

# Unrolling the Scroll

## Episode Four The Crucified Bride

The Rapture is about to occur; the Eastern sky has split  
Suddenly, half of the church is gone, and half remains  
**WHICH HALF WILL YOU BE IN ???**

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All Scripture quotes found in this book are taken from the New King James Translation Bible, unless otherwise specified.

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# Dedication

The first time you write a book and come to the dedication part, it should be fairly easy. There is always someone in your life who has made a very significant contribution to who you are and what you believe; someone who has shaped your character and world view. With that in mind, the first book I ever wrote was dedicated to my father and my grandfather, men whose character and faith established a foundation and set a precedent which I have followed all my life, although not without failure at times. The second book I wrote clearly had to be dedicated to my wife, because without her faithful, loving prodding (no, not nagging!), none of my books would ever have been written. The first two books were easy in that respect. But this is my third book, and now the task became a little more difficult. Who else, I thought to myself, has been an inspiration to me, a source of strength, and a pillar of reliability? I let my mind begin to wander, all the way back to my childhood. Were there any candidates there? No, not aside from dad and grandpa. What about my high school years? Perhaps my football coach or some other notable figure? No, there were no candidates there, particularly not my football coach. Even though he won more football games than any other coach in Pennsylvania high school history, there was nothing about the character of the man that I considered worthy of emulation. I had no heroes in high school. Neither were there any men of notable character in college who shaped me and marked me indelibly with their values and actions. After college there was Rev. Stan Meckle, a born-again Presbyterian pastor who was instrumental in helping me come back to the Lord a little at a time, despite the fact that I was as wacky as a loon at that time. But from that point on, once again even the short list is empty, until we started a church in "Crawdad" County, near Marengo, IN. The experience was both traumatic and fulfilling. We saw remarkable displays of grace and power through the Holy Spirit, and also got our first clear exposure to the rebellious insanity that is the Charismatic church in general. I saw God pour out His grace and mercy repeatedly into the lives of people, spontaneously healing a 12-year-old who was almost legally blind as he came up out of the baptismal pool. I also saw the casting away of that grace when the mother decided to run off with an old, rich lecher despite what the Lord had done for her son. Yet, in all of this insanity, there was one bright, shining light of Christian character, conduct and consistency, a man named Ron Ater. Brother Ron had been known as "Ron the Con" during his unsaved days, dealing in drugs both real and fake, and running on the wrong side of the tracks until he was in his 40's. But then God intervened in his life, and did so in a dramatic way. Ron totally changed. Instead of being a con man, he was now a constant source of blessing to everyone around him. He always somehow kept several freezers in his home fully stocked with various kinds of meats and other foodstuffs. If you needed something, somehow mysteriously it would show up on Ron's doorstep. If you needed money to tide you through a financial crisis, somehow Ron always seemed to have just enough money at hand. And paying him back was as difficult to do as getting the original "loan" had been easy. Brother Ron would wave his stocky hands and say, "*Brother, don't worry about it. That's between you and the Lord.*" Ron's old blue pickup truck seemed to find its way all over the countryside, from one end of Southern Indiana to another. Even to the most foolish of individuals, and we seemed to encounter more than our fair share, Ron was unfailingly kind and generous. I never heard an unkind word come out of his mouth in all the years that I knew him. He was patient, kind, giving, encouraging constantly, the very model of what a true Christian is supposed to be. I referred to him constantly as a modern day Barnabas.

What most Christians don't know about Barnabas was that his popular name wasn't his real name. His real name was Joseph, and he was from Cyprus. He first distinguished himself by selling some property he owned and donating it to the apostles. His popular name was really *Bar Nabas*. *Bar* means "son of". Sometimes it's spelled *Ben* in the Bible, and Arabs today used their own version, "*Bin*", as in Osama bin Laden. *Nabas* means "encouragement". Taken together, then, Barnabas really means "*Son of Encouragement*". He was singled-handedly responsible for Paul's ministry ever getting started. After his conversion experience and subsequent receiving of the Gospel to the Gentiles in Arabia, presumably on Mt. Sinai, Paul was on fire and ready to go, but no one would support him, help him or provide any sort of ministry opportunities because of his previous anti-Christian activities. Discouraged, Paul had returned home to Tarsus. It was the Son of Encouragement who, when appointed to the first Gentile church at Antioch, realized what a perfect match these totally new Gentile converts were for the doctrines which Paul had been given. It was the Son of Encouragement who sent for the man then know as Saul. It was the Son of Encouragement who made him an assistant pastor and teacher in the new church. It was the

Son of Encouragement who accompanied the man soon to be named Paul on their first missionary journey together. And tragically, it was that same Son of Encouragement who suggested they bring along his nephew John Mark, who didn't like the fact that they were having stones thrown at them in Pamphylia, and headed back to Jerusalem to mommy. And it was the very same Son of Encouragement who suggested they give John Mark a second chance on the return trip. Sadly, the very Paul who had benefited from a second chance himself wasn't willing to give one to John Mark and they parted ways. But without Barnabas, there would be no Pauline Epistles, most of the Book of Acts nor would there be a Gospel of Mark, written by one John Mark, then the devoted disciple of another Apostle who knew what it was like to fail and run, a certain fellow named Peter.

So it was with Brother Ron. There would be no Pastor Ray without Brother Ron. There would have been no signs, wonders and miracles. There would have been no healings. There would have been no souls led to Christ. There would have been no Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, no Calvary UMC, no Fellowship @ River's Edge, no Ephesians 4 Center for Learning, no E4India, no trip to India, no miracles as dramatic as a girl born mute, without a tongue in her mouth, spontaneous healed was she was prayed for. There would be no **Unrolling the Scroll** series, no **How to Survive the Coming Crash**, no **Making Sense of the End Times**. Why do I say all this? Because it was in this first stretching of my spiritual muscles and reaching out toward the high calling in Christ Jesus that I was seriously wounded, treacherously betrayed and totally disillusioned and discouraged. In all of the madness, only one man stayed by my side, consistent and true, always reliable and dependable, always encouraging me and supporting me. On three separate occasions I was ready to quit and turn the church over to Brother Ron. Unlike others around me who seemed to constantly covet the opportunity to deal with people who believed in unlimited grace and unceasing sin and carnality, and who also believed that a dollar in the offering plate allowed them free access to the pastor for at least five or six hours, Brother Ron on every occasion simply said, *"Brother, God didn't call me to pastor this church. He called me to stand by you!"* Coming from a man who had already pastored several churches, this meant a great deal to me.

When we hit the wall financially, and we frequently did, it was Brother Ron who would unexpectedly show up on our doorstep with his tithe, always in cash, in a rumpled envelope. When we didn't have food in the fridge, and that happened on several occasions, it was Brother Ron who would show up with his old blue truck and begin to bring bag after bag of food into the church where we lived. When I needed encouragement, he was there. When I needed strengthening, he was there. No matter what the circumstances, Brother Ron was there, a constant reminder that somewhere out there were people who really did want to live for Christ. As my Assistant Pastor, he provided a level of support that I had never had before, and have never had since. He was a true friend, in the finest sense of the word. I could pour out my heart to him with full confidence that what I had told him in private of my own personal struggles would stay private forever.

If tragedy had not struck, Brother Ron would be my Assistant Pastor today. Unfortunately, Ron had problems of his own to contend with. Even though he was a constant source of support to all those around him, he received absolutely no support at home from his wife. He had redeemed her out of a bar, and although he had led her to the Lord, the whole concept of sanctification and holiness never got through to her. While Ron moved forward and upward with Christ, she stayed at Ground Zero of her conversion experience. She was also extremely unsupportive in their marriage. Sadly, this unscriptural condition created more stress than Brother Ron could cope with. Finally, he became involved in a tragic set of circumstances that he could see no way out of, and he fled to another state and went into hiding to avoid arrest. Periodically, Ron would contact me to let me know that he was still alive and OK. I would plead with him to turn himself in to the law and deal with the matter. Finally, he decided to return, and turned himself in to the police. Little did anyone know what was in store. At the time, I was relieved. At least Ron had come to terms with his sins, repented of them and been forgiven by both God and me. Now, surely with God's help, he could deal with the prospects of going to jail. But that was not to be. Ron was a diabetic, and had to take regular insulin shots. One morning I received a frantic call from his wife. Brother Ron had taken ALL of his insulin shots at one time and had lapsed into a diabetic coma. He had attempted this once before and had miraculously come out of the coma intact and undamaged. I had lectured him loud and long about how God had shown him uncommon grace and that He clearly meant for Brother Ron to stick around and that He would somehow work all of this out. But the burden of what he had done was too heavy for Ron to carry. This time, he didn't come out of the coma, and passed away. To this very day, I carry his photograph in my Bible, along with a tiny sword from "Cutting Edge

Ministries”, the name of his own outreach. He would pass out little penknives and miniature swords, to help people to remember that the Sword of the Lord was always there to help them.

Some of you might ask why in the world I would dedicate a book like this to someone who had failed so terribly and whose life had ended so tragically. I can hear the Pharisees among you arguing that the man wasn't even saved, and that he is roasting in Hell today, rather than basking in the same comfort from His Lord and Savior that he constantly gave to all those around him. To you, I would provide a list of men who totally failed God, and many of whom had lives that ended tragically or violently. Could any of these men be in Heaven? Let's see. Let's begin with **Sampson**, who prayed for strength one last time to bring down about 8,000 Philistines at one time. How about **Moses**, who actually murdered a man, and then fled the country and went into hiding? Let's add to that list **David**, who calmly slept with the wife of one of his best friends (enemies of the king didn't live right next door to the king's house!), and then tried to get his good and trusted friend drunk as a skunk so that he would sleep with his already pregnant-by-David-wife and assume that the child was really his own. When that didn't succeed, this same "man of God" arranged with his most trusted friend and adviser, General Joab, to have Uriah set up so that he would be killed conveniently in battle. Let's add the prophet **Elijah**, who ran in terror from a mere woman after calling fire down from Heaven. Don't forget **Noah**, who, after leading his family and all remaining animal life to safety inside an ark which he and his family built, planted a vineyard and got so roaring drunk that he passed out naked in his own tent. How about **Adam**, the first man, who knowing disobeyed the one rule that the Lord had established for permanent residence in the Garden in Eden?

As you can tell, I could go on and on. Every single Bible hero had one thing in common with all his compatriots. Every one of them sinned and fell and failed God. And without fail, God extended grace to them and restored them. I know that there are those who believe that no one who takes their own life can be in Heaven. Tell that to Sampson and King Saul. I won't get into an argument with you about it, but remember that the spirit of Samuel was permitted to rise from the then-populated Bosom of Abraham to tell Saul that he and his sons would be with him tomorrow. Clearly, Samuel was speaking from Sheol, the place of the dead until Christ, but was not speaking from Gehenna, the place of torment within Sheol. And if Saul and his sons were to be in the same place as Samuel, there could only be one location, considering that among Saul's sons was David's closest friend, Jonathan, who had never done anything wrong, either regarding David or his own father.

No, dear friends, after diligently searching the Scriptures, I am convinced that taking one's own life is not an automatic ticket to the underworld. Let's just say that I have personal tragic experience in my own household dealing with this subject. No, I am not going to discuss it. But I have been there. I have not done that. But I have had to deal with the enormous, long-term trauma which suicide causes in any household.

Instead, I look at a gracious, merciful, loving God who is not unmindful of all of his servant's failings and faithfulness. And I remember the untold times that my own personal Barnabas, Brother Ron, was there for me and the innumerable thousands of others who might not be here unless Brother Ron had intervened in the nick of time. Many years ago, I could not properly show my respects or express my gratitude to the man who was for me closer than a brother, the finest friend I have ever had in my life. Brother Ron, I remember you still, with fondness and love and gratitude. And I owe you, brother. I owe you my own life and the ministry which God has now entrusted to me. Without you, there would be no me, no Pastor Ray. And so I salute you, my precious brother. Let everyone who has ever failed God know that there is yet hope for those who feel they have sinned so badly that they cannot be redeemed. God remembers, my friends. God remembers all. Not only your bad acts, but also your good ones. The times that you stepped up and were there for others, as well as the times when you failed. Always remember, dear friends, that for you and me and Brother Ron, **God's grace is always sufficient**. Just like the woman of sin who purchased \$30,000 worth of perfume with her earnings and poured that self-same oil on the head of Jesus, what Brother Ron did for Pastor Ray will be remembered and spoken of everywhere that this book is read. And that testimony is sufficient, and Brother Ron is duly and correctly honored for everything that he did and everything that he was. Brother Ron, save some lunch meat for me out of that divine freezer of yours, so that we sit down and have a sandwich together at the banqueting table in Heaven. No meal will ever be so sweet.

Dr. Ray Young





# Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge my wife, helpmeet, friend and companion, Beverly. Without her love and support, I would not be in the ministry today. When a heart attack and malignant, inoperable cancer both threatened to take my life within the span of one year, she faithfully ministered to my needs just as she had done as a child for her invalid father. She loved me, nursed me and nurtured me through the crisis. When the church I was pastoring betrayed me and fired me as I lay in the hospital, she stood by me, comforted me and protected me. Aside from Jesus Christ, I owe her everything. This book would not be in existence if she had not patiently prodded me to pick up the work I had begun three years ago and then let go, entangled in other issues and problems. Darling, acknowledging you is not nearly enough. Thanking you is not nearly enough. Praising you is closer to the truth, but Proverbs 31 still says it best:

*"Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates" – Proverbs 31:30-31*



# Preface

**Oh, NO! Yet ANOTHER book on Revelation! When will it ever end?**

Yup! Another book (actually **Seven Books**) on **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**, the most important book in the entire Bible! Why do I say that? Because it Cross-foots the entirety of Scripture together into one ultimate, masterful piece of non-fiction literature; the **Story of All Stories about the Love of All Loves**.

But a zillion books have already been written on this subject. **Why another one???**

**Because many of them are dreadfully, dangerously, deadly wrong.**

Certain things are being taught in American Christianity about the Rapture and the events contained in The Revelation Of Jesus Christ that are so completely out of context that the truth appears to be a lie, and vice versa. Now, wait a second, pastor! Are you saying that these folks don't love the Lord? Nope! Do they love Jesus with all their hearts? Yup! Do I love the folks that are writing these books and teaching these things? Yup! But being absolutely sure and absolutely right aren't the same thing. Let me give you an example: For many years I believed a certain way about the Rapture and the Tribulation and the Wrath of God, etc, etc. And I believed firmly, passionately, and, I thought, accurately. I faithfully repeated everything I ever heard any TV preacher say. I even looked up the Scriptures, kinda, sorta, that they quoted from. It all seemed good at first glance. Then, one day about 15 years ago, I was pastoring a little Spirit-filled church in Southeastern Indiana when the Lord spoke to me and said, *"I want you to teach from The Revelation of Jesus Christ"*. My reply was, *"No way! Every lunatic and wacko from Waco uses Revelation as a hidey-hole for their crazy doctrines and practices. They twist and distort the Word of God to suit their own purposes."* The Lord replied, *"Then who will teach it correctly?"*

That floored me. Now I no longer had an argument, because He knew how very much I valued Scripture, and how much emphasis I placed on **rightly dividing the Word of God**. So, I had to make several quality decisions. The first was to **scrap everything I had ever been taught about this wonderful book**. The second was to **read the book literally, logically and chronologically**. That meant that I had to begin with the following assumptions:

- (1) What I was reading was **literally true, not symbolically true**.
- (2) That this book was **designed to be logical, and meant to be understood**.
- (3) That the events portrayed in this book were **chronological**, forming an **accurate time-line** that could be followed, and into which **all other Scriptures** regarding the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ could be cleanly placed, **without distortion or manipulation**.

When I finally got done, with passages underlined, cross-footed, dove-tailed, doubled-underlined, noted, commented on and read again and again, everything fell into place, exactly as it was supposed to.

Not only that, but, to my absolute horror, **what The Revelation of Jesus Christ REALLY SAID, literally and clearly, was in absolute variance to what most so-called prophecy experts were saying it said!** Now I had a dilemma. I could no longer teach what I had been teaching. And I knew that I could no longer rely on the so-called experts. So I began to teach this little congregation the book, line by line and precept by precept. The old guard were outraged. It violated their long-held, highly cherished theology. And they were in no mood to change their minds. The young adults in the church were astonished, but thrilled, and took up my challenge to search the Scriptures to see if these things be so. Time and time again, they came back to me, saying *"You were right, pastor! That's what it actually says! In context! Literally!"*

But for the next ten years, virtually every attempt I made to teach this new, but very old, truth fell on deaf ears. America was not willing to listen to anything that stretched its comfort zone. Suburbanianity,

masquerading as Christianity, didn't want to be moved out of its three bedroom, two-car garage dream world to face what was actually going to come on the world and the church in their lifetimes. Only in the Black Christian community did I find ears that were willing to listen, and hearts that were willing to accept and change, even though I am Indo-European myself, of Welsh and German ancestry. Then God moved us to a suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio. After pastoring a small, African-American congregation for about three years, circumstances necessitated us forming a new, multi-cultural, non-denominational church. Suddenly, everyone I encountered wanted to hear what I had to say. Everyone I taught these truths to eagerly searched them out for themselves, and readily embraced them. What had happened? Perhaps the deadly events of 9-11 shocked America so badly that she started to wake up. Perhaps the Holy Spirit had finally decreed that it was time for this to be preached. No matter why, the door suddenly swung wide open. I was eternally grateful, and very, very relieved.

As you read this book, the Fourth of Seven Episodes, you will begin the most exciting Scripture journey you have ever taken. If you complete this journey (and you only need to "walk" about 15 minutes each day to do it), you will come to understand exactly how The Revelation Of Jesus Christ is put together, what each of the key symbols represent, in what order the events will occur, when the Rapture will occur, who the Wrath of God will fall on, and, most importantly, **what you must do to ensure that when the roll is finally called up yonder, YOU will be there!**

For further information on how to obtain additional copies of this book, any of the other Episodes, please contact us at the address listed below, email us, or phone us. We stand ready and willing to talk with you, answer your questions, and, most importantly, **pray with you and for you.**

**May God richly bless you as you walk in faith and obedience to Him!**

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# Day 1 – When Will These Things Be?



“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’” – Matthew 24:3

Jesus was **mad!** Just the day before, He had cleaned out the temple, driving out all those who bought and sold, overturning the tables of the money changers and the seats of the dove sellers, trashing what had been a lucrative business center operating inside the temple itself. To the carnal mind, there was nothing wrong with the concept. After all, men reasoned, people needed to exchange currency in order to give tithes and offerings, and it was impractical to carry lambs and turtledoves all the way from your hometown to downtown Jerusalem. To understand the scene in our modern world, visualize the semi-carnival atmosphere surrounding any major league ballpark. There are vendors selling everything under the sun before, during, and after you leave the ballpark. You can get your hot dogs, cotton candy, pizza slices, sodas, beer, souvenirs, scalped tickets, and anything else you might desire right there within walking distance of the park. Provided, of course, you are willing to pay a premium price for the privilege of buying in a seller's market. To the carnal mind, this kind of merchandizing wouldn't demean or cheapen the game. And, perhaps for a baseball game, they might be correct. But one of the mandates given to the priests was to **distinguish between the holy and the unholy, the clean and the unclean.** Clearly, the temple was **holy ground**, and not to be defiled with the garbage of the world, the unfair money exchange rates, and the exorbitant prices of everything surrounding the temple (How much does a simple hot dog cost at the park? Could you get it for less anywhere else?). Clearly, the **holy** had been hemmed in and nearly throttled to death by the **unholy.** Jesus had nailed the situation right to the wall when he had said, “*My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.*” (Matthew 24:13). After that explosion of righteous indignation, he had healed the blind and the lame (can the moneychangers do that?). No sooner than the miracles had started to break out than the chief priests and the scribes had started a fight with Him. (Let's see...I'll bet **they** couldn't heal the sick or raise the dead, either!). Sure sounds like sour grapes to me!

The next morning, He was still steaming. That poor fig tree got in His way, and paid a terrible price for our sins. Returning to the Temple that following day, in Matthew Chapter 21 and 22, He taught the people about the things of the Kingdom of God. Again, the Pharisees contended with Him, and finally, in Chapter 23, He let them have it with both barrels, identifying them for the hypocritical, blind fools that they really were. Righteously angry at their incredible hardness of heart, he moved into the **Divine First Person Singular** when He said,

*“...Therefore, indeed, **I** send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate: FOR I SAY TO YOU, YOU SHALL SEE ME NO MORE TILL YOU SAY, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'” -- Matthew 23:34-39*

Notice how twice He says **"I"**, instead of **"God"**? If Jesus were not totally God, He would never have been able to make that statement. Even operating as a prophet, he would still have had to preface what He said by saying, *"Thus saith The Lord"*, to distinguish his own comments from God's. In **Episode One, Day 20 – Alpha and Omega**, we examined how Jesus Himself created the heavens and the earth, and looked carefully at three critical Scriptures in the New Testament, found in John Chapter 1, Colossians Chapter 1 and Hebrews Chapter 1. Now, if Jesus made the heavens and the earth, and He is fully God, then it would make perfect sense for Him to say that **He** sent them prophets, wise men and scribes, and that **He** wanted to gather Israel's children together under His wings. Not just God. **Jesus**. The real tragedy of this passage is, that, after having received so many blessings and opportunities for repentance from Jesus, the Jews had successfully come to **the point of no return**. Their house would be left desolate, destroyed and scattered for roughly 2,000 until His return, when they would finally say, *"Baruch Hava Bashem Adonai"*, or *"Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord"*.

Little did they know that less than 40 years would pass before the fulfillment of His judgment, and almost another two millennia would pass beyond that before they would once again even stand in Jerusalem, the Holy City, in a position to say the words again. Ironically, they are still not ready to say those fateful words, but they will be! Friends, there will be another Palm Sunday, just like the first one, when the inhabitants of Jerusalem welcome back their returning Lord, Savior, Messiah and King by placing palm branches at His feet, and crying out, with final, ultimate sincerity, *"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"*. There is an ironic little twist about the term "Lord" that is used, first by the crowds, then finally by Jesus Himself. In the Strong's literal translation, the original word used is *kurios*, which we translate as **Lord** or **God**, but which literally means **He who is in authority, in charge or in control**. It bothered the Scribes, Pharisees, and the Chief Priests that **someone else might be in control of the situation**. Heaven knows, they certainly weren't in charge, or in control, even through they wielded the authority to do so. The final thing that Jesus said as He left the temple in Divine anger was, *"You won't see me again until you say that My being in control of your lives is a blessing!"*. At the risk of sermonizing, isn't that always the focal issue between God and us? Isn't it always the **final unresolved point of contention?** God **wants and needs** to be in control of our lives, **for our own good and protection**. We resist, rebel and chafe under His Divine protection, guidance and direction. **And when we say that we don't want Him in control long and often enough, He leaves us to our own devices, just to let us know just how horrible it is to be without His Presence, Protection, Direction and Control!** Then, once we have foundered on the reefs of our own sin and incompetence, we cry out to Him who is able to save us from ourselves and the consequences of our sinful nature, and He graciously and mercifully comes to us again to deliver us, but only when we say, *"Blessed is He who comes in the name and authority of He who is in control of my life!"*

One final thought on this scenario: Down through history, this passage and the passage in which the crowd gathered before Pilate says, *"His blood be on us and on our children"* (Matthew 27:25) have been used by Anti-Semites to justify their persecution of the Jews. The Jewish people have been called "Christ-killers" for untold centuries. But please pay close attention to exactly what Jesus said in the Temple Confrontation. He specifically said *"that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth"*. Now, here comes the interesting question: **Who** is the **YOU** that He is talking about? Is it the Jews for all time? Are all Jews cursed because of the ungodly actions of a few? No! Later on in the same passage, Jesus specifically says that *"all these things will come upon this generation"*. In **The Passion of the Christ**, Mel Gibson deliberately leaves out the part of the scene before Pilate where the crowd cries out that Jesus' blood be on them and their children, for fear of offending the Jewish community. And I understand why he did it. Christianity has misused that particular passage for almost 2,000 years to justify ungodly actions against those who committed no crime. It was **that generation** that reaped the full wrath of God over the persecution, crucifixion and death of His Only Begotten Son. Everything that Jesus prophesied against them occurred in that generation. Did they also go into exile? Yes! Was the Temple burned to the ground, and the stones scattered across the landscape as Roman soldiers looked for gold melted into the cracks between the stones? Yes! Did God's righteous wrath descend on His Chosen People for a very long time? Yes! But it was **that generation** that was the target of the prophecy. What about the crowd, and what they said? I can't prove it, but I would be willing to speculate that **every single descendant of every single member of that crowd has been the target of hideous persecution since that moment in time. Those individuals** uttered a curse against themselves and their descendants in front of the living Christ, **not all of Israel**. If I was living in Galilee, was healed by Jesus, and loved Him dearly, I would not have been a part of the hideous events of that day. I cannot be

held liable in any court of law for the actions of another individual or group of people. That's like saying that a man living in Cincinnati, Ohio can be held responsible for the murder of a man in Naples, Florida who was killed by a man from Boston, Massachusetts. Ungodly common sense tells us that much, much less Godly grace and mercy. God is a just God. And He watches over His Word to perform it, **literally**.

Now, back to the story!

Jesus stormed out of the temple, once again outraged at what He had encountered. At that precise moment in time, He ran into the disciples, who, instead of sitting at His feet for one of the most important series of messages He had ever preached, were busy sightseeing, gawking at "*all them thar tall buildings!*", just like the Hicks From the Sticks that they really were! They were more impressed with **Roman construction** than they were with **Divine instruction**, more enraptured with temporal toil than with eternal truth. Watch out, folks, I can feel another sermon building, with gusts up to 250 words per minute! No, No! Self-control.....

Not unduly impressed by their sense of priorities, Jesus said to them, "*Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*" (Matthew 24:2) At that point, still steaming mad, He must have marched right through them and headed straight for Bethany and the Mount of Olives, where He knew he could get some peace and quiet, and talk to His Heavenly Father about all the madness and stupidity He was surrounded by. Realizing that this was probably a really bad time to ask Him what He was talking about, the disciples followed Him, one by one, back to the mountain and gathered around Him in silence until they could clearly see that He had calmed down. Then Peter, James, John and Andrew came to him **privately**, saying "*Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?*" (Matthew 24:3).

Before we examine their question, I must point out something very important to anyone entrusted with any power ministry – Although we are called to **discharge** the power and virtue of Jesus **publicly** to those in need, we are also called to **recharge** ourselves **privately**, in counsel with the Master. It is **impossible to sustain a power ministry** without **focused times of solitude**, alone with God, for the purpose of being refilled with His Spirit, and of holding sweet counsel with Him who knows and understands all things. If we do not allow ample private time for receiving from His hands, we will have no power to discharge from our own hands when the need arises. That means you have to isolate yourself from your wife, your children, your ministry team, your parishioners, the stupid TV, the radio, the phone, praise music, good books, Bible study courses and **anything and everything that separates you from and blocks out the still small voice of God**. God shouts at sinners, because they are so hard of hearing. He whispers to those with whom He is intimate in relationship, with those whom He loves. And you have to shut your big mouth and stop talking, so that He can clearly and accurately talk to you. Sadly, He has to shout at most of us, even those of us who call ourselves believers, since we are not willing to sit still and wait for Him to talk to us. Jesus made public pronouncements constantly which didn't make sense to the crowds. He called those pronouncements **parables**, and they were not meant to **clarify**, but to **confuse**. Don't believe me? Read Matthew 13:10-14 and see what Jesus had to say about the motive and method of all of His parables. He wanted to see **who really wanted to know**, and who was willing to **take the time to find out**.

