of deep worship. At least twice in my own ministry people have seen a beautiful light in the gathering of God's people. During one ministry people saw behind and to one side of me a glowing light like a cloud. It remained there for the entire hour of my ministry only leaving when I closed the teaching. On other occasions there have been tangible manifestations of His Presence.

His presence is especially real in times of deep worship when believers have entered within the spiritual "veil of his presence". At his return, or

parousia, he will appear to his people. Those who enter through the veil of the "cloud of his presence", the realm of the Holy of Holies, will see him in the cloud of GLORY. He will appear "face to face".

### **THE NEW TESTAMENT CLOUD - Matt 16:27 - 17:7**

When Jesus went to the mount of transfiguration he was transformed in glory. Some days before this he told his disciples they would see him "coming in glory" and then he gave them a preview of that glory on the mount of transfiguration. He met with Moses and Elijah in the bright cloud of God's presence. This event was later described by Peter as the "parousia" or "coming" of Christ and he used the same words to describe Christ's future return. Although the two events are separated by thousands of years there is a similarity in terms. Peter first described the "parousia" at the transfiguration (2 Pet 1:16-19) and then described the "parousia" at Christ's return (2 Pet 3:4,12). He looked back to the display of Christ's glory on the mount and looked forward to the promise of his future return. In Peter's mind what he saw on the mount was a preview and illustration of what will happen at the future "parousia" or "coming of Christ". He said he was not telling stories about Christ's Glorious Coming because he was already eyewitness of it. When did he see it? - at the transfiguration.

Christ and the disciples did not leave the vicinity of earth to be in the realm of transfiguration and glory in the Cloud of God's Presence; it all took place with their feet firmly on earth. Jesus was present in glory and the past and living saints met together, "in the cloud" of God's Presence. Not all the disciples saw it at that time, only Peter, James and John. These were the closest to Jesus, they saw it others did not.

When the apostle Paul saw the Lord on the Damascus road he described it in similar terms as the transfiguration. God's glory was revealed at the birth of Jesus and at other times. All these displays of glory were NOT far up in the atmosphere but in immediate vicinity of earth. (Acts 22:6,14, 1 Cor 9:1, 15:8, Luke 2:9) It is this glory that the church will again witness when Jesus comes in the Clouds. No one will see him except in the Cloud of His Presence. Just as Moses entered the Cloud and saw God *face to face* so too believers will see Jesus in His Cloud. The "Clouds" are plural because wherever believers will be the Cloud of his Presence will be there too.

The Glory of God is described in 1 Tim 6:14-16. No one can on their own initiative or through their own ability see that glory, but Jesus will himself appear and reveal it to those who are his. He will come back "in clouds of glory". The Clouds of God's glory were never somewhere up in the atmosphere but were always on earth in the immediate vicinity of his people.

To put it simply when Jesus comes the church is not going up into the sky but will meet the Lord in the Cloud of the Holy Spirit where He will be unveiled and visible right here in the presence of his believers.

**THE "RAPTURE" - NOT A DEPARTURE BUT A CHANGING.  
"CAUGHT UP IN THE CLOUDS" - 1 Thes 4:13-18**

Paul wrote that we shall be changed. What did he mean "caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air"? Just as the Lord spoke in Hebrew Biblical figurative terms so Paul also used these same terms to describe the mystery of what will happen at his return. If you rely on your Gentile mind you may like to think he is talking about flying up to the clouds in departure. However, if you were a Jewish believer you would certainly not think that.

Let us establish the order. When Jesus returns he will bring back his believers who have died. They are with him and when he comes they will come with him. When Jesus was transfigured in the cloud of glory both Elijah and Moses were also there. They came from a previous time and appeared with Jesus and talked with him. Remember, when he arose and appeared to living believers many past saints also appeared. (Matt 27:51-53) They ascended with him and ever since then believers at death immediately enter His Presence. Jesus is raised in heavenly places and the church is also seated with him in that realm. (Eph 1:20, 2:6, 3:10, 6:12)

When he returns he will bring them back with him. AFTER that, living believers will be "changed" (1 Cor 15:52) and will be able to enter "the cloud of glory", his Presence. Like Moses and Elijah, Peter, James and John we will be able to enter the Cloud and see him Face to Face. This will take place at his parousia - or "Presence". The term "in the clouds" does not refer to natural clouds in the atmosphere but, as we have seen, is a spiritual term to describe Christ's power and Shekinah Glory of the Holy Spirit in His temple.

Why would Jesus bring back heavenly believers to immediately turn around and take them away again? He brings them back for a reason; to give them new bodies. Why do they need new earthly bodies? It is clear that believers who have died and gone to heaven already have their heavenly bodies. (2Cor 5:1-8, 1Cor 15:40-54, 2Pet 1:13,14) We do not need resurrected bodies to go to heaven but we need them to function here on earth. The Lord will come back to earth and bring believers with him who will then be resurrected so as to function on earth. Note the order: FIRST believers in heaven come back with Jesus and receive *resurrected* bodies, AFTER that, living believers are *changed*. Together they join the glorious Presence of Christ in "clouds of glory". He comes in Clouds, plural, because it will happen throughout the world in every place there are true believers. Let me reiterate; the clouds are not up in the sky but right here in the midst of his people. Note that this is a sequence and not simultaneous. It is the individual believer's change that happens in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. When some believers insist the rapture means being taken away they are interpreting scripture from a Western mindset. A Jewish believer sees it with a Hebrew mind and understands what Paul says by the Biblical symbols he uses. The rapture is not up in the sky but right here in His Presence; it is not going up to the clouds but going through the veil.

### **"CAUGHT UP" - HARPAZO - 1 Thes 4:17**

The term "caught up" depicts a powerful event. The Greek word "**harpazo**" (Strong's 726) conveys the idea of force suddenly exercised (Vines) and is used to describe a powerful release of God's energy. It means to be taken hold of, to be seized by a power beyond our own. For those who would say "caught up" means to be removed from the earth let us consider the following. Paul was "caught up" to the third heaven and whether in or out of his body but he did not leave the earth; he had access to spiritual realms and heard words which could not be expressed in human language. Philip was "caught away" by the Lord from one place to another but neither did he leave the earth. It seems Ezekiel also had a similar experience. Each received a powerful intervention of God's power which released them from the restrictions of this physical dimension but they were not taken away. (2 Cor 12:2-4, Acts 8:39, Ezk 8:3, 11:24)

The use of this word by the Lord himself reveals its meaning. Jesus used

the same word but never said that people are taken out of the world. He said that "harpazo" empowers "men of force" to enter the Kingdom of God. (Matt 11:12) The NIV says, "*the Kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing and forceful men lay hold of it*". Men enter into it by the "harpazo" power of God. It conveys the idea of pressing into and possessing the Kingdom. (Luke 16:16) Every time Christ did a miracle he reached into a "future age", the Kingdom age, took hold of it and released its power into the present situation. Through "harpazo" believers were able to take hold of and enter into the Kingdom. Jesus did not use the word to mean being taken to heaven but to mean entering the Kingdom of God here on earth. They were not taken out of the world but experienced the power of God coming in to them to change them *in* the world. "Harpazo" is the forceful dynamics of God to catch someone into His power. It is God seizing control.

Paul experienced "harpazo" and used the same word to describe what will happen to living believers at the parousia. It is the release of God's power into believers, not to take them away but to enter His Presence when He comes. It is not a removal from a *place* but a transformation from a *state*. The "harpazo" is the dynamic power of God to catch believers out of their fallen condition of corruption and transform them into the incorruptible life of Christ. It means first and foremost a catching out of a state, that of carnality and death, into that of spiritual power. (See page 28, Romans 8) The "harpazo" releases one from the restrictions of this present mortal life to fully transform one into the freedom of Christ's life right here and now. The "harpazo" will happen as it did with Jesus. The "man child" was "caught up" to God. (Rev. 12:5) In the same way he had come and gone during the 40 days he just stepped through the veil into the cloud. When He returns the "harpazo" will happen in the same way. He will step out and they will meet him not up in the stratosphere but right here in the Cloud of his Presence. But some may say "The Lord must first descend". To descend (*Strong's 2597*) means to "step down". (Jn5:7) He will just step down from the cloud.

### **"A MEETING IN THE AIR"**

If the clouds at Christ's return are not weather clouds but clouds of God's Glory and Presence, then the term "in the air" must also convey a spiritual reality. Once again, if I said "I am walking on air" would you take that to mean I am floating around in clouds? Paul did not mean that believers will



go up to the atmospheric clouds but that they will enter the Presence or realm of Christ's Power and Glory in the mighty Clouds of His Holy Spirit. The place God met His people in the OT was in the Cloud of His Presence in the "Tabernacle of Meeting". (Num 12:4) This is where He will return, to his Living Tabernacle, in the Cloud of His Mighty Spirit.

The "air" is a word Paul used to describe a dimension in our immediate vicinity. This is not a frequently used word and the apostle Paul used it to mean the air in the sense of it being nearby, *surrounding us*, not far away. (Strong's Dictionary, no.109 - *circumambient*.) This is how he described the reality of the invisible spiritual dimension *very near* to us, all around us, right here "in the air".

The word "air" is used in the New Testament for both natural air and the realm of spiritual powers working in the earth. In the book of Revelation it is used in the context of angelic activity on earth and in Ephesians 2:2 it describes the realm and work of "the prince of the power of the air" working in this present earth. It is a spiritual dimension right here within the natural air. To understand this one must understand the realities of different dimensions so close to each other that they superimpose upon each other. Paul linked the air with the realm where spiritual battle takes place and the Lord rules. The realm of the air is the realm over which Jesus has ultimate rule. This dimension will open for believers.

When Jesus returns he descends from heaven. (1 Thes 4:16) He will then "catch his people into the air", a different word from heaven. He does not ascend back into heaven with them but he takes them into His immediate Presence in the Holy Spirit, the Cloud of Shekinah Glory, His Holy Presence, "in the air".

The word "air" is used in a similar way as the word "wind" which also denotes both natural and spiritual realities. (Eph 2:2) In the New Testament the word "wind" almost always conveys the meaning of "spirit". In the same way, when the apostle Paul spoke of "air" he certainly did NOT mean what we breathe, made of nitrogen and oxygen but was referring to an invisible spirit dimension. Air is the nearest Paul could get to describe this invisible realm. Just as air is real but invisible so Paul used it to describe the very real but invisible realm which is very close to us. It is a spirit dimension which is

not far off, just invisible, nearby "in the air" all around us. Paul did not mean that believers will be caught up to the cloudy sky but that believers will have access to spirit dimensions. The "air" is the Spirit realm that Jesus rules over and which will open for believers. At his "parousia" believers are not going up into the weather clouds but are going into the "Presence" of Christ in the Clouds of the Holy Spirit and Shekina Glory.

As believers we are "seated with him" and have access to the realm of His Presence even though we may not see Him. When he returns we will be able to fully enter and see him "Face to Face" in Glory.

### **IMMORTALITY**

Paul taught that believers will be caught out of their present condition which is subject to mortality and into a condition subject to immortality. They will be clothed with immortality. (1 Cor 15:53,54,) What did Paul mean by immortality? Immortality is *not* being subject to death; deathlessness. However, according to Vines Expository Dictionary immortality (athanasia) is more; it suggests the *quality* of life enjoyed by the believer when mortality is "swallowed up by life". The immortality Jesus offers is to be joined in him, the source of life and joy. It is to be fully released from the carnal principle that works in us producing death and to be joined in union with Him who is immortal. (2 Cor 5:1-8) Every believer already has that kind of life but the day will come when it will be experienced in its complete fullness. (Jn 8:51, 10:10)

After his resurrection Jesus displayed his immortality to his people. At his return he will release it into those who are his, who will then be able to live and function in a way no longer subject to the physical dimension just as Jesus was able to do in his earthly body. May I ask "Did the Lord have immortality in his earthly body when he lived on earth? Yes, he was free of sin and no curse of death operated in his life so he must have. He is the author of life and light; its very source. In him was the life of the Father so he must have been immortal. (John 1:4, 5:26, Acts 3:15, Col 1:16) In his earthly life he was *not* subject to the restrictions of his body. He was able to walk on water and could pass right through hostile crowds either by being invincible or invisible. (Luke 4:30, Jn 7:30, 8:59, 10:39) If Jesus had not died surely he could have just walked into heaven; otherwise he would still

be alive on earth. The pre-flood Patriarchs lived for hundreds of years and they were sinful, Jesus was sinless. No one took his life from him for he voluntarily submitted to death. (John 10:15-18) At his transfiguration I believe that he could have stepped back into his glory but chose not to but to go to the cross and die for us. And when he died it was not possible for death to hold him. (Acts 2:24) So too believers will function in bodies that are powerful, glorious and spiritual, made like the man from heaven. It will be a worldwide replication of Christ's life in his people. (1 Cor 15:35-48) At his "parousia" or "Presence" his people will experience a *change* that will release them from the present physical restrictions of this dimension and give them access to his power. Believers who have died will rise in resurrection and be able to function like angels (Luke 20:35) and believers who are alive will be changed so as to also enter and share in the life of Jesus. They will have newly empowered and changed bodies not subject to carnality or restrictions of this present dimension. They will be like Christ was on earth, not subject to death or disease and like Enoch will be able to walk through the veil into God's presence. We will consider Enoch later.

There are three groups of people on earth when Jesus returns. 1/ there are believers in Jesus who will be changed to become like him and then live and function with him. Through "harpazo" they will possess the power, life and glory of Jesus and enter the Kingdom of God which will grow and increase. 2/ There are the desperately wicked who will be destroyed at his coming. 3/ There is the remainder of mankind who will come under the authority of the Kingdom of God. The "Day of the Lord" is the time of Christ's reign on earth. It commences at his parousia and continues until "New Jerusalem" comes down to earth. This period is designated as a thousand years. We will consider this more fully later.

The emphasis through the Bible is that the Kingdom of God will come to earth and subdue the whole world. God will empower his people and will rule and reign through them. How will this happen if there are no people left on earth? Will they rule over one another? Who has ever heard of a Kingdom without a structure, without rulers and people who come under it? In his church the Lord has established a world wide net that will take control of the nations and gather in a vast harvest. The Lord Jesus will have complete dominion over all nations. It will be the righteous reign of God through the one and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords and those who

rule with him. (1 Tim 6:15) When will this happen? – At his coming PRESENCE - "parousia".

### **REVEALING THE SONS OF GOD. Romans 8:1-30**

The apostle Paul wrote that the whole creation groans as it waits for the unveiling or "revealing of the sons of God" when God's Sons will be revealed to the whole world. Paul taught that through the indwelling Spirit of God believers are victorious over the sinful carnal nature and one day their mortal bodies will be quickened by God's Spirit to receive full redemption. He described it as the "glorious freedom" of the "sons of God" for which the whole of creation awaits. Believers will be set free from the bondage of the mortal body; carnality, sickness, pain, weakness and death. When this happens believers will conform to the image of Christ and be the "Sons of God". Nothing will be able to harm them. It will be a public display of God's Power and Glory in believers. At that time the Glory of God will be *unveiled* in His "Sons" and evident for all to see.

John the apostle confirmed this. 1 John 3:1,2 - *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is."*

The statements Paul made in Romans chapter eight cannot be fully appreciated unless they are placed in the context of chapter seven in which he described the conflict within each believer between the carnal sinful nature and the spiritual nature that desires to serve God. The carnal nature fights against the Spirit. (Gal 5:17) Paul said that he was "carnal sold under sin" and described the law of sin and death which he was powerless to overcome. This war was within the members of his body and worked in him to produce death. There is tension within every believer between the carnal nature and the Spirit. In a very real sense believers are caught between two dimensions or ages. As children of Adam they are subject to the law that in Adam all die. Spiritually however, they have passed from death to life. The day will come in the new age of glory when the tension between the two realms will cease. Paul cried out "Who can set me free from the body of this death?" He longed to be free of the power that worked death in him and it is this very question that he answered in chapter eight. It is through Jesus that

it is possible to be victorious and to be controlled by the law of the Spirit of life. Believers receive the "first fruits" or pledge of this when they receive the Spirit of God by which they know that one day they will receive the *completed* work. (Romans 8:23, 2 Cor 5:5) The infilling of the Holy Spirit is not the final work but only a foretaste of it. Paul declared that one day there is coming total release from the law of death and corruption when the body itself will be set free into glorious liberty. The complete revealing will come when "He shall appear and we shall see him as he is".

How then will this work? When Jesus appears, all those who are walking in His Spirit will be "quicken" by His Spirit. (Rom 8:11) There is an order to follow; first we "walk" in the Spirit and overcome the carnal nature. (Rom 7:23,24) By living in the Spirit we have entry into a new dimension of life *in* the Spirit. (Rom 8:9,10) By living in His Spirit we are victorious over the carnal nature and then at His Coming His Spirit will fully redeem and *quicken* (2227 *make alive*) our mortal bodies. Jesus "*shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit in you*". Then full resurrection life will be unveiled within our bodies as the "Sons of God". (Rom 8:19-23).

When this happens believers will become like Jesus. When Jesus walked on earth he was as immortal as when he arose after death. In the earthly body he had no sickness and was not subject to the restrictions of his body for he could walk on water, go from one place to another instantaneously, could be invisible and so on. He was only limited to earthly boundaries because he chose to be. If he had chosen he could have stepped into glory without experiencing death but he chose to go to the cross. When the sons of God are revealed they too will have bodies like he had and be able to do amazing things. For them death will lose its power, they will not see corruption and will be able to step through the veil into his Presence.

There is coming a "day" when the world will enter a new age of blessing. This is a transitional period during which there is an ever increasing growth of His power and glory through the whole world as nations submit to him and even nature itself will share and benefit from the glorious liberty of God's Sons and be brought into harmony and freedom. The entire creation will begin to enter into a new freedom from the suffering which came about by sin and which brought decay and death. When will this happen? When the "Sons of God" are set free. "*The universe itself is to be freed from the*

*shackles of mortality and enter upon the liberty and splendour of the children of God".* (Isa 11:4-10, Romans 8:21 NEB) Christ's initial reign will last a thousand years and that is only a foretaste of more!

### **THE SPLENDOUR OF CHRIST'S LIGHT**

When Jesus was transfigured his face and clothes shone like the sun in brilliance. This was the unveiling of his Shekinah Glory. This is what will happen at his appearing (epiphaneia) in glorious light. (1 Tim 6:14-16)

The psalmist wrote that God is clothed in splendour and majesty and covered with light as a garment. (Ps.104:1,2) The prophet Malachi wrote that to those who fear his name the Lord will rise as the "sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings". (Mal 4:2) Peter described Christ's "majesty" as "megaleiotes" meaning "splendour, superb magnificence, mighty power, glory". He foretold that a new day, or "age", will dawn when the "morning star" will arise in the hearts of God's people. (2 Pet 1:17-19)

Morning Star comes from the Greek word "phosphorus", meaning "light bearer". It comes from "phos" meaning to shine or make "luminous", and "phero", "to bear or carry" and refers to the appearing of Jesus in splendour as personal fulfilment in hearts of believers at his coming in glory to establish his Kingdom on earth. The reference to Jesus as Morning Star, (pertaining to the dawn) endorses this theme. (Rev 22:16, 2:26-28) To those who follow him he gives a promise that they will rule the nations and receive the Morning Star. Jesus is the Morning Star who one day will appear as the "Sun of Righteousness" to govern the world in peace. He is the light who shines in darkness and brings God's government into the world. (Isa 9:1-7, John 1: 4-9, Rev 21:23,24)

### **HIS LIGHT IN BELIEVERS**

A new day will dawn when Christ's light will arise and shine within believers. True believers already experience the indwelling of Christ by his Spirit. One day he will reveal himself to those who trust in his name and then the righteous will shine forth (and be resplendent) as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. (Matt 13:43) The Morning Star will arise and shine within believers. We read something similar in Daniel 12:3; the righteous

will shine like stars. Believers will appear with him in glory. *"Christ is our real life. When he comes back, you will shine with him in all his glory"*. (Col 3:4 Simplified Living Bible) *"When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in (the splendour of His) glory"*. (Col 3:4 Amplified Bible) The word 'appear' is "phaino" which is derived from phos, to shine. People who saw Christ's glory described it as brilliant light. When Moses saw God's glory he radiated that glory and his face shone so brilliantly he had to cover it. He had experienced such concentrated exposure to the Lord's presence that he wore a veil. This glory faded outwardly but one day it will remain and believers will share His Shekinah Glory.

Martyrs and faithful followers of Jesus will be given robes of pure white. (Rev 3:4,5,18, 6:11) The word "white" is derived from the word for light and is used to describe the brightness of Jesus in glory. (Matt 17:2, Rev 1:14) Those who are faithful to him will walk in the same whiteness, as pure light, and not be found naked. (Rev 3:4,5,18) God's children will put on garments of pure white just as He is arrayed in garments of splendour and light. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, reflected this glory and his face looked like the face of an angel.

When Adam and Eve sinned they lost their spiritual covering and became naked. Prior to their fall they were clothed in the glory of God which departed when they chose death rather than life and immortality. However, one day Jesus will restore believers to be like him. Then he will present to himself his church, glorious and without spot or wrinkle. (Phil 3:21, Eph 5:27)

God's people will shine with His Glory. *"The Lord shall be their everlasting light"* and they will be planted by the Lord for *"the display of his splendour"*. (Isa 60:19,20 and 61:3 NIV Bible)

### **THE FORTY DAYS OF HIS RESURRECTION PRESENCE**

After Jesus rose from the dead He remained on earth for forty days. During this time he was visible and on many occasions appeared to believers. Although changed, he nevertheless had a real body, wore clothes, and ate and functioned with them. His own people could see and touch him. He was fully fitted as a new man to remain on earth had he so desired, yet

he was risen in Glory, the Eternal God revealed in man. It was to this that John referred when he said; *"That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled concerning the Word of life – that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us..."* (1 Jn 1:1-3) The disciples not only saw him but they touched him and handled him in his resurrection.

What significance does this have?

We have seen how God's presence in the Old Testament was in the Cloud which was visible to his people. Not everyone could approach that cloud; but Moses was able to enter it and when he did he saw God "face to face". For forty days he was with God in the cloud and when he came out he radiated that glory so much that he had to cover his face. (Ex 34:30-33)

In a similar way believers were with Jesus for forty days in his resurrection glory. Not everyone saw him; only believers. He appeared to them and taught them many things. First he revealed himself to individuals and then to more and more of his followers but no unbeliever could see his visible presence. (Acts 10:40,41) He appeared first to Mary Magdalene and other women. Very early in the morning just before daybreak they went to the tomb. These women loved him dearly and could not stay away. Jesus appeared to them. Then he appeared to more people. Paul gave a detailed account of the order of Christ's resurrection appearances and where he appeared. I believe there is a reason why he did so. Jesus first appeared to individual people who loved Him more than anything else. Then He appeared to small groups of dedicated disciples. Finally he appeared to the larger crowd. He made himself visible wherever and whenever he chose. He came and went at will, stepping between the visible and invisible realms. He was invincible and Thomas declared of him, "my Lord and my God". He illustrated his perfect suitability for life on earth and his ability to interact between the two realms.

The 40 days of resurrection is in direct contrast to the 40 days of temptation Christ suffered. That was a terrible time directly after his baptism when as "*The Lamb of God who bears away the sins of the world*" he was led by the Spirit as our scapegoat into the wilderness to suffer 40 days of devastating temptation from Satan. His three and a half years of ministry



started with 40 days of severe personal conflict and ended with 40 days of triumphant victory.

Peter described this time of resurrection interaction in Acts 1:1-4, 21,22. Everything Jesus said and did from his baptism until he ascended and especially during the 40 days resurrection was to teach about the Kingdom of God. Peter mentions how Jesus "went in and out among us". To what did he refer? It was to the manner in which Jesus could move between the invisible and visible dimensions right here "in the air". He stepped in and out. He did not come from the other end of the universe; he was and still is just a step away. Jesus showed them how the Kingdom of God works. It was to this that the two messengers on the Mount of Olives referred when they said "he will come in like manner". This means in like deportment and character; the same Jesus, the same way.

### **HE WILL RETURN**

At the end of the forty days he was lifted up and a cloud received him out of their sight. We are not told how high he went. Contrary to the popular concept of him rising high into the sky he just lifted himself up and was received by the cloud into which he disappeared. (Acts 1:9) This was the Cloud of God, NOT a weather cloud. It was the portal through which the Lord appeared and disappeared. He did what he had done during the previous forty days as he appeared and disappeared except this time he did not return. As we have already considered, heaven is not far away but is another dimension close at hand yet invisible to the finite eye. It is said to be "up" but this is not a physical but spiritual elevation. The idea of him ascending high in the sky comes out of our Western expectations of going up to heaven. This is a Gentile concept. Jewish beliefs see heaven here on earth. The disciples were not gazing into the sky but were looking into heaven. Heaven is not in the upper reaches of the atmosphere but very close, in another dimension. When "heaven opens" it is near by, alongside us.

When Stephen was about to die he saw heaven opened and Jesus standing in the glory of God. He was not looking far into the sky but right in front of him. The veil opened so that he could look into the invisible realm. It was like a portal before Stephen and through which he gazed. Heaven is the spirit dimension. When Jesus stepped into it two men in shining robes

stepped out of that dimension and appeared to the disciples. They had a message, "*This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" (Acts 1:11)

This SAME JESUS, who in risen glory came to his disciples for forty days in his resurrection body, will return in the SAME manner. The same person who died on the cross and rose again will return in his risen body. He will come in the same way he left. He will simply step out of the "cloud" and once more be with his people. When he returns from the invisible realm he will be visible just as he was during the forty days. He will appear to all who love him, to individuals, small groups and to large crowds anywhere in the world. When he comes he will not be confined to an earthly body walking the dusty roads of Israel but will be in a risen body everywhere in the world! He is God and has all Power and Glory of the Godhead. He is also the risen man of glory and as such will be perfectly fitted to live in the realm of earth. His body of glory will have no limits of any kind. He can appear in different forms and in different places. He will be invincible and his disciples will be able to see him and meet with Him. Unbelievers will not be able to enter his presence but believers will and as they do they will meet the Lord, FACE TO FACE, just as Moses did long ago. They will see the King, will be changed to be like him and will never be separated from him.

### **JESUS IS JUST A STEP AWAY - BEHIND THE VEIL**

For forty days Jesus lived with his people in his resurrection body. He lodged with them, ate with them, and taught them about the Kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3) During this time he came and went with no restrictions or limitations. He lived in two realms, the invisible and the visible, the material and the spiritual. God dwells in the invisible spirit realm, the "heavens". This is not at the other end of the universe but is in another dimension. Jesus must have had access to this realm even as a young lad. He grew up seeing and hearing the Father in perfect communion. (Jn 8:38) At times God has allowed people to see into this realm. (Luke 2:13) Every time "heaven was opened" the veil was drawn aside and people were permitted to see things which were not necessarily far away but right there in front of them in the invisible "heavenly" realm. For example Elisha saw an angelic chariot when Elijah was taken to God. Later he prayed that the eyes of his servant be opened to see the angelic army that *surrounded* them. (2 Kings 2:11, 6:17)

These angels were not far away but nearby in the invisible realm.

In Hebrews 12:1 it is written "*we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us*". This is the cloud of those people who have gone before into God's presence; they surround us, not far away but just beyond the veil. At death Christians pass through the veil and enter into the presence of the Lord. At the approach of death there is every indication that believers can see through the veil into the invisible realm for they often respond as if someone is there and even talk to them. They sometimes reach out and declare that they can see angels, loved ones and the Lord himself! (Psalm 23, 2 Cor 5:8, Phil 1:23, 2 Pet 1:13-15). I have been in the presence of dying believers who saw through the veil yet I could not. It is a portal that opens at the right time and through which they see and enter. They step out of the physical realm into the spirit realm. We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. If we have our eyes opened we will see them. (2Kings 7:20)

### **THE ANGELIC REALM**

Angels manifest themselves from one realm to another. When they do they appear as real persons, wear clothes and can touch people. Very often they radiate the brightness of God's glory for they come from the presence of his glory. (Matt 28:3, John 20:12, Acts 1:10) Paul was caught into the "third heaven" which indicates there are different levels in the spiritual realms. There are different kinds of angels and there are also fallen beings, principalities and demons. In fact the whole problem of sin started with the rebellion of Satan. In Revelation we are told of a war between Satan's angels and Michael's angels. (Rev 12:7-12) This war takes place in the spirit dimension immediately adjacent to earth. Satan and his angels will be cast out of that realm onto earth and this is followed by a time of conflict. During this period angelic activity will become very intense and I believe that people will see more and more spiritual manifestations of one kind and another. Even as I write there are amazing reports of things that are happening. The world is entering a spiritual conflict. Christians are having more and more spiritual encounters, angelic visitations, and spiritual revelations as barriers between the realms are opened. There are testimonies of our Risen Lord appearing to people world wide. This will increase more and more until the time he "catches" them through the veil right into his Cloud. The exact moment is known to Him alone.

Jesus said to Nathanael that he would see the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Jesus is the true ladder or stairway to heaven. The word "highway" in Isaiah 40 means a viaduct or "staircase" allowing entry into God's glory which will be revealed to all who travel that highway. It is Jesus himself who is the gateway and opens the heavens to enable us to enter; he is the door and mediator into God's realm and Glorious Presence. He is the "ladder" or link between the two realms. (John 1:51, Gen 28:12, Isa 40:3-5, 62:10) After his resurrection the Lord Jesus lived in both realms. He is forever the risen Son of Glory and Eternal God. During the forty days if he wanted to be visible he stepped through the veil into the visible realm. When he wanted to be invisible he stepped back into it. He was in any place at any time with no earthly restrictions. He had no limits, no hindrances. When Jesus departed he simply lifted himself up and stepped through the veil into the Cloud. He did not go like a rocket into the sky but disappeared into the Cloud of God. On the day he returns he will simply step back from the invisible. Weymouth's translation puts it well; "on the day that *the veil is lifted* from the Son of Man". (Luke 17:30) Paul wrote that we eagerly await the revelation or unveiling (apokalupsis) of our Lord. (1 Cor 1:7) He can come at any time! When he does he will be real, as real as he was to Thomas! There are those who say that Jesus cannot be in two places at the same time. I discount that. He is God with no limits. Scientists now know that quarks, very small particles of matter, can be in two places at one time, how much more the One who made them? His resurrected body is real but not physical; it is a body of Glory empowered by His Holy Spirit.

There is a "veil" that hides God's realm. Before Adam sinned he had perfect communion with God but after his fall he only heard God's voice. He hid from the Presence of the Lord. (Gen 3:8) A veil shut off God. This veil will one day open. At his return Jesus will forever destroy the veil that covers all nations. (Isa 25:7-9) At present we look through a "glass" but one day we shall see him "face to face"; "*We all, with open (or unveiled) face beholding as in a glass (or mirror) the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory*". (1 Cor 13:9-12, 2 Cor 3:16-18)

### **"LORD JESUS COME"**

We are approaching the time of the inauguration of the reign of the Lord

on earth and the establishment of his Kingdom upon the nations of the whole earth. In the fifth section I will show how it cannot be far off.

One day the moment will come when the saints will possess the Kingdom. (Dan 7:18,22) "*The kingdoms of the world will become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He will reign forever and ever*". (Rev 11:15) His Kingdom is coming in power and great glory. No one will be able to resist or oppose it. It will be a complete and total victory, an overthrow of Satan's power. At that time there will be a huge harvest - millions will turn to the Lord. John described this when he saw the "Son of Man", the unique title of Jesus, on a cloud crowned with a golden crown and holding a sickle to reap the whole earth. (Rev 14:14-16)

God has through his people established a world wide net that will bring the greatest ingathering of the ages. There are more people alive now than have ever lived; mankind is ripe unto harvest. Early one morning on the shores of Galilee the risen Lord called out to his disciples to cast their net and they caught a catch so big they could hardly land it. This was a preview of what will come. (John 21:1-6) Two things will take place. The tares will be burnt and the harvest will be gathered. The angels will go through the entire world and bring them in. Who are the angels? The word angel means messenger and in scripture is applied to both heavenly angels and people. When Jesus returns he and his people will harvest the nations.

## **THE UNVEILING OF JESUS TO HIS PEOPLE**

The Lord Jesus will appear a second time as High Priest to all who love him and are looking for him. (Heb 9:24-28, Titus 2:13, 1 Cor 1:7, Phil 3:2) God has a chosen people, a Holy Nation, a Royal Priesthood of believers. (1 Pet 2:9) Jesus the High Priest made Atonement for them. (Rom 5:11, Heb 9:24-28) The Lord Jesus will one day reveal himself to all those who love him and look for him, his own special people. Just as Joseph revealed himself to his brothers behind closed doors so after his resurrection Jesus revealed himself to his own disciples behind locked doors. (John 20:19, Gen 45:1) And he will do so again. He will appear to every person who has surrendered to him and made him Lord. He will receive them and embrace them with great joy and they will enter the Cloud of his Presence with rejoicing. (Matt 25:21) Then he will be marvelled at by all who believe. (2

Thes 1:10) The word "marvel", or "admire", comes from a verb which means "to look at closely, to look upon and behold". Just as the early disciples were able to touch him and handle him, even after his resurrection, so too his people will be able to see him, embrace him, worship and admire him. (1 John 1:1, John 20:27, Matt 28:9) In that day there will be a deep union with him which will never be broken. He will come to those who have opened their lives to him. They will sup with him behind the "door" of his Presence, within the Cloud. (Rev 3:20, Matt 25:10)

### **THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH**

There is a Secret Place of the Most High, the place of His **Face to Face Presence**. (Ps 91:1Ps 31:20) It is a place where one is covered, concealed and hidden, a refuge and strong fortress; a hiding place in His Presence. (Ps 32:7 31:20 119:114, 32:2) "In the *time of trouble* he shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret place of His tabernacle". (Ps 27:5) It is a real place right here on earth. I have heard amazing testimonies of people who have been delivered from death by being in this "secret Place". (Isa 26:19,20,21 Isa 4:5,6) It is a place of divine protection where nothing can intrude. God's people will enter this place and be hidden in His Presence until the time of indignation is passed. It is there that they meet the Lord.

They will come out from this meeting a new people, to control a new era and a new world. Resurrection life will sweep through the earth. Instead of being taken away from the world true believers are going to be empowered to win the world. Jesus gave certain signs that indicate "*He is near, right at the door*". (Matt 24:33) These signs are evident everywhere. He is standing very near, right at the door just on the other side of the veil. Soon the veil will open to reveal him in Glory and all who are seeking Him and are ready will step through the veil and meet Him.

You may respond to this by saying "This is not what I have been taught". No, it probably is not but that is because as Gentile believers we have been taught Gentile theology that comes from a Western Mindset that interprets scripture in a Gentile manner without any real support of Hebrew scripture, idioms, and Biblical symbols. The challenge is for us to move out of that mind into a spiritual mind, understanding things as depicted in Hebrew revelation.

## **OTHER SCRIPTURES ABOUT THE RETURN OF CHRIST**

This section is to anticipate questions that may arise and is for those who want to consider other scriptures.

### **"ONE TAKEN AND ONE LEFT" - MATT 24:37-41**

If we consider Christ's teaching we see that believers are NOT taken away when he comes but enter his Kingdom here on earth. He said at his coming or "Presence" some people will be taken away, NOT in rapture but in judgment, one from a bed another from a field, yet another from the work-place. In its context this is NOT a removal of believers but a removal of the wicked! This is seen in his *direct* comparison with the flood. He said that as in the days of Noah the flood came and took them away so shall it be when he comes; two in a bed, one taken one left, two at a mill, one taken one left. Those that are taken away are taken in judgment just as the flood "took people away at the time of Noah". His reference to vultures confirms this as judgment and comes from a description by the prophet Ezekiel of the great "judgment supper". (Ezk 39:17, Rev 19:17) Those who are taken are the wicked and not the righteous! Those who remain inherit the earth.

The idea of being whisked away was never a Biblical concept. The rapture has gained much acceptance because of the idea that God's people need to be rescued from the horrors of a world in the grip of Satan. Escapism is a modern western mindset. People want to escape from the reality of today's world; the daily drudgery of some, the apparent meaningless existence of others, the harsh battle to survive for others. We are an escapist society and the drug culture is a symptom of it. Prevailing TV and movie themes perpetuate it. The greatest escapist trend these days is to deny the reality of God and sin. (1 Jn 1:8) People are deeply spiritual beings and many are in denial of their inner conscience. The rapture teaching appeals to our natural mind to escape death and suffering. But scripture says "*How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation*". (Heb 2:3) God promises salvation not escapism.

When the Old Testament prophets foretold the "Day of the Lord" they always foretold the destruction of the wicked not the removal of the

righteous. Those who were wicked were destroyed, those who remained were saved. There is no precedence in scripture for a rescue policy; the emphasis is on overcoming in the circumstances, victory over all evil, God working in the situation. Any rescue of God's people will not be by their removal but by the destruction of their enemies. Yes, Moses led God's people out of Egypt and Lot came out of Sodom but they never left the planet. Neither did Noah. It was the wicked who were taken away. Elijah was the only one to be removed but that was to extend his ministry into the end times and he is coming right back into the thick of it. As for Enoch he walked straight into the Kingdom. This is a preview of what will happen during the time the Kingdom comes upon earth in its fullness. Death will lose its power and all who walk in faith will be able to access the heavenly dimensions, not somewhere up in the sky but right here just a step away. This is how angels come and go, just as Jesus did during the 40 days, he just walked in and out of the dimensions. In a similar way God's people will put off the carnal and put on the spiritual. We will consider Enoch later in this book.

The Lord said that at the time of his coming there will be a cleansing on earth. (Matt 13:30-50) He said that the tares will be gathered and burnt then the wheat gathered.

Jesus also spoke of those who may try to enter his presence at his return but will be turned away and prevented from doing so because they never knew him. The judgment of the nations at this time indicates that some people will enter the Kingdom but not all. (Matt 25:11,12,30,41)

The Old Testament prophets foresaw the Kingdom of God filling the whole earth. Like the mustard seed it will eventually fill the entire earth. (Matt 13:31) Jesus will rule the nations and his people will be empowered to rule with him. Peace then will fill the earth when the wicked are removed, the nations converted and the Lord rules.

What is sometimes called the "rapture" is in fact *not* a departure but a meeting with Jesus at his return. Yes, it will be a "rapturous" event and it is a "meeting in the air" but as I have shown it is in the "Spirit" just as John was when he was "in the spirit". (Rev 1:10, 4:1,2) At this meeting believers will be changed to allow them to function in a new way with no restrictions and great power. His Kingdom will bring resurrection life into the world, the



spiritual and material realms into harmony, and believers will have access to both.

When will this happen?

### **THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT**

This must be understood correctly. Jesus, the mighty king of the universe, is not going to sneak in like a thief. When he comes back the whole earth is going to shake in signs and omens. His coming as a thief is only applicable to the ungodly, not the godly. The thief aspect only applies to those who are not watching or ready. Those who are prepared will not be caught, it's that simple. The prospect of people being caught is because they are not expecting the Lord and therefore have not prepared.

This is the clear meaning the Lord gave in Matt 24:42-51 and Luke 12:31-40. It is those who allow their hearts to turn away from him who are caught. Those who are right with him are not caught. It is our own spiritual state that traps us. This is exactly what Paul says; "*we are not in darkness that the day should catch us unawares*". (1 Thes 5:1-4)

In fact, in his second letter to the Thessalonians Paul repeats this. (2 Thes 2:1-5) Some believers in Thessalonica said that the Lord's coming was imminent and had already occurred but Paul had to correct this and say that the Day of Christ will not come until the *rebellion* and the "man of sin" is first revealed. He was emphatic about this. There is a certain time for Christ's return. (See Appendix 4: The Falling Away)

Peter said the same thing in 2 Peter 3:3-14. He said that scoffers discount his return but believers look for it and hasten towards it. In other words the day of the Lord will come as a thief on the unbelieving world but not on believers. It is how we keep our hearts that matters.

The exact time of the Lord's return to an individual at death is always unknown in that we do not know the number of our days. We could die at any time and when we do he will receive us. (Jn 14:1-3) He gave this promise to his early disciples. He promised to take them to heavenly mansions. Some believe that Christians sleep in dormancy until the return of

Jesus. However, the aspect of sleeping is in the context of the body sleeping. (Lk 8:52) The apostle Paul said that when he died he would straight away go to be with Jesus. (Phil 1:23) Peter said the same. (2 Pet 1:14)

However, he promised to come back to earth. The time of this is unknown. Yet we can understand the "times and seasons" and those who look for it actually hasten his coming. They see and understand the signs. They make proper preparations for it, they get their lives in order; the wise take oil, the foolish do not.

The Lord himself gave the time of his return. (Matt24:29-31) He said his coming will happen immediately after the "tribulation of those days". He said that he will "gather together his elect" at that time. (2 Thes 2:1-5) I don't know how clearer he could make it.

## **THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST**

The emphasis in scripture is on Christ's return. He is coming back, NOT to depart again but to remain with his people during which time he will subdue the nations and establish His Kingdom ON EARTH. Later in this book we will look at how his PAROUSIA will last for a prolonged period and grow and grow.

I think at times we find it hard to differentiate between the prophecies of his "parousia" and the final great judgment. Just as people long ago had difficulty understanding the prophecies concerning Christ's first coming and his second coming so we may confuse the events which take place at the inauguration of the Kingdom when he returns with events at the climax of the Kingdom which are separated by a thousand years also called by the apostle Peter the "Day of the Lord". Many things that are initiated at the time of his return are completed during this period or at its culmination. In this way it sometimes appears that there is a double fulfilment of some prophecies, one partial and then one final. However, these prophecies are over an entire period. When the apostle Peter wrote about the Day of the Lord's "parousia" or "Presence", he said that a day with the Lord is like a thousand years and the apostle John also said Christ's reign would last a thousand years. (2 Peter 3:3-13, Rev 20:4-6) The OT Psalmist expressed the same concept. (Psalm 90:4)

His coming "parousia" or "Presence" will usher in the Kingdom of God. It is not the end of the world but the start of a new era during which his Kingdom fills the whole earth. At Christ's return his "Presence" will be everywhere filling the earth from east to west. (Matt 24:27) Contrary to popular interpretation of this verse it does not necessarily mean that everyone in the whole world will see him like lightning but that his return will be to the whole world. Just as lightning is not confined to one spot when it flashes but can be seen from one horizon to the other and lights up everything and extends from east to west so too his Presence will not be confined to one spot but will be just as widely felt. At his Presence there will be no need to seek him in private chambers or go to the wilderness to find him for it will be as universal as the lightning which lights up the east to the west, in other words it is not a localised event confined to one particular place or group but he will be everywhere in the whole world. It will also be unexpected in that many will not be prepared for it. Consequently some people are taken away, not in rapture but in judgment.

### **THE RESURRECTION, 1 COR 15:23-58**

Paul's teaching is significant in that he gives the order of events.

1/ Christ the First fruits "Wave Offering",

2/ then those who are his at his "Presence" (parousia), the "First Fruits" of harvest,

3/ finally the "Ingathering" will come at the end but only after he has abolished all other rule, authority, power and even death itself. There is a clear step by step strategy outlined here. It is generally accepted that there is an order in the resurrection and that although one day there will be a universal resurrection of the dead there is also the promise of a resurrection for believers prior to that time. (John 5:25,28, Rev 20:4,5, Luke 14:14)

**Firstly: "Wave Offering"**. Jesus was the first to rise from the dead. He did so on the day of the Wave Offering. When he arose many saints from the previous age also arose. (Matt 27:51,52) This resurrection was largely unseen by most yet it included a *multitude* of saints who came out of the graves. So there has already been a significant resurrection of the dead. This

was the "Wave Offering" of God's harvest. Seven weeks later at Pentecost the living saints were empowered by the Holy Spirit and a spiritual explosion resulted that thrust the gospel into the world. There were two groups, the dead and the living, and there was both a resurrection and an empowering.

**Secondly: "Firstfruits"**. At Christ's "parousia" there are also two groups. First are the saints who have *died* between his departure and his return; they will be raised. Second are all those *alive* at his coming or "Presence". (1 Thes 4:13-5:10, 1 Cor 15:51,52, Js 1:18, Rev 14:4, 20:4,5)

**i/** Believers who have died will come back with Jesus when he returns. They "will rise first" and be active again in this dimension. They are already with him and accompany his return. He brings them with him. Some people say that at this time the Lord raptures the church and returns to heaven. Why would he immediately turn around and take them straight back to heaven?

Why indeed does the Lord bring saints back from heaven?

He brings them back so that they can function in new bodies here on earth. We don't need resurrected bodies to function in heaven we need them to function on earth.

The apostle Peter declared that he would one day lay down his earthly tabernacle, his earthly body, and depart to be with the Lord. (2 Pet 1:13-15) The apostle Paul spoke of putting on or being "clothed" with his *heavenly* body so as not to be found naked. The word clothe is "enduo" - to sink into a garment, invest with clothing, endue. Paul says in 2 Cor.5:1-6 that departed Christians are not just floating around somewhere but are clothed in heavenly bodies. When Jesus returns they will return with him and (Rev 20:4) function in glorified bodies. It is significant that Jesus said that in the new dispensation believers will be like angels. (Matt 22:30) Angels can move between dimensions. That is why Jesus brings the saints with him because he is returning to earth to live and reign. They will be resurrected to function with him on earth.

**ii/** Living believers who are alive at the parousia will be **changed**; (Strong's) which means "to make different"; (Vines) "to transform". Living believers will not be resurrected because they are not dead but they will be changed

and then join in the glory of Jesus at his return.

There is something of a "mystery" about the life of **Enoch**. He "walked" with God and pleased God. One day God took him and he "was not". He was translated into God's Kingdom. How did it happen? He walked with God right through "the veil" into His Presence. When Jesus steps back through the veil then believers who are walking with Him as Enoch was will also be able to walk through the veil into God's Presence. They will enter the "Presence of his Glory" with great joy and share his majesty and power. It is possible to not "see" death. (Jn 8:51,11:25,26) This does not contradict Hebrews 9:27. All die; we either die because of sin or we die to sin. (Rom 6:4) Some people have died more than once, for example Lazarus. This scripture in Hebrews discounts the fallacy of reincarnation; everyone has one life and after that comes judgment. However, Enoch did not "see" death. (Jude 14,24,25) He prophesied that Jesus will return to earth. The coming age will be the "Enoch Age"; the Age of Resurrection. (Lk 20:35,36) In this Age those who follow Jesus will walk through the veil. In 1 Cor 15:51 Paul described a "mystery". He chose his words very carefully when he said 'this corruptible (subject to death) must "be clothed" with "incorruption" (*861 unending existence, imperishableness*) and this mortal shall "be clothed" with immortality (*110 deathlessness*). The dead (corrupt) will be raised and the living (mortal) will be changed. We will consider Enoch more fully later in this book.

**Thirdly: "Ingathering"**. Christ's "Presence with" and "being along side" his people will explode his resurrection power into the world and his Kingdom will grow and fill the whole earth. Just as there was at his departure a resurrection and an empowering so too at his return there is a resurrection and an empowering. Just as the first believers were able to rise in power and witness to all the world so believers at his return will be able to rise in power and witness to the world. Then the "Kingdom Age", also called the "Day of the Lord", will follow and at the end of this period Jesus submits the Kingdom to the Father. He will reign until he has put down every enemy the *last* to be abolished is death. (1 Cor 15:24-26) Although his own people will have entered glory, death is only fully abolished at the end of that period.

The apostle John wrote that when we see him we shall be like him. (1 John 3:2) Paul said Jesus will transform our humble body and conform it to the body of His Glory by the exertion of the power that he has to subject all

things to himself. (Phil 3:20,21) There is a quickening and energising of the Spirit that will change the believer to rise above the restrictions of the physical body and become conformed to Jesus. When he reveals himself believers will take on the life he has. How will he reveal himself? It will be just as he appeared through history and during the 40 days. He will reveal himself to every person who loves him and is looking for him. (Heb 9:28, John 14:21)

*"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation".* (Hebrews 9:28) The Amplified Bible says he will appear to those who "eagerly, constantly and patiently" wait for him.

However, for the wicked his return will be with mighty angels in flaming fire to bring everlasting judgment away from his presence and glory. (2 Thes 1:7-10, Isa 66:15,16) They will not see his glory or stand in his presence. As the Living Bible puts it *"They will never see the glory of his power"*; and the NIV Bible says they will be "shut out" from the Presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power. The wicked are taken away. His appearance in splendour will take place at his "parousia" at which time the wicked are destroyed. (2 Thes 2:8) This endorses the parables of Jesus concerning the removal of the wicked and the remaining of the righteous to enter his kingdom. The wicked will be removed and Satan will be bound. (Rev 19:17-20) This is described as the great judgment supper when vultures gather to devour the wicked. (Lk 17:37, Matt 24:28, Ezk 39:17)

In that day he will be glorified in his saints and marvelled at by all who believe. (2 Thes 1:10, Isa 66:18) When Jesus returns true believers will be seen to have his same glory! (Col 3:4) The wicked will be destroyed but the rest of the people who remain will know he has come because they will see his glory revealed in his followers who will be changed! This is the "revealing" of God's sons. (Rom 8:19)

### **EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM - REV 1:7**

What does this mean? Yes, every eye will see him but this is clearly *not* in rapture. This cannot mean rapture for those who pierced him await judgment and will not be in any rapture. The apostle John quoted two Old

Testament scriptures; Zech 12:10 and Dan 7:13. These scriptures describe firstly the day when Jesus was crucified and secondly his final judgement when every knee will bow before him, events separated by thousands of years. When John wrote this he did not mean catching away in rapture. The scriptures from Zechariah tell about the conversion of the tribes of Israel which John applied to all tribes on earth. It tells about those who call upon Jesus in repentance; they will mourn, not go in rapture. The "Clouds" of Daniel chapter 7 do not mean rapture either, just read it.

The 'every eye' must be considered in its historical setting. It is conditional. In Joel 2:28 God gave a promise to pour his Spirit upon all flesh. It does not mean it will happen to every single person simultaneously but that it will happen to all who come to the Lord. Peter said it was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost but only 120 people were filled with the Spirit at that time. (Acts 2:16,17) It is an on-going process. Since then many more have received the Spirit. The day will come when every believer will receive the Spirit and also see him "face to face".

It is also a progressive prophecy. The ungodly cannot behold his face, only believers will see him. (Heb 12:14, Matt 5:8, 1 John 3:2,3) Yet, at some time everyone will see him. Psalm 22:16, 17, 29; "*all who go down to the grave will kneel before him*". It is all inclusive; one day all will see him even those who pierced him. John the Baptist also said the same thing. (Lk 3:4-6) He quoted Isaiah 40:5, 52:10 and implied it had already begun; "*The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together*". Yet at that time not everyone saw Jesus. One day it will be complete. One day every single person who has ever lived will see him, every knee shall bow before him and every tongue confess he is Lord. The final fulfilment of this is in Rev 20:12.

When Jesus returns the whole world will see the evidence of His coming in glory. There will be cosmic signs. When the Lord came the first time there was a star. It was visible in the sky and it led the wise men to the baby Jesus. The star was there for all to see. When Jesus comes again there is more than a star. There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. These are visible signs in the cosmos, and on earth there will also be signs and wonders. (Acts 2:19,20, Lk 21:25) The book of Revelation tells of many signs that will take place on earth. They declare the coming of Jesus.

At his coming there are three groups of people on earth: those who love him and are looking for him who will enter his Presence; the wicked who hate him and flee from him and are destroyed at his coming; and then there are millions who have never made a decision. (Joel 3:11-14) The tribes of the earth will repent as his Kingdom is established throughout the whole world. (Matt 24:30) At his coming people throughout the earth will mourn (repent). As people repent they will see his glory and enter his Presence. As more and more people come to him so every eye shall see Him until His Spirit is poured out and his glory fills the whole earth. He will rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. One day all nations will see His glory and bow before Him. (Isa 66:18,23, Jn 3:3, Rom 15:12)

### **THE MEETING**

Scriptures say that unsanctified man cannot see the Lord. (Matt 5:8, Heb 12:14) The ungodly are not able to look upon the Lord. (Rev 6:16) No man can look on his face without a covering, not even Moses. (Ex 34:20) The cloud is the covering. In the OT the people all saw the cloud but only those who entered the cloud saw the Lord. Moses saw Jesus in the cloud. So too the scripture says that when he appears the second time he will come to all those who "are looking for him". (Heb.9:28) This is selective, only those who are actually looking for him and living for him will see him. As in his resurrection only true believers saw him, unbelievers did not. Why did Jesus appear first to the women? It was because they loved him and longed for him. They could not live without him. They were up early at the tomb while it was still dark. They met him first because they were looking for him. Not a single unbeliever saw him at that time.

John saw the Lord on a white horse making war against the wicked. (Rev 19:11) Does this mean that Jesus will come galloping across the sky? Not necessarily. These are figurative terms which describe his power and status. Great warriors rode on white horses as a symbol of their rank. From out the mouth of the Lord came a great sword. This can hardly be literal but illustrates his authority in that he is the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit. (Heb 4:12, Eph 6:17) The book of Revelation is filled with symbols and figures and in this way describes the Lord returning in power to the world.

In Rev 1:10-18 John was "in the Spirit" and saw the glorified Lord



standing in the midst of the candlesticks (symbols of churches) and his face shone like the sun. Then, after hearing the message to the seven churches, John entered the realm of the Lord and described the glory of God in similar terms to Ezekiel. (Ezk 1:1-28, Rev 4:2-11) John saw and entered the Shekinah Glory of Christ and was in the very presence of that Glory. John was "in the Spirit" and entered the heavenly realm. Later he described how the temple of God was opened and the ark of His covenant (a symbol of Messiah) appeared. He described the temple being filled with "smoke" from the glory and power of God. (Rev 15:8, 11:19) John never left the earth, he was in the spirit. These terms describe events that occur in the temple of God with his people.

John said Jesus will come "in the clouds". Jesus used these very words when he told the high priest that he would "come in the clouds of heaven". (Matt 26:64) He quoted from Daniel 7:13,14 and used terms that the high priest knew referred only to Messiah. His "coming" (His Presence) started on the day of Pentecost and is applicable to the whole church age during which time many revivals have swept through the church as the "clouds" of God's Presence have come again and again with Holy Spirit out-pouring. One day Christ himself will stand among his people in his Cloud. Wherever his people are there the "clouds" will be.

His power has been coming and will continue to come until the whole world bows before him. Over the last two thousand years God has established his church throughout all nations. As the Holy Spirit hovers like a cloud over the church in ever increasing power the day will come when Jesus himself will step out of the cloud and be visible, in the Tabernacle of his people in his Cloud of Shekinah Glory.

### **THE CHURCH IS THE TEMPLE OF GOD IN THE NATIONS**

Acts 15:16-18, Gal 3:7,29, Eph 1:22,23, 2:19-22, 1 Cor 3:16,17, 6:19, 12:27, 2 Cor 6:16, Phil 3:3

God is preparing his people for Christ's Presence. During the last week of his earthly life he entered the temple and cleansed it and then was present within it daily teaching and healing the sick. This is a preview of things to come. The true temple is comprised of every true believer. It is not a

denomination but a living temple. Christ alone cleanses it, lives in it and prepares it for his coming reign in Glory. Each individual true believer is a temple in which the Lord dwells by the cloud of his "Presence". He cleanses the temple and indwells it. (2 Cor 5:1-4, 6:16-18)

### **THE TIME OF RESTORATION - Acts 3:19-26**

When the Lord rose from the dead the disciples asked him "*Lord will thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?*" (Acts 1:6,7,8) This was always foremost in their minds, the restoration of all things. Jesus did not correct this or say it was erroneous but he replied it was not for them to know the times the Father had put in his own power. (Matt 24:36) In other words it would indeed happen at the right time. They should wait for the Holy Spirit to come and then get on with proclaiming the gospel.

The apostle Peter foretold times of refreshing followed by times of restoration. He said: 1/ Christ came, (past) 2/ and through repentance refreshing comes from his presence (present) 3/ and Christ will come again and restore all things (future). The Times of Refreshing are followed by Times of Restoration. We need Times of Refreshing right now. Soon the Times of Restoration will be upon us. Paul said we can understand the times and seasons because we are not living in darkness. (1 Thes 5:1-4)

The church is the temple of God planted among the nations. (Acts 15:16,17) It is his body established through the world. It is like a city built on a mountain, the mountain of God, shining with the light of the Glory of God - "Zion of God". (Heb 12:22, Isa 2:1, 60:1) The Lord himself is central in the church and will come suddenly to fill it with Glory. (Mal 3:1, Hag 2:7-9) Any idea that a brick and mortar temple has to be rebuilt in Jerusalem is not necessary. The true temple is the people of God. The Church is built by Christ and set in order by His Holy Spirit. He sets each member in the church and sets his order and authority within it. (1 Cor 12:11,18,28, 1 Pet 2:5) As God cleanses, restores and establishes this spiritual temple its glory will exceed that of the former temple. And just as the Cloud filled the Tabernacle and Temple of the Old Testament so the Cloud of his Presence will fill his church at his return. As Isaiah the prophet declared, the day will come when his glory will be like a canopy over Zion, for the Lord will come and rest on "Mount Zion" and those who gather there. There will be a cloud

by day and at night the brightness of a flaming fire will be over all. The glory of the Lord will be like a canopy and tent to give protection and shelter. (Isa 4:5,6, Jerusalem Bible) His Shekinah Glory will rest on Zion, his redeemed people from all nations. It will be a united body of both Jewish and Gentile believers. When Ezekiel saw this restoration he said that the earth shone with the glory of God. (Ezk 43:2)

## **HE WILL TABERNACLE WITH HIS PEOPLE**

Why did Peter suggest building three booths when he saw the Lord's "Presence" in the Cloud of Glory on the mount of transfiguration? It was because Peter wanted to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles or in other words the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth which is what that feast portrays. What he saw made him think that the Kingdom had arrived. However, what he saw was only a preview of what will happen when Christ's visible Presence comes again in Glory. Then he will be with his people and they will share his Glory and Kingdom.

He will "tabernacle" with them and the Feast of Tabernacles will find its perfect fulfilment - Messiah with his people. The Feast of Tabernacles follows the Day of Atonement which foreshadows his return. Christ the High Priest will step back from the invisible realm and "tabernacle" with his people. A preview of this was seen in the OT at the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) when God filled Solomon's temple with the Cloud of Glory which then remained within the temple. (1 Kings 8:10) The final fulfilment is when - *"I will dwell in them and walk in them"*. (2 Cor 6:16) It is God who indwells his people by his Spirit and this is a foretaste of the eternal state of perfection when "the tabernacle of God" will be among men and he will dwell with them. There will be no more pain, suffering or death and they shall see his face and reign with him forever and ever.

## **THE PLAN OF THE TABERNACLE**

The plan of both Tabernacle and Temple illustrates the spiritual path into God's presence. There was only one door which led to the altar. From there the shed blood was taken into the Holy Place where the priests daily ministered to God. The High Priest once a year stepped through the veil into the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, where the Shekinah Glory of God's

Presence was. The route into God's presence has not changed. There is only one door to enter, one sacrifice to trust in and one God to come to.

We are told that these things are types and shadows of reality. (Heb 8:5, 9:9) When Jesus died the veil in the temple was rent showing that the way into the Presence of God was open. Access is only possible to those who have been washed in the blood of Christ. Believers can in a spiritual way pass through the veil and enter the Presence of God. (Heb 9:3-12, 24-28, 10:19-25) By "walking" in fellowship with him believers are able to constantly live in His Presence, "within the veil". In the Old Testament the presence of God was displayed in the "cloud", which came to abide within the veil of the Holy of Holies. The actual cloud may no longer be visible as it was then but the Presence of God is still real and can be experienced. It is His Glorious, Omnipotent, Omniscient Holy Spirit. In fellowship with him believers can experience the constant Presence of God dwelling in them. In fact, at conversion Jesus himself enters and *indwells* the believer by his Spirit. The believer is then able to walk in fellowship with God. (Rom 8:9, Col 1:27, 1 Jn 1:1-2:6)

From time to time some people have actually seen the Lord and the day will come when at his "parousia" Christ's Presence will visibly appear and believers will see him face to face in His SHEKINAH GLORY. The "revelation" of Jesus Christ is a Greek word, "apokalupsis", meaning "uncovering" and is closely akin to "apokalupto", which means "to unveil". (Rom 8:19, 1 Cor 1:7, 2 Thes 1:7, 1 Pet 1:7,13) At his "parousia" the veil will be removed and Jesus will again become visible to believers who will be able to enter and share his Glory. His people will be like angels and have access to the spirit realm and they will enter through the veil into his Presence. Immanuel, "God with us", will tabernacle with his people. They will know his constant Presence abiding with them and have permanent access to him. He will return just as he promised and will set up a Kingdom which will grow in power and glory. His Kingdom will be unlike anything previously experienced for it will be spiritual and eternal.

### **CHRIST INDWELLS BELIEVERS**

Jesus said that there were many "dwelling places" in his Father's house and that he would prepare a place for believers. The main focus of his

teaching is that believers will be united with him just as he is with his Father. Those that love him will be loved by his Father. Jesus declared that both the Father and Son will make their abode, or "dwelling place", in the believer. He emphasised that he will "come again and receive them unto himself". Where he is there they will be also. The emphasis is unity with God whether in heaven or on earth. (John 14:1-11, 20,23, 17:20-24)

In the closing chapters of Ezekiel the prophet described a time when God's glory will fill his temple and he will dwell among them. (Ezk 43:1-7) In the final verse of the last chapter of Ezekiel the prophet made a significant statement. After describing the city of God he declared that its new name will be "LORD Shammah", the "Lord is there". (Ezk 48:35) The Lord will permanently abide with and be at one with his people.

Believers in Jesus may seem small and unimportant but they are citizens of God's kingdom. When the King returns his people will become the most significant people on earth and will rule and reign with him. The "mustard seed" of God's Kingdom will grow and fill the whole earth. Then the days of church denominations will be over and there will be no place for false religions. The only thing that will count is where the King's Presence is real in the living Temple of his people established to contain his power and glory, to judge the nations and teach the world the righteous acts of God. His power will be released into his people who will take control of the world. Great miracles, healings and conversions will take place. As his Kingdom grows it will fill the world and all nations will come under its authority. This will include people of every nation. (Dan 7:14,18,22, Rev 11:1,15, 12:10, 5:10) They will be obedient to Jesus.

There is a new day coming, the Times of Restoration. The days of church as we have known it will be over, the Kingdom will come in new power. In the last 2000 years the church has comprised largely Gentiles. This was the "time of the Gentiles" and the division between them and Jews grew greater and greater. Those days are nearly over. A "new man" comprising both Jew and Gentile believers will fully come. (Eph 2:14-16) A great move of God will sweep Jewish believers into the Kingdom. Jesus will "confirm the covenant" and resurrection life will come into the world. The next part of this book considers how this will happen.

## **BOOK 2 : JESUS WILL CONFIRM THE COVENANT. THE MEANING OF GABRIEL'S MESSAGE AND THE TIME OF GLORY - DAN 9:1-27**

The book of Daniel contains important Bible prophecies about God's plan through history. Because of this Satan has done everything possible to cause confusion about them and to keep their proper meaning hidden from God's people. Consequently their importance has been missed. There are now so many different and confusing interpretations most people do not even want to try to consider them. However, these prophecies are not too difficult and there are good commentaries on most of them. One reason why there is confusion about them is that some church teaching has changed the periods mentioned in them from days into years. (Dan 8:14 12:12) There is no warrant for this, they are proper days and relate to the historical context. So be careful of any teaching that does so.