So it was, understanding that He had once again said a whole lot more than people thought He said, that the disciples approached him afterwards and asked Him what they doubtless thought was **one question**. What they didn't know, and couldn't possibly have understood, was that they had actually asked **three questions**, with **three separate and distinct answers**.

In **Day 2 – One Question, Three Answers of Episode Four**, we will begin to look at the three questions, and the three separate and distinct answers that were required from Jesus to respond to them. Remember, Saints of God, stay focused on Him! Don't let the world, the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things crowd into your life and choke you, making your unfruitful. Stay focused, grounded and rooted in Him. **Turn off the TV, and turn on to the Holy Ghost!**

Until then, "**Speak, Lord, for Your servant heareth!**"





# Day 2 -- One Question, Three Answers



“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’” — Matthew 24:3

The disciples had gathered around their Lord and Savior as He sat on the Mount of Olives. He had finally calmed down after the aggravating events that had happened earlier that day in Jerusalem. As He had stormed by them, He had said, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” (Matthew 24:2). Now, curious about what He had said, they asked Him, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3)

As I mentioned in our last E-Pistle, the disciples probably thought they were asking a single question of Jesus. In reality, they were actually asking **three separate questions with three separate answers**. Had we been in their sandals, we would have thought the same thing. They were convinced, as were almost all of Jesus’ followers, that He had come to rid them of the Romans. They were thinking in temporal terms, not eternal ones. And I am sure that they saw the destruction of the Temple, the sign of His Second Coming and the End of the Age as all being connected in a single, momentous event. Even today, knowing in hindsight that the literal destruction of the Temple, prophesied by Jesus, occurred in 70 AD under the Roman General Titus, we think that the **Sign of His Coming** and **the End of the Age** are actually a single event. In fact, they are not! **The sign of His Coming** occurs in the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal in The Revelation of Jesus Christ, just before the Rapture occurs. A **20-year gap** then occurs between the removal of the Bride portion of the church and the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, the Wrath of God. And it is difficult to determine exactly how long the Wrath of God will last. There are more cataclysmic events in the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal than in all the other Seals put together. It is my firm conviction that it may take as long as 40 years or more for all the events listed in the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal to play themselves out. We know it will take at least 7 years for the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal to complete, since the 7 year period mentioned by Daniel is contained **entirely within the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal!** Then we have the events surrounding the return of Jesus Christ and his conquering army, the Saints of God. If at that point you argue that we have reached the end of the age, you still are clearly not looking at a single event. And if you include the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ on the Throne of His Father David, then add 1,000 years to the time span between the sign of His Coming and the End of the Age. We are still gripped with a terrible sense of spiritual myopia, and absolutely no sense of Divine timing. When the Holy Spirit began to whisper to the church in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the simple words, “*The Bridegroom Cometh*”, we immediately assumed that He meant like, this week! The Millerites gathered on the top of a mountain and cried, “*Maranatha!*” Nothing happened. Why? Because it would take **several hundred years to even get the Five Wise Virgins awake and ready!** When we read The Revelation of Jesus Christ, we have to totally reorient our thinking regarding time in order to truly understand what the Lord is saying. Just for fun, did you know that the Seven Days of Creation were actually **seven thousand years?** After all, doesn’t Peter say that with the Lord, **one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day?** And the same kind of time spans apply to all the events that John the Revelator was shown. We actually entered into the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and the Seven Seals at the beginning of World War I. World War I??? Yup! And I can show you by Scripture and history how it all plays out, to the dime!

Even Jesus Himself, so long as He was restricted to the boundaries of a conventional human body, was also limited **in part** as to what the Father showed Him during His earthly ministry, and also limited in His understanding as to what the Father's timetable was in regards to these matters. Why do you think that He said that "*No man knoweth...nor the Son*"? I know that's a controversial statement, but I believe that Scripture backs that statement up. To illustrate my point, let us consider two different quotes by Jesus about the same subject, His Return.

First, let's examine His first comment on the subject, found in Matthew 24:36:

*"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, [nor the Son], but My Father only."* – Matthew 24:36

Please notice that the phrase ***nor the Son*** is bracketed. That's because not all versions of the Bible include that particular passage. The KJV (King James Version) and NKJV (New King James Version) do not have the phrase. The NIV (New International Version), the RSV (Revised Standard Version), the NRSV (New Revised Standard Version), the Amplified Version and Strong's Literal Translation all have the phrase. How can that be? **Because there is some disagree among the various ancient texts.** Some of them have the phrase, some do not. But the most accurate and oldest texts we have, **whose discovery came after the writing of the KJV**, all seem to include ***nor the Son***. It is for this reason that modern translators always include it in current translations. Now let's look at what Jesus actually said, in plain English – "*You don't know, I don't know, and the Angels don't know. Only the Father knows for sure*". But remember, Jesus said this as **The Son of Man**, prior to His death and resurrection. During that period of time, He had to live totally **as a man, with all the same limitations that we have as humans**. He was tempted like us, in every respect, yet without sinning. (Hebrews 4:15). He was tired. (John 4:6). He was hungry. (Matthew 4:2). He was thirsty. (John 19:28). Why were all these restrictions placed on Him? Because He was the **Second Adam (man, human), as described in I Corinthians 15:45-49**. As such, it was mandatory for Him to be born, live and die **as a man** in order to redeem mankind. As a man, He operated in and through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, as plainly evidenced through all of the Gospels. The only two differences between Him and us were that He was **born of an earthly mother, but not by means of an earthly father** and that He **lived His life utterly without sin**, thereby restoring the lost covenant of life from Genesis. By being born of an earthly mother, but not an earthly father, He was able to avoid **the penalty of sin before birth**, brought about since the sins of the fathers are visited (transmitted, transferred) on the children (Exodus 20:5). David, in Psalms 51:5, clearly identified the fact that even before he was born, while he was in the process of conception, he was already damaged by the wages of sin and death as transmitted from one generation to another. That's why the Virgin Birth is so vital to Christian doctrine. With a Virgin birth, in which **no chromosomes are transmitted from the father to the child, neither is the law of sin and death transmitted through the damaged male "Y" chromosome**. That's why, dear friends, Satan thought he had all of humanity trapped. He could not possibly imagine how a human could be born of a woman, without the benefit of a man. Jesus, born of woman, was **fully human, yet was born without sin, and successfully lived without sin up to and including His death**.

Having fully satisfied the righteous requirements of the Law as a man, He was resurrected back into a body not of this space-time continuum, made of indestructible matter, and capable of once again holding His full glory as The Word of God, a glory which He had to divest Himself of in order to be born of a virgin. Since no man can **look** on God and live, what would have happened to poor Mary if **the full glory of the Godhead had entered her womb**? She would have simply ceased to exist, for no mortal body could stand that much power and energy without coming apart at the seams. However, in His **resurrection body**, and now with His new title as **Son Of God** to add to His previous title as **Word Of God**, He was in full possession of all power, wisdom, knowledge and authority which He previously had possessed, only with **new titles, new authorities and a new relationship to God the Father which He had not experienced as God the Word, that of the Only Begotten (Naturally-Born) Son Of God**. Folks, I know we're in deep water here, and I don't have time to explain all of these concepts in this E-Pistle.

Now, let's look at this same Jesus **after the resurrection**, as the **Son Of God**, and let's see what He has to say the **second time** the disciples ask Him about this topic:

"Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority..'" -- Acts 1:6-7

Did you catch the difference in the way He answered them? It's subtle, but very important. In His answer in Matthew, He said **that He didn't know** (Son of Man). After His resurrection, **He didn't say He didn't know, He just said it wasn't for them to know**. And that, my friend, is a very subtle and very important difference. In Acts, He tells them that it is on a **need to know basis**, and that they simply **don't need to know at this point in time**. It was good thing, too! Imagine being Peter, James, John or any of the other disciples. Imagine thinking that this whole project can be done in your lifetime. Imagine finding out that it would take **2,000 years longer than imagined** because of the failure of those who would come after them? Here are the hard, cold facts: Jesus **as the Son of Man did not know when He would return**. He was totally truthful in Matthew 24. But **as the Son of God, He did know, and did not consider it to be a wise thing to tell the disciples and so discourage them as to prevent them from ever starting on the journey!**

To help you fully understand what we are saying here, let me ask you a question: When you said "Yes!" to Jesus, would you have still said "Yes!" if you had known, up front, every "No!" that you would receive in your life because of your commitment to Christ? Maybe now that you are a seasoned, mature believer (at least we hope so!), but what about when you had first come to the faith? If you had known all the hardship and suffering you would have to endure in order to live on this planet, much less serve Christ, might you not have wanted to crawl right back into your mother's womb and cancel the trip? That's why God doesn't tell us the rest of the story until we need to know! There would be no sense to tell a 12-year-old girl that she would be raped, have two miscarriages, and spend 5 years on drugs before Christ would gloriously save her, fill her with the Holy Spirit, heal and restore her damaged womb, and miraculously give her a special baby, one dedicated to serve God. Would Sarai ever become Sarah if she knew that 25 years of heartache, emptiness and human mistakes would stand between her and her baby? Would Joseph survive 13 years in slavery and prison, unjustly accused and betrayed at every turn? God requires of us that we **walk by faith, on a day-to-day basis, not seeing the future, but looking unto Him who holds the future in His hand!**

Perhaps this is why the Lord interacts so much with us on a **need-to-know** basis. There's a phrase that I hear a lot these days, *"Too much information!"* Often, knowing what we would face just to complete any given project would be enough to make us quit before the project even started. To be honest, if I had known, in 2002, when I began this monumental task, that four years later I would only have one book done, be working on the second, and have survived a heart attack, malignant, inoperable cancer, being fired by the church I was pastoring because they thought I would die, having the lining stripped from the nerves in my hands and feet because of the chemotherapy I had to endure, and all the heartache, rejection, and unbelievable pain I have gone through, I would never have written word one. I would have considered the task totally impossible and completely undoable. Even now, as I sit here typing, I marvel at how in the world I have managed to come through so much and still have some marginal hold on my sanity. People who know us say that they look up to me as a hero, some shining example of faith for them to follow. To be totally honest, all I can tell you is, that despite multiple meltdowns, crying, screaming, and, yes, some cursing (and repenting!), somehow I have managed, with the help of God, to come this far. How much further? Good question. A year and a half ago, I thought my journey had run its course. I was in so much constant pain that my greatest fear was not that I would die, but rather that I would continue to live in my miserable condition. And despite all the empty rhetoric to the contrary, when you are in that much pain, you truly wish to die, just to go on and be with the Lord. And, yes, I also considered suicide. Shocked? Don't be. As a pastor of 30 years, you would be amazed and appalled at exactly how many people, and, in specific, how many Christians, have seriously considered taking their own life. If you've never been there, you can not understand where I am coming from. Some of you will be shocked and self-righteously angry. How dare I question God? How dare I consider taking my own life? Well, dear friend, until you have walked a mile in my shoes, you will never understand what thoughts go through a person's head. I thought I had all the answers. Typical Full-Gospel arrogance was what it was. Faith that has not been challenged and tested by adversity is not faith at all. It is only a form of Godliness, without any power. Only when that faith has been drawn through the mud, kicked in the head, and threatened to its very existence does faith truly know who it is and why it has come to this earth. Then, and not necessarily in some great supernatural victory, faith stands up, battered and beaten and

says back into the face of death and Hades, *"Do whatever you want. It doesn't matter to me anymore. I know on whom I have believed, and am fully persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have appointed unto Him. In life and in death, I will serve my God, and I will NEVER turn back. Abase or abound, I have learned in whatever circumstances I find myself, to be content."*

Do you really think that Paul wanted to be beaten, shackled in chains, placed in prison, hindered from preaching the Gospel he loved so very much by the very people that he wanted so very much to hear it? Or to see legalists, libertines and lunatics come in behind all the work that he had so very lovingly and diligently done and wreak havoc among the sheep that he had so faithfully shepherded? Who in their right mind would want to go through all that? No, dear friends, we receive **just enough information** to get us through today, with an occasional hint about tomorrow. And, imagine, for just a second, if you will, how much the heart of God breaks when He has to put us through what we go through in order to become what we are supposed to be? Remember, **all things** (even the terrible ones), work together for the good for those who love the Lord, who are called according to His purpose! **He knows everything we will have to suffer before He sends us into the world, and yet, He still sends us, because that is the only way for us to come back home again, this time with a test and a testimony in hand. And He sent His only begotten Son into the world, knowing full well what would be done to Him, so that the greatest test of all time could be endured, the greatest testimony of all time could be obtained, and the greatest Name of all Names could be secured for all eternity, so that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren!**

When we get to the end of our days, there will be only one question worth asking, and it won't be, *"Why?"* It will rather be, *"Was it worth the journey?"* Did the result justify the effort? Was I found a good and faithful servant with what I was entrusted with? And, after all is said and done, did my Lord and Savior find me good and faithful? How I would dread coming to the end of my days, knowing full well that I could have lived for Christ and chose not to. That I had been given a task to perform and a mission to carry out and had, instead, chosen my own selfish will over His, squandering the resources given to me and never completing the task assigned to me. No, dear friend, I would not want that, and I will never do that. Even my own father, who was my hero as I was growing up, backslid on God after he retired from the ministry. He still died saved, but he did not die in victory. Only at the end of his ministry, having largely obeyed God, could he say what he did in his retirement service. As he stood in the basement of the little church that he had so faithfully served for the last ten years of his pastorate, here's what he said: *"If I had to go through it all again, knowing that I would be able to come to this point in my life, I would do it all again"*. Only a few of us knew everything that was entailed in that statement, and what my father had **really** had to endure in order to even enter the ministry. That point was his greatest moment of triumph. But seven years later, he had lost the victory, the relationship and the anointing. Why? Because he had let physical adversity pull him away from the God whom he had so faithfully served. As I observed all of this, I resolved in my mind and heart never to do what he had done, to back off on God. Yet, in my moment of extreme test, I came close myself to doing what he had done. But I have made a decision. Reached a resolve which cannot and will not be taken from me. And that resolve is this: that with my whole heart I will serve the Lord all my days. That, like David, when I give MY final song, that it will be filled with references to Him, praising Him and glorifying Him, and only incidentally will I mention myself. He who loses his life will find his life. And, above all else, I will say and live this: **Nonetheless, NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE!**

# Day 3 ~ The Times of the Gentiles



“And Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

— Luke 21:24

In today's *E-Pistle*, we are going to begin exploring one of the best-kept secrets in all of the Bible, **the exact and only key to the return of Jesus Christ!** And, once again, it has **nothing** to do with **anything** the so-called prophecy experts are saying! It has nothing to do with the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. It has nothing to do with what Iran, Iraq, or any other Arab nation does or does not do. It has nothing to do with who gets nuclear armament. It has virtually nothing to do with what goes on in the church in America. At this point in the global play-out of God's divine timing, America has been passed by in favor of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Word, which is producing the fruit of the Spirit. What??? I will get to that later. In fact, dear friends, the **real key to the Rapture** is indexed, not to an **event**, but rather a **number**, known only to God. Known only to God? Then why, Pastor Ray, bother with this article at all? Because you need to know that **you** play a part in reaching this unknown yet critical number!

But let's begin at the beginning. In order to follow this chain of events out, we must once again go directly to something that Jesus said in the Gospels, as the Son of Man. In order to do this, we must turn to the Gospel of Luke, in Chapter 21. Chapter 21 parallels Matthew Chapter 24, and adds some interesting information that Matthew does not provide. Following exactly the same timeline established in Matthew and confirmed in Revelation, Jesus gives us the chain of events that will lead up to the *Parousia*, or snatching away. It is in verse 20 that things start to get a little interesting and a whole lot confusing. Let's take a look at what Luke says, shall we?

*"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."* -- Luke 21:20-24

Now, remember that in Matthew, the disciples had asked Jesus three critical questions. Can you remember what they were? Good! Attaboy! Just to reinforce your remarkable near-photographic memory, here they are again:

1. When will these things happen (the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem)?
2. What will be the sign of Your coming?
3. What will be the end of the Age?

As you read all three accounts located in Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Synoptic Gospels, you continually have to ask yourself this critical question: **Which of these three questions is He addressing right now?** If you ask me three questions, I am obligated as a pastor and a teacher to give you three answers. Let's take this scenario: There are only three questions on an upcoming test and you simply do not

understand them. So you ask me, the instructor for answers to the three questions. And let's say, just for fun, that these are the three questions:

1. How many sons did Jacob have?
2. How tribes were there in Israel?
3. How many years did the children of Israel wander in the wilderness?

The answers to these three questions **should** be obvious to anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of the Bible. If you don't know the three answers, I would strong recommend our Bible College. We will teach you everything you need to know in the Bible, from soup to nuts! But, back to the answers!

What's the answer to question number 1? Yes, the answer is **12**.

And how many tribes were there in Israel? No, not 12, but rather **13**. Why not 12? That's a whole story in itself.

Finally, how many years did they wander in the wilderness? Now, this is tricky. You could answer **40**, and be correct. But you could also answer **38**, and be even more correct!

Now you have your answers, and so you diligently memorize the numbers in this sequence: **12-13-38**. You repeat this everywhere you go for the entire week before the test. You have it written on a piece of paper and stuck on your refrigerator. You have it scotch taped to the rear view mirror in your car. And you superglued it to the monitor in your cubicle at work. Come the following Monday, and you are ready. You have eternally burned into your mind the critical sequence, **12-13-38**.

Now comes the test. You put your name on the test, find the three questions, and write down, in rapid order, these eternally retained numbers: **12. 13. 38**.

You turn the test in, and confidently sit down, twiddling your pencil with a certain confidence, yes, even a little arrogance in your demeanor. Now the instructor comes to your test. You beam confidently as you await his marking of **100** on your test. And then comes the shock: In rapid succession, the instructor marks **all three questions WRONG, and assigns you an "F"** for the test. You are outraged! You **KNOW** that those are the right answers! And, so, after class, you stride self-righteously up to the instructor's desk and **demand** an explanation! How could he so unfairly and unjustly mark these three critical questions wrong?

Then the instructor smiles sadly, and turns your test paper around so that you can read it yourself. And here is what you see:

1.   12   How many tribes were there in Israel?
2.   13   How many years did they wander in the wilderness?
3.   38   How many sons did Jacob have?

Aghast, you realize that the instructor had **not altered the questions**, but rather **the order in which they were asked**. And you had given the **right answers**, all right, but not to the **right questions**.

Get the picture? When you read the **answers that Jesus has given**, you must remember to link up the **answer He has given** with the **question that has been asked**. And this, dear friends, is where this little discourse gets both controversial and interesting.

At the beginning of Jesus' discourse in Luke, He gives His now-famous prophecy in Chapter 21, Verse 6. And, as in all the other Gospels, the disciples ask the question, but in a slightly different form than Matthew recorded it. In Luke 21:7, the question is framed in this way:

*"So they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?'"* – Luke 21:7

Obviously, Luke didn't hear the story quite the way Matthew did. But remember, Matthew's account is a **first-hand eye witness account**, where Luke is **repeating what he was told by others**. What's the difference? Just this: That if I want to know what happened in the greatest detail and accuracy, I must go to those who were eyewitnesses of the event. Let me give you a crazy, but true, example. A few weeks ago I was sitting calmly in my family room on a Sunday afternoon watching an NFL football game. Suddenly, there was a violent explosion, and the entire house shook. To be honest, I thought my wife, who had been shopping, had returned and accidentally run into the house. Or perhaps that a tree had fallen on the house. I ran outside. No car in the driveway, so the collision theory was out the window. Then, as I prepared to look at the rear of the house for a tree sitting on it, I noticed that every single neighbor in the neighborhood was standing out in their yard, looking around, just as I was. As we watched in amazement, every fire truck and police car in Union Township surrounded a horse farm just up the road. We gathered as close to the action as we could and tried to piece together what had happened. Bit by bit the story came into focus. The neighbor closest to the explosion said he had seen the cloud, and heard people clapping. The neighbor next to him saw a steady stream of cars pouring out of the farm's driveway in obvious haste. One lady said that she had been told by 911 that someone had blown up a pumpkin with an M-80. When she said that, I added, "Yeah, add a few zeroes onto the 80 and you might be right!" Gradually, by interviewing each other and comparing notes, we were able to draw some fairly accurate conclusions, **but all of them were second hand**. That's how Luke, the Beloved Physician, had to work. He wasn't there at the scene of the crime. He was a good researcher, but **he didn't get to hear what was said personally**. What had actually happened that evening in our neighborhood? Seems that the doctor who owned the horse farm just down the road had agreed to host a long-standing fall party, the highlight of which had always been blowing up a pumpkin with some explosives. Unfortunately, each year had to outdo the previous one and the pumpkin of choice for 2006 weighed 1,100 pounds! To set it off, the good doctor and his friends had decided to use about 5 pounds of black powder. That's the equivalent of about 8 hand grenades! No one in the neighborhood had been warned in advance or invited to the party. Guess we just weren't ritzy enough! Two days later there was a knock on my door and a news reporter from a local TV station asked if I was aware of anything unusual that had happened in the neighborhood that previous Sunday evening. Was I??? Turns out that my interview provided the centerpiece of a news piece about the explosion. Now, all of that was good, and I had a pretty good, and fairly accurate feel for what had happened. At least I thought so. Then, about two weeks later, I became aware that one of the principles of the party had actually filmed the explosion, and that it was on the internet! Now, my information was accurate, but it could not compare with **actually being there!** The video was a not-really-close second, but still far ahead of sitting in my living room and being suddenly shaken.

Matthew was at the scene of the explosion. Luke was an accurate investigative reporter who did an excellent job of reporting what had happened. He even says so himself at the beginning of both his Gospel and the Book of Acts. So Matthew's list of questions should be taken as more authoritative than Luke's. Plus, Matthew was an IRS Tax Agent for Rome. Think he wasn't detail oriented?

Anyway...

In Luke 21:8, Jesus begins His answer to that three-part question. He first outlines the events which will take place **in general** prior to His return. We know these events more accurately from Revelation as the first Six Seals:

*"And He said: 'Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He', and 'The time has drawn near'. Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified, for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately. Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven'". – Luke 21:8-11*

Jesus continues on in this vein until verse 20. And then He **switches subjects**. **And listen to how He does it –**

*"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near". – Luke 21:20*



Up until now He has been talking about larger issues – wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilences and the like. **But** He changes the topic with the use of the word **but**, just like I did in this sentence. Now His focus is on **Jerusalem**, and the first question: **When will these things happen?** When will all these stones lay flat on the ground, not one standing on top of another? From this point on to the end of Verse 24, He deals strictly with the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, this attention to the subject matter causes all kind of problems for so-called prophecy experts, who love to pull quotes out of context, and use them to support their own particular theories. But it is very clear from what Jesus says that He is talking about Jerusalem in AD 70, as it is sacked and burned under the Roman general Titus. Now, let's look at the remainder of this passage, with some Pastor Ray commentary inserted for clarity:

**"Then** (When? When the armies of Rome attack Jerusalem with the clear intention of destroying it) **let those who are in Jerusalem flee to the mountains** (Good idea, considering the city is going to be sacked and burned!), **let those who are in midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her.** (Makes sense to me!) **For these are the days of vengeance** (Read Matthew 23:32-36. Jesus specifically states that **on the Jews of that day** will come the righteous blood shed on the earth from Abel on. He specifically says that **all these things will come upon this generation**, the generation to whom He is talking. Remember, don't personalize the word **this**, as if He were talking to you. Remember the **context** in which He was speaking. He was speaking to **a particular generation of people**. And also remember that some of these very same people had transferred the curse involved in killing a righteous, innocent man off of Pilate and onto themselves in Matthew 27:25, when the crowd assembled in front of Pilate said, *"His blood be upon us and on our children"*.), **that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they** (The Jews of His day) **will fall by the edge of the sword** (Exactly what happened!), **and be led away captive into all nations.** (Clearly has already happened) **And Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BE FULFILLED.**" -- Luke 21:20-24

**Everything** that Jesus prophesied in Verses 20-24 has already happened **except for one very important thing. THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES ARE NOT YET FULFILLED.**

Now we have come to the crux of the matter. Sorry it took so long to get there, but I hope you can understand why I must so carefully lay the foundation on which I base my doctrine. Most prophecy experts gleefully take this passage and project into some end time scenario involving the Anti-Christ and a 7-Year Tribulation. But as you study carefully precisely what Jesus said, you cannot accurately remove it from where it stands to some future point in time. The events prophesied clearly have already been fulfilled. It's a done deal. After these traumatic events, Jerusalem lay under the control of the Gentile world all the way till the 7-Day War, when full control of the city was finally wrested from the hands of the Arab world and the Holy City was once again unified. So finally, Jerusalem was no longer trodden underfoot by the Gentiles. Almost 2,000 years had passed since the events of Luke 21:20-24 were fulfilled. Now the clock has started ticking again, moving toward the **Sign of His Coming** and the **End of the Age**. But first **the times of the Gentiles must be fulfilled**. So, what is left undone in order for this to occur?

The key to this question requires a trip back to **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**. We need to go to Chapter 7, where the Rapture of the church actually occurs. There, the ethnic composition of the Bride is listed, and it's certainly not all Jewish. Instead, we are told that it consists of a great multitude from **every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue**. Now, how do we get from the all-Jewish church of Pentecost to a church representing every ethnic group in the entire world? Simple. We have to shut evangelism down to the Jews for a long period of time, in order for the **number of Gentiles to catch up and pass the number of Jews included in the Bride**. Remember that for thousands of years, God dealt exclusively with the Jews, leaving all the other peoples of the world to come in and be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20. But, starting with Cornelius and his household, God had determined to include Gentiles in an ever increasing number and graft them into Israel by faith. In order to that, a **Time Devoted to the Gentiles** had to be decreed, a certain amount of time required to bring in all of the Gentiles that God wanted included in the Bride. And **that** would take quite a while, as it turned out. **How much time?** That, dear friends, is a horse of a different color and a story for another time. We won't have to wait long. How about tomorrow, in **Day 4 – The Blinding of Israel?** Until then, walk in faith and obedience to Him!



# Day 4 – The Blindness of Israel



“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of the mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” – Romans 11:25

In our last *E-Pistle*, we discussed **the Times of the Gentiles**, an extended period of time during which virtually all attempts to convert Israel would be suspended by God, and a concerted effort would be made to raise up a portion of the Bride of Christ out of the Gentile nations. We also talked about part of the motivation for that effort by referencing Revelation 7:9, which states that the Bride raptured out of the world will be from **every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue**. But there are other motivations involved, and before we go on to the Gentile quota referenced by the Bible, let's take a closer look at what God was thinking. Now, once again, I know some of you have gone ballistic on me. "How dare you!" you say, "Why the Bible says that His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways not our ways!" Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but the whole concept of God keeping His own people in the dark on critical issues is not always true. Even the passage referenced to by folks when they try to prove their doctrine is usually mis-quoted. Here's what God actually said, in context:

*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways", says the Lord, 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'"*  
-- Isaiah 55:8-9

Now if this were the end of the text, I would have to agree with my critics. But this is **not** the end of the passage. Here's the **rest of the story**:

*"For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."* – Isaiah 55:10-11

So, what happens when you don't know or understand what God is up to? You go to **His Word!** And as you prayerfully read His Word, these things that seem to be a mystery and be hidden start to unfold and start to make sense. How in the world do you think I have the revelation I have regarding the Holy Scriptures? Instead of just buying into this "Oh, it's just a mystery, brother!" nonsense, I started to study the Scriptures to see for myself what the Word of God said. And, boy was I surprised at what I found! Now, back to the discussion at hand:

We were talking about the motives of God regarding Israel and the evangelization of the Gentiles. Had God already planned to convert the Gentile nations? Absolutely! Prophecy after prophecy is found in the Old Testament concerning the nations coming to Zion, and the nations worshipping God. So, sooner or later, it was going to happen. But when? This is where it gets sticky. It was necessary that **Israel first reject Christ before He could turn to the Gentiles**. How committed was Jesus to bringing the Gospel to Israel first? Here's an example from the Gospel of Mark. Jesus has just received word of the beheading of his cousin, John the Baptist. He is extremely distressed by the news, and tries to get alone by Himself. That becomes impossible when the crowds press in on Him and force Him to minister to their needs. But as soon as that task is done, He leaves Israel and goes into the region of Sidon and Tyre.