A very important prophecy in Daniel is found in chapter 9. This is a message given to Daniel from the Angel Gabriel. It is a *key* to understand the first coming of Jesus and also what will happen at the very end of the age when he comes again. As I have said, the enemy has caused great confusion by sowing misleading interpretations about this message. Not only that, but God has also kept its full meaning "sealed" until the end times. (Dan 12:4,9) Let me explain.

This message in Daniel 9 is about the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple which at that time lay in ruins after 70 years of captivity in Babylon. It gave a certain length of time for the restoration to be completed. Not only that, it also told Daniel some five centuries before it was to happen, exactly when Messiah (Jesus) would come and exactly what he would do when he came. Now here is the confusion. Some people misapply the message of what Messiah will do and credit the antichrist with the work of the Saviour! They misinterpret the words "He shall confirm a covenant with many" to mean antichrist will make a 'treaty' with modern day Israel. (9: 24) This is an appalling exegesis of scripture! To say that "covenant" means some kind of peace treaty is entirely wrong. A careful reading of the account in its proper context directs us to the truth about Messiah and what He does. It is Messiah himself who made a covenant, the same word used throughout scripture and the book of Daniel for God's covenant. Further, it is not

antichrist but Messiah who confirmed the covenant. (See Appendix 3.) Let us consider Daniel 9 in more detail.

Daniel was taken into Babylonian captivity as a young person and grew old there. When he understood that the 70 years of Jerusalem's desolation foretold by Jeremiah were nearly finished he realised God was about to act and he began to earnestly pray. (Dan 9:1,2, Jer 25:9-12, 2 Chr36:21-23) In his prayer he reminded God of His covenant. (Dan 9:4) This is what he prayed about and asked God to remember. It is in answer to this prayer that the angel Gabriel came. Gabriel used the same word covenant in his message to Daniel. (Dan 11:22,28,30,32) It is the same word used repeatedly throughout scripture for God's Covenant. Why would the angel or the Bible suddenly change it to mean a "peace treaty", something totally different and way out of context?

There are a number of scriptures in our Bibles that are loosely translated and poorly interpreted and the true meaning lost or distorted. Over many years these errors have led to deviation from the original truth. There are currently in circulation popular Bible translations that have chosen to support an interpretation of Daniel 9:26,27 that is false. It is a serious thing to change the Word of God or put in additions to mean something it does not mean. (Rev 22:18,19) Some commentary notes in some Bibles also support this wrong interpretation. I would suggest you hunt around and get better translations if you have a Bible that says it is antichrist that makes a treaty with Israel. (Revised Standard, New American, King James and Peshitta are better than some Bibles in regard to this portion.) Better still look at the original language. Be aware when you read a Bible that says antichrist will make a treaty with Israel that this is not what the original language says but merely follows an erroneous teaching.

In Daniel 9:26,27 there are two subjects; one major (Messiah the Prince) and one minor (people of the prince). The heart of the message is very clear; it is to give Daniel understanding about the times and ministry of **Messiah the Prince**. This is the entire focus of the message. The priority subject is Messiah not antichrist. The people of the prince are a minor subject and of secondary consequence. Discipline must be maintained to keep the main subject in focus at all times and not become confused by applying the content of the message to the minor subject. This is the correct

way to understand both the message and the meaning of the language.

In Verse 26 there are two subjects: 1/ Messiah Prince is in the first half of the verse is the major subject; 2/ the people of the prince to come is in the second half and is the minor inconsequential subject. When a subject is not clearly stated in language then *correct* interpretation requires it to always refer to the major subject and never a minor.

In the first half of verse 27 "he shall confirm the covenant" must refer back to the major subject, the Messiah Prince, not the minor subject.

The best possible interpretation of this vision which meets all the historical facts is as follows.

### **HISTORICAL FULFILMENT**

At the time of Daniel Jerusalem lay in ruins. The angel Gabriel told him that a decree to rebuild Jerusalem would be issued and from that time to the coming Messiah would be 70 weeks. The word "week" means seven so it is a period of  $70 \times 7$  which is a total of 490. It is also universally understood that it means 490 years. It is directly connected with the 70 years of captivity that Daniel was praying about. (Dan 9:2) The seventy years were nearly finished when Daniel started intense prayer for his people and for Jerusalem. Gabriel came in answer to that very prayer and told Daniel that from a certain decree to rebuild the city until the coming of Messiah there would be seven 70s, in other words 490 years.

This period was divided in three; 7 weeks, 62 weeks and 1 week. The first 7 weeks ( $7 \times 7 = 49$ ) were difficult years during which the rebuilding was opposed. This was in the time of Nehemiah. Together with the next 62 weeks (434 years) there was a total of 69 weeks ( $69 \times 7 = 483$  years) which would be the time when the "Anointed One" would come. Then there would be a final week of 7 years in which Messiah will accomplish certain events; "finish transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy and anoint the Most Holy". These are all accomplished by Messiah Yeshua, Jesus Christ.

Who issued this decree and when did this period start?



Ezra recorded three decrees given by three different kings. They were given by King Cyrus in 537BC (Ezra 1:2), King Darius in 520BC (Ezra 6:8) and King Artaxerxes in 457BC (Ezra 7:12,13,21). He also gave the most important decree of all, that which was given by God Himself. This decree was recorded by Ezra who called it the "**decree of God**". (**Ezra 6:14 9:9**) Take note that God's Decree incorporated all three decrees by kings Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes which together were *one* decree from God. These three kings were all involved with the restoration of Jerusalem. The last of their decrees was issued in 457 BC and Ezra returned to Jerusalem and a great restoration commenced. Later, because of difficulties and opposition the work of rebuilding stopped for a while. These difficulties occurred during the initial period of 7 weeks, in other words the period of 49 years from 457BC. (See Appendix 1) Artaxerxes confirmed with a letter his original decree and work was renewed under Nehemiah in 446BC. (Neh 2:7-9) Note however, that Artaxerxes did not issue a new decree but gave Nehemiah letters based on his original decree of 457BC.

Therefore the 483 year period started from Ezra in **457 BC**. If we count the 483 years from that date it comes to the start of Christ's ministry. (AD 27/28) This is exactly what Daniel foretold, that it would be 69 weeks (483 years) to the "Anointed One", the Messiah. Christ commenced his ministry with his baptism and he was visibly anointed by the Holy Spirit in the form of a Dove showing him to be "Messiah, the Anointed One".

This was confirmed as the exact year that Jesus began his ministry. (Lk 3:1,2) Luke was very precise and dated this year in relation to no less than seven dignitaries. Luke first mentioned the Roman Emperor, Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius started his reign from AD 11/12. Fifteen years from then was AD 27. The Roman Governor was Pontius Pilate. He was governor from AD 26 to AD 36. Herod, Philip and Lysanias were the three Tetrarchs and Annas and Caiaphas were High Priests. Luke pin pointed the date as AD 27. At that time John the Baptist began his public ministry and Jesus followed soon after. (See Appendix 1: Dates of Decree)

Also at the beginning of his ministry when the Jews asked Jesus for a sign he told them that "*in three days he would raise up the temple*". The Jews protested that the temple had already taken 46 years to build. (Jn 2:19,20) Herod started to build the temple in 19 BC. Therefore the first year of

Christ's ministry was AD 27. At that time he was about 30 years old. Daniel accurately foretold the time of Christ's coming to the exact year! (Lk 4:19 Mk 1:15 Gal 4:4)

Not only that, Daniel also foretold the exact length of Christ's ministry; three and a half years during which He confirmed the covenant. It is significant that Jesus ministered for three and a half years, a length of time that many Bible teachers ignore and yet is generally accepted as true. During this time He taught the Kingdom of God, healed the sick, raised the dead, defeated demons and forgave sinners. He did exactly what the angel declared – He **"confirmed the covenant"**. Christ ministered for three and a half years and during this time fulfilled the first half of the 70th week. He *"confirmed the covenant"* with signs and wonders. It was God's Covenant that he confirmed. (Lk 7:20-23)

The Hebrew word to confirm is *gabar* and means to be strong, to be valiant, to strengthen and is the root from which the name of Gabriel (*Gabryl*) is derived. It is translated in Isaiah 42:13 as *prevail*. The Hebrew word covenant is the same word used throughout scripture for God's covenant. The statement made by Gabriel to "confirm the covenant" does not mean to *make a peace treaty* as some teachers would have us believe. To say this is appalling exegesis and degrades the Word.

In recent times there have been many so called peace accords between Israel and the nations of the Middle East and there could well be more but none of them are the fulfilment of this scripture. The conditions of this angelic message can only be fulfilled by the Messiah.

Gabriel declared that *after* 69 weeks Messiah would be "cut off". This word is used for the "cutting of covenant". The covenant had to be confirmed or ratified by cutting or, in other words, the shedding of blood. This is exactly what Christ did. At the last supper he established the new covenant and the following day shed his blood for it. He confirmed it. In the "midst of the week" at the crucifixion he "was cut off". (Dan 9:26,27) In the middle of the week after three and a half years he died on the cross. He "cut the covenant" with his own blood thereby establishing it forever.

"In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to

cease". This statement must not be confused with the statements about Antiochus who *forcibly* "takes away the sacrifice". (Dan 8:11) These words are entirely different in meaning and have bad connotations of haughtiness, rebellion and pride. (Strong's 7311 - *ruwm*.) However, the word "cease", used when Messiah "shall cause the sacrifice to cease" means "to observe the Sabbath". (Strong's 7673 *shabath*) It means a rest, cessation, fulfilment, to observe the Sabbath. Whereas Antiochus hated the "Holy Covenant" (Dan 11:30), Messiah confirmed it. We will consider the Covenant of God in greater depth later in this book.

By doing this Jesus put an end to all sacrifice by the supreme sacrifice of himself (Heb 9:26) and when he arose multitudes arose with him. (Matt 27:50-53) It is crucial to understand the fulfilment of the first three and a half years in order to understand the significance of the last three and a half years.

### **THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**

Daniel foretold that after the Messiah was cut off the people will destroy the temple and "*on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate*". (Dan 9:26,27) This was fulfilled by the Romans under Titus when they set up their insignia in the temple and then destroyed it in AD 70. Actually it was Herod who had first placed a golden eagle in the temple. Pilate had also defiled it by slaying worshippers within the temple courts and mixing their blood with the sacrifices. (Lk 13:1)

Jesus foretold the destruction of the temple and nowhere indicated that it would ever be rebuilt. (Matt 24:2,15 Mk 13:1,2) Quite the contrary, he emphasised its complete destruction and the raising of a spiritual temple. He said He was the true temple. (Jn2:19,21) The epistles indicate that believers are joined with Jesus and are now the true temple of God. There are no further predictions that require a rebuilt temple. The spiritual church has replaced the brick temple. If any temple is built in the near future it will not be God's temple. The Lord Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple and it happened just as Daniel 9:26 foretold. It was fulfilled by the Romans just as Jesus foretold. Roman soldiers under the command of Titus, the future Roman Emperor, set up their ensigns and then destroyed the temple and city. The temple was destroyed on the same date that it was destroyed in

586BC. It was a time of awful destruction. This desolation was brought upon the Jewish people because of their rebellion against Rome. Not only that but the Jewish historian Josephus records how the various Jewish factions within Jerusalem fought each other and contributed towards their own their defeat. It was their actions that caused the destruction.

Jesus pronounced judgement upon Jerusalem and the nation. Again and again he warned the national leaders of pending disaster. In his parables he called for repentance and warned of judgement. (Lk 20:9-16, Isa 5:1-7, Matt 21:33-41, 22:2-7 Lk 20:9-16) The destruction of Jerusalem was Divine judgement and the Romans were only instruments sent from a higher power, just as the Babylonians were at the destruction of the first Temple. Jerusalem was destroyed and the people scattered in fulfilment of OT prophecy.

Jesus quoted from Daniel and forewarned the people of this event and told them to flee from Jerusalem. (Dan (9:27, 12:1) Jewish believers of that time remembered his words and fled and escaped the destruction. (Matt 24:15-21, Lk 21:20-24) However, Titus captured a huge number of Jews who had come to Passover. Over a million Jews perished and another half million taken as slaves. (AD66-70) Because some critics question the authenticity of the book of Daniel it is important to know that Jesus taught directly from it and thereby endorsed it as a valid word of prophecy.

Before we go further let us consider a previous event foretold by Daniel and also called the "abomination of desolation".

### **ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES**

Daniel recorded in chapter 8 a detailed explanation of events that culminated in the second century BC when a wicked ruler called Antiochus Epiphanes attacked Jerusalem and stopped all temple sacrifices. He entered the Holy of Holies in 169BC and stole gold and silver vessels. A year later he defiled the temple by setting up an image to Jupiter (Zeus) whom he claimed to be. His title "Epiphanes" means "illustrious god". He sacrificed a pig on the altar, forced Jews to eat swine, stopped all Temple sacrifices and severely persecuted the Jews until eventually after an uprising and protracted conflict the temple was cleansed in 165BC. (1 Maccabees 1:54-

61, 2 Macc 6:2) This event was called the "Abomination of Desolation". (Dan 8:11-14, 11:31) The total period of persecution lasted 2300 evenings and mornings, from a high priest who defected to Antiochus to the cleansing of the sanctuary, from 171 to 165BC. (Dan 8:14) Another way of counting the days works out at just over three years, from 168 to 165BC. At this time Antiochus defiled the temple and stopped temple sacrifices. The Maccabees eventually defeated him. (To understand this period you need to read a good commentary.) The Jewish people at the Feast of Hanukkah on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month Kislev (December) still remember the cleansing of the temple exactly three years after Antiochus defiled it. This was the first "Abomination of Desolation" and at the time of Jesus was already fulfilled.

Jesus warned about the next Abomination of Desolation which was still future in his day and was fulfilled in AD70. Jesus pronounced judgement on Jerusalem and the Romans fulfilled it. This was the second Abomination

There was, however, a third "Abomination of Desolation" foretold by Daniel and to which Jesus also referred. In quoting from Daniel Jesus referred to both second and third events, still future in his day. (Daniel 9:27 12:1,11) This is why the writer of Matthew and Mark adds the comment; "let the reader understand"; we have to work it out.

This third Abomination has not yet happened and is still future. In the end times a certain "king" will exalt and magnify himself above God and plant the "tabernacles of his palace" in the "Holy Mountain". This final prediction is found in Daniel 11:35-45. This portion of scripture is a continuation of what was foretold about Antiochus. Note that the next verse after Daniel 11:45 is Daniel 12:1 and the end times. Remember that the verse and chapter divisions in our modern Bibles were inserted long after it was written so it is just a continuation. In this last chapter of Daniel we are told about a future end time of trouble or "tribulation". (Dan 12:1, Matt 24:21-51) It will last three and a half years or 1290 days and ends in resurrection. (Dan 12:7,11)

How will this final future prediction of Abomination be fulfilled? Once again we need to look at history.

When the Romans destroyed the temple they erected a temple to Jupiter (Zeus) in its place! Antiochus had wanted to do that! When this temple was

later destroyed the mosques were built using materials from the Jupiter shrine and they remain on the original temple site to this very day! The mosques that currently stand on the Holy Mountain are part of the fulfilment of this prophecy written 2500 years ago. (Dan 11:45)

The words "tabernacles of his palace" are interesting to say the least. The Hebrew "tabernacles" ("ohel" - Strongs 168) means tent, covering, dwelling place, tabernacle - temple or religious shrine of worship. The word "palace" means pavilion. A pavilion is a large domed ornamental building often highly decorated with emphasis upon being conspicuous from a distance. Notice that tabernacles is plural and indicates more than one shrine on the Holy Mountain. Mount Moriah is where the Jewish temple stood. Today two mosques stand upon this very site. The fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy is staring everyone in the face! A battle for possession of the Temple area has raged through many centuries and a final conflict will bring about a time of "great trouble". (Dan 12:1) David, King of Israel, originally purchased this site. It was known as the Threshing floor of Araunah on Mt Moriah. (2 Sam 24:15-25) David paid the price in full and offered sacrifice there. It was the original place where Abraham offered Isaac who was a "type" of Christ. (Gen 22:2-14) It was also where King Solomon built the Temple (2 Chr 3:1) and is the same place where Jesus died on Golgotha the highest spot of the *same* mountain. By His sacrifice Jesus paid the Price in Full. If it belongs to anyone it belongs to Jesus. It is his Threshing Floor where hearts are tested and where people are forgiven and saved. (Mic 4:11,12 Sim Liv Bible)

### **"THE MAN OF SIN"**

Furthermore, the mention of the "man of sin, son of destruction" by Paul is already largely fulfilled. (2 Thes 2:3,4) Notice that the description Paul gave of this man came directly from scriptures about the Abomination of Desolation. (Daniel 11:36) Just as the prophecies about the Abomination of Desolation had several fulfilments so does this too. There are many antichrists. Paul seems to have indicated several future antichrists culminating in the finale. Paul used this OT text as his foundation to describe the future "man of sin" who will take the place of pre-eminence in the temple of God as foretold by Daniel. Antiochus claimed to be "god manifest", persecuted God's people, entered the Holy of Holies and attempted to stop all worship of the one true God. Paul likened this "man of sin" to Antiochus.

The Jerusalem Temple was still standing in Paul's day and shortly after he penned these words the prophecy of Daniel 9:27 about the "Abomination of Desolation" and to which Paul referred was fulfilled in an awful way. Titus the Roman general who became Emperor, a status revered by the Romans as being "god in the flesh", besieged Jerusalem and after a period of bitter war breached the walls and entered the Holy Place. The Temple was destroyed in AD 70. This was a partial fulfilment of Paul's words just a few years after he wrote them. Notice that Paul had already told them what would happen (2 Thes 2:5,6) but he may not have wanted to put it in writing because of repercussions from the Roman authorities who were already persecuting believers. In fact Paul would soon be arrested and taken to Rome and killed. What did Paul mean in 2 Thessalonians about the restraining? It may be that he referred to the current Roman Emperor of the time, Claudius, who was renowned for his fairly stable government. God has always used people at different times to hold back the full outworking of sin until the appropriate time. When Claudius died the Empire was plunged into a time of upheaval and rebellion and severe persecutions continued for many centuries. However, there is another more likely explanation. (See Appendix 4: The Falling Away)

A prolonged time of intense persecution took place under the **ROMAN EMPIRE** and Christians were hated, thrown to lions, beheaded and crucified. Subsequent to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 there was a further fulfilment of Paul's words. The Greek word he used for "falling away" or "apostasy" also means rebellion. (2 Thes 2:3 NIV) When Simon Bar Kokhba rebelled against Rome and erected a false altar on the Temple Mount many claimed he was Messiah. He was a violent man, a false messiah and hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed as the result of this rebellion against the Romans. This period lasted three years, from April AD132 to November AD135. He is known as "The son of deception".

However, please note what Paul said the "man of sin" will eventually do; "*he will sit in the temple of God claiming to be God*". (2 Thes 2:4) In Paul's understanding the temple of God means only one thing; it is the body of believers. (Eph 2:19-22 1Cor 3:16-17, 6:19 2 Cor 6:16, Acts 7:48 17:24) Paul was emphatic that "*God does not dwell in temples built with hands*".

After the Roman Empire collapsed the State Church became very powerful

and after a while a new empire grew which is known in history as the **HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE**. This was a marriage of power between the official State Church and the various kings and rulers of Europe. The Roman Empire severely persecuted believers in Jesus and the new empire that grew from the old persecuted them a hundred fold more. When Christianity grew in Europe the State Church became very strong and in a way the head of that church, the Bishop of Rome, replaced the Roman Emperor. A similar trend occurred in the **Byzantine Empire** where the Patriarch of Constantinople became powerful. Regrettably some leaders were ungodly men who committed great wickedness. They claimed to represent Christ but in fact had nothing of the Spirit of Christ. They claimed divine authority to the extent of absolving sins and giving or declining salvation to who ever they willed. The State Churches made people into spiritual slaves and men received adoration and veneration instead of Christ. During the Inquisition millions of people were killed some even burnt at the stake as "heretics". There can be no more horrendous deed committed in the name of God and no greater suffering of believers than this. Millions of others fled from Europe. The Eastern Orthodox Church followed similar trends as the West and the division between East and West intensified as both vied for power. At times they even fought each other. Then in the Reformation not all Protestants had a loving Spirit of Christ and terrible things were done. At times Catholics and others were terribly persecuted. This was the spirit of antichrist foretold by Paul, John and Jesus. (Matt 7:22) Yet through all the stages and developments of the church there have been devout believers in every part of it and in all centuries believers from all the church have been tortured and killed for their faith. Jesus foretold that tares and wheat will grow together until the end. (Matt 13:24-30) (See Appendix 2: Babylon)

There is, I believe, another fulfilment that goes further than what happened in the church. This is seen in the prevailing philosophies of humanism which have infiltrated our thinking. The basic tenet of this is that we are masters of our own destiny and not in need of salvation. The emphasis is that man is his own god and that he and his rights are exalted before all else. This is the original satanic deception. The rights of the individual are foremost; the right to do what one wants being at the heart of it. Under the guise of freedom the individual's rights are supreme and obedience to a higher authority secondary. The values and thinking of today that prevails within much of the "Western Church" and Western society



comes from this mindset, which has intellectual strengths, is analytical and individualistic. It promoted science but without a strong spiritual base; it is science without God, not with God. It has its basis in Greek/Roman philosophy and thinking which is far removed from original "Hebrew Mindset" which is the original thinking of the Bible which places community at the heart of everything, the authority of God central and is more holistic, pragmatic and interactive. In Western culture Humanism prevails, not God. Antiochus was a forerunner of this thinking when he enforced the concept of Greek gods, "pagan" culture, philosophy, religion and values upon the Jews. He forced them, on pain of torture and death, to turn from Biblical values. He showed no respect to the Jewish people, defiled the temple and persecuted the Jewish nation. This was the spirit of antichrist.

This culture has been thrust upon the world through subtle and not so subtle trends. Because of prevailing scientific beliefs we are now told there is no Creator and no higher authority than man himself. People who believe in God are considered stupid and uninformed. Atheists use the Theory of Evolution to teach there is no God, something Darwin did not intend. Evolution certainly does not prove there is no God and at best can only suggest the way nature has developed. I know zoologists and scientists who believe in God but they are often the exception. Not only are we now taught there is no God but legislation prohibits prayers in schools, hospitals and elsewhere. Nations that were once considered Christian have abandoned their hard won heritage and are influenced by foreign religions and values. We are entering a time when Christians will yet again be severely persecuted.

This deviation from Biblical values has produced a harvest of abominations. Out of a culture of self exaltation have come values of great destruction. Jesus taught the two greatest principles were to "Love God with all our hearts and minds and to love our fellow men likewise". The two are interrelated; to do one we must do the other. However, today's western culture tries to do away with God through "science" and legislation. By using science to claim there is no God they open the way for immorality of every kind by replacing God's authority with science's authority. Paul warned about this in Romans 1:18-32. In chapter 2 he explained that what we believe about God will direct our conscience. (2:14-16) Conscience is an interesting word. When we break it we get con science; false science. False science

degrades the role of higher divine authority and will ultimately lead to broken conscience. Another word is omniscience. Mans' search for knowledge has done away with the only One who has it. When mankind rejects God or replaces God with a false god the consequences are predictable; non-science or nonsense. In some western nations prayers are no longer allowed. Nations legislate against it. Is it any wonder that a society that has done so much to eliminate the concept of a just and loving God is plagued with immorality? We are almost back to the days of the Roman Empire when it was illegal to worship any other god but the State Emperor and the Roman gods. To teach there is no God of love and justice is in fact the spirit of antichrist. The "adversary" has been very cunning in his tactics. If he can persuade people there is *no* just and loving God he undermines the foundations of truth. It is not so much the system of governing society that matters but the elimination of the God of truth and justice from society. Much good that Christianity achieved has been undermined by actions that have spawned greed, injustice, racial abuse, taken advantage of poorer people, brought corruption, oppression and violence and used capitalism and its communist counterpart to do so. These abominations were spawned in "Babylon the Great" by the spirit of antichrist. This goes much further than a single city, nation or denomination but is world wide in the end times. Yet despite this believers from all walks of life and faith have stood true. The campaign against slavery was led by Christians as were many other advances both scientific and moral. The spirit of lawlessness started back in the days of Paul and increased through the age. Satan has used different people through history to do his work and will raise up yet another; the final "Man of sin."

### **THE FINAL EVENTS**

There is at this time no temple in Jerusalem. Only a few Jewish people want to build a temple but if they succeed it will not be God's temple. The majority of Jews believe that any future temple will only be built *after* Messiah comes. There is no need for another temple. Since Jesus died on the cross all further sacrifice is an abomination to God. The earthly temple was only a shadow of the spiritual temple which is not made with hands. The true temple is spiritual, made of people and all those who comprise that temple and worship in it are known to God. (Heb 8:1-13 9:11,24,25 Rev 11:1) However, the "earthly court" still remains on the temple mount. (Rev 11:2)

Through history many nations have claimed it. For many centuries Jerusalem has been the centre of religious conflict for the three main religions contending for it; Judaism, Christendom, Islam. The city has been filled with violence. Although Jerusalem is called the city of peace it has a violent and bloody history. Different religions have fought over it; Jews fought Romans, 'Christians' fought Muslims, and Muslims and Jews fight each other. Why has it been fought over so many times through history? Satan has always craved to control it and *"sit on the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north"*. (Isa 14:13,14 Ezk 28:14) In the end time there will be a conflict over Jerusalem. It will last for 42 months, the end time of three and a half years.

### **THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT - (Mal 3:1-3)**

You may ask, "Why am I telling you this"? Let us return to Daniel. (Dan 9:27) It predicts the covenant will be confirmed for one week, in other words 7 years. The person who makes the covenant is the "Anointed One", or Messiah, who is the subject of the message. Correct language usage requires that "he" must refer to the major subject. It is the Messiah who confirms the covenant which is not a so-called peace treaty but the Covenant of God.

Jesus fulfilled the first half of the final week of 7 years by his ministry of three and a half years, something many Bible scholars seem to ignore. In a physical body and subject to earthly restrictions Jesus completed the first three and a half years. He was opposed by the Devil and demons, by wicked men, world rulers and religious leaders. He healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead and exposed wickedness. He cleansed the temple. (Mal 3:1-3) Jesus as the Messenger of the Covenant proclaimed the Covenant of God and fulfilled the first half of the week. In the middle of the seven years he was killed, "cut off", in exact fulfilment of Daniel and other OT scriptures. However, he rose and walked again upon the earth for 40 days of triumphant victory before he ascended. The two messengers on the Mount of Olives told the disciples he will come again in the same way he left and Daniel foretold He will confirm the covenant for a total period of 7 years. But Jesus only stayed 40 days! Where is the last three and a half years? There has been an interruption between the first half and the second half of Daniel's final week and three and a half years are still to be fulfilled in the

future in which he will once again "Confirm the Covenant". There is a gap between the first half of the week and the second half of the week. It is during that time that the Gospel has gone to the Gentile nations. It is also the time in which Jewish people were dispersed throughout those nations. Jesus will himself return and fulfil the last part of the week, the last three and half years. The 40 day period of his resurrection was a preview of his Glory when he returns. During those 40 days he had a glorified body and that is how he will return and continue. He will come in the same manner he left; in Glory with all power and authority. It will be a Time of Glory.

### **WHEN WILL THE LAST THREE AND A HALF YEARS TAKE PLACE?**

In the last chapter of the book of Daniel we read that "Michael" will stand up and there will be a time of great trouble lasting three and a half years. (Dan 12:1-3)

Some people say that the final half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week took place immediately after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and was fulfilled at the time of Stephen's martyrdom. However, nothing in scripture endorses this. Others say that it was fulfilled at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews in AD70. Again, all though Jesus foretold that event there is no scripture to show it was the fulfilment of Daniel's last three and a half years. How can we know this? Well, its simple, Daniel foretold a resurrection at this time but it did not occur on either occasion. (Dan 12:13) There was a resurrection when Christ arose but that was at the end of the *first* half of the week. The *final* half of the week will also have a resurrection but it is still future as John explained in Revelation.

It is during this time that Jesus will "Confirm the Covenant". Jesus will suddenly come to his temple in his resurrection power as he was during the 40 days. He will take up where he left off. When he came the first time he entered his earthly temple and drove out the merchants and cleansed it. When he comes the second time he will not come to an earthly temple built with stone but a spiritual temple. As refiner and purifier he will cleanse it; many will be purified, made white and refined. (Dan 12:10)

- He calls to the church to prepare; *repent from known sins and come out of worldly Babylon*. The world systems and values of falsehood

including apostate Christendom will be destroyed. Believers must come out from them.

- Just as the church must come out of the world in a spiritual way so too He calls the *remnant* of His ancient people out of the nations to return to Him in repentance. Many Jews have come out of the nations and back to the land in preparation for this final great move of God.
- He commands the peoples of the world, the multitudes in the “Valley of Decision”, to repent. All people everywhere will be given a chance to do so. (Joel 3:14)

There will be a great end-time repeat of His majestic ministry, this time not confined to the people and land of Israel but worldwide. He will reveal his Glory.

## **WHO IS MICHAEL?**

In Daniel we are told Michael is the “chief prince”, the Great Prince of Daniel’s people. In the NT we are told he is the archangel. He is evidently a very powerful warrior who fights for and protects Israel. His name means “Who is like God”. Let us consider who he is and what he does. In Daniel he is introduced as “one of the chief angels”, (Dan 10:13) The Hebrew word “one” means “first in rank”; hence the “first or archangel”. He is “the Great Prince of your people” (10:21, 12:1).

### **1/**

i/ In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 we are told that Jesus returns with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the dead are raised.

ii/ Yet in John 5:25,28 Jesus said that His voice raises the dead. Can there be two voices? How can an angel raise the dead? Only Jesus can do that, He alone is the Resurrection. His voice *is* the voice of the archangel.

### **2/**

i/ In Revelation 12:7 we read that Michael and his angels fought against Satan and his angels. There are two armies, God’s and Satan’s. So God’s angels are also Michael’s angels and he leads them as their commander.

ii/ Yet in Revelation 19:11-14 we learn the armies of heaven follow the Lord Jesus, *He* is their commander.

In the OT we read that the "Captain of the armies of the Lord" is none other than the Angel of the Lord. (Josh 5:13-6:2) Joshua removed his sandals and worshiped him; the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus. All appearances in the OT of the **"Angel of the Lord"** are appearances of the Lord Jesus, not a created angel but the **"Angel of His Presence"**.

So there is:

The "Angel of the Lord" is the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus.

He is Captain of the armies of the Lord.

He leads the armies of Heaven.

He is the Word of God.

He is the archangel who raises the dead with His Voice.

'Michael' therefore must represent Jesus just as Melchizedek also fully represented him. (Heb 7:17) The mystery about Melchizedek is that he represented Jesus so fully that he seems to be one with Him. He had no earthly lineage but was made like unto the Son of God. He was the King of Salem (Peace) and the King of Righteousness. He met Abraham with Bread and Wine. (Heb 7:1-8) These are all things that relate only to Jesus. Both Melchizedek and Michael are so fully identified with Jesus that they are united in him and act as him. Both are identified with Jesus, the pre-incarnate Priest and Prince of God's people. The "Angel of the Lord" is an OT title for Jesus. Jesus is not a created angel but is divine as shown in his OT names (Isaiah 9:6) and many scriptures. It seems that Michael the Archangel is one with Jesus in the same sense as the OT "Angel of the Lord" and is first in rank over all others, the leader and commander of God's army. It is in this context that Gabriel refers to Michael as "first of the chief princes". Some may ask, "If Michael is at one with Jesus why did he say "the Lord rebuke you" and not rebuke Satan himself? (Jude 9) However, this also happened when the Lord rebuked Satan concerning Joshua the high priest. (Zech 3:1-7) *"The Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee oh Satan"*. Michael does the same. As the "archangel" of resurrection and contending for the body of Moses Michael rebuked Satan with exactly the same words. Michael represents the Lord. In Jewish thinking Michael is identified as Messiah. He is the full representative of Jesus.

So let's put Daniel chapter 12 into its right context. Jesus the Great Prince of Israel, the Captain of the Armies of the Lord, will stand up and there will

be a time of trouble when he will Confirm the Covenant. He will start where he left off except this time he will not be in a physical earthly body! This time he will be in his resurrection body of glory. What will happen during this time? It is a time of trouble (v1), those found written in the book will be delivered (v1), many are raised (v2), the wise will shine in glory and those who turn many to righteousness will be like stars (v3), many will be purified, the wicked will continue in their wickedness (10). How long will it last? Three and a half years, 1290 days (v6-12). It will be a time of great spiritual conflict. It will also be a Time of Glory

Jesus described this time in his discourse about his coming "Parousia Presence". (Matt 24:15) It will be a time of over whelming victory for his people. He will come again to earth and take unto himself his power. Those who love him and know him will see him in his glory. He will not be confined in a physical body or place but will be in his resurrection power and glorified body. Nothing will overcome him. He will have no limitations or be restricted in any way. He will not walk the dusty roads of Israel but will move world wide, appear to and empower His people, do great miracles and defeat all Satan's power.

### **THE LAST THREE AND A HALF YEARS**

What we read in Daniel chapter 12 we find in Revelation. Once again we find the three and a half years during which Michael fights the dragon followed by the resurrection of God's people. (Rev 12) This is very significant as the apostle John in about AD96 obviously considered the last half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week to still be in the future. In other words the horrendous events of AD70 mentioned by Jesus had already occurred but had not fulfilled this prophecy. So the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week had been fulfilled by the Lord and the second half was not yet fulfilled. Therefore, there is a gap between the two halves which is the extended "Time of the Gentiles". John placed the second half at the very end of this time. The gap is between the two halves of the 70<sup>th</sup> week and the second half of that final week is still to be fulfilled. This is important to grasp.

Now there is another vital thing to understand. When Jesus taught about the end times from Daniel chapter 12 he said that "*except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those*

*days will be shortened*". (Matt 24: 21, 22 Mk 13:19,20) What days did he mean? He was quoting the days of Daniel 12, to be exact 1290 days for they are his direct reference point. He did not say by how much they will be shortened.

However, the apostle John in Revelation tells us by how much. In Daniel the end time of three and a half years is 1290 days; in Revelation the end time is 1260 days; it is shortened by 30 days. The question is what happens during that time?

### **THE LAST and 7<sup>th</sup> TRUMPET** **The 1290 DAYS are cut short to 1260 DAYS**

In Daniel 12:6 Daniel heard an angel ask "*How long to the end of these wonders?*" Then a 'man' clothed in linen held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven and answered "a time, times and a half" or 1290 days. This 'man' had the appearance of the Lord. (Dan 10:5-7,11)

In Revelation (10:5-7) John writes "*and the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever ...that there should be time no longer but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God is finished as he hath declared to his servants the prophets*".

This takes place at the sound of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, yet no trumpet sounds momentarily for the very nature of a blast requires an extended sound. It is interesting that we are told that the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, the last in the entire Bible, sounds over a period of days (Rev 10:7). In fact between this verse when it is about to sound and when it fully sounds (Rev 11:15) there is a period of 42 months or 1260 days which is three and a half years. Notice that when it is about to sound the "mystery of God is finished". (1 Cor 15:51-53 1 Thes 4:16,17 Eph 5:32). By comparing the three woes (Rev 8:13, 9:12, 10:7, 11:14,15) we see that the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet will sound at the *start* of the two prophets' ministry and fully sounds *after* the 1260 days. It is clear that the last 1290 days are cut short, for the sake of the elect, to 1260. This is what Jesus himself said would happen. (Matt 24:21,22) When the trumpet sounds the great mystery of God is finished. The trumpet (the voice of the Lord - Rev 1:10) sounds for each individual who belongs to Christ as he reveals



himself to them. This transformation releases Christ's resurrected life into each and a worldwide explosion of God's power follows.

As we continue to read we see that when the trumpet *fully* sounds the dead are judged, his servants rewarded and the time of wrath comes when those who destroy the earth are themselves destroyed. (Rev 11:15-18)

Then *"the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever."*

May I draw your attention to the Feasts of Israel which we will consider again later in this book. The Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) is held on the first day of the seventh month and is followed by ten days, the "Days of Awe", and then the Day of Atonement. During this time Jewish people believe that the names of those who are written in the Book of life are sealed. The trumpet sounds to prepare people for the Day of Atonement. It is a time of great repentance. The books are opened. It is said that the righteous are judged on the Day of Trumpets and the wicked are doomed on the Day of Atonement. It is the most awesome time of the year.

## **THE RESTORATION OF GOD'S ANCIENT NATION - THE "SIGN" – Rev 12:1**

Jesus said that at his coming there will be a *"sign in heaven"*. (Matt 24:30) There will be visible signs in the cosmos but this sign is not necessarily a physical phenomenon up in the sky but a sign of great spiritual significance. In Revelation chapter 12:1 we read of a *"great sign in heaven"* which is described symbolically as a woman clothed with the sun, moon and stars. She gave birth to a child who was caught up to heaven. (12:5) This woman is symbolic of the nation of Israel from where the Messiah, born of Mary, came in the flesh. To understand the symbols of Revelation in the NT one must find their origins in the OT. This symbol comes directly from the dream of Joseph and represents Israel. (Gen 37:9, 10, Jer 4:31, Isa 13:6-11, Mic 4:10, 5:3, Ps 89:34-37, Jer 31:35-37, 33:24) The 12 stars are symbolic not of angels but of the tribes of Jacob. There are many scriptures in the OT and the NT that foretell the return of Jews to the land from where they were dispersed. Some people would discount this and say these scriptures no longer apply but there is no other way to understand them.

Israel is a controversial subject for many people. Indeed the very existence of Israel causes great friction in today's world. It is a tiny land and yet it is constantly in the news. Almost everyone in the world has heard of it. And it is the one thing that has divided people for thousands of years and still does. There are many different ideas about Israel and the role it has played in history and today. There are so many conspiracy theories that implicate Israel and distort its significance in one way or another that I am unable to deal with them in this book. What I have found is that only when our hearts are pure are we able to receive revelation from the Holy Spirit about any matter. If our hearts are not pure in a certain area then that area will remain closed to us and we will believe all sorts of erroneous things and be deceived by what sounds like truth. When one's heart is not pure one can read a scripture again and again and not understand it. The purer our hearts the more revelation and spiritual understanding we will receive. This is especially true of Israel and the Jews. In this book therefore I look only at scripture and will not try and deal with the false teachings and conspiracy theories that have been convincingly sown over many years about Israel and the Jews.

### **THE FIG TREE**

Jesus told a parable of the Fig tree. We will consider in this book how this parable portrays the nation of Israel and how Jesus foretold both their scattering and re-gathering. (Luke 13:6, Matt 24:32, Luke 21:20-33) He said they would be left desolate and would "*see him no more till they cry again 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'.*" (Matt 23:39) The return of Jews to the land of Israel is the "*great sign*" that God will intervene on earth and that a remnant of God's ancient people will receive Jesus as Messiah. Even now there are many Jews in the land who believe in Yeshua. Much of this remnant or their children will at some time experience spiritual rebirth. The Prophet Zechariah, Ezekiel and others describe their restoration when they are back in the land. (Zech 12:10-14) Their rebirth is linked to their return. We will consider the Fig Tree in more detail later.

### **THE OLIVE TREE**

The apostle Paul taught about the restoration of a remnant of Jews. The Olive Tree is mentioned often in OT scriptures and Paul figuratively likens

this tree to the Jewish people. He shows how the Hebrew roots support the branches of the Church and even though Jews were broken off and Gentiles grafted in the day will come when Jews will be grafted back in. (Rom 11:13-33) It is the Olive tree that supports the Gentile branches. Many Christians seem to have forgotten that our Saviour was Jewish from the tribe of Judah. One cannot be more Jewish. God has always used the Jewish nation to show his dealings with mankind. In the past God dealt with the Jew first and then the Gentile. We are coming to a time in which God is to deal with all nations and it will be with his ancient nation first. God has not totally cast them away but will restore the *remnant* that come to him. Jews will come to Yeshua. If the past rejection of Israel meant reconciliation to the world then their future acceptance will bring *life from the dead*. (Rom 9:24-27, 11:15, 23-29, Gal 5:6) It is the conversion of Israel that brings resurrection life into the Church and the world. The prophet Ezekiel saw a Valley of Bones which represented the whole house of Israel raised and restored. (Ezk 37) This has never happened till this time and still awaits a future complete restoration. It is vital for full renewal of the Church. We will consider this later.

It is to Mount of Olives that the Lord will return. (Zech 14:4) Long after Zechariah wrote this Christ did indeed stand upon the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem experienced the most horrific destruction when the Romans laid siege to it. Since that time Jerusalem has indeed been trodden under foot by the nations. Zechariah foretold a final war and although the city will be divided the Lord will return with his "Holy Ones" and will fight those nations. In that day He will stand on the Mount of Olives. Zechariah declared it will never be destroyed and all nations will serve the Lord. (Zech 14:16-11) Jeremiah declared the same thing. He said Jerusalem will be built and never be destroyed "to the end of the age". (Jer 31:38-40 Amp Bible)

The "sign" of restored Israel is the *great sign* to show the times and seasons of God. This sign is of such a nature that over the last 100 years the whole world has seen and heard it. This little Nation of Israel has been in world news almost every day. People must be pretty blind not to have seen it. Yet most of the world is ignorant of its true meaning. The "*remnant*" of Israel are descendants of those who have suffered the holocausts and persecutions of the last two thousand years and have returned to the land. They are able to trace their history to those very same people and DNA tests support this. They will be the first nation to fully repent at Christ's return.

However, when he returns he will be King over all the earth. He calls all nations to repent. (Zech 14:9, Rom 11:15) We are in the times of God's refreshing; the time for repentance and preparation for the coming restoration. (Acts 1:6 3:19-21) We will consider Israel again later.

### **TWO OLIVE TREES - Rev 11:3-13**

In Revelation during the last three and a half years two mighty prophets will be active on earth. The prophet Zechariah wrote about two prophets of his times called "Olive Trees" who brought life to Israel after years of captivity and destruction. (Zech 4:2,3,11,14) These last end time prophets will have a similar ministry when Jews have returned to the land after the Diaspora. These two Olive Trees will bring restoration to God's people. Their ministry is a repeat of Moses and Elijah's ministry both of which were cut short. They also proclaim warning to the nations and speak very severely to them. (Rev 11:10) They encourage God's people. The Olive Tree represents the people of God (Rom 11) and I believe these two great men will pour strength into God's people. The two greatest OT prophets, Moses and Elijah, both had mysterious ends. God commanded Moses to die yet he was not sick or infirm. Moses was obedient but immediately there was a confrontation over his body. (Jude 9) Why did Michael want his body? Not to put in a mausoleum but to raise it. Jesus was the first person to be resurrected so Moses must have been raised like Lazarus was raised, in his natural body. He will return and suffer death. Elijah also had a mysterious departure. His ministry was extended for the end times. (I will deal later in this book with the role of Enoch.)

Elijah's ministry lasted for three and a half years but was cut short when he was taken in a chariot. (2 Kings 2:11) During that time there were significant miracles. It did not rain for three and a half years; a dead boy was raised and the meal and oil did not run out. (1 Kings 17) The three and a half years ended with a mighty conflict between him and all the false prophets of Baal. Elijah called the people back to faith and back to God. The Jewish people at the time of Jesus believed that Elijah was to come as forerunner of Messiah. (Matt 17:10-12) This is foretold in the final chapter of Malachi where Elijah is mentioned together with Moses. (Mal 4:5) Elijah's ministry was one of restoration. Jesus reiterated that Elijah will still come and restore all things (future) but he also likened John the Baptist to Elijah.

John the Baptist came in the "spirit and power" of Elijah. (Matt 17:11,12, Luke 1:13-17) He was not Elijah but had the ministry of Elijah. Jesus said that just as John the Baptist had been rejected and killed so he would be also. It was because of this very rejection of both John and Himself that Elijah still had to come and restore all things. (Mk 9:11,12) Elijah is not coming in reincarnation. He was taken out of his age to come back later.

The Jews also believed in a second prophet. (Jn 1:25) Who is he? Moses is the foremost prophet of Israel and linked with Elijah. (Deut 34:10-12, Mal 4:4-6) Note that their power includes stopping the rain (Elijah did that), turning water to blood and smiting the earth with plagues (Moses did that). (Rev 11:6, Js 5:17) Elijah and Moses are the two most important prophets of Israel. They represent the "Law" and the "Prophets". Moses in his time withstood and defeated the most powerful world leader of his day. The future of the nation that had been in slavery for centuries was at stake. He challenged the greatest power of that time with the words "Let my people go". Elijah exposed and defeated all the False Prophets. During the last three and a half years this will be repeated by the two "Olive Trees". We must be familiar with the stories of Moses and Elijah to grasp what this will mean for Israel, the church and the world in the end days.

This future period is a time in which God will demonstrate his power. It is designated as three and a half years and not seven. Both Daniel in the OT and the apostle John in the NT refer to a future time of only three and a half years. (Dan 12:7:11, Rev 11:2, 12:6,14, 13:5) The two Olive Tree prophets will minister in Jerusalem (Rev 11:8) and there will be worldwide coverage of their ministry. (Rev 11:8-10) They will have great power and although attacked by Satan and eventually killed they will rise in victory and enter the "cloud" of God after three and a half days. (Rev 11:11,12) Please bear in mind that Elijah never died and Moses must have been restored to natural life. (Jude 9) Why would Jude draw attention to the fact that God wanted the body of Moses? He must have been raised to life. However, this is not resurrected life for Jesus was the first to rise in Glory. Moses and Elijah were *not* raised in glorified bodies. Neither will they be reincarnated. They are coming back as an extension of their ministries into the end days.

Just as there was a period of three and a half years to usher in the church age so there is a period of three and a half years to usher in the Kingdom

age. During this period God's prophets will declare his word with great authority. In the days of Elijah God judged all false prophets and in the days of Moses God judged Pharaoh (a type of antichrist) in order to demonstrate His own power. Pharaoh was no match for God who delivered his people with great miracles. In the last three and a half years God will again intervene and once more reveal his power. So much prophetic teaching has emphasised the coming of antichrist that people have forgotten the coming of Christ! These two prophets will have God's great power.

Something awesome is going to happen during the last three and a half years! There is going to be a supernatural intervention by God in the most amazing manner that will bring a harvest of millions of souls. Those of God's people who are looking for him and living for him will have a Transfiguration meeting in the Shekinah Cloud of Glory. They will have the experience that Peter, James and John had on the Mount of Transfiguration except this transfiguration will be permanent.

### **THE WOMAN CLOTHED IN SUN, MOON AND STARS – Rev 12**

Let us consider in more depth the Woman of Revelation 12. Revelation chapters 11, 12 and 13 are a series of visions all looking at the last three and half years from different perspectives. Chapter 11 is a view of the powerful ministry of the two Prophets; chapter 12 is the time when the Woman and her children, believers in Christ, are persecuted but protected (Israel Ps 2:9, Isa 7:14, 9:6, Rev 12:12:17,2:27); chapter 13 is about Satan and the False Prophet who carry out this persecution.

Let us look at the sign of the "heavenly woman clothed with the sun, moon and stars". We need to look at OT scriptures to understand the symbolism. Clearly, the woman is Israel who gave birth to Messiah who Herod tried to kill when a young child and who was caught up to God's throne and will rule all nations with a rod of iron. (Matt 2:16) She also gave birth to the "rest of her offspring", Gentiles who believe and follow the Lord Jesus. (Rev 12:17)

The symbolism in Revelation comes from Joseph's dream about the Patriarchs of Israel. (Gen 37:9:10) The interpretation of his dream indicates that the stars represent the twelve sons of Jacob. The symbolism of

Revelation has not changed and still represents the twelve tribes of Israel. The dragon threw a third of the stars to the earth. These are not fallen angels. We must remain within the context and symbols of scripture. The stars represent Jacob's 12 tribes. The persecution of Jewish people throughout history culminated in the greatest holocaust ever committed when Hitler destroyed over a third of them during the Second World War. Immediately after WW11 the remnant fled to "their land in the wilderness". From our present position in history we look back to the persecution of Jews over the last two millennia. We also foresee the final persecution of the end times. (Zech 11:4-7) The dragon swept away a third of the stars. (Rev 12:3,4) These were not angels but people, Jews to be specific. This happened during the great pogroms and especially the Holocaust in WW11. A third of the Jews were swept to destruction but out of that came the rebirth of the Nation of Israel and the promise of full restoration. WW11 was the labour pains for present day Israel. The woman fled to the wilderness to be nourished there for three and a half years. These are the remnant of Jews in the land. (Rev 12:14,17) However, Jews and Christians are both persecuted. *"The dragon...went to make war with the rest of her offspring...who ...have the testimony of Jesus"*.

Isa 66:7-16 *"Before she was in labour she gave birth...she delivered a male child...shall a nation be born in a day...as soon as Zion was in labour she gave birth to her children...rejoice with Jerusalem...for behold the Lord will come.."* Jer 30:6,7 *"Ask and see whether a man is ever in labour with child? Alas! For that day is great...it is the time of Jacob's Trouble but he shall be saved out of it."*

The woman of Revelation 12 represents the Nation of Israel. Why have the Jews been persecuted more than any other people on earth and how is it that they have survived the most malicious attempts to annihilate them?

### **MIGHTY MICHAEL**

After John wrote about the Woman he described how Michael will fight and overcome the dragon. (Rev 12:7-11) Where last did we find Michael in the Bible? He was in Daniel chapter 12, during the last three and a half years. Now in Revelation we once again are told what he will do in the last three and a half years. Michael, representing the Lord Jesus, will stand up

and there will be a time of great trouble. He will fight against the devil and cast him to the earth. This began in the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week during the first three and a half year ministry of Jesus (Lk 10:18 Jn 12:31) and will be completed in the final half at his return. In the days of Jesus' earthly ministry Satan fell from the heavenly realm. He was by no means neutralised for he has continued for 2000 years to attack and oppose God's people. (1 Peter 5:8) In Revelation we read that "*the accuser of our brethren accused them day and night but they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives to death.*" (Rev 12:10) This war has been going on throughout the past 2000 years of the church age. History has been one long conflict. In the final three and a half years the Lord will once more take up his power and Satan will be cast down. (12:14). Jesus will resume his ministry to Confirm the Covenant and cause it to prevail.

Notice that in Rev 11:19 we read "*the temple of God was opened in heaven and the ark of his covenant was seen in His temple*". What does this mean?

The Ark of the Covenant is a symbol of Jesus the Holy Son of God. The original ark was made of acacia wood and was covered with pure gold. This represents both the humanity and divinity of Jesus. It contained the tablets of the Law of God; Jesus is the fulfilment of that Law, the Word of God. It contained the staff that budded; Jesus is the Branch that budded. It contained Manna; Jesus is the Bread from Heaven. It stood in the Holy of Holies within the Cloud of Shekinah Glory; this is Jesus, the Glory of God. The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the Ark with the Blood from the Altar. Jesus is our High Priest who entered the Holy of Holies with his own blood and dwells within the Cloud of Divine Glory.

The temple of God will be opened in heaven and the Ark will be seen in His temple. (Rev 15:5-8) The Ark of the Covenant is a symbol for Jesus. He established the Covenant of God when he was slain and rose again. Let me remind you that the Temple of God is a spiritual Temple made of people. At the sound of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet Jesus is *seen* in it, in other words will appear to believers. It says in Malachi that **The Messenger of the Covenant** will come suddenly to his temple. (Mal 3:1) Who is this? It is Jesus.



## TWO SATANIC BEASTS - Rev 13

Just as there are two prophets of God there are two beasts of Satan. The two "Olive Trees" represent God's Law (Moses) and Prophets (Elijah) and the two beasts represent satanic control throughout history by State-Political power and False Religions. In the book of Revelation they are called the **Beast** and the **False Prophet**. However, we need to bear in mind that they are not just men but are satanic spiritual beings that have worked through different systems and men throughout history.

Revelation chapter 13 tells about these two satanic Beasts who destroy God's people. The *First Beast* is the Beast described in Daniel's vision. (Dan 7:7, 19-21, 2:31-45) It has seven heads and ten horns and represents satanic control through history in powerful nations. These nations follow after the Babylonian Empire. (Dan 2:38, 7:3,17) I cannot at this time go into details about this and recommend you read a good commentary. Sufficient to say that they culminate in a kingdom of iron that persecutes God's people right to the very end. The iron represents the Roman Empire and its progress through centuries of change even to present times. It became what historians call the Holy Roman Empire, also called the Germanic Empire, and the Byzantium Empire which together have become the European Union. What many people do not know is that Hitler's Germany was a continuation of the Roman Empire. In fact the Nazis copied much from the Romans; the Roman Eagle insignia, the Nazi salute and the absolute authority of Hitler as Fuhrer and "emperor". There were other emperors in its history: Charlemagne, Napoleon and others. A final World Union of Nations will arise. This is prefigured in the United Nations. The *Second Beast*, also called the *False Prophet*, is a goat with two horns that speaks like a Dragon. It comes from Daniel's visions about nations in the Middle East that persecuted the Jews and their final fulfilment in the end times. (Dan 8:3-26 and 11:2-45) We have already considered Antiochus who came from the Seleucid Empire and was a forerunner of the antichrist. Out of the Middle East will arise a final antichrist called the "False Prophet". (Rev 16:13 19:20 20:10)

There is another woman in Revelation called "**Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots and Abominations**". To understand this symbolic figure one must understand the history of Israel and again go back to the OT to see its meaning. Babylon is a symbol through the ages of spiritual

bondage, defilement and false teaching. (Isa 14) The Jews went into captivity in Babylon where they endured slavery for 70 years. At times they were forced to worship idols and false gods. Later when they were scattered into many nations they endured centuries in a Babylonian environment of slavery and persecution. These nations became the new Babylon and the State Religions that grew in them severely persecuted the Jewish people as well as many devout and true believers in Jesus. (See Appendix 2)

## **THE GREAT ABOMINATION**

In Revelation we read about an **image** in the end time. This is not the first time an image is worshipped. The first was the golden calf that was set up in the wilderness. Others were various idols of the OT. We also read about an abominable image of *jealousy* in the temple and hearts of the people. (Ezekiel 8:3-17) People can harbour idols of covetousness, greed and envy. (Strong's 7068) All are abominations to God.

In Daniel we read about an abomination committed by Antiochus IV 'Epiphanes' when he set up an image to the god Jupiter (Zeus). It was called the "abomination of desolation". He forced Jews to worship it but many refused and were killed and the Jewish people withstood him and eventually defeated him and cleansed the temple. Since that time the Jewish people have never again worshipped images of any kind. The Jewish experience of Egypt, Babylon and Antiochus has moulded the Jewish mindset to never again worship any image of any kind. Yet in Revelation we are told of another abomination; an image, a number and a mark. (Rev 13:16) How should we understand this? Where does it originate in the OT?

In Daniel 2 we read that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a dream in which he saw a great Image. Daniel interpreted the meaning of the dream as portraying the successive kingdoms of the world: Babylon was the golden head followed by other kingdoms of silver, bronze, iron and clay. Note the declining value of the image's components. Eventually in the days of the toes a great stone from heaven fell upon the feet and toppled the whole image. The head of this Image represented Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom. It was Nebuchadnezzar who later made a great golden image and ordered all people, nations and languages to worship it on pain of death. (Dan 3) It was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits in breadth. When Daniel's three

companions refused they were thrown into the fiery furnace. Even though they were in a fire the Son of God was in their midst and saved them. Fire either destroys or purifies. They were not destroyed but were purified. The furnace represents the test of faith that true believers endure as they withstand the evil of this present age and though persecuted are refined as pure gold. Later when Daniel was persecuted and refused to turn from the Lord and obey Nebuchadnezzar he was thrown to the lions. He also survived. To this day the Jewish people abhor idols of every kind. A great persecution also took place in the days of the early church when believers who refused to worship the Roman Emperor were thrown to the lions. It was a repeat of what happened in Israel under Antiochus.

Sadly historical churches fell into the trap of worshipping images in various forms. In many ways the Church in both East and West took on the image of the Roman Empire. Within the great cathedrals of Christendom are many images that are venerated. Even more serious, by exalting human leaders the Lord was replaced as head of His church. Any church leader who comes between the Lord and his people, the Bridegroom and Bride, is a usurper and harlot and anything that hinders the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in the church is a carnal spirit. Notice that the image Nebuchadnezzar set up was gold. Mammon is the greatest of all idols. (Matt 6:24) The pursuit of wealth disguised as righteousness is one of the greatest deceptions. There is a place for money but it is not worship. (Mk 12:16,17) The Emperor's image was on the coin not God's. Worship of wealth in this present age is the Babylonian "image". (Matt 4:9, 12:16,17, 22:21)

### **THE NUMBER AND MARK IN HISTORY.**

Let us consider the number and mark of the beast and how to understand them. We have to remain within the Biblical historical context of these verses to arrive at the true meaning. Some teachers have said that the mark in the hand and forehead is a computerised chip. A computerised system may be used at some time to number and identify people. The technology for this already exists. However, this is not necessarily the fulfilment of these scriptures.

The number and mark have a spiritual fulfilment for *all ages* including the end time. If the mark were merely a physical mark in the body such as an

incision, tattoo or punching the appropriate Greek word would be *stigma*. However, the word *charagma* is used. (Strong's 5480 *image, idol*) This Greek word is linked to the word *charakter* (5481) (from which we get our English word character). *Charagma* is used for the engraving of an idol whereas *charakter* is used for the image of Jesus. (Heb 1:3) Both words have the same idea of likeness or image of another, of being made into, moulded or conformed after another.

Christ is the "express Image of God" and wants us to be like him. Do we have the likeness of Christ or the likeness of Satan? Are we moulded and shaped into the image of Christ or Satan? Do we take on the nature of Christ or Satan? Again and again believers are exhorted to "put on Christ" and to take on the mind of Christ, to obey him and be filled with His Spirit. It is in this context that John writes in Revelation 13. To fully understand this concept one has to discard the notion that the mark is a physical mark. It is spiritual. It starts in our minds and hearts.

It originates from the OT command to bind God's laws upon our hands and foreheads. (Deut 6:8, 11:18) God wants our every action to be controlled by His precepts and laws. Every thing we do with our hands must be directed from minds obedient to God. It is this truth that Paul the apostle emphasises in Romans chapters 7 and 8. He says the carnal mind is at enmity with God. Again and again he emphasises the need to have our minds renewed in the image of our Creator. (Rom 12:2, Eph 4:23, Col 3:10, Heb 8:10, 10:16, Phil 2:5) God says "*I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts*".

To receive Satan's mark in the hand and forehead is in direct contrast to being sealed by God in the forehead. In Revelation we read that God seals his servants on their foreheads. (Rev 7:3, 14:1, 22:4) This is a spiritual seal and once again goes back to the OT this time to Ezekiel 9:4-6 where those who sigh and cry for all the abominations committed are marked on their foreheads. In the NT we read that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. (Eph 1:13 2 Cor 1:21,22) Satan compels people who worship him to receive his mark and they become his slaves. In contrast God seals those who obey Him and they are His children. People who live by the values of Satan take on his image and forfeit their God-given image. They sell their souls to Satan. They worship the beast.

Most religions compel people to conform to their values and rituals. One can tell who is a Hindu priest because of their robes and behaviour. Some Jewish, Christian and Muslim sects conform in dress, ritual and attitude as do other religions. Various sects and persuasions fall into this trap and people in them can be identified simply by observing their outward image which is replicated in all of them. In extreme circumstances people can completely lose their individuality and become "brain washed" slaves. Many people have been misled and deceived by false leaders and they eventually are made to think and act in obedience to their sect or leader. All these people have the same mindset. How else can one explain how religious people can torture and kill others who do not conform to them? Outwardly people look and act the same because inwardly they have taken on the *charagma* of the one they serve. It is not necessarily wrong to conform to some things. Soldiers wear uniforms. They have been disciplined and taught in the same way for a purpose. However, Jesus wants us to be true to His image, not to that of the world or various religious movements or even to some spiritual leader. Those who obey and follow Jesus are sealed by the Holy Spirit and become His instruments for peace, love and true righteousness.

## **THE MARK**

This satanic mark is primarily spiritual not physical. This is because of the nature of the original OT scriptures that John the writer of Revelation draws from to make an analogy. As a Jew he understood the hidden truths of the OT. His thinking came from the original instruction God gave us to write His laws upon our forehead and to bind them upon our hand. (Deut 6:6-8, 11:18) The language was figurative. God intended us to ensure His laws so filled our minds that they become the guiding principle to all our actions. All our deeds are done by our hands. We should have God's laws written in our minds and thereby live and carry out all our deeds and actions guided by those laws and values. God never intended it to be a physical thing. Again and again throughout scripture the meaning is clear; we are to be filled with His Spirit and to live and function in harmony with His laws. It is within the mind (forehead) that we come to believe, to love, to worship. All our actions should come from that mind. All we do should come from hands directed and controlled by holy minds. As scripture says, we should have "the Mind of Christ".

Let me recap. If one obeys and worships the image of Satan one will conform to his *charagma*. It is his image that 'comes alive' and speaks within that person. That person is controlled by the values of Satan and becomes a walking talking robot doing the will of his master, an instrument of his power even causing others who do not worship that same image to be killed. This is seen in modern day religious fanaticism. But it can be more subtle than blatant fanaticism.

Paul the apostle wrote in Romans 12:1-8 "do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds". In today's world, the emphasis is on getting rich no matter what. A well known Christian wrote "Today's heroes are those who go from poor to rich. Covetousness is promoted with sophisticated advertising; "ambition" is put first even at the expense of others; greed is seen as success. Until we understand our sick society we will not be able to see how we are being squeezed into the world's mould; how much of the spirit of the world we have absorbed". There has been a reversal of Christ's values.

This mark is not confined to the "end times" but has long existed. People in the time of the NT were already in great tribulation. In the early church believers who refused to worship the Emperor or assimilate the values of those days were very often killed. During the first and second centuries the imperial seal of the Roman Emperor was called the *Charagma* - mark. Those who refused to worship the beast or take his mark, in other words not to bow before the Emperor and accept the worldly values of the day, were sealed by God, with the name of the Lamb upon their foreheads. (Rev 7:2, 9:4, 22:4 Ezk 9:4-6) This was not a physical mark but a spiritual seal. Those with the seal of God had the "*charakte*" of image of Jesus and his "seal of approval". Why is there so much emphasis upon the mark of the beast and so little on the seal of God and His name? Both are on the forehead. Both depict the spiritual standing of the individual. Even today discerning people can see those who have the "mark" of the beast and the "seal" of Jesus. Just look around and watch people as they live their daily lives. It is possible to see people who have the "mark" of the Beast. Their disposition of evil is written upon their face and their actions are driven from this inner disposition. They have been moulded into the image of Satan and have taken his likeness and values, his mark or *charagma*. Their eyes are dead, their words are filled with hate and their deeds are evil. They live and

function under his control.

It is also possible to 'see' people who shine with the countenance of Jesus. They have the Lamb's name and seal written upon them. Jesus mentioned this light within people which at times is so real it can be discerned. Some people, who spend time in His Presence and obey his will, literally shine with the Holy Spirit. Moses shone with the Lord's Presence. God's people are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

So on the one hand there are people who have the character and image of Jesus and on the other there are people who have the "*charagma*" and image of Satan. This has been all through the centuries and continues to be so until the end.

### **THE NUMBER of the BEAST**

We are told to count the number for it is a number of a man. It seems that the numerical value of the name of Emperor Nero was 666. He was a type of forerunner to the anti-Christ. However, the word count does not mean necessarily to add it up but to examine it, to calculate it in the sense of to search it and verify it. The number is a clue for it will lead to a man. It is a mystery and requires wisdom to solve. (Rev 13:18) To help us John gave us the precise number; 600, 60, and 6. We have no grounds to change this to 666. To do so is to mutilate scripture and miss the whole riddle. Some simple math will reveal something about the number; it is multiples of ten. The 600 represents a hundred fold of the 6. The 60 is ten fold of the 6. The 6 is the lowest denominator, the number of man. The full number leads us to the fullness of mans' iniquity, the "man of sin".