Why? Because He can't get a moment's peace! It even says in Mark 7:24 that He entered into a house and didn't want anyone to know it. But no sooner does He get in the house than a woman appears at the door, pleading for Him to cast a demon out of her daughter. Jesus is exhausted, frustrated, worn out, almost burned out, and He is less than kind with this woman. He says to her,

*"Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs"*  
- Mark 7:27

Now, let me help you with a little interpretation. Who are the children? That's pretty obvious. The children are **the children of Israel**. You can't come up with any other possible interpretation. Next step. Who are the dogs? Again, it's pretty obvious. The dogs are the **Gentiles, the unwashed, the goyim**. Any Jew worth his salt would quickly pick up on what He just said.

Even through this precious, determined lady eventually pried a healing out of Him, His priorities were very clear. First the Jews. Then the Gentiles. No Gentiles until all the Jews have been ministered to. Why? Because Israel is His child, His precious bride, redeemed from out of the Gentile nations beginning with Abraham and ending in Himself. First things first.

Another example of this firm commitment can be found in the Gospel of John, but in a rather strange scenario:

*"Now there were certain Greeks among those who came to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus'. Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus." -- John 12:20-22*

So far so good. But the answer that Jesus gives has to leave them all scratching their heads in confusion.

*"But Jesus answered them, saying 'The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.'" -- John 12:23-25*

Now that seems like a reasonable enough statement, coming from the Son of God, who is very preoccupied with His upcoming crucifixion and death. But it's the juxtaposition of the two items that seems strange. All the Gentile Greeks wanted to do was see Jesus, for crying out loud. And they even took care to follow all the protocol required for a Gentile to talk to a Jewish Rabbi. But when the request for a **Gentile** to talk to Jesus comes to Him, He launches immediately into His upcoming death and the future multiplication of the church as an extension of Him. What's that all about??? Simple enough. Jesus **cannot** go to the Gentiles personally. He is already massively overextended just trying to go to the Jews. The only way that He will be able to go to the Gentiles is indirectly, through his disciples. Again, here is the firm commitment to go to the Jews **first**. But as things progress and get rapidly worse and worse, Jesus begins to get increasingly irritated and outright angry with the Jews. When the Gentile Roman centurion comes to Jesus and requests that He heal his servant, Jesus marvels at his faith in contrast to the doubt and unbelief He has encountered in Israel by saying,

*"Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" -- Matthew 10b-12*

Wow! That's sure not a happy face statement, is it? And you can see the door for the Gentiles slowly beginning to open when He says that many will come from the east and west and sit down with the great Hebrew heroes of faith. But then there's that nasty little snip about the sons of the kingdom being cast into outer darkness. I have done some research about that particular phrase, "Outer darkness". It's almost like Outer Limits. In every case where "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" or "Outer Darkness" is used, it **always** refers to **Eternal Judgment in the Lake or Fire**, or Temporary Judgment, in Hell, prior to the Lake of Fire. Either way, it's not a happy thought. And as Jewish leaders become more and more confrontational in the face of ever-increasingly remarkable miracles, Jesus' patience goes from 10 down to

absolute zero. In Matthew 21, He paraphrases Isaiah Chapter 5, the Song of the Vineyard, likening the Jews to vinedressers who have leased a vineyard from a landowner. These leaseholders have beaten, stoned and killed the landowner's servants. Exasperated, the landowner sends his son, feeling that they will at least respect him. In a final act of rebellious defiance, the leaseholders kill the son. The analogy is obvious. The leaseholding vinedressers are the Jews. The servants are the prophets, who have been beaten, stoned and killed for the audacity of telling Israel that they were accountable before God for what He has entrusted them with. The son is, of course, Jesus Himself, who they will kill. This will mark the final act of rebellion. Then, Jesus asks those who are listening,

*"Therefore when the owner of the vinyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?' They said to Him, 'He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vinyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.'" — Matthew 21:40-41*

Isn't it sad that the crowd can see the obvious, while the Scribes and Pharisees don't have a clue? Jesus then quotes the famous "stone which the builder rejected" Scripture, and adds a highly prophetic statement in verse 43:

*"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it." — Matthew 21:43*

The problem continues to escalate as one confrontation follows another. Finally, in Matthew 23, He can take it no more, and lashes out in a torrent of prophetic judgment that continues on to this day. Outraged and pushed to the limit, Jesus issues the famous Eight Woes of Matthew 23, climaxing with this devastating statement:

*"Fill up then, the measure of your father's guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on YOU may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom YOU murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, ALL THESE THINGS WILL COME UPON THIS GENERATION. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, BUT YOU WERE NOT WILLING. See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" -- Matthew 23:32-39*

If there was ever any question about Jesus' divinity, this passage should settle it forever. Jesus doesn't say **God** will send them prophets, etc. He says **He** will send them. He is speaking in the **Divine First Person**. He prophesies that full judgment for all the wicked deeds performed against His servants will be levied against that generation. He cries out as a broken hearted parent, wanting to hold a rebellious child, while all the while that child is tearing away from their parent's loving arms. How many of us have had this same experience? You want your child to love you the way that you love them. You want them to be successful and avoid situations which will cause them harm and heartache. You want to protect them from the world. What do they do? Instead of returning the love which you have poured out on them for many years, they instead tear out of your embrace, curse you and run away into the hands of the devil and the world. And your heart breaks. Now you are faced with a difficult decision. Can you continue to support them and bless them in their rebellious condition? No, not really. And if you **really love them**, what is the only thing that you, as a parent can do? Think hard, America. Be prepared to be offended, politically correct liberals. Roll over in your grave, Benjamin Spock. **YOU BLISTER THEIR REBELLIOUS LITTLE BUTTS AND STICK THEM IN A CORNER UNTIL THEY CAN LEARN TO BEHAVE PROPERLY!** I will not launch into a tirade against the insanity that grips America regarding the disciplining of children. All I have to do is point to the results of not doing it. We are now in our 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of increasingly rebellious children, until now we finally have a **Generation of Lawlessness** to match the **Man of Lawlessness** predicted in II Thessalonians. You must **correct** them. And, if they refuse correction long enough, you must reject them. Reject them? That's right. Did I say stop loving them? No. But to continue to support rebellious behavior in the face of arrogant rejection is pure insanity. Tough love, baby. It is the only thing that works. Gentle chiding for fear of damaging their fragile little psyches will not do the job. Now that your daughter is pregnant by the little thug that lives down the street, should

she be allowed to continue to live in your house? As long as she abides by the rules of your house, yes. Should the little thug down the road be allowed to come to live with her (and you!), shacking up with her upstairs in the guest bedroom every night? **Not if you have any shred of self-respect. Not if you have any fear of God. Not if you say you are a Bible-believing Christian.** And now I have trampled all over a ton of so-called, weak-willed, gutless, love-with-no-discipline Christians, who allow chaos and insanity to rule in their houses, all the while living in terror of Child Protective Services, who will take your child away from you if you discipline them with a switch. As a pastor of over 30 years, I have watched this scenario play out over and over again. I'll take a real situation that spread out over 15 years, but change the names of the victims, in order to protect the guilty. Seems we had some friends named Fred and Wilma. (I know, gimme a break!) They had a darling little daughter named Bam-Bamette. Fred and Wilma loved the Lord and had a music ministry of sorts. Wilma was highly anointed and wrote a fair number of songs. Fred played the harmonica. Bam-Bamette began sleeping with every boy she could find as soon as she reached puberty. Fred and Wilma did nothing to correct the situation or Bam-Bamette and continued to go out and minister in music. Soon, Bam-Bamette had brought her drug-using, Satan-worshipping, non-working sluggo boyfriend into their home, where he continue to shack up with Bam-Bamette until she finally (surprise!) got pregnant. Then, all three were free to mooch on Fred and Wilma, in theory forever, since now Wilma couldn't bear to put an innocent grandchild out on the street. Bam-Bamette was liberated when she was 12. She created absolute chaos from that time on. And Fred and Wilma just couldn't figure out why God was no longer blessing their ministry. So they would come to me at six month intervals. They would say something like this: *"Pastor Ray, we jest cain't figure out why the Lord ain't blessin' our ministry no more. We just work and work but nothing seems to happen. Doors keep closing to us. We're living for the Lord. We're tithing. We attend church faithfully. What do you think is wrong?"* And I would sigh, smile, and carefully outline for them exactly what was wrong in their ministry, and then tell them **exactly** what they had to do to regain the favor of the Lord and have His blessing and anointing on their ministry and lives again. And they would sigh and tell me exactly why they couldn't do that. And so six more months would pass. And they would come back to me again. And ask the same question. And I would give the same answer. And we would repeat this scenario until ridiculousness set in. I probably should have had them tested for either insanity or amnesia. One of the two had to be true. Little Bam-Bamette kept their lives in absolute chaos and compromise, and **God will not bless sin in the camp. Period.** You cannot be unequally yoked, even if it is with your children. This scenario went on for over 10 years. Then, mercifully, I lost track of them for a while. Finally, we ran into them again. They were elated. God was blessing their ministry after all these years. Doors were starting to open. The anointing of the sweet Holy Spirit was falling in their lives again. There was peace in their house. What, I inquired, had caused the change? *"Wal", they replied, "we all got so dang tired of our daughter that we finally left her the trailer in (fill in the blank) and moved down here to (fill in the blank)."* Hmmm... What a coincidence! When they finally stopped being associated with and supporting iniquity, God could once again smile on them. But not while they were in rebellion and sin. And even though they personally were not sinning against the Lord, permitting iniquity to dwell in their house made them an accessory to the crime, and guilty as charged.

Unfortunately, there has been an additional development in their lives since I first wrote this article. Bam-Bamette and her sluggo boyfriend, unwilling to work and therefore unable to keep up the mortgage payments on the trailer, now want Fred and Wilma to sell the trailer and let them come down to (fill in the blank) and **move back in with them!!!** And you wonder why pastors often develop a kind of nervous twitch when they are around certain people!

So it was with Israel and God. She had slapped her father/husband in the face once too often. Too much time in the presence of Divine favor had made her callous and indifferent to that Divine favor. Familiarity had bred contempt. And so, after 4 God-days of continuous favor beginning with Abraham, the Lord hauled off and slapped Israel across the face with the back of His mighty hand, and then picked her up by the arm and threw her into the corner of the room, to be scattered among the nations and to be disciplined for a while. And then God mercifully went out on the street and picked up the sorriest, raggidiest, most miserable bunch of pathetic losers He could find among the people of the world, and brought them into His house, and told them, *"You will be My Sons and Daughters for a while! I will do for you everything I did for Israel, and more! I will make it soooooo easy for you to be saved. I will allow you to approach Me through grace and the shed blood of My only begotten son, who (glance at the child in the corner), someone killed! Come here, my precious child!"*

And, amazingly enough, some of those repulsive little street urchins, without a home, without a mother, without a father, without a hope, would turn out to be prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers, great scientists, great humanitarians, and great human beings. And they would never forget what God had done for them. And they would appreciate forever every little detail. Before they had no food. Now they had food. And they appreciated it. Israel had sneered at the bread of heaven, which angels eat. These little beggar children were just glad to have any kind of food. And, unlike Israel, which had come to take the things of God for granted, they would produce the fruit of the Kingdom of God, which is what God was looking for all along. Someone to take that single seed that had died to itself and been planted in the ground, and use it to produce an abundant harvest of many more souls just like it. Someone who would produce the **Fruit of the Kingdom**.

And so for almost 2,000 years, or two God-days, Israel has sat in a corner, nursing some well-earned and well-deserved bruises. Has God forgotten His original child? Hardly! And soon, her time sitting in the corner will come to an end. And her husband/father God will turn to her once again, and she will weep and run into His arms, begging His forgiveness and repenting for her sins. And, because this wonderful God we serve is Love, He will forgive her, heal her, save her, restore her and put her back in her rightful place. But now she will have to share her bed with another child, a Gentile child, a composite child from every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue. A strange child that doesn't look like her, talk like her or act like her. And now God will have two children instead of one. And, as He turns away for just a moment, a faint smile will spread across His Wonderful Face, for He planned this and anticipated this long ago.

Hmmm..... Maybe His ways **are** beyond our understanding, after all!

One final warning: Since God never changes, the rules for Israel to be a covenant child never changed. And, when any nation in history has ever turned to God and said, "*Let me be like Israel! I can do the job!*" He has nodded His head, and given that nation a chance. And for a season, just like Israel, that nation would do a good job. And God would bless them. And they would prosper, and dominate those around them. And then they would forget the Lord, and begin to want to be like the Gentile nations again. And God would nod His head, and let them go back into the world. And then all the curses in the Bible would descend on them, and they would cry out, and say, "*God, why are You punishing us? What did we do wrong?*" And God would smile, and nod, and point at the Rule Book. When England, under the driving power of the Wesleys, embraced the Gospel of Jesus, God blessed England and made that little insignificant island the most powerful nation in the world. The sun never set on the British Empire, and vast continents were literally handed over to her. Armies vastly larger and more powerful than hers were routed before her. Wealth, power and influence poured into her. But when she grew tired of being righteous and bearing the cross of Christ, she went back to being like the nations. And she fell from favor, like some vast Vashti. And then another nation, called America, turned to God and pleaded with Him to be His choice to spread the Gospel. And she promised to walk with Him. She even printed **In God We Trust** on her currency, and pledged that she was **One Nation Under God**. But now, she, too, has grown weary of being God's chosen. And so she runs back to the nations, to live like them. And when His divine protection is lifted, and she cries out, "*God, why are You punishing us? What did we do wrong?*" the Lord smiles sadly, and points at that same Rule Book that Israel had ignored. Someday soon, God will turn His back on America, as she rebels against Him once too often, and, perhaps, this time, He will once again turn to the little girl sitting in the corner with a star of David pinned on her shirt, and the word, *Juden*, written on it. And in that day, this word will stop being a curse word to the world, and will instead be the greatest source of blessing that mankind has ever known. And she will look upon He who she had pierced. And He will look on she who was punished. **And the two shall be made one.**



# Day 5 ~ The Fullness of the Gentiles



“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of the mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” —Romans 11:25

Gentiles? In the Temple??? What are **they** doing here??? Don't you know that only a good, devout Jew can approach the Holy One of Israel? They have to at least be converts, and must have submitted themselves to circumcision and obey the Laws of Moses. But to come in just as they are? Unthinkable! They are the *goyyim*, the unwashed, Gentile dogs. How dare you defile the Holy Place by bringing them in here?

Through all of Jewish history, this would have been the response to bringing anyone except an Israelite near any of the holy places. True, there were exceptions here and there. Rahab the harlot. Ruth the little Moabite girl. But in every case, they had willingly embraced not only the theology but also the practices and customs of Israel. The very thought of Gentiles anywhere near the holy places would turn a group of worshippers into an unruly mob, just as it did in the Book of Acts when Paul, trying to be a good, devout Jew, had deliberately entered into a vow according to strict Jewish custom:

*"And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge. And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality." -- Acts 21:15-25*

No offense to the early Jerusalem church, but what hypocrisy! Paul and his ministry team arrive in Jerusalem. Everybody is just **thrilled** to see them! Oh, halleluia, brother, God has even granted salvation and the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles! Why, brother, that's just **wunnerful!** But we do have this one **teensy little problem** we need to discuss with you. We got all these here Jews in Jerusalem that are now converts to the Messiah. And they all believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Isn't that just wonderful! But they also obey the Law of Moses, and would be **extremely unhappy** if they found out that you are teaching the Gentiles that they can be saved by faith, through grace, and not of works. Now, here's what we want you to do to make it look good. We have four men who are under a Nazarite vow. And if you would just make a reasonable **financial contribution** to pay their expenses, why I think everything

would work out just fine! That way, all the members of our church (er, ah, I mean the Temple!) will see that you are following established protocol and that you are a good (Jew, Methodist, Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, Fill in the Blank), and then **everybody will be happy!** Riiiiight! Suuuure! So Paul, being a good soldier, does what the council asks of him. Does it turn out OK? What do **you** think! One of the nasty problems with dealing with legalists, no matter where you find them, is that **they are NEVER satisfied.** I found this out the hard way in my last pastorate. There's always another obscure rule that has to be obeyed before the "saints" are satisfied. And, of course, that never happens. Just watch...

*"Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them. Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, "Away with him!" -- Acts 21:26-36*

Well! This is certainly working out well, isn't it? The simple fact is that it would have **never** worked out, because **law** and **grace** just can't stand to be in the same room with one another. Neither can **works** and **faith**. Without fail, law and works will rise up and persecute faith and grace, and attempt to wipe them off the face of the earth. That why Muslims are so determined to destroy all "non-believers". And why Christians in the Middle Ages, also under the deceitful grip of law and works, attempted to wipe out everyone who didn't agree with them. Faith and grace gives time for reason, hope and love to work in the human heart. Not so with law and works. Clearly, going to the Gentiles was a good idea, for a multitude of reasons. But going to them to make them Jews was clearly **not** a good idea. Jesus had some very strong things to say to the Scribes and Pharisees about that matter. Here's what He had to say:

*"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." -- Matthew 23:13-15*

So the Gentiles are brought in under a new administration, a new game plan. Instead of **603 Laws** and **10 Commandments**, the guidelines are reduced to **4 Laws** and **2 Commandments**. What are the 4 laws? This will blow your mind. They are found in Acts 15:19-20. Here they are:

- (1) Abstain from things polluted by idols
- (2) Abstain from sexual immorality
- (3) Abstain from things that have been strangled
- (4) Abstain from blood

Law #1 only applies to cultures where food offered to idols is then resold in the marketplace in order to generate finances for the pagan temple. No problem! Law #2, well, that's another matter! (Pastor! Can we, uh, talk about that issue later? Brother Johnson seems to have fallen into personal sin. I know that he is the head deacon, but, shucks, pastor, boys will be boys, won't they?) Sigh. Obviously, the Gentile church is still struggling with that one. Law #3 only applies to eating animals that have been strangled with their blood still in them, because the Bible teaches in what we call Kosher Law that the life is in the



blood (Leviticus 17:11, Deuteronomy 12:23). Law #4 also ties into this concept. Now, let's step back away from these four laws for just a second, and take a good look at them.

Even if their "liberated" state, the Jerusalem council still laid down three of the four laws based on the Jewish law. All three had something to do with dietary rules. The Law. You know, that thing that didn't work. That **never** worked. In fact, in the Gospels themselves, Jesus declares all foods clean in Mark 7:18-23. And Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, wasn't deeply impressed with their to-do list, either. In Romans Chapter 14, he spends a great deal of time explaining why Laws 1, 3 and 4 make absolutely no sense at all for us Gentiles.

That leaves only the **Two Commandments**. They are found in Matthew 22:35-40. Here they are. Ready? These are gonna be real hard to understand. **Very complicated. Here goes!!!**

- (1) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind
- (2) You shall love your neighbor as yourself

That's it? That's all there is to it? Yup! **Easy to understand. Impossible to do apart from the Holy Spirit.** On the flip side of the coin, the law and works are always **very hard to understand**, and **very easy to do once you have all the details down just right.** But it allows the heart to be totally wrong, while all the body parts are doing things that are just right. That's why law and works had to be done away with and replaced with faith and grace. Now, these are rules that we Gentiles can understand. Ironically, even a "dog" can understand love and loyalty. And so the harvesting of the Gentile world begins, but not without some obstacles.

Peter's little field trip to the house of Cornelius in Acts Chapter 10 went real well until he got back to Jerusalem. And then all you-know-what broke loose until he calmly informed them that God had poured out the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles **in the same manner** that He had poured it out on them on the Day of Pentecost. Even so, there is no real breakthrough. Paul is knocked down on his way to Damascus and converted. But when he tries to share his testimony at Jerusalem, it doesn't go well. Only Barnabas, Mr. Encouragement, stands up for him. Sadly, Paul has to eventually return to Tarsus, where he sits, going nowhere with his divine commission, until Barnabas shows up at his doorstep with an interesting proposal: Come and help him co-pastor an unusual experiment in Antioch, **a totally Gentile church**, the very first one. Finally freed from Jewish legalism, Paul has his first true opportunity to begin preaching and teaching his **Gospel to the Gentiles**, given to him on Mt. Sinai after he had gone into Arabia immediately after his conversion experience. And it has remarkable effects! This first purely Gentile church takes off like a rocket, growing rapidly. Then, the prophet Agabus comes to town with his prophetic ministry team. When he is done, the presiding council of the church consists of teachers **and** prophets; Barnabas (a.k.a. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus), Paul (a Jew), Simeon (a Black man), Lucius of Cyrene (also probably Black, and the possible son of Simon of Cyrene, who carried the cross for Christ) and Manaen (also probably a Jew, because he was brought up with Herod). **Jewish** leadership as a whole, but **Gentile** membership. And while there is some growth of Jewish Messianic Synagogues, it is these new Gentile churches which grow like wildfire, and cannot be stopped. It will be the Gentile church which will experience massive persecution by Rome, yet continue to grow. And, sadly, it will be the Gentile church, once it has gained acceptance in the Roman Empire, which will stagger and grind to a halt.

So much for history. Now we come to doctrine, and some teaching worthy of significant documentation and debate, if necessary. Debate has raged for almost 2,000 years regarding when Jesus Christ would return. And despite the **obvious** warning given by Jesus in Mark 13:32 about setting dates, there have been **over 2,000 dates set in under 2,000 years.** That means that, on an average, one person every year decides he knows more than God and comes to the revelation that he and he alone has determined the date of Christ's return. Let's take a quick look at that Scripture, shall we?

*"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" -- Mark 13:32-37*

Please notice that Jesus clearly says that **only the Father knows the date**. Also bear in mind that while Jesus was this earth as the Son of Man, He was **sinless**, but He was not **perfect**. Boy, I know that statement stirred up a cloud of dust and indignation. Hmmm. Kinda sounds like what happened when Paul presented a little of his Gospel to the Gentiles in Jerusalem, doesn't it? In fact, Jesus was **made perfect through what He suffered**. Want some Scripture on that one? Sure!

*"...who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing." -- Hebrews 5:7-11*

Please notice that Jesus was **perfected by His suffering**. What does that mean? That while in His earthly body He was sinless but He was **not perfect**. Nor was His understanding perfect. And this is where it gets sticky. There are several passages in the New Testament, largely surrounding Christ's return, that Bible scholars will not touch with a ten foot pole. Why? Because they can't make them fit neatly into cookie-cutter theological statements of doctrine. Let me give you an example...

*"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes."*

– Matthew 10:21-23

Whoa! Wait a minute, pastor! That's in the Bible? Yup! Not too many pastors will go near it. And I have read many apologies, or explanations, for the passage. In every case, the explanation came off more like a real apology as we know the word today than a rational explanation that made sense. And you can't just ignore the passage, because Jesus says something very similar in the Gospel of Matthew a little later on. Let's look at His second statement about this matter.

*"Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."*

– Matthew 16:24-28

Do I have you troubled yet? Worried? Good! Thinking? Better. Let's look at these two controversial statements that Jesus made, and that nobody wants to go near. In both cases, He prefaces the comment with the phrase "Assuredly I say to you". Sounds like He was pretty convinced, doesn't it? If the first instance, He says "you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes". In the second instance, He says, "**there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom**". Yet these events **did not happen**. Now, I have read all the explanations and rationalizations out there. And **none of them make any sense**. So, what's the deal here? Was Jesus wrong? **Yes, He was!**

Wait a minute, Pastor! I thought you were the one who spends all his time preaching about the literal, not symbolic, accuracy of the Word of God! So, what's the deal here? Glad you asked. Remember the doctrine of **Progressive Revelation**? How God reveals more and more on a given topic the closer you get to the actual event? How Old Testament prophets have **less information** on future events than New Testament apostles? And, by logical extension of principle, that would also mean the Jesus after His resurrection as the **Son of God** would have greater revelation than Jesus **prior** to His resurrection as **Son of Man**. Guess what? This principle explains **exactly** what Jesus said as Son of Man in these two passages, without compromising His Divinity or accuracy. The same holds true when you compare His

sequence of events in Matthew 24 versus His sequence of events in Revelation 6-7. There is a minor, but significant difference in the order of events of the 1<sup>st</sup> Six Seals. Jesus lists the same events in both Scripture passages, but the Revelation section is more detailed and more complete. Which passage is correct? Both. Which passage is more authoritative? **The Revelation passage.** Why? Because it reflects the words of Jesus as **Son of God**, the highest possible form of Revelation available to mankind. If you begin to analyze the Word of God based on this principle, a lot of things suddenly begin to make sense and come together. It also wipes out most, but not all, of the supposed inconsistencies found in the Word of God, and silences a great many critics as well.

Now, back to those two statements that Jesus made. To help you understand what is going on, let's boil those two statements down into one statement. Here goes: "Some of you will still be alive when I come back. In fact, you won't even be able to preach in all the cities of Israel before it happens." Now, **did that actually happen?** The only honest answer a rational man can give is, "*No, it didn't!*" So what do I believe regarding the return of Christ? Well, Howzabout we turn to the Book of Acts and look at what Jesus had to say about the same subject **after** His resurrection.

*"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." – Acts 1:4-8*

Hmmm.... What an interesting answer. Not at all like the two statements He had made earlier in His ministry while He was still the sinless but **not perfect Son of Man**. Now, through His obedience and suffering, He has been **made** into the **still sinless but also perfect Son of God**. And His answer to their question is interesting, very interesting! Now, in full possession of all His divinity and glory as the Son of God, everything that He had possessed as the Word of God before He emptied Himself of it all to pour himself into the body of a mere man, He knows that His human enthusiasm was somewhat misplaced. He now knows that it will take about 2,000 years (or more!) for everything that He accurately prophesied to finally come to pass. And so, in agreement with His previous stated doctrine that **NO ONE, NOT EVEN HIM**, knows the exact date of His return, He calmly tells the disciples, eagerly primed by His two previous date/time-specific comments, that **IT IS ONLY ON A NEED-TO-KNOW BASIS**, and that **THEY DON'T NEED TO KNOW!** Again, why? Because for them to now be told that it will take thousands of years to bring all of this to pass, and that every single one of them will, in fact, die, waiting for His return would so disillusion and discourage them that they probably would have quit right there and then! And now, all three answers begin to make some sense. You see, dear friend, Scripture still does interpret Scripture, doesn't it? And Progressive Revelation once again passes the test of consistency, logic, and faithfulness to the literal accuracy of the Word of God.