How must we understand it? The full answer must come from OT scripture and as with many of the types and symbols in Revelation it comes from the book of Daniel. To find the clue we must go back to Daniel chapter 3 and the great image erected by Nebuchadnezzar and which every person had to worship on pain of death. The collective memory of the captivity of Israel under the Babylonians was held in the psyche of the nation as one of the most awful times in their entire history second only to their slavery in Egypt. The people of Israel used their history to draw strength. They gained courage and faith by remembering how God saved them in past times. It

was especially so in the days of John when they faced similar persecution under the Romans. When John spoke in terms of false images, idol worship and persecution every Jew recalled the great persecutions of the past.

Nebuchadnezzar represented a time of great persecution in Babylon for Israel. Babylon was one of the most powerful nations in all history and Nebuchadnezzar himself represents the peak of pagan rule. He was one of the most powerful, wealthiest kings to ever rule. The great image in his dream is a picture of pagan Gentile persecution and power through history. The erection of his own great golden image stood as the pinnacle of idol worship. His image was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide, a massive statue. Gold represents two things; one is wealth and power in the present world, the other is pure faith of believers when tested. John multiplies the numbers of the past idol image by a further ten making it 600, 60 and 6. He multiplies it a hundred fold. Thus the persecution and idol worship through the age and in the "end times" will be so increased.

If one understands this as a Jew would understand it then it is possible to see history in a clearer way. The mark, the image and the number represent bondage, persecution and slavery repeated through every dispensation and generation in every nation on earth; bondage to false gods and false religion, false leaders and counterfeit systems of Satan. Let me explain.

### **NO ONE CAN BUY OR SELL**

The circumstances may differ somewhat but the causes are the same throughout history. For example in the days of Soviet Communism anyone who was not a member of the Party faced retrenchment, persecution and even death. They were marginalised from society, had no rights, could not get jobs, could not buy, sell or trade. They were forbidden to worship. Millions were put to death for no crime other than standing for their principles. They would not vow allegiance to the Party nor become slaves.

On the other hand those people who submitted to the rule of the State or powerful State Religions often had to compromise their own standards and violate their own conscience. By doing so they got the benefits of the party. Some of them, however, ended up becoming worse than their captors. Taking on the image of their captors they themselves became full of



darkness and hate, people who forfeited their God given image and sold their souls to Satan. There have been many antichrists. It happened in the days of the Roman Empire. It happened in medieval Europe under persecutions by the State Churches. It happened in the slave trade when millions perished. It happened in Russia when Stalin seized the nation and over 40 million people were killed. It happened under the Nazis when they killed 6 million Jews and at least another 6 million others not to mention the millions of casualties of war. It happened in China when Communism took over and killed 60 million. It is not confined to a single system of rule. It can happen under autocratic monarchs. It can happen under capitalism when rich and powerful organisations driven by greed accumulate vast amounts of wealth at the expense of the poor. It can happen when dictators manipulate democracy for their own power. It is not confined to Eastern or third world countries; just read European, British and Western history. It happened to Jews when they experienced pogroms and were killed and it happened to believers who did not conform to the State Churches; they were hounded out of their homes and fled the country in fear of their lives. It has happened to millions of others who refused to become slaves. Those who kept themselves pure lost homes and jobs, were starved, beaten, hated and killed. It still happens today. It is the spirit of antichrist.

John the apostle tells us about the nature of antichrist. (1 Jn 2:18,22, 4:3, 2 Jn 7) Antichrist is the antithesis of Christ, the opposite of His character and image. It is essentially the lack of love towards others, our brothers to start with and all humanity too. John goes to great lengths to explain it to us. It is not just a doctrinal stance but the total rejection of godliness. It comes from a broken relationship with God. Those who by the way they live deny the Father and the Son are antichrist. It is impossible to live like Christ and deny him at the same time. One can even believe the right doctrine in an intellectual way and yet be antichrist in spirit and deed.

There have been two great satanic Beasts through history; one is State/Political control and the other is False Religious control. Often they have joined forces and worked together. It does not matter what system they contrive whether democracy, capitalism, state religion of any kind, monarchy, communism, dictatorship; Satan uses it to enslave souls. This is the spirit of **"Babylon, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth"** and the evil it has spawned.

## **FINANCIAL COLLAPSE**

One way Satan rules the world is through finance, called 'mammon', the worship of wealth and the power it brings. The big banks operate through a system called usury. This was forbidden in Israel yet we have built our modus operandi on it. (Deut 23:19,20 Ps 15:5 Ezk 18:7,8) Through massive loans and interest we have built short term prosperity but long term poverty. Through systems of credit we expand and inflate the economy outside of true financial growth thereby devaluing our money. It is a recipe whereby the rich get richer and the poor poorer. Banking systems originated in Babylon and have been established over many centuries.

The head of Nebuchadnezzar's image was made of Gold, the purest and most valuable of metals. The Chest was made of silver, the loins of bronze, the thighs of iron, the feet of iron and clay and the toes of iron and miry clay; all degraded in value until the feet are quite rotten. Gold has always been coveted and worshipped by man. Many idols are made of gold. Satan has used this to gain worship and control. Next was silver, followed by baser elements of brass and iron and eventually clay and miry clay. The image of Nebuchadnezzar portrays a prophetic view of the declining state of world morals, values and economy until in the end it totally collapses.

In some countries where computerised bank cards are used actual cash is not used for all transactions. Some people say a cashless society will come with a type of "mark" trade system. However, as I have tried to show this is not necessarily the fulfilment of prophesy. The true meaning applies to a spiritual state not a physical mark. One cannot lose one's soul by having a physical mark. How will a computerised mark be imposed upon all nations? How can it work with mentally retarded people, ignorant or uninformed people? How can it apply to children and babies? How can it work in the jungles of South America and the wastes of Africa, the impregnable mountains of Asia and isolated islands? At best it can only be available in some first world nations, perhaps those directly under the control of the Beast. Anyway, computer systems of the world will totally fail because of cosmic upheavals foretold in the end times which will cause disruptions in the sun and eventually knock out all modern technology that depends on electrical and magnetic systems. The collapse of world finances will follow.

Dubious banking practices coupled with greed have produced a harvest of poverty in the nations. Wealth is no longer based on productivity but on usury. The collapse of world economy is inevitable because the present financial systems are unsustainable. Nations will attempt to maintain national economies by propping up banks with massive loans and printed money but there will be a world collapse. The present worldly systems cannot endure but will eventually crash to make way for the true values of the Kingdom of God. Do not be afraid of the future, God is your provider.

The Lord has a message about wealth. He wants us to prosper in all ways, (3 Jn 2) to have enough and even abundance. God's message about wealth is two fold. **1/ To those who do not have enough it is to gain more.** It is no fun being poor. However, this can build character, perseverance, faith. Poor people can still be caring and loving. When I worked in Africa if I visited a village or a home I always received a blessing no matter how poor they were. Paul learnt to be content in every state. (Phill 4:11) **2/ However, to those who are rich it is to give it away.** It is not wrong to be wealthy but there is responsibility with it. God blesses us that we may bless others. For those who have more than enough there is the blessing of giving it away. The Lord loves a cheerful giver. Jesus said to the rich young man who had everything "Sell all that you have and come follow me". (Matt 19:21-) True wealth or poverty is in the inner man. A truly wealthy person can lose everything and still be wealthy but a poor person can have the world and have nothing. The scriptures encourage us to be productive. (1 Cor 4:12 Eph 4:28) In a stable and righteous society it is possible to be productive. However, there is great imbalance in the world today and for those who are rich through corruption there is coming only judgement. (Js 5:1-6)

This crash is foretold. Revelation 17,18 describes the fall of wealthy cities and merchants. Babylon was extremely wealthy but it fell to the Medes, then the Persians and successive kingdoms followed the same pattern. When a nation maintains justice, discipline and moral values it prospers. When greed and decadence creeps in it inevitably falls. This is where the world is heading. Nations have turned from the commands of a righteous and just God. The world is filled with violence and immorality. It is significant that when a nation's moral and spiritual values are strong the currency is also strong but when spiritual values collapse so does the currency. It is seen throughout history in the crash of decadent societies. How will it end? No

one will buy or sell without the mark, name or number of the beast system. Note that it is one or the other. The mark may not be universal but where not there will be the number or the name; three avenues of control through false values, false religion and false authority. As I have tried to show much of this has already been fulfilled.

Revelation chapters 17 and 18 are a vivid depiction of world wide satanic counterfeit power working through apostasy, immorality, rebellion and deception in all its forms to control people's minds and spiritual values at the expense of their souls. It has produced much suffering and oppression and a harvest of death. (Rev 18:24) It has deceived even the elect of God. It is the "mystery of lawlessness" to which Paul the apostle refers in his epistle to the Thessalonians. (2 Thes 2:1-12) The mystery to which he refers is none other than Satan. It has been Satan who has warred against the brethren and opposed the Kingdom of God. It is Satan's "Man of Sin" who will be exposed and destroyed.

### **RISE of ANTI-SEMITISM**

With financial collapse and the shaking of society through conflicts and upheavals caused through earthquakes, magnetic storms, savage weather and war mankind will despair. The sins of the past, age old feuds, wrongs never forgiven, greed, rebellion and hatred rear their ugly heads. Nations will war against each other. Their rage will be directed especially upon Israel, the inevitable scapegoat. Conditions will once again be conducive for bitterness, hatred and deception. The world will be ripe for another great antichrist. In the past whenever things went wrong the world found someone to blame and very often it was those who had faith in God. When things went wrong in Rome the Emperor blamed the Christians. When things went wrong in Germany the Nazi blamed the Jews. It was Protestant anti-Semitism that contributed to the Nazi mindset. When things once more go wrong in the world it will once again be God's people at fault, both Jew and Gentile. Elements within both the Catholic and Protestant church that have through the centuries condemned, hated and persecuted the Jewish people, are to blame for the perpetuation of anti-Semitism. It has hindered God's plan to have "one new man both Jew and Gentile". Any part of the church today that is still anti-Semitic must repent.

In the end anti-Semitism will again explode. Already there are many neo-

Nazi groups who are anti-Semitic. Great numbers of nations are anti-Semitic. The Antichrist will try and take control of Jerusalem and set up his abomination. He is Satan's final Beast. With him is the False Prophet a religious leader who supports him and is empowered by him. The abomination of desolation is an event of such evil that it causes great anguish and destruction. There are a number of possible events that could cause this.

The "image" of Revelation 13 represents the collective values of the world. Through history Satan has attempted to annihilate the Jews. The "beast with a fatal wound that will come back to life is of the previous world powers. This power once persecuted the Jews and was subsequently destroyed but will revive and once more attack the Jews. It was said that Nazism will never again be able to inflict such horror, yet although wounded unto death the *spirit* in it has by no means died. Today there is a revival of the same hatred under different banners. Where before the Jews were trapped in certain countries where they were persecuted now a large number are gathered in a single country and are vulnerable to annihilation by more than just one nation. (See Appendix 2)

We have all these elements on the world scene right now. We have the revived European Nations many of which are the very nations that were the Holy Roman Empire that persecuted God's people. With them are fringe nations that once comprised much of the Eastern Roman Empire. We have a world mouthpiece in the "United Nations" and a worldwide network of Banks that control international finance. We have decadent Christendom in variant forms and we have Israel restored in the land with an Islamic stronghold controlling much of the Middle East and committed to their total destruction. Few Christians survive in any Middle Eastern countries, except for Israel, and Christianity is attacked elsewhere in the world.

## **THE SIGNS OF THE END WHEN THE FIG TREE BLOSSOMS**

In the last week of his life the Lord rebuked a Fig tree and it withered and died. Why on earth would he do this? He had been staying at Bethany and in the morning walked into Jerusalem. He was hungry and looked for some fruit on a Fig tree and although it was not the season for a full crop it should

have had the early 'knobs' that preceded the fruit to come. Without these the main crop would not form. They were about the size of almonds and were not very palatable but often eaten by hungry peasants. This tree had nothing. Jesus rebuked it and it died. (Matt 21:18-22) Was this some kind of random act on his part? He did not normally go about rebuking trees especially Figs for they were an important national heritage. Yet this tree had no fruit.

Everything the Lord said and did was to teach the truth and show the way. The Fig tree is an important tree in Biblical symbolism. There are three trees that have spiritual significance; the Olive tree, the Fig tree and the Vine. (Judges 9:7-15) In Jeremiah 24 Figs are figurative of the people of Israel both good and bad. (Hosea 9:10) This would not have been missed by the disciples who were all Jews and understood Biblical symbolism.

The Fig tree features in one of the Lord's parables. (Lk 13:6, 34) In the parable he told how a certain land owner had a Fig tree planted in his vineyard. For three years he came looking for fruit and found none so he instructed the keeper of his vineyard to cut it down. The keeper asked for it to be left for one more year and if there was still no fruit then for it to be cut down. What significance does this parable have?

John the Baptist had warned the people and leaders that they should bear fruit worthy of repentance and that "*even now the axe is laid to the root of the tree and every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down*" (Matt 3:7-10) Jesus had come to Jerusalem three years in a row. This Fig Tree was by the road that led from Bethany to Jerusalem which Jesus had often travelled before and very likely he knew it and had looked for fruit on it each time he came to Jerusalem. He had come three years looking for fruit and now there was still none. To illustrate his parable and the words of John the Baptist, Jesus rebuked it and it withered and died, dried up from the roots. (Mk 11:20)

Jesus then went into the city to the temple where he overturned the tables of the money changers and drove them out. He rebuked the whole corrupt religious system practiced at that time. Jesus had already given some serious teaching about trees and fruit bearing. (Matt 7:15-20 12:33-37) He now cleansed the temple. It was a visual lesson for all who saw it.

You don't want to be around Jesus when He gets angry.

The following day they walked past the tree. When the disciples saw it they were amazed. Once again it was a visual lesson for them. They had just seen Jesus single handed drive out the traders and money changers from the temple. (Matt 21:12) Now they saw the consequences of his word on the Fig tree. The tree was dead. When the disciples commented on it Jesus used it to teach faith and said *"if you have faith and do not doubt you will not only do what was done to the fig tree but also if you say to this mountain 'be removed and be cast into the sea' it will be done"*. (Matt 21:21)

To cast a whole mountain into the sea is a difficult thing for even the most faithful person to do. Is that what Jesus meant or was he using the mountain as an allegory for some deeper meaning as he had with the tree?

The answer is again in the ministry of John the Baptist; *"Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley should be filled and every mountain brought low, the crooked places made straight and the rough ways smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God"*. (Lk 3:4-6)

In other words all opposition to the Lord needed to be cleared in order for his salvation to be accomplished in the world. Note that the Lord was specific about which mountain he meant: it was this mountain, Jerusalem and the temple mount controlled by men of that time. The hierarchy entrenched in Jerusalem on the 'mountain of the Lord' had constantly opposed him and despite warnings refused to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. The meaning of these things would not be lost to his Jewish disciples. This was a stronghold against which the disciples themselves would have to stand and overcome through faith. In the days of Ezekiel God showed the prophet the abominations and defilement in the Temple and warned it would be destroyed. (Ezk 8:5-18 9:1-) That temple was destroyed in 586 BC. Again and again through history the temple was desecrated. Satan sought to control it. He set himself up in the 'holy mountain' and defiled it with his trading. (Ezk 28:14-19) Now the Lord of the temple, Jesus, came to the temple but the high priest and leaders planned to kill him. The Lord had constantly warned the national and temple hierarchy that unless they repented they would be judged. Jesus Himself now cleansed the temple, cast out the traders and drove out the "evil one". After he cleansed the temple

and spent some time teaching and healing the blind with children singing his praise he departed. He never came back. The Glory of God left the temple. It was 'Ichabod'. Soon he, the Ark of God (Jesus), would fall into the hands of wicked men. The next time the Glory came would be to 120 disciples in the upper room, to the new temple made of living believers.

When the disciples commented on the beauty of the temple Jesus said it would be destroyed. He went further and foretold the destruction of the whole city and wept over the city that he loved so much. (Luke 19:41-44, Matt 23:37-39) This destruction took place in AD 70 in fulfilment of his words. (Lk 21:16, Acts 6:14) Jesus actually quoted the words of Jeremiah that God would destroy the temple. (Matt 21:12,13, Jer 7:9-14-20) He pronounced God's judgement upon it and the Romans were simply agents of that judgement.

All through the ages there have been similar mountains of political and worldly opposition which believers have had to stand against in order to bring salvation to the nations. Every nation has had demonic strongholds that have resisted the truth of the Gospel. At times Satan has defiled the earthly temple the church, through doctrines of demons, prosperity, worldly values, immorality and greed.

Before we leave the subject of the Fig Tree we need to consider another reference the Lord made to it. A great multitude followed Jesus as he carried the cross, including women who wept and lamented. Jesus said to them "*Weep not for me but for yourselves and for your children*". He said "*if they do these things when the tree is green what will happen when it is dry?*" (Lk 23:27-31, Ezk 20:45-48) Once again he predicted the destruction of the nation and the scattering of the people that would take place in AD 70 under the Romans. These events happened within one generation to the children of these very women. Clearly Jesus was not just referring to the temple but the whole nation. The nation was 'cut down', destroyed, withered and died.

Why do I tell you these things? I want you to understand something else the Lord said; "*Now learn the parable of the Fig tree*". He drew our attention to the very same Parable of the Fig Tree this time to learn what will happen when it buds again. When it does all things concerning his return will be fulfilled. (Matt 24:32 Lk 21:29) He said that when we see it bud we will



know he is "standing right at the door" ready to come. The restoration of the nation of Israel is the prophetic signal that we are near his return.

Jesus said that Jerusalem will be left desolate and trampled under foot until "the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled". (Lk 21:24) He also said the Jews will not see him again until they cry out "*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*". (Matt 23:37, Lk 13:34) Paul said that Israel's blindness has happened in part "until the fullness of the Gentiles is brought in". (Rom 11:25) Jesus used the Fig Tree as a symbol of Israel with Jerusalem at its heart. He foretold its destruction and by rebuking the Fig Tree visually enacted it before their very eyes. He also foretold a time when it will bud again. Notice that he mentioned not just the Fig Tree but also "all the trees". (Luke 21:29) So it is not just the nation of Israel but other nations. One of the great phenomena of the past century has been the amazing 'rebirth' of hundreds of nations. Since the 'United Nations' was formed in the last century many nations have achieved their status as sovereign nations. This is in preparation for the time when all the nations will be judged by God.

The words of Jesus must not be discounted if we are to grasp the significance of the return of the Jewish Diaspora to their ancient home land, despite all the controversy about it. That it has happened is for all to see. Wesley, Wilberforce, Spurgeon and many other Christians understood this and declared it long before there was any indication of a Jewish return. Yet there are Christians who would say it has no prophetic significance because they say the church has replaced Israel as God's people. I would give a word of caution to them that they could well be blind to Biblical prophecy and the words of our Lord. Israel will divide both the world and the Church.

Note that the Fig Tree withered from the roots just as John the Baptist warned; "*the axe is laid to the root*". The nation totally ceased from being a nation. The Fig Tree died yet Jesus later said the Fig Tree will "*put forth leaves and bud*". How can that be if it was destroyed? The tree will be planted again just as the OT prophets foretold. Here are some excerpts from OT scripture in the context of God's ancient people returning to the land: "*My planting*"; "*the planting of the Lord*"; "*I will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and with all my soul*"; "*I will make an everlasting covenant with them*". (Isa 60:21, 61:3, Jer 24:5-7, 32:37-41)

*"I will plant them in their land and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them". (Amos 9:13-15)*

*"O Lord save your people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the ends of the earth...a great throng shall return there". The Lord said that only if the sun, moon and stars cease to exist will Israel cease from being a nation. (Jer 31:7-9, 35-37)*

### **OLIVE TREE BRANCHES WILL BE GRAFTED BACK**

Not only has the nation been planted again but the branches are being grafted back into the Olive tree. The prophets of old all foretold the return of the people of Jacob back to their land. *"O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My People Israel for they are about to come...I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel". (Ezk 36:8,9)*

Again, *"And I will multiply the fruit of your trees"* and again, *"Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit". (Ezk 36:30)*

Paul teaches about the latter day restoration. You need to read Romans chapters 9 to 11. He quotes from Isaiah 10:20-23; 59:20,21; Hosea 2:23 - Romans 9:25-28, 11:26,27. He says a *remnant* will return to the Lord. To understand what Paul meant by "remnant" you need to take a concordance and look up all the OT verses with this word. It will become abundantly clear that Paul referred to all the great promises God made concerning the restoration of the *remnant* of His people both to the land and to Himself. The words of Paul have to be put into the OT context to fully understand them.

Paul explained how the Jewish branches were cut off so as to allow Gentiles to be grafted in. This was done through God's election and not of man. He warned Gentiles not to be conceited or boastful but to be respectful. He warned that they too may be cut off and said that blindness happened to Israel only in part until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. He then said that *all* Israel will be saved.

The teaching that God has two different programmes for Jewish and Gentile believers, known as dispensational teaching, is not supported by

Paul. Paul said God has only one people, Israel, and that the Gentiles have been grafted into that people. There is only one Olive Tree and it is Israel into which Gentile believers have been joined. The Gentile church has not replaced Israel or become Israel. They have been joined with Israel and are partakers with Israel of the same promises and covenant. (Eph 2:13) Notice that Paul did not say that God has cast off Israel for ever but only so that the Gentiles may benefit and when Israel is accepted back it will bring the resurrection. In the context of Paul's teaching this is the very same resurrection in which Gentile believers will participate. The next great move of God will be among Jews and it will be their grafting back into the Olive Tree. This is a prerequisite for the return of Jesus and the resurrection. The other prerequisite for the return of Jesus is the worldwide declaration of the Gospel. Both are necessary. Only when the Jews come back into the Olive Tree will the Church will be able to fulfil the final great worldwide witness.

The Lord said He will give the land back to Israel and they will not be pulled from it ever again. It is clear from these prophecies that the return of some Jews from Babylonian captivity was *not* the fulfilment of these promises. Although in the days of Jesus there were Jews living back in the land by far the majority had remained in the Diaspora. Again and again the scriptures declare they will one day be planted permanently in the land and never again be uprooted. Yes, God said they would be scattered and judged yet the promise of eventual restoration is always repeated. In Zechariah chapter 11 the prophet warns the people that God will judge false shepherds. Zechariah warns he will break "a covenant" with the peoples". This was not the Covenant God made with Abraham but an agreement the prophet made at that time to shepherd the peoples; he would break his agreement with them. However, again and again Zechariah endorsed God's promise of restoration to Israel. (Zec 1:16,17- 8:3,8,11,12,23- 9:16-10:5,6,9,10- 12:10- 13:1,2,9- 14:2) These were all given *after* the first return of the Jews and therefore referred to a *future* restoration. They are now being fulfilled by the return of Jews as seen in the past century. Jewish people were scattered into all nations but many have returned. Jewish people are now coming to Yeshua. For the first time since the early church there are congregations entirely of Jewish believers.

Can anyone show a word in the entire Bible that says God has cancelled, annulled, rejected or forsaken His covenant? Far from it, again and again

God says He will fulfil it. This is why Satan makes every attempt through history, even till this time, to destroy the Jews because if he succeeds then all God's promises are made null and void. Those who deny the promises of God to the Jewish people and teach this to others do Satan's work for him.

If we miss the significance of Israel then we miss the most significant event of all. The world is full of those who denounce the Jews and discount their significance claiming the Church comprised mostly of Gentiles is now God's replacement people. It is almost a kind of spiritual superiority at the expense of the Jews. The next great spiritual move of the Lord will be in Israel. It must be for it is the restoration of Israel that brings resurrection from the dead and salvation to the nations and the world. If the church has replaced Israel will the Christians come back to the land? No, the promise is to the seed of *Jacob*.

By grasping the words of our Lord we grasp the importance of the times in which we live and the unfolding events we now see. The Lord Jesus gave many signs about conditions on earth at the end of the age. They include the increase of earthquakes, raging weather, famines, unrest, war, fear, apostasy and more. Some people say that these things have always happened and there has always been trouble and problems all through history and nothing has changed. To say so is a cop out, almost an excuse not to consider the present problems just because they have in some measure happened before. I would answer it is true that there have always been problems but never on a scale as we see today. Today we have within the hands of fallen humanity the means to devastate the earth through nuclear weapons. Can anyone show from past examples a time when weapons have not been used? The history of the planet is one long account of atrocities and wars. Far from giving comfort to us the past endorses our terrible danger.

Not only that but mankind is well on the way to destroying our planet by greed and pollution; the forests are largely destroyed thereby affecting the weather patterns, the pollution of the air is now chronic, the soil is filled with chemical toxins and being eroded away, the fresh water is polluted, the seas and creatures in them are under extreme pressure and many plants, animals and insects are already exterminated or nearly so. The world is in crisis. These are the "end times".

## **JESUS CONFIRMED THE COVENANT**

To fully grasp the amazing things God will do and what will happen in the future we must understand the significance and outworking of the last half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week.

It is during the last half of the week that the Lord will return and confirm the Covenant of God. How will he do it? There are several Covenants God made through history. The first was with Adam and Eve when their nakedness was covered by skins. Blood was shed to atone for their sins and for all mankind. This pointed to the death of Jesus as the Lamb of God. The second was with Noah, a covenant with mankind and animals. Again blood was shed for this. (Gen 6:18 9:9-17) The third and most important was with Abraham. (Gen 12:1-3 15:18 17:2-21 22:15-18 Lev 26:9-45) God cut the covenant with Abraham. The fourth was with Moses at the giving of the Law. (Deut 4:13)

The final is the "New Covenant". (Jer 31:31-37) This covenant confirms the previous. Jesus said "*do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil*".

When God "cut" the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob He stipulated a number of things. (Exodus 6:1-8)

It is an everlasting covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It includes their descendants. (1 Chr 16:14-19)

It brings blessings to all the families of the earth.

It includes the promise of land. (Amos 9:13 Jer 31:35,36 33:20,26)

It is Jesus who is the Angel of the Lord and who made the Covenant with the fathers in the wilderness. And there are many scriptures that show it is Jesus who fulfils the covenant.

**The covenant was made by Jesus and fulfilled by Jesus.**

### ***In the Old Testament***

"I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people". (Isa 42:1-7)

*"I will preserve you and give you as a covenant to the people". (Isa 49:6-8)*

*"I will make an everlasting covenant with you." (Isa 55:1-4)*

*"I will make with them an everlasting covenant". (Isa 61:1-8)*

These are all Messianic prophecies. This covenant can never be broken. Jer 33:24-26

### ***In the New Testament***

*"This is the blood of the new covenant which is shed for many". (Matt 26:28)*

*"The covenant confirmed of God in Christ". (Gal 3:13-17)*

*"Jesus Christ...to confirm the promises made to the fathers." (Romans 15:8)*

*"For all the promises of God are in Him Yes and Amen." (2 Cor 1:20)*

The Covenant of God is the great theme of scripture. In the NT Zacharias prophesied at the birth of John the Baptist that God had remembered His Covenant; *"As He spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets...to remember His Holy Covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham."* (Luke 1:68-79) What Jesus did on the cross was appropriated by all who believe in him. However, he will return, confirm and complete what he did and establish it forever in his people. It is only Messiah Jesus who can do so; he will confirm the Covenant of God.

## **UNDERSTANDING COVENANT**

Unfortunately the Gentile church does not always understand Covenant. Neither does it understand the place of Israel and land in Covenant. For many modern day Christians the idea that God is still the God of Israel is a totally unacceptable concept.

The Hebrew word for covenant is "*berith*" and is derived from a root which means "to cut" hence a covenant is entered with "cutting". (Gen 15:1-18) The Greek word for covenant is also translated in some Bibles as testament but there is a difference of meaning between the two words as we understand them. The English word testament does not necessarily carry the full depth of meaning as it should and does not fully explain the Hebrew covenant. As westerners we think of a testament like a contract, something drawn up like a 'last will and testament'. The covenant, however, is not just

a testament as a Greek legal document that is drawn up to define the rights of a testator. In such case the Greek practice of giving greater legality to the most recent testament prevails because of the idea that it makes null and void the previous one. In Greek thinking a new testament always cancels the old, like a contract.

By contrast a Hebrew covenant is an on going relationship with no appointed end. It is a commitment to continue a lasting relationship. It includes dynamic interaction between the partners. It can be added to but never cancelled. Hebrew covenant is far different from the western concept of testament. One cannot use the words "new covenant" to imply that it replaces an "old covenant". An existing covenant cannot be terminated or replaced with a different one. It can only be renewed, strengthened, confirmed. It can never be cancelled. That is the nature of covenant. When Jesus said "This is the new covenant" he did not imply that the old was annulled. He meant that the old was fulfilled and its basics renewed and strengthened. By dying he confirmed the covenant and made it new. By his death it is "cut" forever. Nothing can change it.

This is the meaning of the Greek word 'new'. (Strong's 2537 – refresh, renewal.) This is the same meaning as the Hebrew word new (Strong's 2318/19) used in context with God's Covenant in such scriptures as Jer 31:31, Isa 42:9, 43:9. The meaning is that he will renew and endorse the Covenant that already exists. Its heart is unaltered. Jesus said he came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. To fulfil actually means to sustain, to verify. By fulfilling them he was able to do away with the shadows and rituals but the heart of the covenant still stands. This is what Hebrews makes clear. (Heb 8:9) It is the ordinances concerning the temple that became obsolete and are no longer necessary. They are shadows but the substance is unchanged. The earthly temple is destroyed, the true temple continues. It is only the fleshly ordinances and rituals that are terminated. They were shadows and copies of the reality that remains. (Heb 8:5,13 9:10,23, 10:1) The curse the law brings when broken is abolished not the covenant itself. Yeshua is the Law and Word of God and he fulfils it entirely.

The Bible is not a contract or a testament and it is not Greek. The "labels" Old and New Testaments were imposed upon the Bible by early church fathers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. At that time the church was already turning from

its Hebraic roots to Greek philosophy. These labels brought error by implying that the OT was less important and cancelled by the NT. The New Testament does not cancel the old, it fulfils it. Jesus came to fulfil the law and by so doing the shadows of the earthly temple with its ordinances and sacrifices are obsolete. The covenant is not.

Since the nature of covenant is never to become null or void each renewed covenant endorses and includes all that came before. When a covenant is renewed it may contain additional provisions but the original still remains.

Some would argue that the Covenant God made with Abraham concerning the land has been done away. That is not so. It is the unchanging Word of God and has been confirmed by Jesus. God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and his descendents. God's covenant cannot be annulled, cancelled or erased. Man can violate it but the covenant itself cannot be terminated. It can never be cancelled as long as the stars endure and there is day and night. (Jer 33:20-25, 31:35)

The covenant God made with Moses does not change the covenant He made with Abraham. It is only the shadows and patterns of heavenly things that are done away with; the covenant itself was fulfilled by the **Covenant Maker** the Lord Jesus. The heart of the New Covenant always was with Abraham and his descendents. It still is. When Jesus at the "last Supper" established the "New Covenant" he established the covenant promised through Jeremiah. (Jer 31:31-40 Lk 22:20) This covenant was established not with Gentiles but with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, Jews. Jesus was a Jew from the tribe of Judah. All the apostles were Jews. All the early Christians were Jews. The Gentiles are included in it and at the end *the remnant* of Jews will be brought back into the covenant.