Now, having done all that, I am about to get you all riled up all over again. Why? Because I am going to tell you that I know **exactly what the key is to knowing when Christ will return!** Whaaaaat? Pastor Ray, after all that you have said about what Jesus said about not knowing the hour or the day, have you gone mad? Nope. In fact, **it has never been a date! Rather, it has been a condition, which, when met, would trigger the End-Time events sequence and bring about the return of Jesus Christ!** All right, I'll bite, Pastor. **What is the condition???**

Again, dear friends, Scripture interprets Scripture, and so we go again to the Word of God for the answer. This time, we turn to the Apostle Peter for the clue that will unravel this mystery. Turn to his second letter, and let's look at what he has to say. In II Peter 3:8, Peter unravels the critical clue regarding the passage of time in Heaven relative to the passage of time on earth. He tells us that with the Lord **one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day**. It's a two-way mathematical equation that, when applied to the events surrounding Genesis, explain tons of things that up to now haven't made any real sense. As an example, it turns the **Seven God-Days of Creation** into **7,000 man-years**. This allows for vast amounts of experimentation with a wide variety of animal life forms, and a tremendously diverse fossil record to be put down in the soil. It also explains why, when God told Adam

that if he ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil he would die within the span of that day, it seemingly didn't happen. Again, apologists start making excuses for the Bible. "Why, brother", they say, "you see, Adam died spiritually, not physically". To which I reply, "Hogwash. Absolute, utter hogwash!" But now, taking the principle that **Scripture interprets Scripture**, suddenly II Peter 3:8 becomes the key to unlock this mystery. If with the Lord, **one day is as a thousand years**, then in fact, **Adam did die within the day in which he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. Not one **MAN** day, one **GOD** day! Quick! How old was Adam when he died? The answer? **930 years!** Less than one God-day, equal to 1,000 man-years! This mathematical equation also solves a number of other seeming contradictions, but we will not delve into them today.

II Peter 3:10 also provides massive clues into the eventual destruction of the universe, which tie to Isaiah 66 and Revelation 21. But it is the next three verses which give us the key to the return of Christ. Let's look at them.

*"Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."*

– II Peter 3:11-13

Now please look very carefully at the phrase underlined above. What does it say? That we can **HASTEN** the day of His appearing, the coming of the Day of the Lord, the RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST! Now, **how in the world can we HASTEN the day of His appearing???**

Dear reader, I know this is a long E-Pistle, but we have finally come to the crux of the matter. Remember what Jesus said back in Luke 21:24? -- "*And Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*." When will they be fulfilled? Paul tells us the answer in Romans 11:25 – "*...that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*." What does **fullness** mean in this case? The **full quota, census, number of...**

Now, in the light of what Peter says about hastening the day of His appearing, it becomes obvious that God has assigned a mathematical equation, a **number** to the **quantity of Gentiles** which He will allow in the New Jerusalem. Wow, Pastor Ray, how many is that???. Sadly, it is impossible to tell. Obvious, the New Jerusalem is huge, massive beyond our imagination. It is 1,500 miles high, 1,500 miles wide and 1,500 miles long. That's a staggering number of square miles. We have a dear friend in the Lord who is a member of our church. He is also a bona fide genius. Here are his numbers regarding the potential population of the New Jerusalem.

Assuming that the New Jerusalem is in the form of a Borg-style cube, which Scripture suggests that it is, and allowing approximately 20 foot ceiling heights, and 7 feet for the thickness of floors between levels, that would yield **280,000 levels** of **1,960,000 square miles each**.

Now, that alone is almost incomprehensible, but remember, should the New Jerusalem land in the United States, it would stretch from **Canada to Mexico**, and from **Ohio to Nevada**. **One single building / starship**. Imagine. And it would extend 1,500 miles into the atmosphere. By comparison, our own atmosphere extends only about 350 miles into space, and the breathable portion of that atmosphere extends only 5 to 7 miles. Again, stop for a moment and try to imagine.

But if you thought those numbers are mind-numbing, let's talk body count for a second. Allowing **6.4 acres per person**, the New Jerusalem can support a population of **54,880,000,000**. To help you out with zeroes, that's almost **55 Billion**, yes that is **Billion with a "B"**.

Where the Lord is going to get 55 billion saved or anywhere near that number is a puzzle, as we know most of those who lived before the flood were not "In the Book" or they would not have needed to be drowned.

How many Gentiles would it take to fill up the New Jerusalem, adding in Israel plus the Gentiles who will be added in at the Great White Throne Judgment? Who knows? It's certainly not a mere 144,000. That number is ludicrous, in the light of the super massive dimensions of the Eternal City. Yeah, you could probably find a parking space there. But, nonetheless, there is a **fixed number or census of Gentiles assigned by God**. When that count is reached, it is endgame for the Times of the Gentiles. They will have been fulfilled. The fullness of the Gentiles will have come in. And we will have massively squandered our opportunity to hasten the day of His appearing. Peter made that statement almost 2,000 years ago. Comparing the church through history with the initial condition of the New Testament, Pentecostal, Spirit-filled, tongue-talking, signs, wonders and miracles, apostle-driven and directed 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church, it becomes painfully obvious that we have squandered the vast portion of those 2,000 years. By 300 AD, the church had already been seriously compromised. World evangelism ground to a halt. For the next 1,200 years, the church was effectively a total waste. Based on the expectations outlined in Ephesians 4:11-13, the church should have taken its anointed start and then **gone on** into the **fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ**. Instead, it **went backwards** after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century and degenerated into a poor copy of Judaism, with priests, ceremonies and ceremonial trappings galore, endless sets of laws and observances and absolutely no anointing or power. Then, starting around 1500 AD, a slow but steady awakening began to occur. But even after 500 years of Reformation and restoration, the vast portion of the church today is still a waste. As a whole, the church is bound in sin, powerless and compromised. Jesus had anticipated that with his parable about the 5 Wise and 5 Foolish Virgins. Everyone fell asleep when the Bridegroom was delayed. It wasn't until about the 1800's before the church began to regain even a small portion of its evangelistic zeal. And Pentecostal power was not restored to the church until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and then only to a small portion of the church. A realistic estimate is that we have **delayed** the return of Christ by our slothfulness by at least **1,500 to 1,800 years**. **We could have hastened the day of His appearing**. Instead, we sank back into legalism. How many souls are in Hell today because of our failure? The numbers must be staggering. There is one small ray of light in all of this. If we had not so totally messed up, neither you nor I would have ever come into existence, nor had a chance to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior of our lives. There would have been no need for us to ever have been born. Aintcha' glad?

And so, as that census check point draws nearer and nearer, don't worry about what's going on in Israel, or what lunatic currently runs which near-nuclear country. Go out and save souls. Get them filled with the Holy Spirit. Get them sanctified. Then teach them to make disciples of all nations. **Then, and only then, will the end come. Come, Lord Jesus! Get going, Church!**



# Day 6 – The Restoration of Israel



“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of the mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in”

—Romans 11:25

In our last three E-Pistles, we have examined how God, for a wide variety of reasons, transferred His attentions and affections away from the Jews for a very long period of time. And, frankly, as we have examined only a few of the Scriptures involved, it is obvious why He did so. He sent them His only human-born Son, the precious Word of God, co-existent with the Father from time immemorial. He has done that for no other nation. He did great signs, wonders and miracles in their midst. He has done that for no other nation. He healed their sick, raised their dead, cast demons out of their tormented bodies, all seemingly to avail. After all that He had done for them, they turned on Him, rejected Him, spat on Him, mocked Him, struck Him, crucified Him, murdered Him. Yet, despite all this, as He hung on the cross, He said, “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*”. They had no clue what they were doing. If they had understood, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. And we, with the unfair advantage of 20/20 hindsight, can say, “*Well, they got what they deserved! They asked for His blood to be on them, and it has been so!*” But what if you had been there yourself, caught up in the times in which they lived? Sadly, I see absolutely no difference between the church today and the Jews of Jesus’ time. Totally focused on self. Consumed in consumerism. Trying to be politically correct, for in those days, to be incorrect meant to be dead. Compromised in sin. Bound in sickness. No virtue. No power. Empty. Shallow. Self-seeking. And regarding anyone who is radically sold out to God as being strange and unstable, perhaps even mad. We always stone the prophets, throw Jeremiah in a sewer, saw Isaiah in half, taunt Elisha, consider those among us who carry the Christ in us as demon-possessed themselves. How sad. How bizarre. How typical of sin-ridden, rebellious humanity. Always biting the hand that feeds it, and striking out against the arms that want to protect it from itself.

Despite knowing all that, it became necessary for the Father to place his original child / bride in a corner for two days, in order to discipline her, chastise her, correct her, and bring her into a position of repentance and obedience. And, in order to further rub salt into the wound, He determined that not only would He not allow His Spirit to be upon them during this time, but that he would lavishly, and seemingly foolishly, pour that precious Holy Ghost out upon a group of children who were dirty, unclean, rude and unthinking in all their ways, unfit to even be in His presence, and certainly not capable of being priests and kings to Him and administrating His ways to the rest of the world. Yes, dear friends, He chose you and I, the two most unlikely choices for the job, and has poured out His Spirit on us while His first child sat in the corner watching in amazement and envy.

Now, does this mean that He has abandoned His first child, as some would preach? For 2,000 years, the Gentile world has systematically persecuted the Jews, calling them Christ-killers and doing unspeakable things to them. When I was growing up, I can remember that when we covered the Middle Ages in history, the Crusaders were always portrayed as heroic, self-sacrificing figures. No one bothered to tell us that they frequently rounded up whole communities of Muslims and Jews and barricaded them into mosques and synagogues and gave them two choices: convert and deny their own faith, or die. And when, as often was the case, they refused to convert under such duress, our heroic Crusaders gleefully set the building afire and sang hymns praising and worshipping God as these innocent people burned to

death. Didn't know that? History is often written and rewritten by the winners. That's why the most evil curse word in the Middle East today is "Crusader!" And then when they do the same thing to us, we recoil in horror and try to lecture them about love and morality, and how good Christians would **never** do such a horrible thing. How quickly we have forgotten our own infamous heritage. Unfortunately, they have not. And one good atrocity always leads to another, and another, and another... And so on and on we go, all through church history, doing unspeakable things to Jews who have already lost their homeland and the presence of the Holy Spirit, and are truly "Wandering Arameans". A theology even developed which is quite popular in evangelical Christianity called **Replacement Theology**. In Replacement Theology, Christianity substitutes for Israel and replaces her as far as all the promises of God are concerned. And better still, **American Christianity** becomes the inheritor of all the promises made to Israel. So prominent was this theology that learned scholars came to the conclusion that **all the promises made to Israel regarding a literal return to her homeland were impossible, and therefore (my most despised word) symbolic in nature!** Oh boy, here we go again! Now that we have decided that we know more about the future than God does, we can now twist and distort all the promises He made to his first child and spin them any way we want to. And, boy, will that preach well to a crowd of self-satisfied, self-righteous American Christians! Unfortunately, we more closely resemble the Israel of Jesus' day than we do the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church, and if any Scriptures apply to us, it's probably the 8 Woes that Jesus issued to the Jews in Matthew 23 and 24.

And there's one more nasty little hitch: **God has unconditionally promised to return to and restore Israel at the end of the age of the Gentiles.** And those promises were not made in the Old Testament, but rather in the New Testament, so we cannot apply Replacement Theology to them. Let's hear what the Apostle Paul (a good, devout Jew himself) has to say on the matter:

*"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, "LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work." – Romans 11:1-6*

You know, I never cease to be amazed at people who develop theology in direct opposition to clear written, firmly established Scripture. How could Replacement Theology develop in the light of this passage? Very simply. Ignore what God says, and place your own opinions over and above those of God. Then, dear friends, **anything** is possible! As if that weren't enough, look what else Paul has to say on this topic:

*"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" – Romans 11:11-5*

Paul has just hit on two absolutely huge points in this passage. Let's look at them one at a time. First of all, Paul clearly establishes that **God turned His attention to the Gentiles to make the Jews jealous!** After thousands of years of seemingly fruitless attempts to get Israel to walk with him in love, delivering them, blessing them, disciplining them and doing everything that He could possibly do, God became so exasperated with His original bride and her consistent unfaithfulness that He issued her a writ of divorce and, having divorced her, proceeded to pay His attention to other women. Divorced? Pastor Ray, show me Scripture on that one! Sure! Howzabout...

*"Thus says the LORD: 'Where is the certificate of your mother's divorce, whom I have put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, and for your transgressions your mother has been put away.'" -- Isaiah 50:1*



Or, if you prefer...

*"They say, 'If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man's, may he return to her again?' Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me," says the LORD. Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see: Where have you not lain with men? By the road you have sat for them like an Arabian in the wilderness; and you have polluted the land with your harlotries and your wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there has been no latter rain. You have had a harlot's forehead; you refuse to be ashamed. Will you not from this time cry to Me, 'My Father, You are the guide of my youth? Will He remain angry forever? Will He keep it to the end?' Behold, you have spoken and done evil things, as you were able." The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the LORD. Then the LORD said to me, "Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah." -- Jeremiah 3:1-11*

But even then, God's love for Israel knew no human bounds. In Hosea, He has his prophet **act out** the relationship between Him and Israel, telling the man of God to marry a woman who will be unfaithful to him from the very start!

*"When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: " Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry, for the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the LORD." So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. Then the LORD said to him: "Call his name Jezeel, for in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezeel on the house of Jehu, and bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. It shall come to pass in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel." -- Hosea 1:2-5*

So far, so good. Hosea, a godly man, has married a woman of highly questionable moral character. He knows, going into the relationship, that she has been unfaithful to others in the past. But, initially, everything seems to go OK. They have a boy named *Jezeel*, named after the place where Naboth's innocent blood was spilled by Ahab, and where Jehu massacred Ahab's descendants. Pretty traumatic, right? It would be like naming a boy *Pearl Harbor* or *Iwo Jima* just after World War II. But, hey, those were tough times! Name a boy *Sue*, and he'll have to grow up knowing how to fight, right, Johnny Cash? Meanwhile, back in Israel, Gomer (what a name! I always get a mental picture of Gomer Pyle as a girl! Goolllleee, Sarge! I mean, Hosea!) has another child, this time a girl. But not all is right with the circumstances surrounding this baby. Just listen...

*"And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: " Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away. Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword or battle, by horses or horsemen." -- Hosea 1:6-7*

Now, to the uninitiated and to those who are not willing to do their homework, everything seems to be just fine on the surface. But take a look at the child's name. It is Lo-Ruhamah. So what about it? It's just another weird Bible name, right??? Nope. There's big trouble brewing, and God has to be the one to break the news to Hosea. The Lord comes to Hosea personally and says, are you ready for this, "**Call the kid NO MERCY or THAT I MAY NOT FORGIVE THEM AT ALL**". What??? Why would you name a child something like that??? You have to be very careful in your reading in the Scriptures at this point. In Hosea 1:3, it clearly says that Gomer conceived and bore **him** (Hosea) a son. But in verse 6, it merely says that **she conceived**. She got pregnant, all right, but **not by Hosea!** When God told him to name the child *No Mercy/That I May Not Forgive Them At All*, He was telling Hosea that Gomer had been stepping out on him behind his back, and that, although she had just given birth to a child, **that it wasn't his!** Remember that Hosea is stuck with one of the most difficult assignments in the Old Testament – deliberately marry a woman that he knows will be unfaithful to him, in order to illustrate to Israel how God

felt about them and their unfaithfulness. God was saying, "No more mercy. You've run around on me once too often. I will not forgive you at all". Now, I know that this is deep, but it gets deeper still in the next few verses. And if you weren't sure of what I was telling you up till now, wait till you see what happens next!

*"Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. Then God said: " Call his name Lo-Ammi, for you are not My people, and I will not be your God." -- Hosea 1:8-9*

Now for a little more investigative reporting. Remember what God named the last kid? Had to make you wonder a little bit, didn't it? Now, just so there will be no doubt at all in Hosea's mind about what is going on, God is going to all but slap Hosea in the face with this child. Notice again it says that bore a child, but it does not say that it was his. And guess what Lo-Ammi means? **NOT MY PEOPLE! Nope, NOT MY KID! Maybe he's your kid, woman, but he's sure not mine!**

In Chapter 2, God comes right out in the open and says it so everyone can understand it:

*"Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; for she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; Lest I strip her naked and expose her, as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst. I will not have mercy on her children, for they are the children of harlotry. For their mother has played the harlot; she who conceived them has behaved shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.'" -- Hosea 2:2-5*

Man, you can't get any more straight up than that, can you? She is not my wife anymore! I divorce her! I am not her husband any more! As for those last two kids, well, they aren't mine, **and God told me so!** As it was with Hosea and Gomer, so it was between God and Israel. But you know the rest of the story, don't you??? How God instructed Hosea to go and seek Gomer out, and found her so bad off that she was being auctioned off as a slave, sunken to the utter depths of depravity. And how Hosea bought her back out of slavery and instructed her to live with him, but without sexual activity between them for an extended period of time? Didn't know that? Let's take a look at that Scripture for a moment.

*"Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans." So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. And I said to her, you shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, will I be toward you." -- Hosea 3:1-3*

This is a very interesting piece of Scripture, and an equally interesting piece of logic on the part of Hosea. Hosea, of course, finds Gomer in a non-negotiable position – that of a slave being auctioned off at a slave market. This is a far cry from being the wife of a prophet of God, and only serves to point out how far she had fallen. But after he buys her back, he places a very interesting stipulation on her – no sex! She had been busy having sex with everyone she could get her hands on, and the lusts of her flesh were totally out of control. Before she could be restored to the condition and position of a wife, she was going to have to put her fleshly desires under control, and her external conduct was going to have to come into line as well. How totally this parallels the moral condition and immoral conduct of the church today! Redeemed at such a great price, brought back into the house, yet still lusting in her heart for a relationship with the very prince of demons who caused her to fall in the first place. Only when her external conduct and internal passions were finally under control could she enter into a full, meaningful relationship with her husband again. And spiritually, that's how it has been for Israel for almost 2,000 years, two God-days. She has had no meaningful relationship with her husband for a very long time. But there is coming a time when that relationship will be restored. Let's see what Hosea says next.

*"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days." – Hosea 3:4-5*

In the latter days, God's unfaithful wife will finally turn to Him again, this time with her heart and affections in the right place. Fueled by the passionate evangelism of 144,000 young men of Jewish descent, filled with the Holy Spirit, Israel will have an encounter with God unlike anything since that great day at the mountain, when the Lord descended on Sinai in fire, and all Israel pledged to serve, follow, and, oh yes, to love Him with all their heart and mind and strength.

Earlier in this article, I told you that Paul had hit on **two** absolutely huge points regarding Israel. Now we can finally get to the **second** of them. Let's look at that Scripture passage again.

*"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, **what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?**" – Romans 11:11-5*

Now, most folks that know a little about the Bible can tell you about the first point, the fact that God turned to the Gentiles in order to make Israel jealous, jealous enough to begin to show some attention and affection to Him. Kinda like reverse psychology, isn't it? But the second point, which I have never heard discussed anywhere, in any sermon, is the fact that **the Rapture and Resurrection of the Dead are directly tied to the Restoration of Israel!** In fact, the two events are so intertwined that they actually occur **back-to-back** in The Revelation of Jesus Christ. Betcha didn't know that, didya? Let's look at the amazing Scriptures concerning the two events.

In order to place ourselves in the timeline, we have to pick up during the **Sixth Seal, the Great Tribulation**. We pick up in Revelation Chapter Six, where the Global Earthquake and Global Blackout prophesied by Jesus in Matthew 24 have just occurred. And then, one of the most momentous events that will ever happen to Israel occurs. **The Holy Spirit, active among the Gentile nations for so long, is pulled off of them and placed squarely on Israel.** How do I know that? Because of what happens in Chapter Seven. Skipping over Verses 1 and 2 for a second, we move to Verse 3. Here's where it gets interesting:

*"After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed." -- Revelation 7:1-8*

Wow! This is unprecedented! Not even when the Lord took of the Holy Spirit on Moses and put in on the 70 elders was it even close to the magnitude of the power that is released into these 144,000 male virgin Jews. How do I know that they are men, and have never had sex with a woman? 'Cause the Bible tells me so! Let's just jump ahead a bit, shall we? After the apparent evangelization of Israel (and so all Israel shall be saved. You didn't think we Gentiles were going to be able to do it, did you??), the 144,000 have now completed their task and have experienced their own personal/group Rapture (more than one Rapture? Yup! Just read on!), and are now standing before the precious Lamb of God:

*"Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the*

elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” – Revelation 14:1-5

Now there is some confusion about where this whole event takes place. Revelation 14:1 says it is on Mt. Zion, which would place them in Jerusalem, but Jesus does not return after the SWAT team/rescue mission/Rapture operation with the invasion army with Him until Revelation 19:11. It is puzzling, and you may be gratified to know that there are still plenty of things about this wonderful, marvelous Book that even I still don't understand. For right now, I place them in Heaven with Christ. Either way, their job is done. Now the Jews are for the first time prepared to believe in and receive their true Messiah. It is very interesting and significant, I think, that this event occurs just after the Mark of the Beast becomes mandatory all over the world. The Jews have been marked way too many times down through history, and they are not about to receive the Mark of the Beast. Instead, they will resist him, and when Christ finally returns in Revelation 19, here is what will happen:

*"In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn." -- Zechariah 11:8-10*

Now, back to Chapter Seven. With the introduction of the 144,000 and the placing of the Holy Spirit exclusively on Israel, God is **finally, totally done with the Gentile nations as a whole.** There is now no further reason to retain the Bride portion of the Church here on earth. **The fullness of the Gentiles has come in.** And so, in Revelation 7:9, we read the words that all of us have so eagerly looked forward to:

*"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" -- Revelation 7:9-10*

And so that there can be no doubt about this vast multitude of individuals taken from all the four corners of the earth, one of the 24 Elders who surround the Throne of God ask John a couple of questions.

*"Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." -- Revelation 7:13-14*

**Who are these people in white robes? Where did they come from?** Wow! There could be no two better questions to ask to tie down the true nature of this momentous event. And the answer? **These are they who have come out of the GREAT TRIBULATION.** What do you call the mass removal of a huge number of individuals from the planet in the midst of the Great Tribulation? **The Rapture!** And so, having acquired the **full number, census or quota** of Gentile believers to be incorporated into the eternal body of Christ, and having made the Jews sufficiently jealous so that they would earnestly seek His face and accept Him this second time around, He now finishes the punishment of all those who have arrayed themselves against Him, and prepares for the final invasion of the planet, when He appears on a white horse, leading the armies of heaven. Even so, Lord Jesus, come! Dear friends, please pray earnestly that these two great tasks may be completed very soon, so that all of us can look up and see His Sign in the sky, and be caught up with Him in the air! Amen!

# Day 7 – They Never Knew What Hit ‘Em!



“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. “ – Matthew 24:36-39

Today, we begin to examine another **very** touchy subject regarding the Rapture, that of **the conditions required to be a part of it**. Conditions??? I thought that every believer was automatically included in the Rapture, Pastor Ray. What do you mean, conditions?

In order to understand what is happening, we have to go back, once again, to Matthew Chapter 23 and the **Three Big Questions**. I’ve repeated them so many times in different E-Pistles that I am not going to do it again. But it is what **follows** the Three Big Questions that is of interest to us in this article. Starting in Matthew 24:4 and ending in Matthew 24:35, Jesus discusses the timeline and the sequence of events that will occur surrounding the **Destruction of Jerusalem**, the **Sign of His Coming** and the **End of the Age**. But in Matthew 24:36, Jesus shifts His focus toward several key issues. One of them, and the issue He addresses first, is the fact that when He returns, it will catch the world at large, and probably most of the church as well, **totally off guard and completely unprepared**. Let’s do a little exercise I call Content Analysis, and break these passages out into topics and sub-topics.

- I. **General Warnings** (Matthew 24:36-51) -- All deal with the Sign of His Coming
  - A. No one knows when I am coming back but the Father (Matthew 24:36)
  - B. My Return will be as unexpected as the flood was in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39)
  - C. Only 50% will be taken (Matthew 24:40-41)
  - D. You’d better be alert and on the job when I come back (Matthew 24:42-51)
- II. **Prophetic Timeline Parables and Conditions for Inclusion and Rewards** (Matthew 25:1-46)
  - A. Parable of the Five Wise and Five Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) – Deals with the Sign of His Coming
  - B. Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) – Deals with the End of the Age
  - C. Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46) – Deals with the End of the Age

When we finally reach Matthew Chapter 26, Jesus changes topics and begins to discuss His upcoming crucifixion. Quickly then, the storyline moves to the woman with the alabaster box and Judas’ agreement to betray Jesus. Now, normally when preachers preach sermons on any of these passages, they break them up into pieces and deal with them as if one parable has nothing to do with any of the other parables, and, God forbid, that **all** of the parables of Matthew 24 and 25 are directed **exclusively** toward answering **Big Question #2 and Big Question #3**. It is this absolute failure or inability to sit down and break the narrative into logic blocks which keeps most Christians and even many Bible scholars from seeing the obvious. The truth isn’t “out there” somewhere, it is staring you right in the face in these key passages!

Let’s look first at the **General Warnings**. I cannot imagine anyone misinterpreting verse 36. Except, perhaps, to argue about whether Jesus knew when He was coming back or not. But even though the phrase **nor the Son** appears only in the footnotes in Matthew, it is included in the parallel text found in Mark 13:32, with no footnotes to call the phrase into question. Between the two passages, there can be

no doubt. The angels don't know. Jesus Himself doesn't know. **And you and I don't know either! Only the Father knows.** I discussed this topic at great length in a previous article.

The **next** passage, however, creates a firestorm every time Pre-Tribulation folks reference it. The Pre-Tribulation camp uses the Days of Noah passage to try and argue that God is going to Rapture the church out of the way before anything bad (like the Tribulation) comes to hurt their delicate little pinkies. Unfortunately, **that's not what the passage says at all!** Again, dear friends, it's time for Content Analysis, generally known as **What Did He Say?** Let's deconstruct the passage by outlining Jesus' statements.

1. **When the Son of Man comes (Question #2), it will be just like it was in the Days of Noah.** (We've got a comparison going here. Pre-Tribbers won't argue with that point. It's **what is being compared** that is the point of contention. More on that later)
2. **It was business as usual in the Days of Noah. The same will be true when Christ returns.** (Agreed. Eating. Drinking. Marrying. Giving in Marriage. All regular, day-to-day stuff. Nothing exceptional)
3. **JUST AS THEY NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT THEM IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, SO THEY WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT THEM WHEN THE SON OF MAN RETURNS.** (Here's where the fur flies between the two camps. The Pre-Tribbers say that this means that just as Noah was protected in the Ark before destruction came, so the Church will be raptured before the Tribulation comes. Nice thought, but absolutely **not** what Jesus just said. Let's take a **good look in context** at what He did say.)

*"For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and **did not know** until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."* – Matthew 24:38-39

Now, did He **in any way** mention the protection of the Church in this passage? He didn't even mention the protection of Noah. Why? **Because that's not the subject of this analogy. The subject is THEY NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT 'EM!** Now, you don't have to believe me. Study the passage yourself. And ask yourself honestly if the Pre-Tribbers have once again taken a passage out of context, and put a spin on it that is simply **not there** in the original passage. In fact, as Jesus continues His discussion **on the same subject**, He launches into several other parables, all dealing with the same topic. To help nail this critical point down, let's take a look at those parables...

The next two verses continue the thought, but also lay down the **50% Rule** for the first time. Again, to Scripture!