God's Covenant is fulfilled by Jesus, the Seed of Abraham. He fully ratified the Covenant and completed it in every way. It cannot be annulled – all the promises of God are in Christ. Jesus is Himself the **Covenant Keeper**. He made the Covenant and He keeps the Covenant and it is a perpetual, everlasting Covenant. In fact **Jesus is Himself the Covenant.** (Isa 42:1-9 49:8)



## **"IT IS FINISHED" -John 19:30**

What did Jesus mean by his final words on the cross? The word "finished" means *to discharge a debt, to complete, conclude, execute, accomplish, make an end, perfect, fill up, pay, perform* – (Strong's 5055). He finished the transgression and ratified the covenant. This was the purpose of his coming to earth. (Jn 17:4) This had been his purpose ever since he had started on his earthly work. After his baptism he went into the desert for forty days without food and withstood all the accusations of the evil one. The last time anything like that happened was when for forty days Moses interceded with God for the nation of Israel that it should not be destroyed. God heard and renewed His covenant with Israel. (Ex 34:5-10, 27,28 Deut 9:18,25,26) The covenant originated with Abraham. (Gen 15:3-12,17,18) God Himself cut the covenant with Abraham in "horror of great darkness". He passed between the sacrifice. This was the way a covenant was made; those who partook in it "cut" it by walking through the divided pieces. However, it was God Himself who passed between the pieces, not Abraham. Jesus, who is both the Son of God and the seed of Abraham, was sacrificed for the sins of the world. He overcame Satan and as High Priest made intercession for Israel and the world, paid the price, endured the horror and darkness of crucifixion and thereby "cut the covenant".

Gentiles have been included in the covenant with Israel to share the benefits and blessings of Israel. The church has not replaced Israel but has been grafted into Israel. There is a big difference. (Rom 11:13-25) Jewish branches were taken out and Gentile branches were grafted in. The church has not replaced Israel but has been joined with it and been included in its promises. The idea that God has one plan for the church and another for Israel is entirely erroneous. God has one plan for Israel in which the Gentiles are included. (Eph 2:11-22) As branches grafted in all our benefits are supported by the Covenant with Israel. Their calling is irrevocable. (Rom 11:29) It is only because God is faithful to Israel that the Gentiles can have any future hope of salvation.

The Gentiles were grafted in for a period of time; "*until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*" then all Israel will be saved. (Rom 11:25,26) This fullness of the Gentiles is the "Times of the Gentiles" that Jesus spoke of. Because God made a covenant with Israel the Gentiles were included in it.

The Gentiles found mercy because the Jews were blinded and Paul warned Gentiles not to boast against the branches and not to be haughty but to fear, *"otherwise you also will be cut off"*. When the time is right the remnant of Israel will be grafted back. This remnant will first return to the land. (Isa 10:22,23, 11:11) Paul said *"The remnant will be saved for He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness"*. (Rom 9:27,28) If you want to understand what Paul meant get a concordance and look up OT verses with the word "remnant". It will show what Paul, as a Jew, meant by *remnant*. He quoted OT prophecies about the remnant coming back to the land and to God. Their acceptance will bring life from the dead, our resurrection. When the *remnant* is grafted back the Church will be empowered in resurrection.

What is God's plan for Israel? It is that they should be grafted back. *"The Deliverer will come out of Zion and...take away their sins"*. God's covenant is that Jacob should have an everlasting future in God's kingdom. Part of that covenant is that they should have a land. This has never changed and again and again in the OT God reiterates He will restore the remnant of His people to their land. (Isa 10:22,23, 49:6,8,12 Rom 9:27,28 Jer 23:3, 31:7,8 32:37) This has happened yet because people are ignorant of God's promises or deceived by the lies of Satan they are unable to understand it.

This is why Jews have come back to the land. It is God's covenant with them to do so and it is in the land that they will be spiritually restored and it is this spiritual restoration that will bring life from the dead. This is why Satan has resisted their return. The future of the world depends upon it.

Paul said the "Man of Sin" would deceive the very elect that they might believe the doctrines of demons. Much of the church stands idly by in total paralysis and unbelief of what God is doing in our time. Instead of believing the Word of His Covenant many people believe the prevailing lies of world rulers and the falsehood of world media. The truth has been reversed so that they believe a lie. (2 Thes 2:3-11) This is the work of antichrist in the end times. Some within the church have been misled and have turned from the Covenant and denied its truth and thereby been blinded. Where is the true prophetic voice to the nations concerning this? Those who declare it are often shunned so God's people have no understanding of what will happen.

If Satan can destroy Israel as a people and prevent them from ever

having their ancient homeland then he will have made God's Word null and void, cancelled His covenants, brought to nought His promises and overthrown His power. That is why through the centuries Satan has tried again and again to annihilate the Jews and why there have been so many wars over Jerusalem and the land.

### **ISRAEL HIS LAND**

The Covenant includes the land of Israel and its restoration. Jer 32:37-44. The land is included in the everlasting covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. With all his "heart and soul" God will plant them back in the land! It is not just any land, it is His land. (Joel 3:2) God intends to restore the whole earth and will begin in this land. (Ezk 36:35,36 Isa 49:8)

When Jesus conducted his earthly ministry he walked the length and breadth of the land. He was born in Bethlehem, lived in Nazareth, based at Capernaum and visited many places; Samaria, Decapolis, Tyre, Caesarea Philippi, Mt Hermon, the district of the Gadarenes, Bethany beyond Jordan, Perea and other places. Significant events occurred in these places; he cast out demons and healed the sick. This was a carefully planned strategy. Every time Jesus did a miracle he reached into a future age and brought it near and made it real. He said "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand" and he reached into the future dimension of the "Kingdom Age" and released it into the present age. As King of the future Kingdom He brought the Kingdom with him and made it real. He walked hundreds of miles to bring his Kingdom to every corner of the land. He did what he told Moses and Joshua to do, he possessed the land. (Josh 1:3, Deut 11:24)

In his earthly ministry he claimed the land; he stepped it off and marked it there to be his earthly thoroughfare. He did the same thing again after his resurrection. He appeared first in Jerusalem, then in Emmaus and then he sent his disciples to Galilee and appeared to them there too. The disciples had to walk the whole way there and back, a long journey by foot. Why did Jesus send them there? In his resurrection He claimed the land from the north to the south. He owns the universe but this land is His special land by Covenant. It is His land and included in his atonement. (Deut 32:43)

Everything Jesus said and did was to show and teach the truth. He acted

out the reality of the Kingdom of God. After his resurrection when he walked the earth he continued to do this. "*He taught them about the Kingdom of God*". (Acts 1:3) Everything Jesus did during his earthly ministry was a preview of what he will do when he returns.

He is returning to claim this land and the whole earth for the Kingdom of God. He owns the universe but this land is special to him. All through history this land has been fought over and divided in battle. It still remains divided to this day. There is a massive "wall and fence" stretching for hundreds of kilometres through the land. Jerusalem may yet again be divided (Zech 14:2) for in the end times the "Son of Perdition" will divide the land for gain. (Dan 11:39) But Jesus will return and claim it and restore it. The land that was once a desert will blossom and become like the Garden of Eden. (Ek 36:35-,36 Isa 49:8) This is the start of the restoration worldwide that will continue into and during the millennium.

### **THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE**

Jesus foretold a time of trouble or great tribulation. (Matt 24:21) Where does the term, Tribulation, originate? It comes from Jeremiah 30:4-24 in which the prophet described the time of Israel's return to the land and their restoration. This is the OT text for it; it is the "time of Jacob's trouble but he shall be saved out of it". Daniel referred to this time as the last three and a half years. (Dan 12:1)

It actually refers to a specific time in Jacob's life. After many years in exile he returned to the land God promised him. (Gen 32:24-31) But he was in great trouble. He faced hostility behind him and possible annihilation in front of him. When he had left the land he had gone out with nothing but he made a vow that if God kept him and brought him back then the Lord would be his God. (Gen 28:20-22) When the time came for his return he was pursued by the people he had been living with. They were intent on killing him but the Lord intervened on his behalf to save him. Then as he prepared to cross into the land he faced an uncertain future from the people he came back to had also threatened to kill him. He was left totally alone and wrestled with a stranger. It lasted all night but in the morning Jacob still would not let go of him. The stranger was none other than the Lord Himself and it was here that God changed Jacob's name to Israel for he prevailed

“with both God and with men”. This was the time of *Jacob’s trouble* when, utterly alone, trapped before and behind he took hold of God and prevailed. It was here that Jacob saw God “face to face” and it was here that Jacob was reconciled to his brother. When he saw him it was as if he saw the “face of God”. (Gen 33:10) It was then that Jacob built a home and he called the place “Succoth” (Sukkot – Booths or Tabernacles). (Gen 33:17)

This is a reflection of what will happen in the last days when Israel will be surrounded and alone. The people from whence they came sought to destroy them and the people to where they have come now seek to destroy them. After WW11 they fled away from people who wanted to kill them. Very few nations helped them get out of Europe. Even to recent times they have been hindered in their bid to come back to their home. They have returned to a land where the people still want to kill them. They face a foe before and behind. There will be none to help but God. Israel will take hold of the Lord for there will be none other. In this dark night they will “see God face to face”. The Messiah will return to them and will hide them in the Day of Trouble. (Ps 27:4-10) They will be changed for ever, a new Nation in a new world. It is significant that The Feast of Tabernacles originated at that time and will be fulfilled in its final form at the Time of Trouble. It will become a Time of Glory when they shall see him Face to Face.

The tribulation must be re-evaluated. It will be a time of reconciliation when “Jacob” receives Messiah and reconciliation between man and man will follow. It is not so much a time of antichrist’s power as the time of God’s power. It will bring healing. When you read of the conflict between Moses and Pharaoh how do you read it? Do you read it as the great power of Pharaoh or the great power of God? It was when God displayed His power and prevailed. So too is this time. Out of this last great testing will come full spiritual restoration for God’s people, Jew and Gentile believers as one “new man”. (Eph 2:14) All who belong to the Lord will see Him. It is a time of world reconciliation and the great Ingathering, Sukkot. (Zech 14:16) Meditate on Jacob’s Trouble and God’s great deliverance from Egypt at Passover and you will gain much insight.

### **A TIME FOR PREPARATION**

We are now witnessing preparations for the greatest conflict ever to be

fought, except for the personal conflict Jesus fought at the cross. We are about to see the greatest acts of God since the Lord brought His people out of Egypt. Yet many in the church are asleep. Now is the time for the church to awaken from slumber and pray as never before. We need to pray for believers world wide; Jewish believers, Palestinian believers and all believers. Jacob's salvation will bring life out of death. (Rom 11:15)

Daniel set us the example of how to pray in these times. First we need to understand God's purposes and then we need to pray in accordance with them. Daniel prayed for his people and confessed the sins of his nation before God. We too need to pray in this way for our own nations. Why has God saved people in so many nations? It is so that they can witness to those nations and pray for them, to stand in the gap and beseech the Lord for mercy and pardon lest they perish. They cannot pray for themselves. We must pray for them. This is the battleground.

When Daniel understood from Jeremiah the plans and purposes God had for his people he set himself to pray and intercede for them. (Dan 9:3) He prayed for 21 days without ceasing! (Dan 10:2) How did he pray? His prayers were repentance and confession, appealing for mercy and pardon for the sins of his nation and people. God heard that prayer and sent the Angel Gabriel to enlighten and strengthen Daniel that he may know when and how God would fulfil His Covenant as He promised.

In the last 100 years God has brought Jewish people back to the land so that in the land they might come back to Him. Jewish believers in Messiah are growing in numbers in Israel and elsewhere in the world. There are now Jewish Messianic Congregations meeting in the name of Yeshua the Messiah. Messiah will "meet" with them, Confirm his Covenant with them and graft them back into spiritual life. These Jewish believers will not become "Christianised" and take on the trappings of the Gentile Church but will be Messianic Believers. The formation of congregations of "Jewish" believers has caused friction for some Christians who for one reason or another question them. However, the early Jewish Church had to find a way to accommodate Gentile believers and so too the reverse is now necessary. It is imperative for Christians to now pray for and care about Jewish survivors for they are the *remnant* of two thousand years of suffering. The grafting back of the Olive branches is vital for the Church to become whole again.

As spiritual life comes into Jewish believers new life will also come into the Church wherever the Lord's people are seeking Him in prayer. It will bring healing in every nation as believers will be empowered in resurrection power. It is the end of the "Times of Gentiles" and the birth of the "Kingdom Age". God's people in the nations who obey Jesus will take possession of the nations just as Joshua took the Promised Land. They will be empowered to witness in the world and will do mighty acts throughout the world. It is a worldwide repeat and continuation of the ministry of Jesus during his earthly sojourn. Jesus will work with and through His people worldwide confirming His Word. (Mk16:20)

Paul the apostle declared the restoration of the Olive Tree. (Rom 11:24-27, Isa 59:20,21) Paul placed this event firmly in the future: *"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written; the Deliverer will come out of Zion and will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins"*. When will this happen? When the natural branches are grafted back into their own Olive Tree. *"As for Me says the Lord this is My covenant with them; My Spirit who is upon you and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart ...from your descendants' descendants from this time and forevermore"*. Jesus will Confirm the Covenant with His people; Israel will come back to Covenant. (Jer 31:31)

### **PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD**

Once we understand God's purposes we should pray as Daniel did, praying in the purposes of God. There is an urgent need for the church everywhere to prepare for the return of the Lord. Individuals are called to prepare. The church itself needs to prepare. Because some people say that we cannot know when Jesus will return they may have a sense of apathy as if it is a far off event. There is little sense of urgency.

Just as John the Baptist warned the nation to repent so nations today need to repent. Yet most people are not believers so how can they repent? It is the church that must do the praying and repenting for them. This is the way that Daniel prayed when he confessed the sins of Israel and earnestly interceded. We should be having seasons of prayer in which we repent and intercede for ourselves, our nations and the people of the world.

When Jesus came the first time he ministered for three and half years. During this time he gave a mighty declaration and call to repentance, for the Kingdom of God was at hand. First he cleansed the temple and performed many miracles and healings. (Jn 2:14-16) The powers of darkness opposed him and attempted to stop the truth. He cast out demons and stood against wicked leaders and false religious teachers. It was at the Feast of Hanukkah or Dedication that he declared himself Messiah. (Jn 10:22-38) He chose that Feast especially because of its significance. In the last week of earthly life he again purged the temple by overturning the merchants' tables and driving out the money lenders. (Mk 11:15) Then in the temple he healed the sick. This was a preview of what will happen in the last three and half years. He will come as a Refiner's fire (Mal 3:2,3) cleanse the temple His Church, and Confirm the Covenant as foretold in Daniel. It will be a time of cleansing and Dedication for all believers. There is a specific time of three and a half years in which there will be a mighty intervention in Israel and the Church.

### **How should we pray?**

**1/**Believers are called to prepare: To put our lives in order; get our priorities right; pay our debts; go to those against whom we may have sinned and seek forgiveness; make restitution for wrong. We need to do what scripture says; "*Prepare ye the way of the Lord*". Confess sins that are holding us back from serving the Lord, turn away from things that stop us loving the Lord. The ministry of Moses and Elijah will demand this kind of consecration. Do we really think we will enter the Cloud of Glory and meet him if we are not right with Him? It is imperative that we are able to enter the Cloud.

**2/**The Church worldwide with all its denominations needs healing. Over the last 2000 years the Church has suffered great division and cruelty from within. We are called to make confession of wrong and make restitution where possible, to REPENT. Of the seven churches in Revelation *five* of them are told to repent. That is how the Lord sees the churches. (Rev 1-3) Some congregations that compromise His Word, allow open sin and turn a blind eye to injustice are warned they will be judged. Just as Jesus cleansed the temple of money changers and merchants so he will cleanse his Church of those who have defiled it. The world financial systems will crash and all who have gained wealth through corruption and greed will crash with them. (James 4:1-7) Judgement will come on secular corrupt institutions but



individuals within them will be saved. That is why God's people are called out of Babylon; "come out of her my people". Some institutions will never turn back to God. Christendom has been plagued with false prophets, false doctrines, warmongers, prosperity seekers and immorality. There are believers in some of these places who should not be there. We are living in a time when many Christians worldwide are persecuted yet some Christians have little dedication. Cold and non-committal churches must repent and do the works of Christ. If there is sin in them then there is need for repentance. Some people say that the Church is taken out of the end times but a careful reading of Revelation shows it is there right through. Right in the middle of Revelation Jesus comes for his saints. (16:15) His Saints endure, are sealed and resist the mark of the beast. (7:3,13,14, 12:17, 14:12, 15:2, 20:4)

**3/** Jesus will come as a Refiner's fire. Nations that once upheld the truth and have turned from God and embraced false gods and false prophets and not stood for righteousness will come under judgement. One way they will be judged is by the way they have treated "his brethren"; the poor, weak and lost. (Matt 25:34-46) God will remember every act of mercy and kindness towards those in need. Also, the way that nations have treated God's people is a standard by which judgement will fall upon them. This includes both Jew and Gentile. No other people have been so persecuted for their faith through history as Jews and Christians. The kings of the earth are warned "*Kiss the Son lest He be angry and you perish in the way when His wrath is kindled*". (Ps 2:12) We need to pray for our nations. It is sad that some Christians do not understand the call God has on His ancient people "Israel". There are those today who "hasten to run in the error of Balaam" the prophet who wanted to curse God's people. But he was "rebuked for this by a dumb donkey restraining his madness". Even the ass knew it was wrong. (2 Pet 2:15,16 Jude 11) This does not mean that Jewish people are more righteous or sinful than any other. They too need the Saviour as much as we all do. They must receive the Lord. This is why we must pray for them. Who will pray the prayer of Daniel and intercede? "Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem". (Ps 122:6) Peace in Jerusalem will bring peace in the world.

## **FEASTS OF THE BIBLE AND THEIR PROPHETIC FULFILMENT**

### **FEAST OF PASSOVER**

At Passover God delivered his people and destroyed their enemies. By

placing the blood on their doors they were protected. Behind those doors they were safe as the angel of death passed through the land in judgment. This illustrates salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. It also looks to a future purging of the earth when he comes. At his return his people, believers in all nations, will meet him "within the veil" and the doors will be closed. They will enter the Secret Place of the Most High and hide from judgment. As they enter the protection of the "cloud of glory" a "fire" will go throughout the world and remove all that offend. (Isa 26:19-21, Matt 13:39) This "fire" is caused by cosmic upheavals at the Presence of the Lord. It will consume the wicked. Isaiah foretold that when the Lord "comes out of his place" the *wicked* will be punished. However, his people will rise in resurrection power. (Ps 27:5 Isa 26:19-21) (See page 38 "His Presence") Something similar happened at the flood; God's people went into the Ark and the door was shut to the world. When Joseph revealed himself to his brethren he also closed the door. It was in private that he revealed his power and authority to them and they confessed and repented. (Gen 45) When Jesus rose he also revealed himself to his disciples behind closed doors, the doors being locked. (John 20:19,26, Lk 24:29-31)

The Passover portrays something very special. When Jesus celebrated the Passover he said he would not partake of the cup again until he drinks it new in the Father's Kingdom. (Mk 14:25) There were a number of cups during the meal. One cup was known as the "Cup of Redemption" which is probably the cup Jesus shared with the disciples. (Luke 22:20) It seems he did not drink the cup known as the "Cup of Consummation" which recalled the promise that God would take his people unto himself. The unfinished meal of Jesus was a pledge that redemption would be consummated at a *future* Messianic banquet when he takes the cup and drinks it new in the Kingdom of God. Every time believers eat and drink from the Lord's Table they show his death "until he comes". (1 Cor 11:26) The meal points to his return and the union he will have at that time with his people. He will sup with them.

Jesus is the Passover Lamb, (1 Cor 5:7) who shed his blood and fulfilled numerous shadows and prophecies concerning the Passover. For example he died at Passover without a bone being broken just as the Passover lamb had no bones broken. It is evident that Christ fulfilled Passover and all who take him as their own Passover receive pardon and life. (Jn 6:54) He will return to complete its full outworking. He will once again meet with his loved ones

"behind closed doors" in the day that the inhabitants of the earth are judged. (Isa 26:19-21)

## **SYMBOLS IN PASSOVER**

The original Passover was a family meal and each family was set apart. The prophet Zechariah wrote that when Messiah reveals himself to Israel it will be to family units set apart. Jesus will disclose himself as the fulfilment of Passover to those who are looking for Messiah. Jews are not saved because they are Jews but must receive Yeshua as Lord. In Passover their eyes will be opened to understand who he is. They will "see" the wounds in his hands and know he is Lord, King and High Priest. (Zech 3:8-9, 6:12-13, 12:10-14, 13:6) 14:16)

The Passover began as a family festival centred in the home. Later it became a pilgrimage festival when adult men went to the temple in Jerusalem. After the Romans destroyed the temple it returned to the family in the home. Since then there has been no further sacrifice and Rabbis teach that each person is to consider him or herself a temple and the true sacrifice to be prayer, righteousness and repentance. In Jewish belief the Messianic hope is kindled more strongly at Passover than at any other time. It is the season of redemption. According to Jewish traditional teaching of Israel's history the month of Nisan is the month of redemption when God originally chose Jacob and his sons and appointed for them that month as the time of redemption when Israel was redeemed from Egypt at Passover and in which "they are destined to be redeemed again."

Even to this day devout Jews still keep Passover as the time of redemption. They have some important customs in the Passover "Seder" or ceremonial meal which surely point to the coming of Messiah. There is an empty chair and an extra place that is reserved for Elijah. There is a cup called Elijah's cup that is not drunk but which looks to the day he will return as herald of Messiah. However, Elijah is only a type and forerunner of the Messiah, a shadow who points to the Messiah himself. During the Passover meal unleavened bread is arranged in three divisions and the middle part, symbolic of Yeshua, is taken and broken and then hidden somewhere in the house. Later in the meal it is looked for, taken out and revealed. During the meal someone will get up from the table and go to the door to see if Elijah,

the herald of Messiah, has come. Jesus said that Elijah will return. Will he one day knock on the Passover door, enter and sit down on Elijah's chair and take Elijah's cup? Or will Messiah himself enter and take the bread and break it and reveal himself as he did to the two disciples at Emmaus?

The Jewish people still refer to the days immediately before Passover as "The Days of Elijah". It is Elijah who has the ministry of restoration, to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and the fathers to the children. Ever since Israel rejected the Messiah they are in need of restoration. Prominent in Jewish thinking is the need for Elijah to restore the nation. In fact there are two great prophets in Jewish thinking, Moses and Elijah. This is why the Pharisees asked John why he baptised "if he were not the Messiah, nor Elijah nor the *Prophet*". (Jn 1:25)

### **THE UNFINISHED MEAL**

However, Jewish custom believes that it is Messiah himself who will come at Passover. Elijah is only the forerunner of Jesus. It was believed by ancient sages that Israel's future redemption will take place on Passover Day when Messiah will reveal himself. There are four cups in Passover each representing a promise of God. (Ex 66:6,7) The third cup is called the cup of Redemption and is probably the cup the Lord blessed and shared with his disciples. There is a fourth which the Lord did not drink of and is reserved for when he returns and drinks it again in the Kingdom of God, when he "will take Israel as his people". Instead of drinking that cup the Lord went out to Gethsemane and drank the bitter cup of death. (Matt 26:27-29,42)

These are reflections of spiritual truths. Could it be that one day those who are praying for Messiah will open their door and find someone standing there? If they invite him in will he reveal himself to their searching hearts just as he revealed himself to the disciples at Emmaus? (Luke 24:13-35) After all, Messiah is the focus of the meal and the bread and wine are symbols of him, both of his death and his return. There is no question that the feast looks to his coming. Jesus said he will not drink again from the cup until he drinks it new in his Kingdom. It is my personal conviction, that Christ will somehow reveal himself to his people at Passover. He will return for the unfinished meal. His people will hide in the Secret Place of His Presence and when they come out they will be changed.

## **FEAST OF YOM KIPPUR**

### **FEAST OF ATONEMENT AND JUDGMENT OF NATIONS - Matt 25:31**

Yeshua our Messiah will rule every nation on earth and the time will come when he will cleanse all nations. (Matt 25:31) The return of Christ is prophetically portrayed by the Feast of Atonement. In contrast to Passover which was focused on the individual and family the Feast of Atonement was a day of national repentance and atonement. At Passover the blood covered the sins of the individual and family whereas the blood of Atonement was taken by the High Priest within the Holy of Holies to make intercession for the entire nation and everyone in it.

Please read the following scriptures to see how Jesus fulfilled the office of High Priest and the Feast of Atonement. (Heb 3:1, 4:14-16, 5:1-10, 6:19,20, 7:26,27, 8:1,2, 9:11,12, 24-28, 10:19-22, 13:11,12 ) He shed his own blood and then figuratively took that blood into the Holy of Holies to make Atonement. Not only was he Passover Lamb but also High Priest. At the moment he died the heavy veil within the Holy of Holies was rent from top to bottom. (Matt 27:51, Mk 15:38, Lk 23:45) Note it was torn from heaven down indicating that the way was open. (Heb 9:12) Also note that just as the sacrifice was burnt outside the camp so too Jesus died outside the city walls. (Heb13:11,12) He made atonement and will one day step back through the veil and appear to all who love and obey Him.

Another little known fulfilment of Atonement by Jesus was at his baptism. His three and a half year ministry commenced at the time of the Feast of Atonement and ended at Passover. At the Feast of Atonement a goat was chosen called the Azazel or scapegoat. (Lev 16:10-22) The sins of the people were confessed upon it and it was then driven into the wilderness where it died in rejection. At the time of Jesus' baptism he represented both Passover lamb and Scapegoat. Even though he was without sin he was baptised by John. The act of Baptism originates with the Mikveh or washings of the OT. John the Baptist used the Biblical principle of washing to call people into a Baptism of Repentance. Sinners came to hear him, responded by confessing their sins and by going down into the water they were symbolically washed and came out clean. They went in dirty and came out clean having dumped their sins in the water. When Jesus came John protested that he could not baptise Jesus implying Jesus was righteous and did not need to repent.

However, Jesus was both sacrifice and High Priest and as such was obliged to wash especially at the Feast of Atonement. He said he must be baptised to "*fulfil all righteousness*" and even though he had no sin he went into the water but came out bearing the sins of the world. Immediately after his baptism he was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days. From that day he bore the sins of the world to the cross. That was why John declared of him; "*Behold the Lamb of God who beareth away the sins of the world.*" Jesus was entirely sinless yet bore not only your sins but the whole world's. Its hard enough coping with our own sins but imagine if you were carrying the sins of the whole world; every horrible, cruel, painful thing that has ever happened through history. He went to the cross where he died to make atonement for Israel and the world.

Jesus is King. The title over the cross was "King of the Jews". As Zechariah predicted, both offices of High Priest and King are combined in Christ. (Zech 6:12,13) The King of the Jews died for the Gentiles. He will cleanse all nations on earth and then he will rule as King of Kings.

*"And all the nations shall be brought together before me. And I will sort out the people as a shepherd sorts the sheep from the goats. I will put the sheep at my right hand. And I will put the goats at my left. Then I, the King, shall speak to those at my right. I will say, Come, blessed of my Father. Come into the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."*  
(Matt 25:32 Simplified Living Bible)

The nations are judged by the way they have either blessed or hated "*his brethren*".

As one considers the present world turmoil one must realise how imminent this judgment could be. It is my conviction that Jesus will reveal himself to his people at the Feast of Atonement. He will fulfil both Passover and Atonement. He was crucified at Passover and then rose and ascended. There is a gap in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week during which the Gospel has gone into all nations. He will return to continue and complete his work. His Presence will be real throughout the final half week. The prophetic time for the last half of the week of Daniel 9 starts again where he left off, at Passover. This is the start of the final three and a half years and it goes through to the Day of Atonement. Jesus will fulfil both these Feasts.

## HOW ATONEMENT IS CELEBRATED

### "The 10 Days of Awe"

This Feast was kept on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month Tishri. The ten days leading up to the Day of Atonement were kept as days of penitence during which people were expected to humble themselves and "get right" before God. If necessary they had to "afflict" their souls. (Lev 16:29-31) They had to get ready for the most awesome day of the year. This was the day the high priest went into the very Holy of Holies to make atonement. When he came out everyone broke into joyful celebration for forgiveness of sins. It is said that young maidens dressed in white and there was dancing in the streets. If you knew Jesus will come back in ten days time what would you do? It would completely change your life.

The ten days of preparation are extended to 40 days by those who also observe the month before Tishri called Elul as part of the time of preparation. During this period the people confess their sins and turn from them, they put their lives right in every way possible. These are the "Days of Awe".

To this time the Feast is celebrated by Jews but they have no sacrifice or high priest. It is the most important feast of the year. It is a day of great solemnity as synagogues are full of sombre people seeking God's forgiveness. There is confession and prayers of repentance. During the service the Ark within the Synagogues is opened and the Torah brought out and read. The Jewish Ark is a box kept within the synagogue that contains the scroll of the Torah, the Books of Moses. It is called "Ark" after its Hebrew name "*Aron Kodesh*" and it is a type and reminder of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. At the end of the day the people spill into the streets to dance and sing. I have been in Jerusalem at Yom Kippur and experienced the solemnity of that day and seen the dancing in the streets afterwards. How much more will this happen when the *remnant* of Israel come to understand who Messiah is.

When Jesus walked in his resurrection on the road to Emmaus he spoke with two disciples; "*beginning at Moses and all the Prophets he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself*". (Lk 24:25-35) Their hearts burned within them and their eyes were opened. What if one

day Moses comes to synagogue, opens the Ark, takes out the Torah, unrolls it and expounds from the scriptures showing the Jewish people who their Messiah is? And what if the Heavenly Ark, the Righteous One, the Giver of the Law, the Living Word Himself, the true Ark, should appear in the cloud of his Presence? Will they see him face to face as Moses did of old?

John made figurative reference to this when he wrote in Revelation that "*The Ark of the Covenant was opened in the temple in heaven*". (Rev 11:19) Worship in synagogues goes right back to the times of the New Testament and John would have been familiar with this custom. Jews have considered the synagogue as a type of temple ever since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Every time the Ark is opened in the synagogue it figuratively portrays the appearance of the Messiah to his people. One day it will actually happen.

The Day of Atonement is followed by the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot). It lasts seven days. The Sabbath during these days is called "The Day of the Return." (Hosea 14:1-) On the evening of the eighth day there is a festival called the Joy of Torah (Simchat Torah). At this time the Torah scrolls are taken out of the Ark and paraded aloft with joy, dancing and singing. The annual Torah reading is concluded by the reading of Deuteronomy chapter 34. It is the pinnacle of rejoicing and fulfilment of the year.

As we have already considered there is coming, in some way, the ministry of two of the greatest men of the Bible, Moses and Elijah, to "*turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers*". The OT Feasts and many customs associated with them all point to the Messiah. They will all be fulfilled. The annual Feasts of Israel are in two groups; the first three at the start of the "religious" year the second three at the start of the New Year. The first three, Passover, Unleavened Bread, Wave Offering with First Fruits (Pentecost or Shavuot) were all fulfilled at the first coming of Christ during his three and a half year ministry. He fulfilled them on the exact day; he was slain at Passover, rose on the Wave Offering and sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The second three will be fulfilled during the last three and a half years at his return; Trumpets will sound, Atonement will take place and Tabernacles, also called the Feast of Ingathering, will follow.



## **Jesus Confirmed the Covenant (Dan 9:24)**

It is significant that the next time Gabriel appeared after his visit to Daniel was at the announcement of the conception of Jesus in fulfilment of God's *Covenant*. (Lk 1:19, 26, 72) Let us look again at what the Lord did during his three and a half year ministry. He fulfilled all that Gabriel told Daniel.

**1/** He finished Transgression. (transgression - Strong's 6588 - rebellion, revolt) Israel had been in transgression for many years and that was the reason they had gone into captivity in Babylon.

**2/** He made an end of sins. (to end - Strong's 2856 - seal up; sins - Strong's 2403 - offence, perpetual sinfulness)

**3/** He made reconciliation for iniquity. (reconciliation - Strong's 3722 - to cover, make atonement, cancel, forgive; iniquity - Strong's 5771 - fault, perversity, sin)

**4/** He brought in everlasting righteousness. (righteousness - Strong's 6664 - justice, prosperity, morally right)

**5/** He sealed up vision and prophecy. (to vindicate all prophecies of scripture)

**6/** He was anointed as the Most Holy.

At the start of his earthly ministry Jesus stood in the synagogue and read from Isaiah 61:1,2; "*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to ... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*". (Lk 4:18,19)

This was exactly 69 weeks from the time Gabriel had declared; 483 years to the year, the start of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. Jesus ministered exactly three and a half years and in the middle of the week was cut off, the very year in which the Covenant would be fulfilled. (See Appendix 1) When Jesus died on the cross he cried "It is finished". He fulfilled the covenant for all mankind.