*"Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left."* -- Matthew 24:40-41

The first question that we have to answer is **50% of what?** Verses 40 and 41 make it look like 50% of **everybody** is going. But let's look at the passage a little closer before we get too excited. Jesus says that two men will be in the field. Doing what? **Working.** He then says that two women will be grinding at the mill. Again, doing what? **Working.** Get the picture? **Doing the work of the Lord. Actively. Aggressively.**

Now we're going to play another little game called **Calculatus Eliminatus.** In other words, **to find out where something is, you find out where it isn't.** Basically, it's just the simple process of logical elimination. Let's start with the 50% of everybody theory. It is very unlikely that 50% of the world will be raptured. Why? Well, for starters, Christianity has never comprised more than 33% of the world's population, and only then since the 1900's. Even with the massive evangelism explosion that is taking place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> World, it is just barely keep pace with the equally massive explosion of the world's population. So the percentage of Christians in the world is not changing. What **is** changing, and rapidly, is the **composition** of the church. For over a thousand years, Christianity was almost exclusively an Indo-European product, limited to Europe and the places that had been colonized by Europeans, like North and South America, South Africa and Australia. But in all cases, many of the people of these lands were only **nominally** Christian. They called themselves Christians because they were **born and baptized** Christians, but had no real relationship with Christ. Not born again. Certainly not Spirit-filled. In no way,

shape or form resembling the New Testament Church of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. This condition persisted from the 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Reformation and subsequent historical events sparked a renewed interest in evangelism, and began to introduce the concepts of justification by faith, the new birth, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit back into the church, but only incrementally, and slowly but surely, in waves lasting between 100 and 150 years. That's as fast as God could move us forward. Each new concept restored to the body of Christ produced an extended period of violence and bloodshed. Many men and women of God gave their lives for concepts which we now deem automatic and assumed. Not so in the 15<sup>th</sup> century! But in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a drastic change began to happen, associated with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street in 1903-06. Fueled by Charles Parham's breakthrough in 1901 in Topeka, Kansas, the Azusa Street outpouring began to sweep all over the world. Unknown to most church historians, however, parallel outpourings were also occurring in South America, Eastern Europe and India at the very same time! God was determined to wake the church up and get her ready. Since that juncture, two major paradigm changes have been occurring in Christianity. The first is that **Christianity is no longer an Indo-European product**. In fact, the center of Christianity has already moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> World, with the bulk of the activity centered in South America, Africa and China. There, despite significant persecution, the church is growing like wildfire. And, connected to this phenomenon, and directly responsible for it, is the fact that **almost all new converts to Christianity globally are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in tongues**. This restores the original New Testament/Day of Pentecost model. The growth in this area is staggering. In 1901, when Agnes Ozman asked Charles Parham to lay hands on her so that she could receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there were absolutely **no known individuals** in the world who were baptized in the Holy Spirit. But only 100 years later, **27%** of all Christians globally are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Remember, we're not talking America here. The center of Christianity moved from Rome during the Reformation and traveled to Germany. From there, it moved to England, and from there to America, where it stayed for quite some time. But now, except for the start of the Final Great Awakening, it has moved again, this time to either Africa or China, based on whose statistics you use. America is now in the decline, just as England was when she turned her back on the Savior who had made her ruler of the world. England used to brag that the sun never set on the British Empire. The same was true for America. But in both cases, after embracing the Gospel and receiving the blessings of prosperity and authority, just as the Bible promises, both nations turned their backs on God. When that happened, God turned His back on them.

In addition, according to world statistics, Islam is also growing rapidly. And accurate figures are hard to come back. One set of figures I have says that Christianity is growing at 2½ times the rate of Islam. Another set of figures says just the opposite: that Islam is growing faster than Christianity. This study states that if present growth rates for the world population and the Muslim population continued at their current rates that in 180 years half the world would be Muslim, and that in 80 years Islam would pass Christianity as the largest religion in the world. That's a very scary thought, given Muslim intolerance for other faiths, but totally consistent with the events of the first Six Seals, particularly the global persecution of Christians during the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal or Tribulation.

So, 50% of the world raptured? Not hardly. Not unless a revival of epic proportions were to radically redefine the world's religious profile. Could that happen? Yes. Might it be the Final Great Awakening that I talk about constantly? Could be. Only time will tell. But for half of the world to be converted and filled with the Holy Spirit? I don't know. Let me get back to you on that one.

If the 50% doesn't refer to the world, then who, by process of elimination, must it apply to? You got it! It **must apply to the Church!** At this point, you should be stroking your chin and saying, "Hmmm...." There should be a small stream of worry passing through your mind. Because if only half of the Church is going to be raptured, then the other half must be the part that is left behind! Gosh! We're actually in agreement with many of the Pre-Tribbers on this! Witness the whole *Left Behind* series. You mean they're right, Pastor Ray? Right in that half the church will be left behind. Wrong, deadly wrong about **when** the event will occur.

Meanwhile, back at the two sets of twos...

In the very next verse, Jesus again warns His disciples to watch **because they do not know when He is coming back**. So we are still on the same topic that we were on when we were discussing Noah. **They**

**won't know what hit them. You had better keep your eyes open and be ready. Otherwise you won't know what hit you, and you will be left behind.** This message is repeated again and again through Chapters 24 and 25. And when viewed as a **single narrative on a single topic**, everything falls together perfectly. Only when you grab sections and passages and try to preach them and teach them out of context do things get weird and distorted. Remember, these passages **must** be viewed **in context** with one another and as a single response to the three-part question the disciples asked back in Matthew 23.

Now Jesus moves to two more linked parables **dealing with the same subject**. Now He uses the analogy of the Master of a house and his servants. Let's take a look at the first one:

*"But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." -- Matthew 24:43-44*

Originally, I was going to pass quickly over this passage. But the more I studied it, the more it began to speak to me. And I was troubled by what I heard. Understanding the symbols here is once again critical. Ask yourself this: **Who is the Master of the house?** I know of no legitimate answer other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And then ask yourself this: **Who is the thief?** Again, there is only one legitimate answer: the devil, satan, the adversary. Given those two answers, let's rephrase this passage with the actual persons inserted into the text:

***"But know this, that if I (Jesus), the Master of the house (my kingdom, the church) had known what hour satan, (the thief), was coming, I would have watched and not allowed my church to be broken into and damaged in such a terrible way."***

Wow. When you read it that way, it opens up a whole can of worms, doesn't it? And it is consistent with Jesus as the Son of Man. Sinless, but not yet perfect. And won't be perfect until He has passed through the suffering of his death and resurrection. We have already discussed this at great length. And since He was not perfect as the Son of Man, it was possible for Him to make mistakes and have to learn from them, just like the rest of us. When I began to understand this, so many Scriptures that never made sense began to line up for me. And John 14:12 became a real possibility, and not a theory. I don't have time to go into the implications of a sinless but not perfect Son of Man, but, God willing, this imperfect but working on sinless individual will write an article on it someday soon. There's just so much inside of me that I must tell you. And, as of the writing of this E-Pistle, I am 58 years old and am just coming out of a bout during which I suffered a heart attack and inoperable, malignant cancer in the span of just 30 days. I am so very aware of my own mortality. And yet there is so much that the Lord has shown me. I could write 24 hours a day if that were possible. And yet, every time I sit down to try and complete another E-Pistle, every interruption under the sun comes at me. At times I get very angry. But I must be patient, and diligent. Sometimes I just have to tell people that I am busy and will get back with them later. I don't want the **urgent** to crowd out the **important** in my life.

Back to the passage! Is Jesus really talking about **Himself** in this first part of the parable? Wow! If that's the case, it would explain the chaos that erupts at His arrest, and the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, and all of the problems that have afflicted the church, His body, since that time. He didn't know, as Son of Man, at what time the enemy, the devil, would break into His house and steal, kill and destroy, which is consistent with his nature. I just marvel at how the Word opens itself up to you when you meditate on it, and it is impossible, at least for me, to write about the Word of God without meditating on it deeply.

Having made the first analogy/comparison, Jesus then redirects the analogy back to the disciples. Listen to what He says next:

*"Therefore you also need to be ready, because you don't know when I am coming back"*

Same theme, right? Next, He talks about the End of the Age, when He will return to mete out both rewards and punishments. Again, to Scripture:



*"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." -- Matthew 24:45-50*

There is sooooo much here! First, the obvious. The faithful and wise servant (similar to the good and faithful servant) will be found busy at His Master's business when the Master comes back. The Master will then entrust the management of all His belongings to that servant, who has already been found faithful. On the other hand, if a servant says **that His Master is delayed** (He's already hinting at what is going to happen. Forget what I just said about you not making through all the cities of Israel, boys! The Holy Spirit has already convicted Me that I spoke rashly when I made those statements. I am already in damage control. Remember that word, guys. **Delayed.** I didn't know that satan was coming to trash the operation this bad. Now I know. The Holy Spirit has spoken to me, and I am correcting my previous statement.) and starts to beat up his fellow believers and live in an ungodly fashion, things aren't going to go well for that fellow when his Master returns. But it's **what will happen** that should strike terror into the hearts of backslidden believers. The Lord says that He will **cut that servant in two** (sure doesn't sound like eternal life to me!) **and put him with the hypocrites.** Hmmm... Where do the hypocrites end up at the End of the Age, at the Great White Throne Judgment? They sure don't end up in the New Jerusalem. Then what's the only other option? **The Lake of Fire!** To further emphasize and clarify what He is saying, Jesus adds that **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** That phrase in one form or another is used five times in the Gospels, four in Matthew (8:12, 22:13, 24:51 and 25:30) and once in Luke (13:28). I did a study on this phrase a long time ago, and every single time Jesus uses this phrase He is referring to **eternal judgment and punishment.** Guess it's a good idea to stay in a ready condition, keep your nose out of trouble, and understand the consequences. What if Christ came back right now, as you are reading this article? I would hope that you are a good, wise and faithful servant. But how many Christians, servants of the Master, do you know who **right now** are living lives of compromise and sin? What would happen to them? The answer is clear, **very** clear!

I know the Jesus repeats Himself a lot, but can you see the reason why? He doesn't want anyone to lose eternal life. Yet so many will. Simply because they wouldn't make themselves ready and **keep** themselves ready. What about you and I?? We need to **watch because we don't know the hour when our Lord will return.** And I pray that you and I, dear friend, will both be found as **good, wise and faithful servants.** Even so, Lord, come! Maranatha!



# Day 8 ~ Five Wise, Five Foolish



“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”

—Matthew 25:1-4

In our previous E-Pistle, we began to look at the **conditions required to be included in the Rapture**. As we began to deconstruct the Parables and statements that Jesus made, it soon became very obvious that **not everyone is going**. In fact, **not every Christian is going**. The most compelling and literally clear passage covering this topic is the very famous parable of the Five Wise and Five Foolish Virgins. This parable has been taught and preached in so many different directions that it makes my head spin. I have heard the most amazing, outlandish interpretations of this passage. Yet the first time I heard the **correct** interpretation of this parable, I became very angry, and rejected the sermon out of hand. I was mad for days afterwards. How dare that simpleton, backwoods preacher (and to this day, I can't remember who he was!) dare to tell me my Christianity might not be good enough to make the greatest sky lift in the history of the world! Why, I was born again when I was seven, bless God, and became a church member when I was thirteen. I even saw God when I was sixteen. I was called into the ministry shortly thereafter. And, after falling away for a period of time, returned to God when I was twenty-five, and was filled with the Holy Spirit when I was twenty-nine. Baby, if **anybody** was going, it was me! (If you're listening real close in the Spirit right about now, you can still hear the Charismatic arrogance just ringing from the steeples after that statement. Almost sounds like the Pharisee and the tax collector in the temple. Hmmm...) Yet, despite all those significant and important spiritual milestones in my life, I still **wasn't living right**. There was severe moral compromise in my life at that time. I was going through a period of about 10 years when a major portion of my walk was way out of sync with what the Bible teaches. Pastor Ray! You? Yup! All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Some of us **real** short! So when this country bumpkin preacher started preaching on Matthew 25, it hit a raw nerve inside of me. I knew, or at least suspected, that there was a whole lot more to the Gospel than I had been taught, either in my mainline background, or in my then-current Charismatic, cheap, easy grace environment. It kept tugging at me. It wouldn't let me go. Yet I continued to deny, avoid and evade the simple fact that I was not living up to the high calling of Christ Jesus. And this good ole boy nailed me to the wall.

Finally, after an unspecified period of uncontrollable rage against this poor fellow and his doctrines, I finally did the one thing I knew I should have done all along – **I read the passage for myself, and took it apart to see what it really said**. When I was done, I had a hat and some cooked crow to chew on. Danged if the old man wasn't right! Why do I tell you this story? 'Cause you're liable to get just as mad at me as I did at him. So, please forgive me in advance if I step on some toes while I try to tell the truth of the Word of God. Turn with me to Matthew Chapter 25.

*“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.”* -- Matthew 25:1-5

In a previous article, I mentioned that the three parables found in Matthew 25 are linked together as part of the answer Jesus gave to the **Three Big Questions**. And, of course, Jesus never told parables to **explain** truth, but rather to **hide** it from those who were only casual onlookers. That way, only those who really wanted to know would come to Him later and ask for the hidden, real meaning behind the nice story. Everyone else was just there for fishes, loaves and miracles. And, sadly, not even among the disciples did he find much of a willing band to learn and grow. Consistently, only three of the twelve, Peter, James and John, with a one time membership of Andrew, came to Him for explanations and answers. And yet, when Jesus told these most critical of all parables, **nobody** asked Him for further clarification. Why? Perhaps because the symbols He used in these parables were so well known and understood by almost all Jews that further explanation was simply not necessary. But for us Gentiles, ah, it's another matter! We don't come to the Bible with a solid knowledge of Jewish history. We have not had Torah read to us every Sabbath since we were born. We have not studied at the feet of the Rabbi to learn Hebrew. And so a vast percentage of the assumed levels of understanding and revelation that were automatically there for even the least informed Jew are totally absent for even the most knowledgeable Gentile. When we come to Scripture, our teacher must decode each and every line and explain the symbols involved. Otherwise, it's off to the races we go, creating interpretations willy-nilly that have nothing at all to do with what was actually said.

In addition, this particular parable is, like some others, a **prophecy** regarding future events. That isn't out of line at all, for many of the prophecies given to both the Major and Minor Prophets involve symbols, images and pictures. Revelation is **loaded** with symbols. That's why properly interpreting them is so critical. With that in mind, let's look at the symbols involved here.

**(1) The Kingdom of Heaven.** There's lots of argument about exactly is meant here. Some scholars argue that the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God are not the same thing. Some argue that they are. Some argue that it refers to the future, in the Millennial Reign of Christ. Some argue that it refers to right now. Here's my simple take on the matter: **The Kingdom of Heaven** refers to not only the ongoing process involved in forming the body of Christ, the Bride, but also the end result itself. It is not realistic to separate the **process** from the **result**. And, whenever the **Principles of the Kingdom** are applied in this temporal realm, it always produces **The Kingdom based on the Principles of the Kingdom of Heaven**. The phrase, "*Heaven on Earth*", is **exactly** what we are supposed to be producing while awaiting the final and complete manifestation of that kingdom globally and permanently. The New Testament is filled with examples and exhortations to do just what Jesus did, and to reasonably expect the same results that Jesus got. My favorite Scripture in all the Bible is John 14:12, where Jesus plainly teaches that those individuals who believe in Him **shall (not might or should) do the same works that He was doing, and even greater works than those**. I do **not** have time to go into that teaching, but, bottom line, **we should be generating the Kingdom of Heaven right here and right now**.

**(2) Ten Virgins.** Granted, the number ten is found frequently throughout Scriptures, but don't go crazy on that point here. It's just a practical number for the illustration, like five, two and one for the talents in our next parable. However, the word **Virgin** is a biggie, and worthy of some discussion. In our previous E-Pistle, we discussed the **50-50 Rule**, which states that only **half** of the group involved will be taken. And we also said that it couldn't possibly be the world, but had to be the church. In this parable, which further defines this principle and clarifies it, the keyword **Virgin** says it all. Why? Well, let's take a look at the use of the word, both in the Old and the New Testament. First of all, the word virgin appears in the Bible 71 times. And the first 22 times it is used, it is referring to a human, physical virgin. But in II Kings 19 the tide begins to turn, and the Lord Himself, for the first time, refers to **Israel** as a virgin:

*"This is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him: 'The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you, laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind your back!'" -- II Kings 19:21*

From that point on, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Amos all refer to Israel as a virgin, specifically as a virgin promised in marriage or betrothed to the Lord, and often as an adulterous, unfaithful virgin. All in all, God makes this reference 14 times. All through the Gospels, the term is used

mostly to describe a human woman, but Jesus uses it, obviously, in His analogy about the Kingdom of Heaven. Surprisingly, only one New Testament passage links the church itself to the word virgin, courtesy of the Apostle Paul:

*"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." -- II Corinthians 11:2*

But the pattern is still clear. In this case, the word **virgin** always applies, from a spiritual standpoint, to **a group of people who are supposed to be committed to a permanent relationship with God, and who are supposed to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to that relationship.**

A similar and compatible word that we can use here is that of **bride**. The parable, after all, is about a wedding that is supposed to take place. They are waiting for the bridegroom, who is delayed. And finally, in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, when the Bridegroom has finally returned, we get to see the appearance of the Bride herself:

*"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." – Revelation 21:2*

Having clearly defined the word **virgin**, we can now safely say that Jesus' references to these 10 virgins **have to refer to the church, which is the spiritual equivalent of Israel**. It can't refer to Israel itself, for Paul says that **all Israel shall be saved**. And Israel is **not** waiting for His **return**; they are still looking for His **first** coming. No, if we have 10 virgins who are waiting for a Bridegroom who has been delayed, then we must clearly be looking at the church. Sadly, **five** of them were **wise**, and **five** of them were **foolish**. Again, we have the **50-50 Rule**, restated with even greater clarity. **Two** in a field. **One** taken. **Two** grinding at the mill. **One** taken. And please note that I don't use the words **men** or **women**. Why? Because those two words used in Matthew 24:40-41 are **italicized words**, meaning that they are not in the original text, but were inserted by the translators in hopes of clarifying the translation. Granted, it would most likely be men in the field and women at the mill, but we can't say for sure. So, after all that smoke and thunder, what have we come up with so far?

**That half of the church, waiting for the Return of Christ, will NOT be ready when He comes, and will NOT be taken!**

Ouch! Well, if that's true, that what are the criteria for going versus not going? I sure don't want to be in the **NOT** going category! Now we have to move to our 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> symbols, which define what Jesus means by **wise** and **foolish**. In reading the passage, we find that the **wise** virgins brought two things with them, a **lamp** and an extra supply of **oil**. Conversely, we find that the **foolish** virgins also brought a **lamp**, but failed to bring along an extra supply of **oil**. Hmm... So the key to being **wise** versus being **foolish** centers around having **an extra supply of oil**. Now it's time to decode what Jesus meant by lamps and oil.

- (3) Lamps.** Surprisingly, this is a toughie. Remember, Scripture interprets Scripture. So all we have to do is perform a simple keyword search in our Bible database, and, *voila!* we have an answer! Actually, several answers. The word **lamp** in the Old Testament can and sometimes does refer to an **individual or descendant**. Frankly, I had forgotten about this one when I did my research. In II Samuel 21:17, I Kings 11:36, I Kings 15:4, II Kings 8:19 and II Chronicles 21:7, the word lamp is used to refer to David or to one of his descendants, so that David would always have a **lamp** in Jerusalem.

The most frequent usage of the word lamp means **life or witness**. Maybe **who you are and what you do** is a better way to say it. And there are a ton of times that it is used this way, including Job 18:6, Job 21:17, Psalm 18:28, Proverbs 13:9, Proverbs 20:20, Proverbs 20:27, Proverbs 24:20 and Isaiah 62:1. So, knowing Jesus' comprehensive knowledge of the Scriptures, we have to give consideration to this meaning.

But my own personal favorite, and I'm gonna stick with this one for the time being, is found in Psalm 119:105. It is one of the most famous quotes in the entire Bible, and we've even written songs about it. What does this Scripture say?

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*

Or, as Amy Grant sings it, *"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"*.

And there's one more thought we have to consider. Jesus gave a parable which appears in all three synoptic Gospels. In it He says that you don't light a **lamp** and then put it under a basket. Of course, He's referring to your **life or your witness**. This is consistent with many of the quotes in the Old Testament. Hmmm...

So at this point, we've got kind of a quandary. Did Jesus mean **the Word of God** or **your own personal life and witness** when He used the phrase **lamp**? Well, let's go back to the original text and look some more. All ten virgins took their lamps with them for the wedding. So, that might lean toward life or witness. But, then again, all of the church has the Word of God, so lamp as a symbol of the Scriptures isn't bad either. Truthfully, I don't see a major problem, no matter which way you lean on this one. If you have the Word of God hidden in your heart, then your life and your walk and your witness will be a lamp to men. So, let's look at it this way: **The Word of God is a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your path. As you meditate on it, it lights your way, and produces light within you, which produces a life and a witness worthy of the Lord. Once the light of the Word is in you, it should produce a light shining out from inside you.**

But notice that I used the word **should**. There are many, many Christians who **know** the Word, but are unable to **live** the Word. That's how my life was for the longest time. And, you know what? The Apostle Paul had the same problem! In Romans Chapters 6-8, he produces one of the greatest pieces of systematic theology ever written. In it, he bewails the terrible problem that has come upon him because of the incredible revelations he has received regarding the Gospel to the Gentiles. And he finds, that like a great many of us, he can know what the right thing to do is, but seems incapable of actually doing it. Here are his own words:

*"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."*

– Romans 7:14-25

Sounds like a pretty conflicted guy, huh? Wanting to do the right thing, yet somehow never doing it. His will at war with his flesh. Knowing what is right, yet not doing right. Pretty tormented, if you ask me. But hold on, Harry! We're not just talking about Paul here, folks! We're talking about a huge percentage of the body of Christ. Raised up right in church. Sat through all the **do** and **don't** sermons. **Knows** what is right. Wants to **do** what is right. Yet seem to lose out to sin and temptation a whole lot more often than they win. So, what's the deal here? How come all our churches have Bibles and pews and preachers and TV programs and yet the vast majority of Christians seem to lead defeated, miserable lives with no real victory in them. Aha! Now we are finally ready for the final clue in the puzzle! Now we are ready for the **oil!**

- (4) **Oil.** Determining what Jesus meant by oil is almost automatic. All through history, oil has been symbolic of the anointing and of the precious Holy Spirit. There are 207 references to oil in the Bible, and the overwhelming percentage of them refer to either the special oil for the sanctuary or a specific type of oil, the **anointing oil**. Here are just a few examples:

*"And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually." – Exodus 27:20*

*"And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons' garments with him."*  
-- Exodus 29:21

*"Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 'Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane, five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy. And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister to Me as priests. And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make any other like it, according to its composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people.'"*  
-- Exodus 30:22-30

*"Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah."  
-- I Samuel 16:13*

*"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over" -- Psalm 23:5*

*"You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." -- Hebrews 1:9*

*"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." -- James 5:14*

I could go on and on, but you get the point. There can be no doubt that the oil represents the **anointing**, the **presence of the Lord** and the **Holy Spirit**, all one in the same. Now, how does it apply to our parable? Let's take a look at the situation.

Remember that all 10 ladies remembered to take their lamps, **which already had some oil in them**. But only five of them remembered to take along a **separate container (vessel) with an extra supply of oil**. Now here's where common sense kicks in: when do bring along an extra container of **anything? When you think you might run out on the way!** Hopefully, most of you carry a spare tire in the trunk of your car. Not a dinky little fifty mile spare, but a real, full-bodied tire with full tread! Hopefully, you also carry a gas can with you, along with a variety of extra supplies that you might be in danger of running out of. If you saw the trunk of my '94 Town Car, you would be amazed. I have a full sized spare, an industrial strength tire jack (to heck with the little piece of junk they provide you with. You could get killed with a piece of tinfoil like that!), extra oil, transmission fluid, windshield wiper fluid, scraper, blankets, etc, etc. I have been caught too many times without what I needed when circumstances changed unexpectedly. In fact, I also carry my full tool kit, two ratchet sets and a four-way jack as well.

There is nothing more frustrating and embarrassing than running out of something when you're halfway to where you want to go. And yes, I have also run out of gas on the road when I was younger. I have learned. The **hard way**.

How does that apply from a spiritual standpoint to this parable? Here's how: When you are **born again**, you receive an **initial supply of oil** and a wonderful period of grace during which you are riding on the top of a Holy Ghost wave provided by the Lord Himself. It's often referred to as the **Honeymoon Period**. It applies to almost all new relationships, marriages, cars, tools, dresses; anything that is fresh and new. And everything is "**bullfrogs and butterflies**" for a while. But then the hard, cold realities of life begin to press in and the shine goes off of whatever it is. Jesus even told a parable about this kind of situation. Some people, it seems, never got the big picture. And there were those who started out just fine, but when things got a little tough, burned out and fell away. Another group got past that, but got entangled in all the things of the world. Only a precious few managed to overcome and avoid all the perils and pitfalls along the way and make it through.

It will take more than just the **initial supply of oil called the New Birth** to get you through what is coming on this earth. This is why it is so **mission-critical** to be **baptized in the Holy Spirit and remain filled with the Holy Spirit**. That is the **extra vessel** that is referred to by Jesus in this parable. As I look back over the last ten years, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I would have fallen away and denied Christ if not for the **precious Holy Spirit** providing me with an extra supply and boost to get me through almost dying twice in the last two years. And where we are going as a church in the coming decades isn't going to be much better.

Remember poor, conflicted Paul earlier in this article? Well, he got the victory! We didn't finish reading what he had written in Romans. And just as his Gospel to the Gentiles is the paradigm for salvation for us, so his own personal victory is the paradigm for our personal victory as well. Let him instruct us in how important being filled with and walking in the Holy Spirit really is:

*"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." – Romans 8:1-6*

Yes! Enough fuel to make it all the way. Enough oil to keep my lamp lit for however long it takes for Him to return. Enough anointing to carry me through whatever adversities I encounter. Enough to **carry me through till the wedding party starts**. We are not nearly done with this subject, but we are done for today! This is one of the longest E-Pistles I have written, and I don't want to burn you out today. If you are a glutton for punishment, just turn the page and keep on reading! For the rest of you, ask the Lord to give you **that extra vessel filled with oil that will get you through!**



# Day 9 – The Door Is Shut



“And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.” —Matthew 25:6-10

As we continue our discussion of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, we need to make quick reference to Day 8 to refresh your memory. In Day 8, we decoded the key symbols, including **why** five of the virgins were classified as **wise** and five as **foolish**. Simply put, the five foolish virgins didn’t bring any **additional oil**. We analyzed why the oil is representative of the **anointing of the Holy Spirit**. And we let Paul discuss at great length how critical it is to **walk in the Spirit**. Having said all of that, we now have to look at **what happened next** and the **historical prophecy** hidden in this parable.

At the beginning of the preparations for the event, all ten virgins looked to be the same. All clearly had lamps, and those lamps had oil in them **at that time**. Everything seemed to be in order. In fact, all ten virgins looked to be pretty well prepared, because weddings are typically held during the day. To the casual observer, it would have seemed that all ten girls were right on the money. But something went wrong, and the Bridegroom was delayed. And it was the **introduction of the unexpected** that separated the women into two groups. There is so much to say here that I hardly know which way to go. But the introduction of the unexpected is calling to me in the Spirit, and so we shall go in that direction.