When Jesus cried "*Father, forgive them they know what they do*" it was all inclusive. Some say he only meant the Roman soldiers but this cannot be. According to both Peter and Paul the great majority of people did not know what they did when they crucified Jesus. (Acts 3:17, 1 Cor 2:8) He died for

all mankind and forgave the *whole* of humanity. All may receive it.

- He finished transgression by making full atonement. (Isa 53:8 Heb 9:15)
- He died for sins. (Rom 5:8)
- He made reconciliation. (Heb 2:17 Col 1:19-23)
- He brought in everlasting righteous. (Rom 10:3,4)
- He completed all the prophecies of the Messiah. (Lk 24:27)
- He was anointed as the Holy One: by the Holy Spirit at his baptism (Lk 4:18); by God His Father in his miracles. (Acts 4:27, 10:38, Lk 1:32-35) He is the Anointed One. (Ps 2:2)

He was anointed as the Holy One. Throughout the book of Isaiah he is called the Holy One. He is the Temple of God. (Jn 2:19-21) The Most Holy is not a place but a person. He spoke of Himself as the Temple of God and said he would raise his body in three days. By his resurrection Jesus fulfilled the Covenant and was Glorified. (Jn 12:10,23 13:31 Acts 3:13) He did all this in the first half of the final week. He confirmed the promises made to the Fathers. (Rom 15:8) So what will he do in the second half? He will come again to Confirm the Covenant, fully establish it, implement it and cause it to prevail. He will complete all the above and reveal His Resurrection Glory.

## **THE MIGHTY ACTS OF GOD IN THE END DAYS**

It is during the last half of the week, the final 1260 days that Jesus will "Confirm the Covenant". The first time he came he brought the Kingdom of God, overcame Satan and brought thousands in Israel to salvation. Then he sent the disciples to declare the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout the world. The last 2000 years has been a time of sowing and the Gospel has gone into all nations and multitudes of Gentiles have heard and believed. There has been a harvest in each generation but the church is not the harvest. The church is the elect, the "First Fruits", called by God to be a nation of priests, a chosen people to do his will. The great "Ingathering" harvest is still to come. (Js 1:18, Rom 8:23, 1 Pet 2:5, Rev 1:6, 14:4)

Jesus said that the harvest is the end of the age. (Matt 13:39) There are more people alive on earth now than have ever lived throughout history! The present population on earth is over 7 billion. The earth is ripe for the biggest

harvest ever seen. The message will go out to all who "*dwell upon the earth – to every nation, tongue and people*" and it is Jesus himself who will put in the sickle and reap the earth. (Rev 14:14-16) There have been seasons of harvest throughout history but the full harvest is still coming. It is prefigured in the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles, Sukkot, at the end of year after Trumpets and Atonement. It will be fulfilled in the end times.

He will confirm this on a world wide scale. There is coming a great outpouring of God's Spirit. (Joel 2:28-32) There will be multitudes in the Valley of decision. (Joel 3:12-16) It is harvest time.

It is also the promise for Daniel's **people** and **land**; the Jews and Israel. He will Confirm his Covenant with them too. Through history Satan attacked them. Again and again he attempted to destroy them from off the face of the earth. Even now the world gathers against them. Satan has always wanted to control Jerusalem and to sit on the "sides of the north". The Jews have come back to the land in fulfilment of Daniel 9 and many other prophecies. It has been a long journey through many pogroms and holocausts. They have come back to meet Messiah and it is in the land where they will meet him and call upon him. (Zech 13:8,9) They will flee to the place prepared for them where for three and a half years they will be protected. (Rev 12:6) There will be a time of great trouble as nations will gather yet again against Jerusalem. (Zech 14:2-9) "When the power of the holy people has been completely shattered then all things shall be finished". (Dan 12:7) It is when all appears lost that the final act will come. "Then the Lord will fight against those nations". (Zech 14:1-9) Jesus is coming back to Jerusalem; not London, Washington, Moscow or any other world centre. (Zech 14:4) He has prepared this city especially to return to. It will never again be plundered or destroyed. (Zech 14:10,11, Jer 31:38-40) "It shall not be plucked up or thrown down anymore forever".

The King will overcome the Beast and his 'kings'. He comes with those who are chosen and faithful, his "Mighty Ones". (Joel 3:11 Jude 14 Rev 5:11 Dan 7:10, Zech 14:5) He will gather together his saints, all those who have made covenant with him by sacrifice. (Ps 50:3-6) This is why God has established his people in all nations. They are prepared, obedient, tested in the furnace. He comes as King to establish his Kingdom in all nations.

They will be empowered by Jesus to take the nations for the Kingdom of God. Every miracle the Lord accomplished during his earthly ministry of three and a half years will be replicated as His people arise and his resurrection power sweeps through the world. There will be a time of great spiritual conflict similar to what happened long ago when Moses delivered God's people from Egypt and also in the days when Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal. As it was then so again, great signs and miracles will take place. (Rev 11:3-12) Imagine what it will be like to hear such great prophets as Moses and Elijah challenge the whole world? Moses will confront the Pharaohs of the world and Elijah will challenge all the false prophets of the world. They will have power to back their words. There will be cosmic disturbance with sun and moon turning dark and there will be great upheavals on earth. Scientists have recently learnt much more as to how the sun affects the weather on earth and our magnetic fields. Magnetic sun storms can cause huge disturbances on earth, destroy communication systems and cause modern technology to malfunction. They also cause earthquakes, volcanoes and disrupt weather patterns. They even affect the minds of people.

Believers in the Lord will have great power, speak with authority, do miracles, be able to travel in the spirit as Philip did, defy natural laws and do great wonders. They will have power over the evil ones of the earth just as Jesus had during his ministry. Jesus said that those who attain the age of the resurrection will be like angels. They will be able to come and go as angels. Just as Jesus did miracles, wonders and signs so believers too will do them. He will work with them and in them as he did in the days of his earthly ministry and in the early church. (Heb 2:4, Mk 16:20, Acts 2:22) They are strategically situated in all nations so as to be able to spiritually rule the nations as Christ establishes his kingdom upon earth in real terms. Faithful, obedient, committed believers will be empowered to possess the nations for God. (Dan 7:18,22 Rev 11:15) It will be a world wide repeat of what happened when God sent Joshua (Jesus) to possess the "Promised Land". The Kingdom of God will prevail and the elect of God will teach, instruct and establish the Kingdom on earth in real terms. Wherever His people are gathered the Lord will be in *resurrection* power and authority.

The church will be cleansed, restored and empowered with the indwelling Presence of the Shekinah Glory to become the Lord's Tabernacle in which he

dwells. Israel will be grafted back in and the nations will come to Jerusalem to enquire of the Lord; they will take hold of a Jew and say "God is with you". (Zech 8:23) Peace will settle upon the world in a generation of reconciliation. The times of the Gentiles will be over.

Through history the Lord has prepared a people who will be His people. The history of Israel is significant. Through all their experiences they have been purged and disciplined. Each great event in history was allowed to prepare them for The Lord's purposes. They came out of Egypt, wandered in the wilderness, possessed the land, went into captivity, were scattered into all nations and a remnant have returned to the land. No other nation on earth has endured such things. Gentile believers have been grafted into Israel and had a very similar experience as joint heirs with Israel. The experience of true Gentile believers in Jesus is in many ways the same as that of Israel. The early Christians went into the world and took cities and nations for Christ. They were hounded and persecuted, fell into captivity and were at times overcome and scattered. Yet they have endured and a faithful remnant will be empowered to take the world. Their calling is irrevocable. (Rom 11:29) Why has the Lord allowed all this? It is to prepare a people who will be His people. Those who love Him of both Jews and Gentiles will meet Messiah.

## **EZEKIEL'S VALLEY OF BONES – Ezekiel 37**

In Ezekiel chapter 36 the prophet foretold the restoration of Israel back in their own land. They will multiply upon it and the land will blossom as a Garden of Eden, it will bud and yield its fruit. (Ezk 36:8, 35) "*O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My People Israel, for they are about to come*". This is fulfilled by the return of "His People" to the land. It is the start of the great restoration promised in scripture.

Ezekiel foretold how they were scattered among the nations where God judged them and wherever they went the nations "*profaned My Holy Name – when they said of them 'These are the people of the Lord and yet they have gone out of the land'*". (36:20) God promised to restore them to the land and the "ruined cities will be filled with flocks of men". God will do this for His own Holy Name's sake. (36:22) He will be hallowed in them when He

gives them new hearts and new spirits and they will dwell in the land. This spiritual rebirth of Israel takes place in the land.

In chapter 37 Ezekiel then described the most awesome thing one can ever contemplate; he had a vision of a great valley of dead bones. The bones represented the deceased of the whole house of Israel, all who are in the graves. (37:11) A careful reading of this chapter indicates this is more than restoration, this is the resurrection of God's people. This could not be clearer: "*Thus says the Lord GOD: behold O my people I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves and bring you into the land of Israel*".

God will raise every believer who has ever died or been killed. All who bear His Name and are named by Him, who have been killed for no reason other than they were His people, will be raised back to life. Through the last age millions have perished for no other reason. Satan targeted His people for slaughter, gloated over them, abused and tortured them, mocked, ridiculed and tormented them. The nations will witness the most terrifying event of all. The very people killed in pogroms, inquisitions, holocausts and great persecutions will come back to life. They will have the last say. God will do this for His Great Name's sake. The Bible is a book about resurrection. Because Jesus suffered death and overcame it he is able to give resurrection to all who call on him. (Heb 2:14-17) This resurrection includes Jews and Gentiles who follow him. (Hebrews 11, the whole chapter and especially verses 32-40)

*"Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves".* (37:13) God said this, not the prophet. Notice the choice of words; "your graves". Did the Lord say this? Yes HE did. The prophet did not say it and neither did I. The Lord said it, we need to believe it. Does it go against your theology? You need to change your theology. Are you still not sure? Read it again "*I will cause you to come up from your graves*". The whole world will be silenced in awe and fear at the RESURRECTION. (Rev 20:4-6)

Then you shall know I am Lord. It is after the resurrection that they come to understand who the Lord is. What does this mean? You will have to meditate on it before the Lord to grasp it.

Then they will dwell in the land and have one king over them and one shepherd and they will be one nation forever and 'My Servant David' will be king over them and he will be their Prince and God's sanctuary will be with them forever and the nations will know that God is faithful to His people. (37:25) The Kingdom of God will be on earth. In Daniel we read the "Stone cut out without hands" will smash the kingdoms of this earth and establish a kingdom that will last for ever and ever. (Daniel 2:44, 7:18, 25-27) The Times of the Gentiles and their kingdoms will be over.

### **GOG AND MAGOG – Ezk 38,39**

Ezekiel told of a conflict involving many nations that will take place after the return of Israel. This order is confirmed by John the apostle in Rev 20:7-15. Where did he place it in the timetable of God? John, as a Jew, was familiar with Ezekiel's prophecy and he followed the same sequence as Ezekiel; he placed it after their return to the land. Certain nations will attack Israel. In Revelation 19:17 he used the same language as Ezekiel 39:17 to describe this conflict. He then said that the 1000 years would take place followed by a further conflict. (Rev 20:4-10) John put its final fulfilment after the 1000 years of God's Kingdom upon earth. (Rev 20:7,8) So it seems there will be an initial fulfilment at the time of the restoration of Israel and before the inauguration of the Kingdom Age of 1000 years. Then there is a final fulfilment at the end of the 1000 years Kingdom Age. This is where John placed it, at the end of that age and before the inauguration of the Eternal Age. People have different views about Gog and Magog but I trust Ezekiel and John as the authority on this. (See Appendix 3)

The apostle Peter also placed the final purging of the world after these events. He said the new heavens and earth will come on the Day of Christ's Presence (Parousia). That "Day" lasts a thousand years and this is endorsed by John. The concept of a day being a thousand years comes from the OT. (Ps 90:4) John agreed with Peter and placed the new heavens and earth at the end of the thousand year rule of Christ. It seems therefore, the Day of the Lord's Presence (his Parousia) commences at his return and lasts a thousand years during which time he rules the nations and subdues all his enemies. (Rev 20:2,5 21:1) At the end of 1000 years the final rebellion and judgement takes place. He will establish a Kingdom that will never cease but will grow and increase from glory to glory and bring all things into

submission and usher in a new heavens and earth. (1 Cor 15:24,25 Phil 3:21)

### **THE AGE OF THE RESURRECTION - (Lk 20:35) "THE MILLENNIUM"**

Jesus spoke of a future "age of resurrection" which those who are worthy will attain. Only people who have believed and obeyed him will be there. Paul said he *"presses towards the prize of the upward call of God....that he may know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death if by any means he may attain to the resurrection from the dead"*. (Phil 3:8-14,20,21) In Hebrews we read about those who will "obtain a better resurrection". (Heb 11:35) This is not the "general resurrection" that takes place at the end of the 1000 years (Rev 20:5 Jn 5:28,29) but is the resurrection of the righteous. (Rev 20:4) It inaugurates what is variously called the "Day of the Lord", the "Kingdom Age", the "Age of the resurrection", the "Thousand years of Peace", the "Sabbath Day of the Lord". The apostle Peter said that certain things will take place on the "Day of the Lord" which spans a thousand years. This is where the term "millennium" comes from. It is actually called "The Day of Christ" and will last 1000 years. It is evident that the resurrection is in stages, there is an order to it. There has already been one resurrection of *multitudes* of OT saints, the "Wave Offering". (Mat 27:51-53) There will be another at the "Parousia" of Christ, the "First Fruits". (Rev 14:4, Jn 5:25-26) All who have been obedient to Christ will be raised at Christ's return. Those who are alive at that time and believe in faith will be changed.

There will be another resurrection after the 1000 years when death is finally overcome for ever. This resurrection is when everyone who has ever lived will stand before the Lord. (Rev 20:11-15, Jn 5:28-30, 1 Cor 15:22-26)

### **THE COMING KINGDOM 2 Peter 3:1-13**

The manner in which the Kingdom of God will operate on earth after the restoration of Israel is beyond the scope of this present book. However, if you have grasped the spiritual principles outlined within these pages you will have the heart of the matter. Those who have been faithful unto death and



attained the resurrection will be like angels. (Lk 20:34-36, Heb 11:35, Rev 12:11) They will share the resurrection glory of Christ and be able to come and go as angels, as Elijah and Moses were able to and as Jesus himself. They will have great power and authority in the Kingdom of God upon earth. They will be a people of power and glory.

On earth there will be a new body, the united "body of believers" both Jew and Gentile "as one man" in the fullness of God. Christ will dwell, not in a cathedral, nor in a temple, but in the living Tabernacle of believers in which He will abide and manifest Himself to those who love and obey him. The Shekinah Glory of God will be within that Tabernacle. Those who seek the Lord will be able to enter the "Cloud of Glory" and see him face to face. People will continue to be born and function on earth, grow and become old. Death is only finally done away at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ when all things will be subject to him and he offers the Kingdom to the Father. His Kingdom will exist and grow for ever.

*"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom establishing it and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever." (Isa 9:7)*

It is not a static kingdom but a dynamic Kingdom, always expanding, increasing in glory and multiplying as in 'compound interest'. (increase - Strong's 4768) The Kingdom endures forever and ever. It is not in a state of dormancy, it is in a state of continual growth. It is not a democracy, it is a kingdom. It is exponential, ever increasing until it fills all in all, without end. All creation is groaning for that day and it will start with the "unveiling of the Sons of God". It will incorporate the entire universe, and all creation, and will have no end, no limitations of any kind.

During the 1000 years "Day of the Lord" His Presence will be on earth in the same way as when he led his people out of Egypt, and during his 40 days of resurrection and in his Shekinah Glory. All these things we have considered are types and shadows to help us understand what will happen.

During the thousand years Satan is totally bound, completely neutralised and ineffective. His hold on the minds and hearts of mankind is brought to an end and the Kingdom of God will be established upon the earth.

During this time Christ's authority is stamped upon the nations. There are many scriptures that give us glimpses of how this will be implemented. The prophets of old foresaw an age when the earth will blossom and there will be no more war, injustice, sickness or pain. Sin will not be tolerated. Nature will be restored and nations will walk in peace and righteousness. Sickness will be gone, healing will be available for all; even death will not be feared. It is the time of restoration of all things. There are many scriptures that describe a time on earth when it will blossom and righteousness and peace will fill the whole earth. It will grow until death itself is swallowed up in life. The beauty of Eden will overtake creation.

In the OT we see how this works. When Moses came to the end of his earthly journey God told him to go to the top of a mountain and die. Yet he was not sick or weak, he was not frail or infirm. In obedience and faith he laid down his body. He did not fear death but simply lay down and died. Aaron did the same. During the age of the Kingdom death will hold no fear or pain. Those who obey the Lord will pass into the heavens in the same way as Enoch did. Through faith Enoch was translated. He simply walked through the veil and into God's Presence and stayed on God's side. These were previews of a future age.

At the end of the thousand years there is the final conflict when Satan will be released from prison and all who disobey God "come up or out" to resist God. (Rev 20:7) The language conveys something of great proportions. It is the time of the last great resurrection and it has been suggested that all the wicked of mankind whose names are not found written in the book of life will follow Satan in a last futile rebellion. All who hate God arise from the "four corners in the earth" in a final attempt to frustrate God's purposes. They can never be rehabilitated and resist and hate God to the bitter end. It is this multitude that the apostle John describes as Gog and Magog. He draws from Ezekiel's prophecy of judgement and places the complete fulfilment of this at the end of the thousand years 'Day of Christ'. (Ezk 39:17, Rev 19:17, 20:7) This final rebellion is quickly subdued. Satan and all with him are destroyed and the eternal order is established.

During the thousand years Christ will harmonise the realms of heaven and earth in a new order which will be administered by his chosen elect. (Eph 1:17-23) The Peshitta Aramaic Bible (translated from the Ancient Eastern

text) explains this when it says *"that all things might be made new in heaven and on earth through Christ"*. (Eph 1:9,10) The NAS Bible says that *"He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in heaven and things upon the earth"*.

Creation is both material and spiritual and the gulf between them is an unnatural gulf caused through sin which contorts it. In his resurrection Christ showed that harmony between both realms is possible. He had a body perfectly fitted to live in both realms. He will reconcile them and remove the barriers between them with the spiritual controlling the material in a new way. (Col 1:13-23) There is coming a new heavens and earth in which righteousness dwells and in which sin, suffering, decay and death can never recur. Peter described this when he wrote that this present world and all it's works will be dissolved and burnt up. In the context of his statement he is referring to the destruction of the wicked. He used God's past judgment at the flood as an example of future purging. It is not necessarily a total destruction of everything but it most certainly is a catharsis and total renewal and rearrangement even of the elements and principles that hold it all together. The writer of Hebrews put it most eloquently when he wrote that this present order will be "folded up like a garment" and be "changed". This is the same word used in 1 Cor 15:51,52, "to make different". (*Strong's 236*) Christ will renew and make perfect the whole of creation removing the prospect of sin ever recurring. (Heb 1:10-12, 2 Pet 3:7, Rev 20:11, 21:1)

We know scientifically that the present creation is temporal. The whole universe is running down and decaying. Stars burn out and this planet in its present state cannot last forever. However, the whole creation is going to be changed and this starts with the "revealing of the sons of God". It increases through the millennium reign of Christ until at the climax the "new heavens" swallow up the old, "death is swallowed up in victory" and Jesus submits everything to the Father. (1 Cor 15:24-28, 54-55 Rom 8:19-23 Hos 13:14) And that is only the beginning!

During the thousand years the power of Jesus is not only evident in the material physical world but also in the spiritual realms. It is in these realms that Jesus accomplishes a mighty work of grace. Paul described how during

this time of Christ's reign both "death and Hades" will come under his authority and submit to him and their power totally destroyed. (1 Cor 15:23-26 Col 1:16 2:15) The OT text that Paul used is Hosea 13:14. John endorsed this in Revelation 20:13,14 and 1:18. Note that John described how the books will be opened including the Book of Life. He said that "anyone *not* found in the Book of Life" will be destroyed. Why did John use such a peculiar way to write this, by emphasising the negative principle; only those not found? Is he implying that many *are* found and only those *not* found will be lost? Remember that John was the "beloved" disciple who was closest to Jesus. He spent time leaning on the bosom the Lord learning from his heart. This is the general resurrection Jesus taught about when all will be resurrected, some to life and some to condemnation. It may be that the theology in some churches has missed the truth of scripture which needs to be understood in a different way. There is a reason why the Lord allowed a period after death and before the final judgement but its significance is disregarded by most people. This is beyond the scope of this book but is something believers should come to terms with.

God's people will play a major role in the new creation. In his parables Jesus indicated that those who are faithful to him will be rewarded with greater responsibilities. They will judge the world and even angels! Jesus will empower his people to rule the world and his Kingdom will never pass away. (Eph 1:17-23, Matt 24:45-47, 25:14-30, 1 Cor 6:3) Not only that, but the Church, the living temple and "dwelling" of God, is in fact the body which the Lord has prepared to administer in all ages to come. (Eph 1:10-23, 2:1-22, Heb 2:5-9)

In the "dispensation of the fullness of times" God will gather together in one all things in Christ. God has broken down the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile and made them into "one new man". They are built together into the "dwelling place of God". This is what the prophet Amos foresaw and to which the apostle James referred in his Jerusalem speech to the leaders of the early church. (Amos 9:11,12 Acts 15:16,17) The raising of the "Tabernacle of David" is the union of Jewish and Gentile believers into one temple for the indwelling of the Lord. This was quoted by James as justification for the acceptance of Gentile believers and will happen fully when God restores His ancient people; then "the rest of mankind, the Gentiles, will seek the Lord". We are told more of this in Psalm 102:12-22.

There will come a set time for God's favour towards Jerusalem and Israel and at that time, when he establishes it, He will appear in His Glory.

When King David set up the Tabernacle of David it was a unique structure for it contained the Ark of the Covenant (a figure of Jesus) but it seems not to have had a separate "Holy of Holies". There was *no* separation between people and God. This is a picture of God "dwelling with his people in Glory".

## **"SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN"**

One day Peter asked the Lord *"how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"* He probably felt that seven times was more than enough but the Lord answered him, *"I do not say to you up to seven times but up to seventy times seven"*. That is a lot of times, it is 490 times! Why did the Lord say 70 x 7? It is a number of perfection.

As a Jew Peter would have immediately grasped the significance of what Jesus meant. That number only occurs in one place in scripture, in Daniel chapter nine. It is the number of Atonement, total forgiveness, the end of sins, complete reconciliation and everlasting righteousness. It is the fullness of the Covenant of God. That is what Jesus meant; no half measures; we must totally forgive and be fully reconciled to one another and to God.

This time is at hand. We are approaching the end of the full 70 weeks of 490 years to the full time of The Covenant. We are near the dawning of the millennium Kingdom age. (Mal 4:2) It is time for mankind to be reconciled to God. It is time for Jew, Christian and Arab to seek reconciliation. One day all the children of Abraham will be reconciled. The prophet Isaiah foretold the day when all three nations, Egypt, Israel and Assyria will be reconciled. (Isa 19:19-25) All need to receive Him as Messiah. Jews are not saved because they are Jews, neither Arabs saved because they believe in Abraham. All need Messiah. At a critical time at the end, all the descendents of Abraham will turn to the Messiah. A highway will go from Egypt to Assyria through Israel. Israel is the key to reconciliation. A great reconciliation will take place throughout the Middle East. There have already been reports of visitations by the Lord to people in the Middle East and throughout the world and these will continue and increase. It is time to "Prepare the way of the Lord".

We are moving out of the Church Age into the Kingdom Age. God has prepared a kingdom. All who call upon the name of the Lord will be there. (Joel 2:32) The time will come for all people to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. It will start in the Middle East and extend into all nations.

When will this happen? "How long O Lord?" - is the cry of the ages. The prophet Zechariah cried it. (Zech 1:12-17) Daniel cried it. (Dan 12:6,7) John cried it. (Rev 6:10,11) There is an answer. (Rev 10:6,7) There will be a three and a half year period leading to the time all things will be fulfilled. Just as there was three and a half years to usher in the "Church Age" so there will be three and a half years to usher in the "Millennium Age".

These are the Days of Awe. Now is the time for repentance and confession, for brother to get right with brother, a time to repent, to pay our debts, make restitution and put our lives right with God and one another. Now is the time to turn back to our first love; to turn from pride, riches, and unbelief, to come in brokenness and committal. Cry with all your heart and strength if necessary. He will turn your sorrow into Joy. Those who wish to meet Jesus must prepare; He will come to all who love him and look for him.

"Prepare to meet your God O Israel". (Amos 4:12) "Behold I come quickly". (Rev 22:7,12,20 2:5,16 3:11) Have you made yourself ready? "

## **THE MARRIAGE FEAST**

You may ask, "What about heaven and the Bride?"

Throughout the scriptures there is the theme of a wedding. The union between the Lord and his people is likened to a marriage. This concept originated in the Old Testament when the Lord said he would marry his chosen nation. (Isa 54:5, Jer 3:14) It is consummated when New Jerusalem is portrayed as the Bride of the Lamb. Heaven comes to earth. (Rev 21:2)

In the New Testament the Lord taught parables about weddings and marriage. One was about the "guests" who were invited but refused to come. (Matt 22:2-10) Another was about the need to watch as "virgins"; they are the bridesmaids who have oil in their lamps. (Matt 25:1) Yet another was about "servants" watching out for the return of their master

from the wedding. (Lk 12:36) Jesus also talked about the "sons of the bride chamber". These were the "friends" of the Bridegroom. (Matt 9:15) Jesus said he is the bridegroom.

But who is the Bride?

Certain Biblical customs in marriage serve to portray spiritual truth. Paul likened the church to a bride. He wrote that believers are betrothed to Christ. He used the marriage covenant as a figure of the union between Christ and his church, the body of Christ. For the believer who is truly joined as one with Christ the betrothal has already taken place and is a binding covenant. They are sealed. (Eph 1:13,14) Believers must keep themselves set apart spiritually to Christ. Paul wants to present each believer as a chaste virgin to Christ. (Rom 7:2-4, 2 Cor 11:2, Eph 5:25-32)

However, the marriage supper is still in the future. According to Jewish custom when a woman was betrothed the Bridegroom went away to prepare a place for her. He could return at any time and the bride had to keep herself pure and ready. When he came it was to the bride's house where they would have a supper. Her attendants went out to meet him and together they entered, the doors were shut and no one else was allowed to enter. This is the most likely interpretation of Matt 25:1-13. Subsequent to this the Bridegroom and bride went to a marriage feast held at the bridegroom's house and many guests attended. This is seen in Matt 22:1-14. These customs portray both the coming of Christ to believers and also the final celebrations with the Bride in heaven. In Revelation we see New Jerusalem, as a Holy Bride, taking her place in the New Heavens and Earth. But before this it is on a personal level, one to one, right here on earth. He will complete the "unfinished meal" that he left the last night of his earthly life. He will once again meet with those he loves and drink with them the "cup of consummation" that he did not drink but left for his return. We must be ready. "Blessed are those who are called to the Marriage supper of the Lamb for she has made herself ready". (Rev 19:7, 21:2,9,12,14)

Only those ready will enter.

Dear believer, you are betrothed as a pure Bride of the Lamb. There is an aspect of individual preparation necessary for a bride. Who is the Bride? The

bride concept is always collective, corporate, and yet it is made up of individuals. Jesus himself never let on who he considered his bride. Even John the Baptist, one of the most holy and significant followers of Christ, said he was only the friend of the Bridegroom. (John 3:29) Yet as such he said his joy was full. Jesus taught about bridesmaids, companions of the Groom, guests and servants yet he did not define the Bride. Why is this? Is this known only to him, reserved for those who love Him with a pure and devoted heart?

Salvation is a gift through faith in Jesus and promised to all who believe, even the thief on the cross. Being a son or daughter of God is experienced by all who are born again. However, marriage is a love relationship. It is very holy, very intimate and entirely exclusive. Marriage is a Holy relationship. The Bride is devoted, sanctified, set apart and consecrated. She loves the bridegroom, is completely devoted, totally set apart and wholly consecrated, fully sanctified wholly unto him in deep devotion. Can every believer claim to have such a relationship?

People who think they are going to be the Bride of Christ but live in a way that is not worthy of it may find they are not included in the intimate Bride of Christ. Christ and the apostles continually warned about this. As I have said the relationship starts on an individual level, one to one with the Lord. Nothing can replace this. When Jesus rose he appeared to individual people not the masses. He came to people who loved and obeyed him. When Mary saw Jesus she called him "Rabboni". It means more than Master; it means "MY GREAT ONE". He must be our Great One. We cannot call him Bridegroom until we call him Master.

It is impossible to truly love the Lord without giving Him reverence, respect and obedience. In Malachi 4:13 it says the Lord will come in Righteousness and heal those who fear Him. It is those that fear the Lord who are spared. (Mal 3:16,17) One can ask "Where in today's society is the Fear of the Lord?" Even in church there is often a flippant attitude that anything goes. Sometimes open sin is ignored! God is often considered so loving that he will ignore unrighteousness. However, it is impossible to see the Face of God or worship Him without holiness. (Ps 96:9) The apostle Paul makes it clear we must cleanse ourselves from all filth "perfecting holiness in the fear of God". (2 Cor 7:1) In Hebrews we read "Pursue...holiness without



which no one will see God". (Heb 12:14) God's people are holy, set apart for him. (Isaiah 66, Hosea 2:19,20, Jer 31:31,32, Jer 3:14-19, Isa 55:5)

New Jerusalem is the City of God, the eternal bride of God. She will forever dwell under the protection of his canopy and the doors will be open for the saved nations to enter. (Rev 21:24)

Jewish marriage was originally conducted in a tent or canopy; Hebrew - "*chuppah*". The word *chuppah* is still used by Jews today of the canopy under which the bride and groom stand during the ceremony. This canopy is the Cloud of Shekinah Glory, the covering which the Lord will stretch over the assemblies of Mount Zion, the City of the Living God. (Isaiah 4:5,6 Heb 12:22) The corporate assemblies of true believers represent spiritual Mount Zion and collectively the "City of God" on earth. Together with the great cloud of witnesses "in heaven" they form "*the General assembly and church of the firstborn enrolled in heaven*". (Hebrews 12:1, 23) The marriage is held in the canopy of His Glory Cloud in His Presence.

There is a beautiful scripture in Isaiah 62:5. "*As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.*" Isa 54:5 "Your Maker is your husband, the Holy One of Israel". (Isa 54:5)

When Christ returns his Presence will be with and in his people, along side them and abiding with them and all who love him will have access to the Cloud of his Glorious Presence and Heavenly City. As His kingdom grows so will his Glory until eventually Heavenly Jerusalem comes onto earth and God will be with His people within its eternal walls. There will be a new relationship between the realms of heaven and that of earth. John saw New Jerusalem coming down to earth out of heaven like a beautiful bride and those who are citizens enter its gates. The day will eventually come when the New Heavens and Earth, the material and spiritual, the visible and invisible, will unite together in perfect harmony. God will dwell with his people and through them rule all creation for ever. (Rev 21:3, 24-27, 22:3-5) The gates of His City will always be open.

"Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people: but the Lord will arise over you, and his glory will be seen upon you.

The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising". (Isa 60:1-3) Can you hear your heart cry "Come Lord Jesus"? The Bible ends with "The Spirit and the Bride say come". The Bride has prepared herself and is ready to meet her Lord. (Rev 22:17) Does your spirit leap with joy in response?

*Dearly beloved, you are invited to the Marriage supper of the Lamb.*

Believers must be ready for the wedding; pure, suitably dressed and set apart. (Rev19: 7- 9, 21:2) Jesus wants believers to be ready and prepared for the marriage supper. Those people who make no preparation may miss the high calling of God. Do we really think we will be included if we live a non-committal life to Christ? Marriage is meaningless without true devotion.