It is at this point that I must change how we are looking at this passage. Up until now, we have simply been viewing The Parable of the Five Wise and Five Foolish Virgins as just that, a parable which teaches certain basic truths in some allegorical or hidden manner. And it is that. But it is so much more. It is also the most extensive prophecy ever given by Jesus, covering, in its fulfillment, about 2,000 years. Let me explain. There is, as with many passages in Scripture, at least one additional layer of meaning in this passage. This parable lays out, in clear historical detail, **exactly what would happen to the church after His ascension!** Jesus had already told a parable in Matthew 24:45-52 in which He had hinted that the Master of the house **might be delayed**. But it must have been clear to Him that He wasn’t getting through to the disciples, so He told a second parable using the same concept right behind it. He had to do this because in His human, Son of Man enthusiasm, He had made two comments earlier in His ministry about how **quickly** He was going to come back, on one occasion commenting that some of the disciples would still be alive when He returned, and on another stating that the disciples wouldn’t even be able to preach in all the cities of Judea before He returned. Since He was sinless, but not perfect, it was possible for Him to make mistakes and learn from them. In fact, Scripture specifically states that He grew in **wisdom** and stature and favor with God and man. There is so much about His humanity that we do not understand or appreciate. We see Him as some ethereal, supernatural figure walking on the water and healing thousands. Yet this same individual was tempted like us **in every respect**, yet without sinning! That means, dear friends, that Jesus had to have been tempted **financially**, He had to have been tempted **sexually**, He had to have been tempted regarding **power**, and regarding every other lust and passion which mortal man deals with on a daily basis. We somehow have this crazy notion that He was only tempted twice during His ministry, once at the beginning and once at the end. Get real, guys! Let me ask you a question: **How often are you tempted to sin, either in thought, word or deed?** No, just because we have recorded the two major crises of His ministry doesn’t mean He wasn’t tempted daily, just like you and I. In fact, to be tempted in **every** way, things had to come at Him **every** day.

Anyway, He was now in damage control, and that's primarily what this parable is all about. The Bridegroom would be unavoidably delayed. Out of His control. Yes, even **His!** The original plan would have to be scrapped. And there would be no way to alert the troops back on earth about it. All He could do was to warn them in an allegory that it was going to happen. And that the delay was going to be **massive**. Not just by a few years. Not a few decades. Not even a few hundred years. **Two thousand years of delay!** And during that enormous unscheduled delay, **all** the virgins would fall asleep, despite the warning. **But can you blame them???**

Now, let's look at the actual history involved. The church started out with a bang on the Day of Pentecost. Everyone was excited. There were signs, wonders and miracles. Significant numbers of individuals were baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Apostles gave their testimony with great power. Persecution was rampant, but the Gospel was unstoppable. Everyone expected the Bridegroom to be back **very soon**. There seemed to be no doubt that the Gospel would be preached to all nations within the lifetime of the Apostles, and that the church would be able to make disciples of all men very shortly. The amount of oil in the lamps of all ten women **seemed** to be totally adequate. But in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, things started to slow down a little. Suddenly, the Church was besieged by a whole army of cults and false prophets teaching false doctrine. Roman persecution increased dramatically. In AD 64, Nero burned part of Rome to the ground and blamed it on the Christians. Somewhere between AD 65 and AD 150, the spurious Gospel of Thomas, on which Dan Brown based his equally spurious DaVinci Code, was written. Other spurious false gospels like the Gospel of Mary Magdalene and the Secret Gospel of Mark were written. And insanity inside the church was almost equally rampant. In AD 189 Pope Victor I (funny, I don't remember anything about popes in the Bible, do you???) excommunicated the Eastern churches for having the audacity of continuing the observance of Easter on the Jewish Holiday of Purim, on Nisan 14. By AD 250, Origen was promoting the rumor that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Mary and a Roman soldier name Panthera. At the same time, Rome had dramatically stepped up persecution of Christians. By AD 283, Pope Eutychian, the 27<sup>th</sup> pope, decreed that only beans and grapes could be blessed at Mass. (Odd, I don't remember anything call Mass in the Bible, either. And what's this deal about beans and grapes?) By AD 311, persecution of Christians had ended, and Constantine had converted to Christianity. But with the cessation of persecution, the church came off its guard, and became more and more apostate. Gradually, the truly apostolic and prophetic disappeared from the church. As the church move further and further from the original doctrines of the New Testament Church, less and less power was available. Incrementally, Jewish Law, the very thing which Paul had struggled so mightily to prevent, began taking over the church. Where Peter himself had said that we were all priests and kings to the Lord, suddenly believers everywhere were being forced to submit to official priests, cardinals and popes, none of which had any real precedent in Scriptures, except in the Old Testament. More and more, the church began to resemble the practices of the Old Testament, and eventually justification by faith was completely forgotten, and a doctrine of justification by works, straight from Jewish Law, replaced it. The entire church fell victim to exactly what Paul had told the Galatians he feared:

*"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?— just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." -- Galatians 3:1-14*

And so, with the Bridegroom delayed because the Bride was **far** from ready, the ten virgins gradually fell into what can at best be described as sleep. Perhaps a coma would be closer to the truth. And when the Doctrine of Universal Salvation was adopted by the church during the Middle Ages (**everyone** is going to heaven!), there was no longer any need for evangelism. Without evangelism, the full number of the Gentiles could **never** come in, and unless the full number of the Gentiles came in, the times of the Gentiles could **never** be fulfilled. The damage that the thief had caused to the Master's house was immeasurable. The real question was: was it repairable? **Could the virgins be roused out of their coma so that the Bridegroom could return?** In the natural, it seemed like a hopeless task. Instead of moving **forward** from the Day of Pentecost to fulfill Ephesians 4:11-13 and come into the **fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ**, the church moved **backward**, becoming the **re-embodiment of the Jewish Law**. To help you understand the magnitude of the degeneration, let me share a true story with you.

Many years ago, I had a dear Jewish friend name Lenny Newman. He ran a jewelry store in Jasper, Indiana. He was also probably a closet Christian, but wouldn't admit it. He loved the Gospels and the teachings of Jesus, but hated Paul. I once told him that his problem with the Apostle was just the fact that two hard-headed Jews were arguing about Torah. He laughed and admitted it was probably true. He also taught Old Testament at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, and knew the entire Bible better than anyone there. One day, he took me aside, and said, "*Would you like to know a secret?*" Well, anytime a man as knowledgeable as Lenny Newman wanted to share something with me, I was all ears. "*Go ahead*", I said. "*Do you see those precious Catholic saints fingering the beads on their Rosary as they pray?*" he asked me. "*Yes, what does that mean?*" I replied. "*When a devout Jew prays*", Lenny went on, "*he fingers the knots in his Talit (prayer shawl), just like those little Catholic ladies finger the beads on their Rosary*". I sat there stunned. Lenny had hit the nail on the head. The Catholic Church (and originally the **entire** church) had allowed itself to degenerate into a shadow of its spiritual inheritance, and a poor copy of Jewish Law, something that God had already proven conclusively didn't work. That's why He replaced the **Law/Works** model with the **Faith/Grace** model.

And so the church slumbered on, wrapped up in a simulation of Jewish Law. There were popes and anti-popes. Popes who assassinated one another to ascend to the office. The fracturing of the church into two sections, one Eastern Orthodox and one Western Catholic. The introduction of the Rosary. The deification of Mary. Wide-spread graft and corruption. The Inquisition. The selling of indulgences. Further and further into the morass of moral compromise and further and further away from the Great Commission.

Then, in the spirit realm, a cry began to go out. "*The Bridegroom cometh!*" At first, it was faint, and hard to hear. Only a very few ears heard it at first. John Wycliffe, a Biblical scholar in AD 1380 at Oxford, heard it clearly and translated the Bible into English for the first time. Unless you understood Latin, no one could even read the Word of God. And, since Masses were held in Latin, it was impossible for faith to grow, for faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Again the cry went out, this time a little louder. And Martin Luther heard it loud and clear and posted his 95 Theses in 1517. William Tyndale would hear the voice at the same time and publish a translation of the New Testament direct from the original Greek instead of the widely corrupted Latin around AD 1530. His reward for bringing the virgins one step closer to being awake? Execution in 1536. Knox and Calvin would hear the voice, as it grew louder and louder. John Wesley would hear the voice so strongly that it would forever change his life, and the lives of untold thousands in England and America. Gradually, the virgins would start to stir and some of them would begin to wake up, sleep dropping from their eyes like the scales that fell from the eyes of the Apostle Paul when he first came to know the truth. Charles Finney would hear the voice loud and clear. Then Charles Parnham would have the voice literally shout in his ear in Topeka, Kansas in 1901, and his little Bethel Bible College would not disband until every one of them was filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in unknown tongues, recreating and reestablishing the Pentecostal foundation of the original church. William Seymour, a Black man from Cincinnati, Ohio, would move to Texas to sit under Parham's teaching, and would move to Los Angeles at Azusa Street, where, in 1903, the voice would no longer whisper, but begin to shout, "*The Bridegroom Cometh!*"

Each new time that the voice would be heard, there would be over a century of bloodshed and violence. But each new round of martyrs would only spur another group of men and women to be willing to die for their faith and for the restoration of the Word of God to the people of God. Has the process completed? Not yet. How can you be sure? **Because half of the virgins do not yet have an extra vessel of oil**

**to keep their lamps lit during the Tribulation and Great Tribulation that they will have to endure.** But the time is drawing near. In 1901, not one person in Christianity that we know of was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Now, only 100 years later, **27%** of all Christians globally are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Nearly 100% of all new converts globally are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. **When we reach 50%, half of the virgins will be awake and fully prepared.** And at current conversion rates, we will reach that point by 2050. As I write this article, I am 58 years of age and it is 2006. Based on current trends, I may very well be able to look up and see Christ pierce the Eastern Sky and call His People home. And I look forward to that event eagerly.

But the rest of this story is not so pleasant. Christ had repeatedly warned the church to stay in a condition of constant readiness. Had there been servants who had, convinced that their Master would not return, gotten drunk and beaten their fellow servants? Absolutely. And what is the outcome for them? You shouldn't have to ask. You already know. But what about today? With the return of Jesus Christ so frighteningly near, what are we to do? Let's look at what Jesus said would happen.

*"And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut."*

– Matthew 6:10

Even with the dramatic changes that are taking place in the body of Christ, a significant percentage of Christians **still** do not take seriously what Jesus has said. Some of us who have heard the cry are preparing ourselves. But there will come a time when **everyone** in the Body will know. The Mainliners, the Evangelicals, the Fundamentalists, the Pentecostals, everyone. And then, at the very moment just before He splits the Eastern sky, there will be a great many Christians who will make a last-moment effort to come into compliance with His clearly stated demands. All the church will finally trim the wicks on their lamps. They will hurriedly try to clean up their lives, to remove the sin and compromise to which they have become so easily beset with and accustomed to. And those who have never sought after the Spirit of the Almighty will rush to Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, eagerly and desperately seeking what they had so openly mocked for decades, the condition of being filled or saturated with the Spirit of the Living God. But it will be too late. They will rush to their friends and neighbors who begged them to come to church and be touched by God, and ask them to share what is inside of them with those around them. But there will **not be enough time.** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, Christ will come, the sound of the Trumpet will be heard, and suddenly and instantly half of the church, known as **the Bride**, will be swept away. While those virgins who had **not brought an extra supply of oil** rush to find religion, those who **already have enough oil will go through the open door to rejoice with the Bridegroom.** When the others return with a belated supply of religiosity, they will **find the door shut.** Listen now to the pitiful dialogue between those who were not ready and their Lord.

*"Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' " Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." -- Matthew 25:11-13*

Suddenly, churches all over the world will be full. But not with those who were the faithful attendees prior to that. Many of them, having eagerly sought the Lord all their lives, will be gone. But the entire **C & E** (Christmas & Easter) group will be there. Even the **FPO** (Funeral Purposes Only) group will be there. And they will all be banging on the door, now closed, hoping and praying that there will be one more final act of undeserved mercy, one last moment of grace. **But not this time.** Jesus had specifically said that Jerusalem would be trodden underfoot until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. And Paul had added that a hardening had come upon all Israel until the full number or quota of the Gentiles had come in. The Lord's attention will now be directed on **Israel**, so that all of them will be saved. And He will turn, one final time, standing at the doorstep of that **Door Open in Heaven** which John passed through almost 2,000 years ago, and He will look at all the people who never had time for Him up until that moment. And He will pause for just a moment, and shake His head sadly, with a tear forming at the corner of one of His divine eyes. And He will say to them, much to their horror and amazement, *"I am truly sorry. I don't know who you are".* And the door will close, never to open for them again.

As they stand there in stunned silence, they will be able to hear a clamor coming from behind them. A hideous, shrieking, moaning sound, as a bottomless pit is opened in the earth, and demons without number come pouring out. With the Holy Spirit no longer restraining the Man of Lawlessness in the Gentile world, there will no longer be a force protecting them. Gone will be the presence that they could have had if only they had asked for it. All that will be left is a creeping fear and terror of what lies ahead.

And what of those who played the fence? Those who experienced the Spirit of God as Saul in the Old Testament did, yet could go out and sin and walk in the flesh and carnality no sooner than the service let out? As one precious saint of God said to me years ago, *"If dey's got mo' Holy Ghost than flesh, dey's goin' up! If dey's got mo' flesh than Holy Ghost, dey's stayin' down!"*

I can't make it any simpler or plainer for you. **If you have more of the Spirit of God in you than attachment to the flesh, to this world, then you will rise, unfettered and unbound, like an eagle, soaring upward. But if the rock of this world and the love of the things that are in it that is attached to you is heavier than the buoyancy of the Spirit of God within you, then you are going to stay right where you are!** Friend, which will it be? Will you be **bound to the ground?** Or will you **fly to the sky?**



# Day 10 – Good and Faithful Servant



“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ –Matthew 25:20-21

In Day 7, we took a look at Matthew 25 in general, and what parables applied to what situations. And we discovered that they fell into two categories, **General Warnings** (Matthew 24:36-51) and **Prophetic Timeline Parables and Conditions for Inclusion** (Matthew 25:1-46). We just finished what I consider to be one of the most powerful E-Pistle series I have ever written, cumulating in **Day 9 – The Door Is Shut**. At this point, we have actually walked **through** the Rapture, without actually describing the event itself. Don’t worry; we’ll come back to this crucial event in just a few days. But it is appropriate for us to complete our study of what Jesus said in Matthew 24 and 25, answering the **Three Big Questions**.

Now, we move into the area of **rewards and punishments**. Jesus has moved the conversation beyond the point of His return, and now is discussing events which will occur in Revelation Chapter 20, in what Bible scholars call **The Great White Throne Judgment**. At this time, Jesus settles up with both faithful and unfaithful followers, as well as dealing with those who never had a chance to hear about Him. I encourage you to keep reading these E-Pistles. When we get to **Day 11 – You Did It to Me**, you will find out the clearly outlined plan God has to deal both fairly and justly with those who never had a chance to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But now on to rewards and punishments, and to the **Parable of the Talents**. Again, as with many of the other parables, the theme centers around a Master and His servants. Jesus sets the stage by saying that this man **went on a long journey and placed the resources of the estate into the hands of three of his servants...**

*“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.”*

– Matthew 25:14-19

Just as with the previous two parables, Jesus is still doing damage control and trying to get the disciples to understand that there was going to be no quick fix and no early return. He tells them that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man **traveling to a far country**. This is as obvious as it can get. They had no jets, no superhighways, no monorail trains to whisk someone to a place and then back again. As a basis of comparison, it is Christmas time as I write this article, and Bev and I are making plans to drive from Cincinnati to Louisville to visit with her daughter’s family and our two granddaughters. The drive will be almost totally on 4 to 6 lane interstates and will take about two hours. We will probably run at about 70 MPH most of the way. (Pastor Ray! Do you exceed the speed limit! Yeah, we kinda do. But not like I used to! I used to be a trooper’s delight! Now, in my more mature days, I am becoming more law

abiding. Just pray for us.) We'll have a good time, eat too much, and sit around and watch TV. We'll celebrate the holiday, remember **Whose Birthday It Is**, and then head back after a few days. But what if we had been born only 100 years ago? I clearly remember a travel story with my family when I was younger. It was the summer of 1965. I was coming up on my senior year in high school. Dad was pastoring three little country churches in Eastern Pennsylvania. He had attended summer school at seminary for several summers, and wanted to visit a friend he had made who lived in Southern Illinois, in an area referred to as Little Egypt. Dad was able to get several weeks off from work, and we loaded up the big green Chevy Impala with the huge tail fins and set out across the country. At first, the travel was fairly pleasant. We spend a full day on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, one of the first superhighways built in America. Other than the awful food at the Howard Johnson restaurants that dotted the turnpike in an exclusive chokehold on gas and nutrition, it was a fairly enjoyable journey. Dad even let me drive for a while, much to the dismay of my mother. But when we hit West Virginia, things turned very bad very quickly. It seems that US 40, built before I-70 became the principle east-west corridor, bobbed and weaved through the mountainous regions of that area. And all east-west traffic had to squeeze through a two-lane highway that passed torturously through Wheeling. On that blazing hot summer day, we spent **eight hours** in the same spot! It was so bad that mom ate twice and went to the bathroom three times without the car moving one tiny inch!

Once we passed through the nightmare of Wheeling and hit Ohio, things got much better, and US 40 turned into four lanes again. The rest of the trip was a lot of fun. Now, bear in mind that this journey occurred about 40 years ago. In the last 40 years, a country-wide network of superhighways was built. In the 1970's we constructed the primary east-west and north-south passages. We live in the Cincinnati area, and it takes two hours to go to Indianapolis via I-74, 2 hours to go to Louisville via I-71, 1½ hours to go to Lexington via I-75 and about two hours or so to go to Columbus north on I-71. From Louisville, Evansville is only 1½ hours away via I-64. And so on and so on...

Once the major east/west and north/south corridors had been established, the next step was to establish the beltways around each of the major cities. In Cincinnati, we have I-275. In Louisville, they have two of them, I-264 and I-265. What's the point of all this information? Try to imagine 50 years ago, when none of these highways existed. Then go back another 50 years, and imagine a time when you traveled from one place to another by foot, on horse, or, for the very rich, in a horseless carriage, with a top speed of maybe 15 miles an hour. So when Jesus says that this Master of the house, this businessman, was going **to a far country**, we are talking about a **very long period of time**. As a basis of comparison, remember that the Magi took **two years** to travel from Babylon to Jerusalem, and probably another **three years** to return home by another route, not the quickest for sure. With that in mind, we can see that this **entrusting of resources to associates** was going to be a long-term project. No internet trading here! Again, Jesus is warning his supporters that **this is going to take a long time. A very long time.**

He then discusses two issues: **what is being entrusted into their hands** and **what kind of return they are expected to yield when He returns**. Again, this sermon has been preached a million different ways, but let's stay on course. The first principle that Jesus laid down was that **you would be entrusted with resources in proportion to your ability to manage them**. And **he expected a consistent return on his investment, regardless of the amount entrusted to you**. Let's look at the passage in question:

*"Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'" – Matthew 25:16-23*



Some things become obvious immediately. First of all, the expected return on the Master's investment is **100%**, a doubling of His investment. And the first two servants are up to the job. The first servant is entrusted with 5 talents, a huge sum of money. One talent is equal to 3,000 shekels, generally in silver. That would mean he was given 15,000 shekels of silver, and a shekel of silver, for argument sake, would weigh about 10 grams. One ounce would equal about 28 grams. And silver in today's market, is worth about \$5.00 an ounce, but it was much, much more valuable in ancient times. So, just for fun, let's arbitrarily say that silver in Jesus' day cost about \$50 an ounce. Now, let's do some advanced math:

5 talents x 3,000 shekels per talent = 15,000 shekels  
15,000 shekels x 10 grams per shekel = 150,000 grams  
150,000 grams / 28 grams per ounce = 5,357 ounces  
5,357 ounces x \$50 per ounce = **\$267,850.00!!!** (Give or take a bekah or two)

So, when all the smoke clears, the first servant was probably entrusted with a minimum of about **one quarter of a million dollars!** I don't know about you, but I could sure use that kind of money right about now. It would solve a lot of problems, and probably create a few new ones of their own at the same time. But here's the catch: **the money didn't belong to him, it belonged to His Master!** I hate to do this, but this is a perfect opening for a little speech on tithing, something almost no Christians in America do. The latest statistics that I heard went something like this: At best only about **2%** of American Christians tithe. The average Christian in America gives about **5% of his net income.** We spend more money on **dog food** that we do on foreign missions. Do we truly believe that the tithe belongs to the Lord? Apparently not. And do we believe that our money is not our own, but really belongs to our Master, who put us here and entrusted us with abilities and opportunities and resources to produce wealth? Many Christians argue that in the New Testament, the tithe was done away, because it is part of the law. Yup! **Now you are free to give 15, 20 or even 25% as the Lord blesses you!** No longer are you bound to that terrible restriction of giving **only 10%** to the Lord. Having a heart attack yet? No? Shucks, we're just getting started. Your reaction that that last set of statements just told you where your heart is regarding your money. And if God has your pocketbook, He also has you. If He doesn't have total control of your money, He doesn't have total control of you, and He can't entrust you with much. I love it when people starting quoting the prosperity Scriptures, while at the same time blindly and stubbornly resisting and rejecting the whole concept of planting a seed to meet your need. Hey, folks, if God can't trust you with **ten lousy percent of your income, what makes you think He is going to rain down miraculous finances on your selfish little head?** Too blunt? Sorry! If the shoe fits...

Now, put yourself in the Master's shoes for just a second. **How much does He trust this first servant?** Obviously, a ton! He is going on a **long** trip, will be gone for a **long** time, and has just dumped about a quarter of a million dollars into the servant's lap. And he doesn't just expect to get his money back in a can when he gets back. He fully and justifiably expects that this highly trusted, highly competent, highly motivated servant will give him an excellent return on his investment. And guess what? His expectations and his confidence are greatly rewarded, for when he returns, the servant has skillfully taken the quarter of a million dollars and **generated another quarter of a million dollars, increasing his master's investment to a half a million dollars!** Well done, indeed! If you were the Master, I think you would be a happy camper upon your return and your inspection of the servant's financial prospectus.

Now we turn to servant number two. His abilities and trustworthiness must not be quite up to the standard of the first servant, but he still gets about **\$100,000** in silver to work with. And, guess what? Even though he is given **less to work with**, he generates the **exact same percentage of return on the Master's investment, 100%**. Now, the \$100,000 investment has turned into \$200,000. **And the Master is just as pleased with the second servant as he was the first servant.** Why? **Because the percentage of return was the same.** That means that the second servant generated enough ingenuity and effort to duplicate **by proportion** the effort of the first servant. Frankly, the Master might have been somewhat surprised by the second servant. He expected big things from the first servant, and gave him resources concomitant with those expectations. But the second servant showed that he was up to the job just as much as the first servant. Sounds to me like a man who could be promoted to higher things. Most people in business are subject to the **Peter Principle.** The Peter Principle states that individuals rise in a corporate or organizational structure through multiple levels at which they are capable of performing effectively, until they reach a level at which they are no longer able or willing to perform competently. There they stop and stagnate. And so, most of the corporate world is filled with individuals

who are incompetent in their current job. And that most of the **top positions in management are occupied by individuals like this**. Based on my experience with business (I had my own company for 12 years, did \$250,000 in sales in our best year, and had as many as nine people working for me at one time), I would honestly say that it is probably true, particularly regarding government employees. And, please, don't get me started. I have stories that would make you both laugh and cry regarding the exceedingly great level of stupidity found in most governmental offices, federal, state and local. But this was a very wise Master. His two top producers were up to the challenge, and did a bang-up job. No wonder he said, "*Well done, good and faithful servant!*"

But now comes the surprise for both highly dedicated and capable men. Listen carefully to what the Master says next. "*You have been faithful over a few things*". Whaaaaat??? Boss, are you telling me that you consider \$250,000 and \$100,000 **small change???** And the answer, much to their amazement, is yes. These amounts, which seem astronomical to most of us, were merely **small test samples to see what these two men would do**. The Master has not, at least up until this point in time, entrusted even a small portion of his resources into their hands. This was a test. This was **only a test**. If this had been the real thing...

Now the Master gets down to brass tacks. Listen carefully... "*Enter into the joy of your Lord.*" What does that mean, boss? It means just this: **I am about to entrust you with everything I own. You have cried out to me for an opportunity to change the world. I gave you the opportunity to change yourself. I placed something small into your hands to see if you could handle it. And you did. And I am proud. VERY proud. And, as of today, I am entrusting a global ministry into your hands, because I now know for sure that I can trust you with it. From now on, I am making you a full partner in the business. Enter into the joy of your Lord. I no longer call you a servant. I call you a son. You now have joint ownership of the business with me. And whatever profit I reap, you reap. Whatever blessings I enjoy as a result of your efforts, you now enjoy as well. You see, dear servant and now, dear son, I entrusted this amount of money to you, so that I could give the return on the investment and the principle as well into your hands as your possession**. Oh, now, stop crying. No, I know you didn't know that this was my plan. I wanted it to be a secret. Are you happy? Good. Now stop blubbering and get back to work. We have a world to win for Christ, child!

And then the Master turns to the third servant. Here we clearly have an underachiever. The first servant was given \$250,000. The second servant was given \$100,000. But the third servant was given only \$50,000. Still, that's not chump change. What would you do if someone entrusted \$50,000 into your hands? Could you keep your hands to yourself? How much temptation would there be? Recently, we were literally given \$50,000 for another ministry located in India. Of the \$50,000, \$40,000 was to go directly to them for the building of a new orphanage. And \$10,000 was to be retained by us, for uses by our own ministry. We had never been given that kind of money for anything. But \$40,000 dutifully went straight into a wire transfer headed for India. Hint. The less time the money spends in your hands, the less likely you are to be tempted to misappropriate it. My son works as the Head Teller for a bank branch. He just got the position as the result of his predecessor mishandling some bogus checks which got by her. It cost her the job. My son had a similar scam tried on him the following day, but caught the fraud and refused to cash the bogus checks. He got the job. Now, unfortunately, I need to make a confession. We still had the \$10,000, which was ours to use as we saw fit. But even so, the first fruits still belonged to the Lord. We weren't obligated to tithe on the \$40,000, since that money was not ours. But we were obligated to tithe on the \$10,000. And I made a terrible mistake. Let him who has ears, let him hear. **When God puts any sum of money into your hands, particularly a fairly large one, make sure that the first check you write is ALWAYS the tithe check!** I kept thinking in my mind, "*I'll take care of the tithe in a couple of days. We've got plenty of cushion*". Boy, was I ever wrong! Before I knew it, the money was gone, and **God had not received His full 10%!** We did get some of the money allocated, but I am a firm believer in the full ten percent, and have so many miracle stories because of it that you wouldn't believe it. Let me give you just a **few** examples. In the last year, we have been **given** the following things: (1) A \$1,600 riding lawn mower, in good condition. (2) A \$3,000 bedroom suite, in good condition. (3) A \$4,300 computer video editing system, only one year old. There's a lot more, but I won't go into it all. When you give to the poor, you lend to the Lord, and **He** will repay you. When I realized that I had tanked it on this significant amount, I was deeply troubled. I couldn't make up the difference, but I pleaded with the Lord to give me another chance. I reminded Him

of how many times I had been faithful with the tithe in the past, and how consistent I had been. And, sure enough, another significant amount was supernaturally placed into our hands, this time within minutes of the request. Needless to say, that money burned a hole out of my pocket and into a wire transfer to India. And it took every penny I had to pay for the wire transfer. And I made darn sure that the transfer fee **didn't** come out of the base amount. I covered it myself. And considered it an honor and a privilege to do so. Because I want God to find me **faithful**. And **good**. See how the two have to run hand in hand?

But now back to the third servant. This guy was a real piece of work. Imagine taking **\$50,000 and burying in the backyard in a trunk?** That's what the third servant did. And listen to his lame excuse when queried by the boss:

*"Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'"* – Matthew 25:24-25

So the Boss is a hard man to work for, huh? Then how come your two co-workers are doing such a great job? How come they are both on the bonus program and have been promoted to partners? As far as that stuff about reaping where he hasn't sown and gathering where he hasn't scattered seed, doesn't he have the right to look for an **opportunity for profit anywhere it appears? Maybe that's why he's the Boss, and you're the employee!**

What was the real heart of the problem, then? Was the problem with the Boss? Nope! Maybe the problem was with the two co-workers. Nah. They could have cared less. They were busy doing their job. So what was the issue? **Fear**. Our one-talent hero admitted so himself. He said he was afraid. Afraid of what? Of failing. Maybe of even trying. I know someone who has recently developed a totally irrational fear of riding in a car with someone else, or driving to places they have never been before. They have driven all over the Midwest, both by themselves and with others, and are well over 50. What on earth is wrong? It's hard to say. But fear will paralyze you, cripple you and steal your victory, your soul and even your very life. And this loser was **afraid**. So, instead of even trying, he hid \$50,000 in the ground, content in the knowledge that at least his boss would get his principle back when he returned. But that wasn't what the Boss was after. He was after **profit, a return on his investment**.

*"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents'"* – Matthew 25:26-28

Ouch! Probably not what servant number three expected to hear. And hear carefully what the Master says about this servant. He is **wicked (evil) and lazy**. Not just inefficient or incompetent. **Wicked. Just the opposite of the good and faithful servant**. Now, if this were just a story about money, it would be disturbing enough. But it's not. It's a story about **eternal reward and punishment at the end of the age**. And here's something for the cheap and easy grace folks to chew on for a while. Jesus Himself considers the **misuse of Divine resources and the failure to aggressively apply them as not just slothful and lazy, but wicked, a sin against Heaven and against Him**. It is, after all, His money. The very breath you breathe comes from Him. How are you using it? Are you **good and faithful** or **wicked and lazy**?

Now, the Master does something startling. He takes the \$50,000 away from the third servant and gives it to the servant **who already had \$250,000!** When I have taught on this parable, I've had people ask me, "Why didn't he give the money to the second servant? The first servant already had plenty of money." But they are missing the point. We live in an equalitarian society that is so obsessed with leveling the playing field that we want everyone to be equal, regardless of ability, intelligence or diligence. But that's not how the Kingdom of Heaven is. It, just like the business world, rewards **outstanding performance** and punishes **poor performance**. I'll guarantee you that no successful football coach determines his starters on a random basis. As I write, some time has passed, so that it is the week between Christmas and New Year's Eve. There are multiple college football games on every single night. And I love it! But none of those teams are there because they gave a poor performance. All of them are

in bowl games because they excelled during the regular season. And the players on those teams who are starting are doing so because they excelled during practice and games over and above their peers. Only the very best of them will eventually go on to play at a pro level. And the same process will be duplicated again, with only the best of the best individuals and teams eventually playing in the Super Bowl. The reason the Master gave the \$50,000 to servant number one is because he was the **best performer**, and he could expect the **best return on his investment** from him. It is, after all, all about productivity, and gaining the **greatest return on the initial investment**.

Even if Mr. Lazy didn't have the diligence and intelligence to do business for his Boss, he could have at least deposited the money in a bank, so that it could draw interest until the Boss returned. But he didn't even do that. He did **nothing**. Do I have to draw the analogy out any clearer for you? Take a good, hard look at your life, you who call yourselves Christians and servants of the Master. Exactly what are you doing with your lives regarding the Kingdom? **How are you utilizing or investing what you have been given?** Because we aren't just talking about **losing eternal reward** here, we are talking about **gaining eternal punishment**. Hear now what the Master says:

*"For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* -- Matthew 25:29-30

The one who has will be given more. Why? Because he will produce more. The one who has nothing will have what little he has taken away. Why? Because he won't produce anything. That's bad enough. **Now it gets worse. In addition to losing everything, the servant will also lose eternal life.** How do I know that? Because every single time that Jesus uses the phrases **outer darkness** or **weeping and gnashing of teeth**, He is referring to **eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire**. Four times in Matthew and one time in Luke, Jesus makes a statement like this. And the context in every instance clearly implies torment and agony forever.

Now that the prophetic parable is over, and all has been said and done, it becomes painfully obvious that this is not just some nice little 15 minute sermonette about using your God-given talents wisely for the Lord. See how we have systematically watered down the Word of God, and stripped the Scriptures of all their power and authority? Your wise use of **temporal resources** has direct impact on your **eternal reward**. And foolish misuse of those same resources can and will produce **eternal punishment**. I don't want you living in fear because you're not the brightest bulb in the kitchen, but even a servant with no brains, diligence or skill can still **invest** his or her time, money and effort into serving the Lord. That way, at least you have placed the money **with the bankers**, so that it can still draw interest, and grow **by reason of use**.

One final parable remains on Jesus' To-Do List, the Parable of the **Sheep and the Goats**. And in it is contained the **key to salvation for everyone who has ever lived who has never had the chance to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ**. Surprised? Then stay tuned for tomorrow, when we talk about **Day 11 – You Did It to Me**. Until then, work wisely for the Lord, who **richly rewards them that diligently seek Him!**

# Day 11 – You Did It Unto Me



<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?’ <sup>38</sup> When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?’ <sup>39</sup> Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’

– Matthew 25:37-40

Ever since the dawn of Christianity, there has been a theological question that has puzzled scholars and caused a great deal of controversy within the body of Christ. It has to do with **what happens to those who have never had a chance to hear the Gospel and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.** Hyper-arrogant Evangelicals are quick to either condemn everyone else to Hell or to simply bail out and use some “*Good and Just God*” argument, when in fact they have no clue how to answer the question. If only they knew that the answer to the question is found, firmly and clearly in not one, not two, but **three** separate but interlinked Scriptures, all in the New Testament. Now, the answer that comes from these Scriptures is **not** the standard Evangelical answer. In fact, if you don’t understand God and His Ways, some of you will find what He says offensive, and reject it because it does not fit neatly into your little cookie-cutter theology. But our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is far greater and far bigger than our puny minds can comprehend. Frankly, we have this bizarre concept in America that true Christianity is somehow tied to capitalism and free enterprise and hot dogs and baseball and Chevrolet. Unfortunately, the nature of global Christianity has changed. We are no longer predominantly an Indo-European, Anglo-Saxon product seeking to convert the dark skinned heathen of the world. I say it as someone who has a Welsh-German background, born and raised in White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Republican country, living on the side of a mountain. And our hated adversaries in high school football were the evil, terrible Italian Catholic Democrats who lived in a valley. And all of our boys dated their girls, and vice versa. And it drove our parents nuts. I had never even seen a Black man until I was 12 years old. I remember turning, and looking in amazement at this man, and asking my dad what was wrong with him. Seriously! In college, my outlook was radically expanded. And I do mean **radical**. All my friends were Hippies and Black radicals. I ended up with shoulder-length hair and a full beard. I was the only white boy in the middle of Evansville’s only race riot. I had a friend named Willie Thomas IV, or, as he put it, W.T. the IV. When the riot broke out, Willie grabbed my shoulders and said, “*Brother, I got to get to my peoples!*” I looked at him and said, “*Willie, do you see what color this skin is? They’ll kill me!*” So a negotiated settlement was reached. I drove our ‘66 Green Mustang right down to the corner of Lincoln and Governor, the center of the Black district, with Willie hanging out of the passenger window, hollering, “*Don’t throw nothin’, brothers! He’s one of us!*” From that point on, my horizons continued to be radically stretched. For many years, I ministered extensively in the Black Christian community, and I loved it. And now, working with Ruth and Raj in India, I have been radically stretched again. When I see a picture of children with stern expressions on their faces and their arms crossed, I now know that this is a sign of great respect for elders. And I have learned that be called **Father** by Ruth, Raj and the children is as great an honor as any man could receive. No, dear friends. America is no longer the heart of Christianity. Almost all growth in Christianity is centered around Africa, South America and China, with India and the Middle East just waiting to explode. Right now TBN gets **10,000 emails a day** from the Middle East, largely from Muslim women who are secretly watching them over the internet, and who are sick and tired of a culture which relegates them to a second place status. This is the **Time of the Bride**, when God

begins to prepare her for His Second Coming and their upcoming wedding. This Bride of Christ does not have white skin. Nor does she have black skin. Interestingly enough, if you take the passage found in Revelation 7:9, which speaks of a vast multitude from **every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue**, and combine the colors of the skin from every nation under the sun, you would find that resulting color would be a **reddish brown**, in all probability the same exact color of **Adam**, formed as Jesus Himself knelt by the bank of the Super River that flowed from the Garden in Eden, and shaped a **man in His own image** out of the reddish brown soil at His feet.

Suffice it to say, God's intentions and designs extend far beyond our narrow, parochial viewpoints. He is concerned with **all** mankind, not just those of us who are fortunate enough to dwell on the North American continent. He has a plan, and has **always** had a plan in place to provide a way to Eternal Life for **everyone who seeks after Him, Christian or not!** I do not speak personal opinion in this matter. No, dear friend, when I speak to you of eternal things, I speak **only from the Word of God.** To understand the plan, we must go to the very last parable in Matthew Chapter 25. Remember that almost all of Matthew 24 and all of Matthew 25 are designed to be a series of answers to the **Three Big Questions** posed by Peter, James, John and Andrew to Jesus as He sat on the Mount of Olives after the confrontation with the Pharisees. Also remember that the parables of Matthew 25 represent **Prophetic Timelines and Conditions for Inclusion and Reward.** This final parable, the parable of **the Sheep and the Goats**, deals with rewards and punishments and eternal salvation and damnation. There are no issues more important than these. We get so wrapped up in our temporal, temporary needs that we constantly lose sight of eternity. As we get older, and our mortality and eventual death begin to loom up in front of us, most of us have the good common sense to begin to think about eternal issues. And, frankly, this life that we lead, of 70 or 80 years if we have the strength, is just a drop in the ocean compared to eternity. How long is eternity? **Forever.** Yet most people lead their lives as if nothing were at stake. It isn't just the young and foolish. More and more people live as if **this life were all the life they were ever going to have.** Yet the evidence is overwhelming and irrefutable: **something exists beyond this mortal plane. And the end of this life is not the end of existence, but rather the beginning of either life eternal or death eternal.** To understand what Jesus is saying, let's look directly at His Words:

<sup>31</sup> *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.* <sup>32</sup> *All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.* <sup>33</sup> *And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.* <sup>34</sup> *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'* <sup>37</sup> *Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? <sup>39</sup> Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'* <sup>40</sup> *And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'* -- Matthew 25:31-40

Let's deconstruct what Jesus just said, one item at a time. First of all, this event which He is talking about occurs **at or after His Second Coming.** There can be no doubt about that. The event will center around the point where He is **seated on His Throne, on the Throne of His father David.** At the point where this event will take place, **all the nations of the world will be gathered to Him.** Now, most preachers jump right past these absolutely critical links in the time line and begin preaching on how we, the church, will receive our rewards or punishments. **And they completely miss the point of what Jesus is saying.** Again, let's take a close look at the details. Remember what looking at the details did to our understanding of the Parable of the Talents? The same will apply here. Also remember that **Scripture interprets Scripture.** So, if this Scripture is relevant to our understanding, particularly for End-Times events, there must be **other Scriptures** which refer to the same event. Are there? You betcha! In fact, counting this passage, there are **three** passages. Where are the others? Let's look first at Paul's letter to the church at Rome:

<sup>12</sup> *For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law* <sup>13</sup> *(for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the*

*doers of the law will be justified; <sup>14</sup> for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) <sup>16</sup> in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.*" -- Romans 2:12-16

Once again Brother Paul has given us an astounding key, and for almost 2,000 years, we have consistently ignored what he said. Follow his brilliant logic carefully. To help you, we will break it out into numbered statements.

1. **If you sin, and you do not have** (are aware of, have not received) **the law** (i.e. the Law of Moses, O.T. Covenant), **you will perish (be eternally damned) without the law.**
2. **If you sin, and you do have the law** (received, aware of), **you still perish.**
3. **It is not people who hear the law who are justified in God's sight** (in right standing, for salvation).
4. **It is people who do what the law says who are justified in God's sight.**
5. **THEREFORE...It doesn't really matter for eternal purposes whether you have the law or not. What matters is that you obey the commandments of God from your heart.**
6. **As a matter of example, when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature, from their conscience, what the law requires, it clearly shows that the law of God is actually written in their hearts.** This applies to **every individual who has ever lived who never had a chance to hear the Gospel or be exposed to the Law of Moses. A huge percentage of the people who have lived on this earth down through history never had the law like the Jews did.** These people are referred to by the Jews as the **nations, the Gentiles, the *goyyim*.**
7. **These people will be judged by God in regard to how they obeyed the mandates of God which He put into their hearts and their consciences.**

I hope you're following this so far. Paul has just dropped a bombshell into our laps. He has taken concepts like Justification by Faith, and Jesus' statement that if you love Him you will **obey His commandments**, and made it **RETROACTIVE** and **UNIVERSAL for all mankind!** This is **huge!** It means that the American Indian who lived on the Great Plains in 300 BC will be resurrected and judged, not on some legalistic standard, or if they prayed a little two-minute prayer or not, but based on **how well they obeyed the commandments of God which He placed in their individual consciences.** I know at this point, some of you are jumping out of windows and running screaming for the Exits. And you are asking yourself, "*What does this do to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?*" **Nothing. Absolutely nothing at all. The Gospel still stands as universal for all mankind.** But if that is the case, then how do we reconcile what Paul just said with what we have been taught for generations about how Jesus is the only way, and that we must save the poor heathen via missionaries lest they fall into the yawning jaws of Hell? Just sit tight. All of it **will make sense. I promise you.** It also means that the peasant living in China, or the native Indian living in the Andes, or the Eskimo in the Arctic Circle, all will be judged, **not by whether they prayed a little two-minute prayer, but by how they responded to their own conscience.** Now, don't argue this away. Don't ignore it. It is the foundation for the absolute, immutable fairness and righteousness of God toward all mankind, regardless of **whether they have the law or not.** But Paul is not done with his discussion, so let's pick up with point #8:

8. **When Gentiles, who don't have the law, do by nature, what the law requires, THEY ARE A LAW UNTO THEMSELVES.**
9. **They carry inside of themselves a mechanism which will be used to judge them in the form of a supernatural video tape replay on the final Day of Judgment.**
10. **Since the work of the law (what God wants them to do) is written in their hearts (their conscience), they already know what God wants them to do.**
11. **This is why such concepts as morality, integrity, justice, mercy, faith and love are universal to all humanity, even if they have never heard the Gospel.**
12. **On the Day of Judgment, God will simply replay the events recorded in their conscience, and their conscience will either accuse (find them guilty) or excuse (find them innocent).**
13. **This is, by the way, how God will judge the secrets of men's hearts. ALL men's hearts. EVEN YOURS!**

This phenomenal secret or mystery was one of the many things which God showed Paul on that incredible day when He received the Gospel to the Gentiles. In fact, according to II Corinthians, so much revelation was downloaded into Paul while he was on Mt. Sinai in Arabia (he says he went to Arabia immediately after his conversion. What is in Arabia? Mt. Sinai!) that he was given a messenger of Satan, a thorn in his flesh, to torment him to keep him from being exalted because of what he had been shown. And then, having received this mind-boggling revelation, he was told that he could not share it with anyone until further notice. Then, gradually, bit by bit, as this new Gospel became accepted, he was able to unroll one mystery after another. I count at least seven times where Paul shares with his readers something which, up until that time, had been totally unknown. An entire book could be written on the subject. Let's call it, for sake of argument, **The Seven Mysteries**. Then, God willing, I'll write one entitled **The Seven Thunders**. Ah, dear friend, don't get me started.

The next logical question is, given that this is true, **when will this event take place?** The answer is that it will happen **on the Day when God judges the secrets of men's hearts**. OK. When will **that** happen?

To answer that question, we must move to our third witness on this subject, found in Revelation, Chapter 20. In Chapter 20, we have the wrap-up of the great conflagration and battle surrounding Jerusalem, the establishment of Jesus as reigning and ruling on the throne of His father David for 1,000 years, the eventual release of Satan from the Abyss, the **Second Battle of Armageddon** (Two! Yup! Two!), the casting of Satan into the Lake of Fire and then, finally, **The Great White Throne or Bema Seat Judgment**.

*<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."*

– Revelation 20:11-15

Before we analyze this Scripture, it is necessary to step backwards in order to establish a **timeline** for all these events. We don't have time in this article to list all the supporting Bible verses, but I will include key Scripture links. We pick up at the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal of Revelation for clarity's sake.

1. The 6<sup>th</sup> Seal begins (Revelation 6:12)
2. Global earthquake (Revelation 6:12)
3. Global blackout (Revelation 6:12)
4. Meteorite shower (Revelation 6:13)
5. Atmospheric blow off and second global earthquake, sufficient to relocate Tectonic Plates (Revelation 6:14)
6. Announcement that the Wrath of God is about to begin (Revelation 6:17)
7. Sealing of 144,000 male virgin Jews (Revelation 7:3-8)
8. Rapture of Bride portion of the Church (Revelation 7:9-14)
9. Half hour of silence in Heaven / 20 year pause in destruction on earth (Revelation 8:1)
10. 7<sup>th</sup> Seal – The Wrath of God (Revelation 8-18)

Notice that the Rapture of the Bride occurs at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, just before the Wrath of God, the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, begins. Also note, based on what we have discussed, that only half of the church is taken in the Rapture. What will happen to this remaining half has yet to be discussed. It is not a pretty thing, but some will endure and die for their faith, and a few, perhaps, will actually survive. Also notice that during the Rapture there is no **mention of either rewards or punishments**, merely a **removal of those who were ready**. Yet Paul says that we **all** must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. That will occur later, at the **Great White Throne Judgment**. Now we pick up the timeline again.

11. Invasion from Heaven by Christ and the Armies of Heaven (Revelation 19:1-19)



12. Capture of the Beast and the False Prophet and their being cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20)
13. Destruction/death of the entire human army arrayed against Christ (Revelation 19:21)
14. Satan bound and cast into the Abyss for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3)
15. Raptured believers and those who did not receive the Mark of the Beast assigned positions of judgment (Revelation 20:4-5)
16. Christ rules and reigns for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:6)
17. Satan released from Abyss/Prison (Revelation 20:7)
18. Surviving humanity deceived again / 2<sup>nd</sup> Armageddon (Revelation 20:8-9)
19. Satan cast into Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10)
20. Destruction of existing Heavens and the Earth (II Peter 3:10)
21. **Great White Throne / Bema Seat Judgment** (Revelation 20:11-15)
22. Creation of new Heavens and new Earth (Revelation 21:1-8)

The reason I have included this timeline of end-time events is because there is so much confusion, even among so-called Full Gospel believers, about **what** is going to happen, and **when** it will happen. And, believe me, friend, it **does matter!** Notice that a great many negative things will happen **before** the Rapture of the Bride. Also notice that a great many additional negative things will happen before the Great White Throne Judgment. Clearly, this is going to be a difficult journey for everyone.

Now, a clearer picture begins to emerge. We have the first six Seals of Revelation followed by the removal of half of the Church in the Rapture. A staggering number of people die during the cataclysmic events of that time. After the removal of the Bride, the Wrath of God erupts against the remainder of sinful, rebellious humanity. An even more staggering number of people perish during this 7<sup>th</sup> Seal. Satan gathers a massive army against Jerusalem. This army is destroyed. By the time we reach the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ, there are very few individuals left alive. Jesus had prophesied this very thing in Matthew 24:22. During that 1,000 year period, conventional humanity rebuilds and repopulates the earth, under the judgeship, direction and tutelage of the Raptured Bride and the Martyred Saints. At the end of the 1,000 years, satan is released and deceives the nations (Gentiles) of the earth **again** (Duh!). Again there is a massive army. Again there is a massive destruction. And then comes the time of the judgment.

During this Scripture journey, we have traveled far away from Matthew 25. But it is time to return to the Parable/Prophecy to see if it agrees with Romans 2 and Revelation 20.

<sup>31</sup> *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.* <sup>32</sup> *All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.* – Matthew 25:31

Let's see. Hmm... When the Son of Man comes **in His glory**. Well, that's not the Rapture. That's Revelation 19, with Jesus as the Word of God on the White Horse. So that part's OK. And all the holy angels with Him. Also OK. **He will sit on the throne of His glory**. That will be true all through the 1,000 years. **All the nations will be gathered before Him**. All righty, then! We have a link-up! There is only one place and time when **all the nations will be gathered before Christ**. And that's the **Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20, when God will judge the secrets of men's hearts, as Paul's Gospel declares in Romans 2**. And notice, once again, **who is primarily being judged here. The nations. The Gentiles. The goyim. Those who did not have the law, but who had the law written in their hearts**. Now comes the critical part. **How will they be judged? What will the basis for judgment be?**

<sup>33</sup> *And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.* <sup>34</sup> *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: '35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; '36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'* <sup>37</sup> *Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? '38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? '39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? '40 And*

*the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'* -- Matthew 25:33-40

Who is this conversation being directed to? **The righteous.** What kind of righteous? **The righteous of the nations. Not the church.** Let me say that again. **Not the church. The world. The nations. The Gentiles.** Lest you think that I am beating you on the head unnecessarily on this point, please remember that for most of you, 100% of the times that you have heard this parable preached, your pastor invariably **connected this to the church, not the Gentile nations.** This passage does, incidentally, also refer to the church, but in a different manner. It's primary concern, and **it plainly says so, is the Gentile nations, and how Christ will deal with them.** And how will He deal with them? **Based on their actions. Their works. How they responded to that law written in their hearts. A playback of everything they have ever done, either in submission to or rejection of that Divine mandate hidden deep within their subconscious mind.** Is there anything else we should know about what they have done? Yes. Jesus qualifies their actions by saying **inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me.** Hmm... Now what exactly did He mean by that? Again, your pastor has probably preached it as how one Christian deals with another. But, again, we're not talking about the church being judged for the basis of salvation and eternal life here. We're talking about the nations. So, we ask one simple question: **Who are the brethren (brothers and sisters) of Christ?** Wow! Suddenly the passage becomes crystal clear. Whenever applicable, it says clearly and incontrovertibly that **the Gentile nations will be judged based on their treatment of the body of Christ.** We, after all, are His brethren. Not the world. He is the **Firstborn among many brethren.** So, should a devout Muslim follow all the dictates of the Koran, and kneel 5 times a day in prayer, **yet persecute and kill members of the body of Christ,** he is doomed to eternal judgment. Sorry about that! I know it's not gentle. But this judgment isn't **gentle.** It's for the **Gentiles.** Then what about those who never saw a Christian in their lives, and never had a chance to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Same principle. How they dealt with those around them. A law unto themselves.

There are those misguided pastors who preach, arrogantly and ignorantly, that this Great White Throne Judgment is a judgment that sends everyone to Hell. They are dead wrong on two counts. First of all, at this point **no one is being sent to Hell. Death and Hades (Hell) are themselves cast into the Lake of Fire. Something worse than Hell has arrived.** Second of all, Jesus clearly says that there will be a **separation of those judged into two groups. One that is entering into eternal reward. One that is entering into eternal punishment.** Revelation also says that the Book of Life is opened at this point in time. And that anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire. But that clearly implies that there were those whose names **were** found written in the Book of Life. This is totally consistent with Matthew 25, and totally consistent with Romans 2.

And speaking of punishment, Matthew 25 deals with that as well. Just as the **sheep** (a positive designation) have been gathered to the **right** hand side of the Lord, so the **goats** (a negative designation) are gathered on the **left** hand side.

<sup>41</sup> *Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup> Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'*

Matthew 25:41-46

Now, this is one of the few portions of Scripture that I take personal offense at (I hope you know I'm kidding!). It just so happens that I am a left-hander, and I have always been a little frustrated that the bad guys end up on the **left** hand side. We lefties have never gotten an even break, though. The word for right-handed in Latin is **dexter.** The word for left-handed is **sinister.** Really makes you feel wanted, doesn't it? It was so bad that when I was in kindergarten, my evil teacher, Mrs. Klugston, would hover over me when we had writing practice, and literally snatch the pencil out of my **left** hand and put it in my **right** hand. I would simply glare at her, and calmly put the pencil back where it belonged. After half a

year of constant bickering, we finally reached a negotiated settlement. I would give her perfect penmanship. She would leave me alone.

All kidding aside, though, there are some key issues that we have to look at in this final part of the parable. Jesus has just taught us something very interesting about **the Lake of Fire**. It seems that **humanity was never supposed to go there. It was originally constructed solely for the devil and his fallen angels.** There's one really interesting passage in Isaiah 5:14 that says that Sheol had to be enlarged in order to accommodate the humans that were being added into it. Neither **Hell**, designed to be a **temporary holding cell** for the devil and his angels until they could be brought to trial, nor the **Lake of Fire**, designed for the **permanent incarceration** of the same, were originally designed to **accommodate humans**. It was only after mankind fell in the garden that there had to be changes made to the construction blueprints.

One final note: Part of humanity will go into **everlasting punishment**. What an incredible tragedy. Pain and agony; unspeakable, eternal. It is beyond our comprehension. During my battle with cancer, I went through what I now refer to as **My Year in Hell**. The chemotherapy which was given to me did unspeakable damage to the nerve endings in my hands and feet. And those nerve endings would dutifully and inaccurately report to my brain that my hands and feet were experiencing extreme pain. And my brain was dumb enough to believe them. The pain would be constant in my hands and feet, but at night, something horrible would happen. The pain would begin to creep up my hands into my forearms. Then it would move into my biceps, then my shoulders and chest. And then, the most awful thing would happen. It would move into my face. All over my face. It was like being stung constantly by thousands of angry bees. At the same time, the pain would begin to move up from my feet into my calves and thighs. It felt as if I were dying. The pain was so severe that I would be unable to sit, stand or lay in one place. I would begin to pace back and forth across the house, weeping and screaming in unendurable agony, begging God to end my life. My precious wife would have to trail behind me like a caboose on a train, laying hands on me and praying in the Spirit at the same time. Eventually, the pain would subside a little, and I would fall asleep about 3:00 in the morning in a fetal position, upside down in the bed, clutching onto my wife like a security blanket. Even at my best, I was only marginally coherent because of the constant pain. From the time that I was midway through *Episode One – The Revelation of Jesus Christ* till now, when I am getting close to wrapping up this next book, I have come a long way. But I have to take three separate nerve pain medications. Slowly but surely, my body is healing, but, having experienced what I did, I know that I could not have endured the pain I did if I knew that it would be **forever**. Suicide would probably have been the end result if there had been no relief. Can a Christian commit suicide and still go to Heaven? That is another subject for another day. But what if **you were already dead, and experiencing this kind of pain? What if you had entered into eternal judgment? What if there were no way for the pain to ever end? How long would your sanity endure?** I cannot stress strongly enough to you who have unsaved friends and relatives that you pray and fast and go to them and at least **present the plan of salvation to them**. That way, if they still go into the Lake of Fire, at least you will not have **their blood on your hands**. And the righteous, Jew, Christian and Gentile will all go into **eternal life together**. And all men and women of good conscience and character who sought after God as best their circumstances could warrant will walk hand in hand in the Kingdom of God, forever and ever.

When all the smoke has cleared, has God been faithful? Yes. Has He been just? Yes. Have those who never had a chance to hear the Good News been given some good news of their own? Yes. The Gentiles were judged under the terms of the **first** contract that God established with mankind, a covenant of **works and law**. And, under that covenant/contract, **some went in and some were left out**. Some of the Gentiles all over the world, through all history, now get to participate, not in the Bride, but in the New Heavens and the New Earth, with the New Jerusalem ruling over everything. They gain eternal life, and the same eternal privilege of praising and worshipping their newfound Lord and Savior. The one that **they never knew, but knew in their hearts just had to be there**.

That leaves us, however, with several uncomfortable questions. The first is this: **If all of this is true, then of what use is the Gospel of Jesus Christ?** The second is this: **Is there then also a judgment of the church, and, if so, when does it happen?** And that, dear friends, is the topic of our very next E-Pistle, *Day 12 – The First Shall Be Last*. Stay tuned until then, and remain faithful, for His Name is Faithful and True, and He is coming, riding on a White Horse, to **Judge the Nations**.