One of the characteristics of a Bride is that she longs for her Wedding Day and yearns for her Bridegroom. The "Spirit and the Bride" cry for Jesus to come back. (Rev 22:17) The Bride looks for Him day and night. She cries out in adoration for the Lord to come. Like the women on the Day of Resurrection who went early while it was still dark to meet the Lord (Jn 20:1) so too all who love the Lord will be ready to meet Him when He appears. (Rev 22:20) Yes, the days may be dark with no glimmer of dawn, yet we must be ready. The new day is nearly upon us. "Arise, shine, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon you." (Isa 60:1,2) For those who fear the Lord a new Morning is coming.

"We shall see Him face to face". (Rev 22:4)

**THE LORD'S MIGHTY MEN OF VALOUR**

The concept of a bride is only a figure. The church is not feminine. It is comprised of both men and women and is also called "the new man" and the body of Christ.

I have found that men can have difficulty with the concept of being like a bride, women understand it better. For men there is another analogy that is helpful.

The Lord is called the "Mighty God, the Lord of Hosts". (Jer 32:17,18 Isa 9:6)

Psalm 50 v 1-6 is an awesome description of Him coming in His Power. He gathers those who have made Covenant with Him and comes with his Mighty Ones. (Joel 3:11, Isa 13:3, Jude 14) In the OT there are those in every generation who are called the "Mighty Men of Valour". Joshua had his Mighty Men, so did David and there were others. (Josh 8:3; 1 Chr 7:9,11,40; 11:11; 12:30, Neh 11:14) The Lord declared Gideon a "Mighty Man of Valour". (Judges 6:12) One man in particular was a "Mighty Man"; Jonathan. (1 Sam 18:1-4) He made Covenant with King David, was loyal and courageous and gave his kingdom and life for David. He loved the King.

His soul was knit in love with the King. (1 Sam 18:1)

The Lord is looking for men like this; men in Covenant relationship with Him. Men who have proved faithful in spiritual battle, who have stood the test and are valiant: "Mighty Men of Valour". In the Day of the Lord they will share His power and Glory, clothed in white, the Armies of the Lord of Hosts.

The Lord has *Mighty Ones*. He knows them by name.

### **THE AGE OF ENOCH – Gen 5:18 -24, Heb 11:5, Jude 14**

It is possible to walk right into the Presence of God.

Enoch was one man in the Bible different from all others. He was a pre-flood Patriarch, seventh from Adam, a mighty Prophet who *walked* with God. He understood the plan of the ages, foretold the flood and the return of Jesus with ten thousands of his saints. He lived a normal life, married and had children. He lived 365 years and for 300 years he walked with God constantly in his Presence. It seems that in the beginning Adam and Eve knew God face to face. When they sinned the veil came down and they lost that relationship. When they heard the Lord *walking* in the garden they hid from his Presence, from his Face. (Gen 3:8) Enoch did the opposite; he walked *with* God. That means he saw the Lord "Face to Face". In other words he lived within the Cloud of God's Presence and by faith pleased God.

He is *not* one of the two end time prophets who return and die, for by faith he was translated into the Kingdom; he will never see death. He was the forerunner of the Kingdom Age. He walked with God and the veil became so thin that one day he just walked right through and stayed on God's side. His feet never left the ground for he was already in the cloud.

If we want to understand what will happen in the Age of Resurrection then we must consider Enoch. His life displays this final age of which he prophesied. He was seventh from Adam and his life corresponds to the "Day of the Lord" the seventh Millennium. The coming age will see Enoch replicated in many. His experience will become that of all who walk with God and live within the Cloud of His Presence. For them death will lose its power. The veil that was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died will be no barrier and will simply become a portal into Heaven, a gateway into the City of God. It is significant that the veil represents our earthly body. At the moment Jesus died in his physical body the veil was torn. Physical death will lose its power when the body is quickened by God's Spirit. This is the start of the Eternal Kingdom of God on earth. (Isa 9:6, Dan 2:44, Lk 1:32,33) Those who live as Enoch lived, a life of faith and pleasing God, will at the appropriate time walk through the veil into his Eternal Presence. When God's Kingdom comes in fullness people will be born, live, have children and then walk through the veil. It will be the endless increase of God's family. It is the ever increasing Kingdom of God that will know no end; infinite. You say this is impossible? Nothing is impossible with God. This is why God made the universe so large. Scientists cannot agree as to whether the universe has an end or not. However, there is not just a universe but multi verses, mansions without number. He made creation to be inhabited and for his people, the "new Adam", to have dominion over all.

The **Covenant of Glory** made by the Most High, Possessor of Heaven and Earth, with Abraham will come to pass;

***"Look now toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them. So shall your descendants be."*** (Gen 15:5)

## **FINALE – “The Dawning of the Millennium”**

***We are approaching the dawning of the millennium. “To you who fear My name The sun of righteousness will rise with healing in His wings.” (Malachi 4:2)***

Dear reader, throughout this book I have tried to draw your attention to themes such as Clouds, God’s Presence, the Veil, the Covenant and seeing the Lord Face to Face. You may have many questions but the Lord can reveal all things to you. He is Joshua leading his people to possess the nations. He is David coming as King of Kings to establish His Kingdom. He is the Branch who will build his temple. He is the Lamb of God, High Priest, and Judge of the living and the dead.

***“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Rev 2:7,11,17,29. 3:6,14,22***

We must understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To do so we may have to reconsider some of our preconceived beliefs. The Lord is showing many devout believers things that are beyond the boundary of established theology. We may well have to reconsider not only the time of a so-called rapture but what exactly it is, as well as other things entrenched in our Christianity such as the nature of the “tribulation” and the importance of Israel in God’s plan. Are we so focused on Gentile concepts that we have moved away from our Hebrew origins and not ready for what God will do?

There is a need for the church everywhere to prepare for the Lord. Individuals are called to prepare. The church itself must be pure. Some may say that we cannot know when Jesus will return and may have a general sense of apathy about it as if it is a far off event with little sense of urgency. Yet every great act of God has been preceded by times of deep soul searching, repentance, renewed dedication and preparation.

Nations need to repent. Leaders of nations need to lead their nations in confession of past deeds and sins. But few world leaders have understanding of this. Most people are not believers so how can they pray or prepare? It is the church that must do the repenting, just as Daniel did when he confessed the sins of Israel and earnestly interceded for them. We should have seasons

of prayer in which to repent for our nations and for the people of the world. We are commanded to declare his name to every nation and *"then the end shall come"*. (Matt 24:14) It no good to just keep passing condemnation upon the nations; we are called to stand in the gap for them and to repent. Believers are called as a "nation of priests" to do just that.

A time of Divine intervention is coming. When Jesus came the first time he ministered for three and half years. During that time he performed many miracles and healings. Simultaneously the powers of darkness opposed and persecuted him. He cast out demons and stood against worldly leaders and false religious teachers. He purged the temple, a figure of the church, overturned the tables of the money changers and drove out the false religious leaders. Then in the temple he healed the sick and taught. Those events were a preview of what will happen when he returns and confirms the Covenant. We can look for the great move of God that is coming.

As a bride yearns for her bridegroom so should we. Those who look for him will see him on his return. One day he will step back to meet with each one who yearns for him. One day while in prayer at home, or perhaps in a garden or a gathering of believers, **JESUS** will come in **SHEKINAH GLORY**. And if perhaps we go before he comes then we will step through the veil into His Presence.

*"We should be looking forward to that wonderful time we've been expecting. It is the time when his glory shall be seen. It is the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ"*. (Titus 2:13 Simplified Living Bible)

This is our expectation, to meet with the **KING OF GLORY**. Long ago Job wrote of his earnest longing to see his Redeemer when at the end He will stand upon the earth. (Job 19:25-27 NIV) Jesus will once again walk upon the earth. *"When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as he is pure."* (1 John 3:2,3 Psalm 17:15)

The Bible ends with a prayer - **"COME LORD JESUS"**. Now is the time for all who long for him to pray that prayer. And if you dear reader have never yielded your life to Jesus you need to do so now. Pray, repent and receive the gift of God's own Son as your Lord and Saviour. (John 3:16)

## **Appendix 1: The Dates of Decree - Daniel 9:25,24**

**606BC** – Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, conquered Jerusalem.

604BC – Daniel was taken to Babylon as a young person.

**586BC** – Temple destroyed and the people taken into captivity.

539BC – King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon. Isa 44:28,45:1-4.

### **THE DECREE of GOD and THREE PERSIAN KINGS – Ezra 6:14, 9:9**

#### **FIRST DECREE**

**536BC** – **King Cyrus issued Decree** for exiles to return to Jerusalem.

Ezra 1:1, 6:3

**70 years from first deportation** to start of the return - 606-536BC

522BC – King Darius began to reign.

- Daniel prayed restoration for his people. Dan 9:4
- He received the message about the Messiah.

#### **SECOND DECREE**

**520BC**- **King Darius issued Decree** to rebuild the temple.

- Ezra 6:1,12

516BC – Temple completed. **70 years of desolation ended** - 586-516BC.

#### **THIRD DECREE**

**457BC** – **King Artaxerxes issued Decree** Ezra 7:12-21

- This completed the three decrees of the Kings of Persia that fulfilled the “**Decree of God**” foretold to Daniel by the angel. Ezra 6:14, 9:9 Dan 9:24,25.

446BC – King Artaxerxes issued *letters* to Nehemiah to continue restoration.

**70 years from rebuilt temple** to Nehemiah’s return – 516-446BC.

- These letters were not the Decree of God but based on the original decree issued of 457BC.
- God’s Decree incorporated that of Cyrus (536BC), Darius (520BC) and Artaxerxes (457BC). It took place over a period of time and completed in 457BC. From that decree there were 483 years to the coming of the Messiah.

The process of returning and rebuilding happened slowly over a long period. It was 70 years from when the temple was destroyed to when it was restored. It was another 70 years from then to Nehemiah.

### ***The first Period of 7 Weeks – 49 years***

Verse 25 “The streets shall be built again and the wall even in troublesome times.” The period of 7 weeks or 49 years was fulfilled during the time that Nehemiah and others rebuilt the city of Jerusalem. According to Barnes and other Bible Commentaries the historian “Prideaux” declared that Nehemiah’s last action in rebuilding the city was completed in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the rule of the Persian Darius Nothus (423-404BC) although some work may have continued for a while. The 15<sup>th</sup> year was therefore 408BC and this was exactly 49 years from the decree in **457BC**. Josephus seems to support this idea in his remarks about the death of Nehemiah. This is remarkable and can be viewed as an indication that the 457BC date is the correct decree.

***The second period that followed was 62 Weeks – another 434 years; a total period of 483 years.***

## **457BC + 483 years = AD27/28. This was the date of the baptism of Jesus soon after John the Baptist began to call people to repent.**

The years of Artaxerxes’ reign are known in history. They are listed in the “Canon of Ptolemy” with a list of kings and astronomical observations. They are alluded to in Greek and Persian history and generally considered reliable. Any small differences arise from using different calendars. The disparity depends on which calendar is used; a Persian Babylonian calendar would be 458BC (spring to spring), a Jewish calendar would be 457BC (fall to fall).

Anyone who feels compelled to verify this information should look to good Biblical commentaries. Historians have been aware of these dates for a long time but for various reasons the bulk of believers have ignored them. One reason is that Christians often tend to disregard what denominations other than their own teach. This book does not follow or support the teachings of any one church or denomination and I would encourage the reader to receive all truth when it relates to the Word of God. There are many differing views on the veracity of dates so I have tried only to give a broad outline.

Luke records the time that Jesus started his ministry. (Lk 3:1) It was the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius the Roman Emperor. His first regal year according to



the Syro-Macedonian calendar was in AD13/14. However, he was coregent with Augustus Caesar for two years from AD11/12. It is of interest that Tertullian documents this coregent reign of Tiberius with Augustus. So the 15<sup>th</sup> year would have been between AD26 and AD29. This is in keeping with the dates for other officials that Luke recorded and was when John the Baptist appeared and Jesus came soon after.

We also know that Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great who is generally recorded as having died 4BC. An important indicator of the time of Jesus' birth is Luke 2:2. This verse has caused much controversy as the dates of Quirinius do not coincide with Herod the Great. However, there is a simple answer; Luke used the word "first" (*protos* Strongs 4413) which also means "before". (see Jn 1:15,30) We know Jesus was born during a Roman census; "*All the world should be registered*". (Lk 2:1) This means "all the Roman Empire"; in other words it was not a local census but a major census for the whole Empire. Only two censuses were conducted by Caesar Augustus; in 8BC and in AD6. It could not have been the latter so it must have been the former; in other words the census before Quirinius was governor. Luke made sure people understood it was the *not* the second census. This census was ordered in 8BC but we do not know when it was implemented in Israel. It was a major undertaking and may have taken time for the whole Empire to be registered. Jesus was, in my view, born during the upheaval of this census probably around 7-5BC. Later Herod slaughtered all babies of two years and older. Herod died around 4BC so the birth of Jesus must have been sometime in the preceding years. When Herod died Joseph and family were already in Egypt and had been there for some time.

If Jesus was born about 7-5BC, the most likely time in my view, he would have been *about* 30 years of age in AD27-29. (Lk 3:23) Bear in mind there is no "0" year between BC and AD. Pilate took office in AD26 and all other key figures fit perfectly. Luke pin pointed the year of the Lord.

The majority of researchers believe that Jesus ministered for at least three years and very likely three and a half years. I personally believe he started his ministry at the Feast of Atonement. I see this because of clues in the text. He was baptized (equivalent to the washing priests undertook at Atonement), was anointed (as High Priest), took the sins of the world (as the Lamb of God) and was then driven into the wilderness (as Scapegoat), all linked to Feast of Atonement. This would have been in the month of Tishri considered the New Year in the Jewish calendar. If Jesus started in October AD27 it would have been, for the Jewish calendar, part of the next year, AD28. I personally think Jesus started his ministry between AD27-29.

Another indicator for dates is Herod's Temple. Jesus declared that He

would raise the Temple in three days. This was at the start of his ministry. (John 2:20) At that time Herod's temple had been in existence for 46 years. Herod started it in 20/18BC; some records fix the year 19BC. A calculation confirms that Jesus must have started his ministry in about AD27-29. This was 483 years from the decree of Artaxerxes issued in 457 BC.

At that time Jesus was anointed and began to preach the Kingdom, do miracles, cast out demons and raise the dead. In this way he "confirmed the Covenant". He did this for three and a half years which would have brought the date he cleansed the Temple (Luke 19:29-48) to the **50th year** since the building started under Herod, which was the **Jubilee** year. Jesus taught and healed in the Temple in the Jubilee year; the year that slaves were set free and outstanding debts were pardoned!

I believe Jesus started his ministry between AD26-29. (See my notes: "The Week that Changed the World".)

However, what ever one understands about dates does not alter the truth that it was Jesus who confirmed the Covenant.

It is thought the temple in Jesus' time had no Ark. He himself was the Ark. He came to it, cleansed it and during the last days of his earthly life Jesus was daily in the Temple healing the sick. (Mal 3:1) Later, he died on the cross and after his resurrection poured out his Holy Spirit into His new Spiritual Temple. From then on the temple in Jerusalem was destined for destruction. Work on the temple continued until AD 64; they went on beautifying it for many years after the Lord had come and gone! It was destroyed in AD 70. God replaced the earthly temple with a spiritual temple. (Acts 15:13-18, Amos 9:11,12) In Daniel 9:27 the scripture proclaimed a complete destruction even until the end. The Lord Jesus verified this. (Luke 19:44, Matt. 23:38) I do not expect a rebuilt temple before the return of Messiah. In fact in Daniel 11:45 we read the "abomination of desolation", the replacement of the temple, has already been there for a long time.

## **APPENDIX 2: BABYLON THE GREAT: PERSECUTION AND APOSTASY**

The Bible is a story of two great cities: Jerusalem and Babylon. Their fortunes through history have become symbolic of two opposing kingdoms. Jerusalem is a figure of the Kingdom of God and eventual triumph of righteousness. Babylon is a figure of ungodly Gentile kingdoms headed by Babylon. It was Babylon that was the head of the great Image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (Dan 2)

The ancient city of Babylon was destroyed long ago and no longer exists. When the apostle John wrote of the "*Great City of Babylon*" he did not mean Ancient Babylon. So what did he mean? (Rev 17:5, 14:8, 18:21, 6:19) There is a misleading idea put out by a minority that Babylon represents Jerusalem. This is entirely erroneous and breaks all the rules of sound Biblical exegesis. To suggest that Jerusalem is now Babylon is like saying day is night. They are two completely different figures for two completely contrary themes. Babylon is the antithesis to Jerusalem, they can never be swapped. To understand scripture one must obey the cardinal rule of context especially the context of culture, language and historical use. If we break the context we have a con text, a false text. In chapter Rev 11:8-13 John mentioned Jerusalem and called it "Sodom and Egypt" but this analogy was clearly defined from OT scriptures. (Isa 1:9,10 Jer 23:14) The next city John mentioned was Babylon. (Rev 14:8) In the OT Babylon was *never* a pseudonym for Jerusalem, so what did he mean?

When John saw this vision of "Babylon the Great" the angel told him precisely which city it was; it "is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth". (Rev 17:7,18) He did not say that it will rule over the world but that it already did so. At that time Jerusalem did not rule over anything and never has but the Roman Empire governed vast areas, nations, kings and tribes with Rome at the centre, a city even at that time of some antiquity. According to the angel the city that ruled over the kings of the earth in the days of John was none other than **Rome**. The angel referred to Rome as Babylon. John survived one of the harshest persecutions ever conducted on the church, under the rule of Emperor Domitian. He had every right to refer to Rome as Babylon for in Jewish thinking it perpetuated the same conditions that had prevailed in Babylon: religious intolerance, pagan worship, immorality, persecution and slavery. "Babylon" was a synonym for Rome as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Peter also referred to Babylon. (1 Pet 5:13) Traditionally he wrote this from Rome where he also died. However, the title "Mystery Babylon the Mother of Harlots" goes further; it is not a particular denomination of Christianity or even a specific city. (Rev 16:19) It embraces a vast worldwide network and broad spectrum of values and practices that have grown throughout history and embodies all that Babylon stands for in rebellion and defiance of God's laws and Kingdom.

This is endorsed by the prophecies of Daniel especially chapter 2 where the great image of gold, silver, bronze and iron represents the course of Gentile world history culminating in the feet that represent the final development of the divided Eastern and Western Roman kingdoms of the end time. The head of gold was Babylon and the feet of iron were the Roman Empire; "Babylon the Great". Note that the Roman Empire embraced most of East and West Europe as well as Middle Eastern nations of North Africa,

Turkey, Euphrates and even further East. They were all part of it. Babylon was the head and *also* the feet of this symbolic image of Gentile world power. It represents the sum of all that is opposed to God; the dark side of satanic power reigning through Gentile kingdoms entrenched in Babylonian practices.

The Roman Empire brought extreme persecution on early Christians. Almost every Emperor conducted violent campaigns against Christians. The apostles Peter and Paul were both killed in Rome. Emperor Nero was excessively brutal. He crucified believers, killed them in the arena and burnt thousands of them. Domitian (AD96) conducted a harsh campaign against them in Rome and Italy. Trajan (AD98-117) killed many leaders. Hadrian (AD117-138) allowed persecutions. Pius (AD138-161) killed many leaders including Polycarp. Aurelius (AD 161-180) conducted a barbarous persecution and many thousands were beheaded or thrown to wild animals including Justin Martyr. Under Severus (AD193-211) many martyrs were beheaded, crucified and burned. Maximin (AD235-238) killed many leaders. Decius (AD249-251) carried out a violent extermination of Christians throughout the Empire. Valerian (AD253-260) was more severe than Decius and brought utter destruction on the church. Diocletian (AD284-305) conducted the most brutal of all persecutions throughout the whole Empire. He put Christians to death in the cruellest manner possible. It was a systematic effort to abolish Christianity. Millions of Christians were killed. Almost all the early "Church Fathers" were martyred. In the Roman Catacombs there are millions of Christian graves.

Despite all this the Church was not extinguished. Eventually in the 4<sup>th</sup> century the Emperor Constantine made "Christianity" the official state religion and persecution stopped. Unfortunately from then on the Church took on more and more of the values and character of the Empire. Theology was formulated that prohibited all freedom of worship outside of the State Churches. Once again severe persecutions of believers began and continued through the centuries. This time it was the "church" itself that committed the acts of violence. "Heretics" were cruelly hunted out and killed. Charlemagne officially established the HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE in AD800 and was crowned by the Pope. Western Church leaders claimed more and more divine authority. Unfortunately some were totally godless individuals known for their cruelty, apostasy, violence, immorality and abusive ways. In the Eastern Roman Empire the Byzantium Church also grew strong. These State Churches became entrenched in worldly powers, became excessively wealthy, and the leaders, clothed in purple and gold, at times lived in debauchery and extreme immorality, harlotry, sodomy and child abuse.

Constantinople, named after Emperor Constantine, was now called the

"Second Rome". Eventually in AD1453 the Eastern Empire had become so corrupt and weak that it fell to the Muslims. Many Christians fled to Eastern Europe and Moscow now became known as the "Third Rome". The power of the State Church became entrenched in all these countries and the old Roman Empire (Babylon) became the countries of "Christendom".

Throughout the centuries millions of Christians and Jews were killed by the church! The Inquisition was responsible for the death of millions. In thirty years alone over a million Protestants were killed. That campaign lasted many centuries and was one of the most horrendous things in history, all in the name of Christ. It was impossible for many people to work, to make a living, to have a home, to survive. Whole towns were exterminated. It completely stamped out the Reformation in Southern Europe. At times the Protestant Churches were as bad. They were intolerant and severely persecuted Catholics and others and even burnt "heretics" at the stake.

Not only that, but the State Churches persecuted Jews unrelentingly. Over the centuries they conducted Crusades and pogroms, expelled them from countries and forced them to convert to their form of Christianity. Poisonous theology was spewed out from the Churches that made Jews scapegoats for every hateful cause. It was this that prepared the way for the Holocaust. When Hitler came to power he called his regime the Third Reich. Nazis saw themselves as the Third Revival of the Germanic Empire which was in reality the continuation of the Roman Empire. Not only were Jews persecuted under the Nazis but at different times they were severely persecuted in other nations including Russia, France and Britain. No wonder they want nothing to do with Christians. The "Church" as a whole has never apologised or repented for this outrage against Jews or fellow believers. The churches have never publicly confessed this. We need to repent.

In Revelation 17:7 we are told about "*Mystery Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots*" and the Beast that carries her. Notice that the Beast is not the Harlot but carries her. Apostasy in various forms has always ridden on the back of the great State powers. They have gone hand in hand, a marriage between State and Religion. At times secular and religious leaders vied for power but the one always sought to manipulate and control the other. This Beast had "seven heads" which are seven mountains on which the woman sits. (Rev 17:9) Rome was known as the "city of seven hills". However, the term "heads" in the prophetic language of Daniel and John represents *more* than hills but different kings or kingdoms. They are different kingdoms or 'mountains' and their meaning is explained in Rev 17:10. Five of them had already fallen in the days of John (past tense), one existed at his time (present tense), and one was still to come (future tense). Together they represent the Beast "that was, and is, and is to come". (Rev 17:8) It is fairly

easy to see that the kingdom in power in the days of John was the Roman Empire. The five previous are considered to have been Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and the Greeks; the five notable kingdoms of Biblical antiquity. The Kingdom that was to come after Rome, the seventh, was the Holy Roman Empire in its various forms including Eastern and Western European nations.

The Nazi regime was the manifestation of the seventh head of the Beast that persecuted the Jews. The Nazis revived the Roman Eagles, the Roman Salute and the worship of Fuhrer as their Emperor. Many German people were as much victims of Hitler as others. Hitler was the final seventh head of the Beast of Revelation 12:3-13:1 and swept a third of the Jews to death. The rebirth of Israel came out of that horror. A third of the Jewish people were destroyed. (Rev 12:4) Now here is something that is often overlooked; the Beast was healed of a fatal wound. This was not an individual who was wounded but the entire beast that was healed and became the final eighth head. (Rev 13:3,12) Has this been fulfilled? Keep within the context and consider what happened to the seventh head. During WW11 Europe under the Nazi was completely devastated. Its cities lay in ruins, its people demoralised, millions were dead and the economy ruined. It was divided right down the middle by the "iron curtain". It had been given a fatal wound. People said it would never rise from the ashes. Yet within a few decades it was fully restored. The recovery of Europe and subsequent European Union is considered the great "*miracle*" of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Actually WW11 was just a continuation of WW1 and out of them came the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the *true miracle* of Israel.

We are told that a final eighth head will arise after the seven. (Rev 17:11) It belongs to the seven and has the same spirit and power. It will persecute God's people just as the previous heads did. It will arise from within the old Roman Empire and will be the final antichrist. It is called the False Prophet and forms a satanic trinity; the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet. (Rev 19:20) It is the Goat of Rev 13:11 and is linked to the Goat of Daniel (Dan 8:9) which foretold the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes the terrible antichrist who attacked the Jews and who is the prophetic fore runner of the final end time antichrist. It is linked to the region of Euphrates and the historical Hellenic Seleucid Empire, Syria and Assyria. (Rev 16:12,13) In this I do not explain Revelation in any detail. (See my book The King is Coming)

John, the writer of Revelation, warned about antichrist. (1 John 2:22 4:3) The antichrist is especially defined by his denial of the relationship of the Fatherhood of God and Jesus the Son. However, the spirit of antichrist is not just to do with a point of doctrine but is largely to do with the nature of antichrist. Antichrist is not just a pseudo Christ but the antithesis of Christ.

John wrote about God's love especially demonstrated in the relationship of the Father and Son. It is Divine Love. God is Love and those who are born of God love others. John's message is that if we abide in the Father and the Son then we walk in light and love one another. The spirit of antichrist is the exact opposite. If we deny that relationship between Father and Son we are unable to express the true love of God. Divine Love comes from a relationship with God just as the Father and Son have. Regrettably, because many Christians have not had such a relationship with the Father and Son the spirit of antichrist crept in. It has been in the "church" all through the age and caused great suffering. Instead of the gentle, humble, obedient, sacrificial spirit of Christ there has at times been one of arrogance, superiority and hatred. Far from being loving examples of Christ Christians often hated and killed others, even other Christians. A great part of the church through history was unable to express God's love despite their claim to have it. The Spirit of antichrist is expressed today in the prevailing secular humanistic worldview that comes out of Greek/Roman philosophy that rejects God and His love, of which Antiochus was forerunner. It is linked to false religion that denies the love of God revealed in Father and Son. Babylon the Great is not a single denomination; it is the *spirit* of antichrist working in the institutions of Religion and State to persecute all who love the Lord regardless of their affiliation. All who are *not* written in the Book of Life will worship the "beast". (Rev 13:8,17:8) Clearly, this is not *all* humanity, only those who have given themselves to Satan.

In Revelation John wrote about a time when the "accuser of the brethren" will be cast down. (Rev 12:9-12) John described this conflict as the final three and a half years. He said that "*the devil will come down having great wrath because he knows he has but a short time*". This scripture is linked to Paul's teaching in 2 Thess 2:1-. Paul said something similar; there will be "*the falling away and the man of sin revealed, the son of perdition*" who will exalt himself but the Lord will destroy him "*at his coming*". They both refer to the same period, the final end time. The falling away is not so much from a doctrine than from Godliness. "Sound Doctrine" is love, faith, patience, and such like against such there is no law. (Gal 5:22,23 2 Tim 4:3 Tit 2:1)

### **APPENDIX 3: PSALM 83 AND THE NATIONS**

Some Bible readers suggest that this Psalm is a prophecy for the end times and they claim a possible link with this and Daniel 9:27. This Psalm describes those nations that made a covenant with one another to destroy Israel and the idea of some is that the antichrist will lead these nations and make a "treaty" or covenant with Israel for 7 years. He will allow temple sacrifices to be reinstated but half way through he will break this agreement and stop all further sacrifices.

As I have shown this is an erroneous understanding of Daniel 9. The nations of Psalm 83 are historical nations that have always stood against Israel and it is quite possible that their modern day representatives will oppose Israel. However, this has nothing to do with Daniel 9. I would like to point out a glaring discrepancy. These nations will not enter into a treaty with Israel which they then break but they entered covenant with one another against Israel. Today the nations that surround Israel have declared their goal is the annihilation of Israel. The conflict in the ME has been fuelled in the last century over land and religion. It is a spiritual conflict between different beliefs and values. I believe that the majority of people on both sides would wish for peace but radical elements will continue to drive the nations to war. Many want reconciliation but without Messiah it is impossible.

In Daniel 11 we read of certain nations that may be part of an end time conflict; Edom, Moab, Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. Ezekiel also listed nations that will come against Israel; Magog, Mescheh, Tubal, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer and Togarmah. Bible Dictionaries can help to identify these nations. They are found in North Africa, the Middle East, Euphrates area and Turkey with the exemption of Magog (possibly a reference to the ancient Scythians who may be elements of Eastern Europe and Russia, and Gomer who may be peoples of Western Europe. The thing to notice is that it is a union of traditional nations of Christendom with Islamic nations all from the old Roman Empire and comprising people drawn from all tribes of Biblical humanity; Gomer, Magog, Tubal, Meschech and Togarmah were children of Japheth generally considered Europeans; Egypt, Edom, Moab, were children of Shem, Arabs and others; Ethiopia is a broad term for African people, children of Ham. (Gen 10) They represent European, Arabic and African peoples. Other nations may also be involved.

All the elements for the above already exist. When the Berlin Wall came down we witnessed the healing of East and West Europe reunited. We then witnessed the demise of the Soviet Union and the formation of many independent nations. There is the United Nations World body comprising all the nations of the world, a United Europe which currently faces crisis and a large block of Middle Eastern nations and others from the ex Soviet Union and around the world who are against Israel.

This book is not intended to look in detail at these events but Prophecy tells of a conflict which will culminate at Jerusalem and only Jesus will have the power to stop it. I believe a series of events will plunge the world towards nuclear confrontation. The existence of Israel and the future of the world as we know it will be in jeopardy. Israel will stand alone without help and will be on the brink of annihilation. Then Divine intervention will shake the nations and change the entire world.



## **APPENDIX 4: THE FALLING AWAY – 2 Thessalonians 2:3**

The word translated "falling away" is "*apostasia*" (Strong's 646) It means exactly what it says – apostasy - to forsake the faith. It is sad that there are teachers who claim this means a "departure" of the church in rapture. This must be the height of erroneous exegesis. The context means to depart from the faith. To say any different is to make Paul say what he did not mean.

The main focus Paul had in 2 Thessalonians is the *revealing* of Jesus at his *coming* "parousia". (1:7, 2:1) He said "*that day will not come unless the falling away comes first and the man of sin is revealed*". (2:3) The "man of sin" will *first* be revealed before Jesus is revealed. It is the coming of Jesus that will destroy the "man of sin" alias Satan. Paul had already explained this to them (2:5) and now told them again that there was someone who *opposes* God in every way. (2:4) He said this mystery of iniquity was already at work and will continue until he is taken out of the way. (2:7) Then (Strong's 5119 – "*at that time*") he will be revealed and the Lord will consume him at his coming. (2:8) Its not too difficult to understand, just keep focused on the issue Paul is teaching; the "man of sin", who opposes God, will be consumed, "taken out", when Jesus comes.

Paul said "*you know what is restraining*". (2:6) What did he mean? It is Satan the great adversary of God who opposes and resists God. It is he who attempts to "restrain" and hinder God. He "withholds" (Strong's 2722 – *withhold, restrain*) fights against and frustrates the purposes of God. He is the "accuser of the brethren". Some people say this is the Church that is restraining Satan. However, it is the exact opposite, read it carefully in an accurate translation or look at the original language. It is not the Holy Spirit or the Church that is taken out of the way but Satan and all his followers who will be removed when Jesus comes.

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