# Day 12 – The First Shall Be Last



<sup>8</sup> “So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.’<sup>9</sup> And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup> But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. <sup>11</sup> And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, <sup>12</sup> saying, ‘These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.’ <sup>13</sup> But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ <sup>14</sup> Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. <sup>15</sup> Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’ <sup>16</sup> So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.” – Matthew 20:8-16

In our previous *E-Pistle, Day 11 – You Did It Unto Me*, we examined the remarkable mechanism that God has created for the eventual resurrection and salvation of those Gentiles who led righteous lives, yet never had the privilege of hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We also looked carefully at the criteria for inclusion/exclusion and punishment/reward, as outlined in **the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats** in Matthew 25. But we had to leave that remarkable study with some loose ends unresolved. Today we will attempt to begin to resolve those complex issues and start to bring closure to all the teaching which Jesus gave in Matthew 24 and 25 regarding the **Three Big Questions**. Our issues centered around how the disturbing events of that parable apply to the church, if in fact they do, and where the Gospel of Jesus Christ fits into God’s grand scheme of things if Gentiles can be saved apart from it. Let’s look first at how the Gospel itself fits into this picture.

In order to explain this matter, we must go once again to **yet another parable**, the parable of **the Workers in the Vineyard**, found in Matthew Chapter 20. And again, **an incredible truth and revelation is hidden therein** that no one seems to be able to see. I know that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation (II Peter 1:20-21), and I have enormous respect for that boundary. Almost 100% of all false doctrine arises when individuals think that they know more than God, and launch out in strange and bizarre interpretations which often fly directly in the face of the obvious meaning of the Scripture. Yet I cannot count the number of times, as I have read, meditated and prayed over the Word of God, that it has opened itself up to me as the living, breathing entity which Hebrews 4:12 says it is, and it has revealed deep, wondrous and hidden things to me **time and time again** (Jeremiah 33:3). And I don’t mean to be a renegade or iconoclast, throwing rocks of Scripture through the stained glass windows of conventional and popular doctrine, but when I compare what the Word of God **actually says** with what respected theologians **say it says**, I almost always find myself at odds with them, simply because they **take the Word of God and twist and distort it to suit their fancy, without respect or fear of the terrible warnings in Scripture about adding to or subtracting from the Word** (Revelation 22:18-19). And so it is again, with this particular passage. I know what has been taught down through the years, but when I read the Word for myself, I find something far deeper and richer than the scholars say is there, looking intently back up at me, like the living thing that it says it is. Here, then, is the parable:

" <sup>1</sup> For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup> And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, <sup>4</sup> and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. <sup>5</sup> Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. <sup>6</sup> And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' <sup>7</sup> They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'" -- Matthew 20:1-7

If you're not a farmer, and have never had to bring a crop in during the fall of the year, it may be a little difficult for you to understand the principle that undergirds this parable. I've had many farmers as friends in the past, and there are two times during the year when speed is of the essence: first in the **planting** of the crop, and second in the **reaping** of the crop. Why so? **Because there is always a brief window of opportunity when the weather conditions are just right to put out or take in the crop.** In the Spring, the ground is too wet at first to put the seed in the ground. Too much moisture, and the seed will actually rot in the ground. Too little moisture, and the seed will never germinate and sprout properly. So the farmer has to wait patiently until the conditions are **just right**, or as close as they are going to get, and then quickly plant. And different crops have to be planted at different times, because different seeds require different levels of moisture to germinate properly. The same is true at harvest time. In the late summer, there is normally a period of dryness, usually during August and September, which causes the grain, be it wheat, corn, soybeans or the like, to come to a point of ripeness, and to a point where the grain has dried sufficiently on the stalk to enable it to be stored safely. Too much moisture in the grain, particularly corn, can cause spontaneous combustion later on in the silo, and cause the entire crop to burn up where it is stored. This also happens with hay, and it is not unknown for bales of hay, harvested too soon, to later burst into flame in the barn and burn themselves and the entire barn to the ground. It turns out that the reason for this is that certain micro-organisms in the grain need moisture in order to stay alive and multiply. If given that moisture, they give off heat as a byproduct, and hence the fires. Needless to say, when it is time to harvest, my farmer friends hop on the combine and work from sunrise to sunset and often beyond, nonstop until the crop is in. If the farmer waits too long to bring the crop in, the fall rains of October and November come, and the crop can actually rot in the field while still on the stalk. Since a farmer's livelihood depends on his crop, once it is time to harvest, he needs to pour every resource he has into the project **until the job is done.**

So it was with the farmer in this parable. He had a crop to get in, and he had to do it in a hurry. **To tarry in harvesting the crop would result in a certain loss of part of or all of the crop.** Since our Biblical friend didn't have the luxury of tractors and combines, he had to harvest the crop **by hand.** And since it was impossible for him to **personally** harvest the entire crop by hand, he had to hire workers, **as many and as quickly as possible.**

And so he went out **early in the morning**, probably about 6:00 AM, just as the sun was rising, at the beginning of the Jewish day. And he hired as many temporary laborers as he could in the city courtyard, for it was the custom of the day for those without standing jobs to gather in the city gates, just like temp workers gather in the early morning today at the various temp agencies across our country. They work a day, and get paid a day. They work when they want to or need to. Some may work a temp job because they are currently laid off and need the money. Economics haven't changed much in the last 2,000 years. Our farmer friend agreed with these workers that he would pay them a **denarius, or one day's wages** for their efforts. Having hired as many men as were available at 6:00, he showed up **three hours later**, at the **3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, or 9:00 AM.** By this time, another group of workers, not quite as quick to rise in the morning, had gathered in the city gate, looking for employment. He hired all of them that he could, agreeing to pay them an **unspecified but fair wage for their efforts.** He showed up again at 12:00 and did the same thing, then again at 3:00. Finally, in desperation, he showed up **one final time at 5:00 PM, just one hour before the then standard Jewish work day of 12 hours ended.** Wow! And we complain when we have to work eight hours in an air-conditioned building with a comfortable chair and a desk! Just like during pioneer days, our ancestors worked from sunup to sundown, and then continued to work after supper in the house on tasks that they could do sitting down. Yet their health was generally far superior to our own. Our sedentary lifestyle is slowly but surely killing us, and making us weak and sick in the process. But I digress...

Finally, the work of the day was over, and it was time to pay all of the temp laborers their wages. And it was here that things got interesting. Remember that the landowner had agreed to pay a denarius to those workers that he had hired at 6:00 in the morning, and had only agreed to pay a fair and representative wage to all the other temps that had been hired as the day progressed. But apparently the harvest must have gone very well, and the owner was feeling generous. **Very generous.** Let's examine what he did:

*"<sup>8</sup> So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.'<sup>9</sup> And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius.<sup>10</sup> But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius.<sup>11</sup> And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner,<sup>12</sup> saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'<sup>13</sup> But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?'<sup>14</sup> Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.<sup>15</sup> Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'<sup>16</sup> So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen." -- Matthew 20:8-16*

As the landowner hands out the day's wages, he does something very odd. **He pays the individuals that he hired last, first.** Now, this is more than a bit odd. You would think that he would do it in just the **opposite** way. Pay the guys who have worked the **longest and the hardest first.** For whatever reasons, he does it in a seemingly backwards manner. Once we dig into this strange action and understand what Jesus is saying **prophetically, across the timeline of history,** this bizarre action will make **perfect** sense, but not until then. Not only does the landowner pay the workers **backwards,** he gives the workers hired at 5:00 PM **a full day's wages!** I have no doubt that these fellows were shocked but happy! They had received **12 times** what their labor was worth! Man, I'll bet that they began planning to pull this same deal the next day! And so it went, down the line, each group of workers receiving a **full day's wages for their labor, no matter how many hours they worked.** Everybody was happy with the deal until they got to the fellows who had been hired at 6:00 that morning. After watching everybody else get goodies they hadn't expected, they expected something special themselves, and were shocked and angry when the landowner gave them the **exact same amount as everybody else, one day's wages!** And so they groused about what they thought was a bad deal. But the landowner brought them up short. He reminded them that at 6:00 that morning, they had been more than glad to receive a **full day's wages for a full day's work.** They had made a deal, and they needed to stick with it. And if they had a problem with him being generous to the other workers, well, tough luck! After all, it was **his** money, not **theirs!**

To further compound the total confusion surrounding this parable, Jesus then added two very strange statements:

- (1) The last will be first, and the first will be last.
- (2) Many are called, but few are chosen.

At this point, Jesus abruptly changes the subject to His upcoming death and resurrection, and never bothers to explain exactly what He meant by the parable. Most of the time, when He gave a teaching on the Kingdom of God in parable form, He waited until some of the disciples came to Him requesting an explanation before He would launch into what each of the symbols and events stood for. This time, for some reason, no one came forward. I am very sure that it wasn't because they understood exactly what He had said. Perhaps because He was so preoccupied with what was about to happen, He didn't even wait for questions, but moved to the next topic. Down through the centuries, many Bible scholars have attempted to make sense of this parable, but, without fail, seem to have fallen short. Now, this is going to sound arrogant and cocky, so please forgive me. Of all the times I have heard this parable preached or taught on, **none** of the expositors have got it right, or even come close. And, to be very honest, up until just a few years ago, it was one of those passages that stumped me totally. I could find no reasonable, rational explanation of what Jesus meant by it. Then, one day, as I was working between Matthew and Revelation, and comparing the two covenants, Old and New, it suddenly hit me like a ton of bricks. The light went on up in the attic, and all the symbols in the parable fell into prophetic line. I was astonished! And so I share it now with you, because it relates directly to **the judgment, punishment and reward of all believers.** Here goes:

Remember that this parable is guided by two principles, **the last will be first and the first will be last** and **many are called, but few are chosen**. And, in the story line, that's exactly what happens. Those who came to **labor** in the field **first** became the **last** to be **rewarded**. Those who came to labor in the field **last** became the **first** to be rewarded. Now, why is this important? What is Jesus trying to tell us? To understand that, we must turn to another incident in the Bible (Scripture interpreting Scripture), and an analogy that Jesus used that is highly relevant. Turn in your Bibles to John Chapter 4. In that chapter, Jesus is traveling through Samaria, and stops near Sychar, at the very famous Jacob's Well. There, He meets a woman of dubious character and engages her in a conversation that starts with water as it's subject but ends up talking about eternal life. Deeply moved by a series of Words of Knowledge which Jesus gives her regarding the somewhat sordid details of her previous marriages, this woman declares Jesus to be a prophet. Jesus informs her that He is actually much more than that – He is the long-awaited Messiah. The woman goes quickly into town, and tells the men (notice, not the women!) that she has met a Man who has told her **everything that she has ever done**. And, to satisfy their curiosity, the men of the town come out to meet Jesus and the disciples. Doubtless many of those men were concerned that Jesus knew that they, along with her many husbands, had all had sexual relations with the woman, and they were afraid that He would spill the beans about their indiscretions. While the disciples are unsuccessfully trying to get Jesus to eat something, He sees all these men walking **through the fields from Sychar toward Jacob's Well**. It is at this point that we pick up the narrative:

" <sup>31</sup> *In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.'* <sup>32</sup> *But He said to them, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.'* <sup>33</sup> *Therefore the disciples said to one another, 'Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?'* <sup>34</sup> *Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.'* <sup>35</sup> *Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!* <sup>36</sup> *And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.* <sup>37</sup> *For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'* <sup>38</sup> *I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.'"*

– John 4:31-38

Given this event, which happened long before the events of Matthew 20, this parable now begins to make some sense. Who is the landowner? Obviously, **Jesus!** It is He who owns the field, which is the **world**, and the harvest which is in the field, which are **the souls of men to be saved**. The temporary laborers are **the disciples and all other believers who would follow after them, harvesting souls DOWN THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF TIME, THROUGH ALL HISTORY**. Starting to get the picture now? Making sense? Some of those workers, **the Jews**, were hired **first**, at the beginning of the work day, at 6:00 in the morning. But because the harvest of souls was so great, and the need so desperate, the owner of the field had to go back out, **in regular intervals, hiring other workers to help bring in the crop, because the job was too great for those who had been hired initially**. And so, down through history, more and more individuals would be hired for the job at hand, first Father Abraham, then Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Isaiah, and all the others who have worked for the Kingdom down through the ages. And, **despite the time at which they were hired, they all received the same base wage, ETERNAL LIFE!** This is why the owner of the field did not and **could not** pay them a higher wage than any of the other workers. There is nothing more valuable than to live in His glory for all eternity. You can't get a better deal than that! In fact, the task got easier as the day went on! What did Jesus say to His disciples? **I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored. Others have done all the work. You get to harvest it, without having to expend the effort to till, plant and weed the field.** And, not surprisingly, **the workers who were hired first, the Jews, were astounded and angry when the owner of the field showed favor those Gentiles, those 5:00 hirelings, who did not deserve the payment of a full day's wages for their meager effort!** And, technically, they're right! The Jews, however incompletely or incompetently, have nonetheless busted their chops for God for almost 6,000 years. And then, for we Gentiles to come along **only** 2,000 years ago and have the temerity to try and pick up where they left off? Why, **how dare they!** Don't they know that they have to be circumcised and obey Kosher Law and never travel more than 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a mile on the Sabbath and...and....and....

But the blunt and simple truth here is that the owner is not primarily concerned about the workers, except as a means to **bring in the harvest**. He doesn't care **how** He does it. He only cares **that** He does it! If



He can hire only the descendants of Abraham and get the job done, fine! But if we need additional workers, and the crop still remains to be brought in, and **the window for harvesting the crop is rapidly closing...** Then, by all means, **hire as many men as you need! Pay them whatever wage they desire! We MUST get the crop in!** And we cannot have a party at the banqueting table until all the work is done. Work first, play later! Once the **full crop, the full number of the Gentiles, has been brought in and harvested, then, and only then, can we close the door on this project and let this field lay fallow, rest for the Winter, and enjoy the fruits of our labor.**

Now that we have tied down the general context of this parable, we are still left with Jesus' two final cryptic statements:

- (1) The last will be first, and the first will be last.
- (2) Many are called, but few are chosen.

But are they really so cryptic now? If we understand that there have been **Two Covenants** established between God and man for the purpose of establishing the Kingdom of God and bringing in the harvest, then perhaps all of this will start to make sense, in the light of the **Rapture** and the **Great White Throne Judgment**. Here, then, is the timeline, as God sees it:

- (1) The **First Covenant**, a covenant of **Law and Works**, was established between God and the Jewish people.
- (2) That covenant remained in place for quite some time, **but proved inadequate to the task at hand.**
- (3) A **Second Covenant**, a covenant of **Faith and Grace**, was established to replace the initial covenant, and to expand the scope of the project so that all people, not just the Jews, could be included.
- (4) For clarity's sake, let's refer to these two covenants as the **First Agreement** and the **Last Agreement.**
- (5) The institution of the Old Testament, or **First Agreement**, established a contractual basis between God and man through which **Law and Works** were the foundation or terms of salvation.
- (6) The institution of the New Testament, or **Last Agreement**, established a **different** contractual basis between God and man through which **Faith and Grace** were the foundation or terms of salvation.
- (7) All of the Gentile world never exposed to the **Last Agreement**, which we know as the Gospel of Jesus Christ, automatically fell back into the **First Agreement.**
- (8) In fact, if you study all other world religions, they are based on **Law and Works**, not **Faith and Grace.** Only Christianity is so constructed.
- (9) When the **Rapture** occurs, it marks the end of the **Times of the Gentiles** or **Age of Grace.** That closes the **Last Agreement**, and no other people are ever able to come to God through this agreement again.
- (10) At the **Great White Throne Judgment**, it marks the end of the **First Agreement**, since everyone who enters into eternal life does so not through **Faith and Grace** but rather by **Law and Works.**
- (11) Jesus settles up with the Gentiles who came in during the Times of the Gentiles under the Gospel **first.**
- (12) He then settles up with the rest of the world who came in under Law and Works **last.**
- (13) Sooooo, **the First (the Jews/Works/Law) are Last (Great White Throne Judgment) in being paid their wages,**
- (14) And..... **the Last (the Bride/Faith/Grace) are First (Rapture) in being paid their wages,**
- (15) And.... **Many are Called, but Few are Chosen.**

Wait! Whoa! Darn it, Pastor Ray! Just when you got done explaining things, you threw that last little monkey wrench in there. I finally get what you are saying about this **first are last and last are first stuff**, and it makes sense, but **what about the other cryptic statement that Jesus made, many are called, but few are chosen?**

**That**, dear friends, will have to wait until tomorrow, in our next *E-Pistle* entitled (as if you couldn't guess), *Day 13 – Many Are Called, Few Are Chosen*. I know that I have taken you into very deep water in this

series, but, hey, you said you wanted to know and understand *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* when you bought this book, and, **Whoop! Here it is!** Talk to you tomorrow, when we continue to *Unroll the Scroll!*

# Day 13 – Many Are Called, Few Are Chosen



“<sup>13</sup> But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ <sup>14</sup> Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. <sup>15</sup> Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’ <sup>16</sup> So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.” – Matthew 20:13-16

In our previous *E-Pistle*, we examined one of the most mis-understood parables in all Scripture, the **Parable of the Vineyard**. We finally made some sense of the reverse payoff of the temporary workers, and the fact that the owner of the vineyard paid everybody the same amount. Who could have imagined that Jesus was actually telling the disciples a **prophetic parable**, which would stretch from the point that God first came to Father Abraham all the way to the **Great White Throne Judgment**, spanning some 7,000 or more years of human history? But, just as we were about to close the topic of conversation, we happened to look back on the spiritual sofa, and, sitting there just a ‘grinnin’ at us, was yet another cryptic statement, **Many Are Called and Few Are Chosen**. You know, I had my heart all set on running straight to the final parable in Matthew 25, but that was about four articles ago! As I began to unfold for you the mysteries of the Word of God, these articles have assumed a life of their own, and have literally been writing themselves! I have begun to understand how the prophets of the Old Testament must have felt when the Holy Ghost came down upon them and they began to prophesy, changed into a different man for the purposes of God. And so we must pause for a moment, and finish what Jesus started in Matthew Chapter 20.

To understand what Jesus means by **many are called, but few chosen**, we have to step outside of the Bible for just a second and go to a classic example from the secular world. What most people don’t realize is that **the Principles of the Kingdom are no different than the principles in the world that govern successful business**. Now, before you hit the roof and begin to proclaim me a blasphemer, I want you to look carefully at some of the things that Jesus has already taught His disciples. In the **Parable of the Talents**, Jesus made it very clear that **top performers were rewarded with top benefits and losers are called losers because they end up losing everything**. Sound harsh? I didn’t tell the story, Jesus did! Remember how the servant that buried the \$50,000 ended up? Not only did he **lose the money that he had been entrusted with, he also lost his eternal salvation**. I know that when I make statements like this, I completely wipe out and alienate the **All Grace** crowd, who have systematically abused and twisted the Word of God to try and make it a license for license and libertine actions. But I would rather tell you the truth **now**, so that when you (**Yes, YOU!**) stand at the **Bema Seat / Great White Throne Judgment**, you will not be able to turn to God and say, “*But, Lord! No one ever told me!*” The fact that your actions disqualified you and sent you screaming into the Lake of Fire will not be **my** fault. Instead, God will look at the sugar-coated sermons preached by the pastors who coddled you and stroked you and comforted you without ever **confronting and correcting you**, and He will turn in **Holy and Wholly Justified Wrath** and look at those pastors, who will be trembling in fear and terror of the judgment which they are about to receive. And their punishment will be far greater than yours, because they knowingly deceived you and taught and preached a lie to you. **And you were foolish, selfish and immature enough to believe it. And that is your fault, and yours alone.**

Don’t believe me? Let me give you a practical, yet simple illustration. There is nothing more American than **baseball**. As the TV commercial goes, “*Baseball, French Fries, Apple Pie and Chevrolet!*” And

baseball is just a fun game, right? Obviously, you haven't been to a Little League game in a while. Psycho-Parents and Frustrated Jock Dads dot the landscape everywhere you look. They treat 12-year-olds as if they were on the verge of a Major League signing bonus. Baseball at its finest is also its simplest and funniest. It all starts in Pee-Wee League. The one boy or girl who can actually **catch and throw the ball** is officially designated the pitcher. The next most talented boy is placed, if you're a smart coach, at First Base. Most coaches don't have a clue about this little secret, by the way. They put the most talented kid at shortstop, and squander his talent. The four positions that drive any team at any level are the Pitcher, the Catcher, the First Baseman and the Shortstop. In Pee-Wee League, a home run is defined as **any ball that rolls through four sets of legs**. And in Pee-Wee League, every player dreams of being a superstar. We all do. Don't tell me that you haven't had Superman Sessions in your imagination in the past. Everybody, and I mean, everybody, fantasizes about being a super hero or heroine at some point in their growing up. We **need** heroes in order to become our very best. And the greatest **superhero of all time is Jesus Christ**. Superman never healed the sick. Batman never raised the dead. The Green Lantern never cast out demons (at least I **think** he never did!), and the Flash **never rose from the dead and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty**. All of us need individuals **who have been CHOSEN for their OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE to be examples which we can look up to and aspire to be like**. But how do you **become** a superhero? The answer is that **many are called, but few are chosen**.

Let's go back to Pee-Wee ball for just a second. **Everybody** goes out for Pee-Wee ball. I still remember with fondness my first experience with Pee-Wees. The infield is set up in standard format, but the outfield, well, that's a horse of another color! In order for **all of the children to play**, the remaining eight ballplayers are arranged in an arc or semicircle in the outfield, stretching from the left field foul line to the right field foul line. It increases the probability that a ground or fly ball hit into the outfield **just might** get caught. That is not always true, however. Once a ball gets past that second line of defense, it generally rolls to the wall and is automatically a home run. I still remember that in one game, one of the boys really got hold of one and launched a screaming line drive into the outfield, straight at the ring of largely unaware outfielders (I play Right Field, out where the dandelions grow...). The two boys closest to the line drive both saw the ball coming, but were afraid to position their body in the way of such screaming destruction. So they both **closed their eyes and stuck up their gloves**. At this level of play, the gloves are almost as big as the players, and so two such monstrous mitts created a kind of cloud cover over that part of the outfield. The screamer went **into** the clouds, **but never came out!** Both boys looked at one another, and then, with a mystified look on their faces, looked in their gloves. Suddenly, one boy's face lit up like the noonday sun, and he proudly held his glove back up, displaying the now-pacified hard-hit pitch. But this level of play does not endure forever. Eventually, the kids have to graduate to (Shudder!) **Little League, a place where adults act like children and children act like adults**. And the number of children playing ball in Pee Wee is **not** the same as the number playing ball in Little League. The number decreases. **Significantly. Many are called. Less are chosen, or, perhaps more accurately, CHOOSE NOT TO BE CHOSEN**. Those who cannot successfully compete at the previous level do not move up to the next level. The first stop in Little League is **Minor League**, a place where most 8 and 9-year-olds start and play. And again, there is a **culling of those who lack talent and desire**. The number of players in the Minors is less than Pee Wee. And the number of players in the Majors is less than that found in the Minors. At this level, however, there is still plenty of room for grace and mercy. League rules state that **all players must play in every game, logging at least 3 outs on defense and one at-bat on offense**. Too many scheming coaches do everything they can to circumvent these rules. As you have probably already guessed, I was a Little League coach myself. I watched my two sons go through the entire process, and learned as much myself as I am sure they did. Actually, based on what I saw in the way of "coaching", I can safely say that I taught them more about baseball than all of their coaches through high school did. That sounds pretty cheeky until you and I sit down and talk baseball for about three hours. Then you'll see what I mean. My father was a Little League coach before me, and, believe me, he had to be one heck of a coach to get me to the point where I became an all-star baseball player!

Unlike most of the Psycho-Coaches and *Uber-Daddy* Coaches, I played the game **to develop ballplayers, not win games**. Most coaches coach to win games, at the expense of their players. Talented boys get coddled and focused on, and untalented boys are shuffled in and out and relegated to oblivion at the end of the pine tar stained bench. And so, from Day One, I determined that my team was going to be different. I threw out the three-out, one at-bat rule. And I instituted an **every player, mandatory**

**three inning rule.** That meant that **every single boy on my squad was going to play three innings every game, barring injury, illness or disciplinary issues.** A few of the win-at-all-cost parents went ballistic at first, but the vast majority of the parents, fed up with years of unfair treatment for their less-talented boys, were thrilled. And, even as I write the phrase **less-talented**, I want to stop and correct myself. True, some of the boys were less talented. But many of them had simply **never been given the opportunity to discover or develop whatever talent they might have had.** They didn't know what they could or could not do, because no coach along the way had ever given them the chance. Instead, I concentrated on finding out what each boy's skill and motivational levels were, what he could do, and what made him tick. Then I worked uniformly with all the boys, and particularly with the boys with the weakest skills. Why? **Because I have discovered in life that it is always the WEAK link in the chain that breaks, not the strong link.** You are only as good as the weakest player on your team. As an example, most coaches always play the poorest player in Right Field. How do I know? I spent many blissful years there myself until I was twelve years old. Then my father took me to the eye doctor. The next year, able to finally see the stupid ball for the first time, I batted .575, played First Base, one of the most important positions defensively on the team, and led the team in Home Runs and RBIs. I had a weakness, but I wasn't a weak player. But, back to Right Field. I learned that when I had my fastest pitcher on the mound I needed to swap the Left and Right Fielders. Why? Because right-handers couldn't catch up with my pitcher's heat, and invariably hit the ball to the opposite field, or Right Field. Where would the worst player typically play? Right field. I saw game after game lost when the Right Fielder tanked a ball in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> inning and cost his team the game. The solution? Think outside the box! Did my three-inning formula work? You betcha! Early on in the season, we took some pretty bad beatings. Our team had deliberately been populated with all the players none of the other coaches in the good-ole-boy network wanted. I had three good ballplayers. The rest were the Bad News Bears. There were three teams in the league that were loaded, but every team has some weak sisters on the roster, and they were no exception. Baseball is a **team** sport. It takes the successful performance of at least nine players to produce success. My team became **more and more successful** as the season wore on. In fact, we beat each of the three teams that were "loaded". And, in every case, the critical play that turned the game was executed by one of my "losers". You know, the ones that never got to play. The ones that never got better. We ended up finishing second in the league, ahead of two of the "loaded" teams. And, if you will permit a still-proud father to boast, I want to share one brief snapshot. One of the "loaded" teams, coached by the most arrogant coach in the league, was pounding us unmercifully. We were down 10-0 in the third inning, and it looked like it was all but over. Then my son Ben came in to pitch. Suddenly, the door was closed on their offense. And our "loser" players began to pound the Golden Boy / Favored Child son of the other coach. He was the best they had, so they kept him in the game, but we kept sending up our batters, and our 5-9 batters were eating him alive. Finally, the bases were loaded in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup>. There were two outs, and my son Ben was up to bat. He drove the ball over the center field fence, just inches beyond the desperately straining Center Fielder, for a Grand Slam home run that won the game. From that day on, our team was treated with the greatest respect in the league. Word had gotten out. Pastor Ray's team was one to be reckoned with.

I have to share one other true story before we move on. I had a young lad named Jarrod. It was painfully clear that he was never going to go on to Senior League. He was twelve years old. It was the end of the season. And this was going to be his final baseball game, ever. In all of his baseball career, **he had never gotten a hit**, not even a loud foul. Why? Because he wouldn't take the bat off his shoulder. He would walk resignedly to the plate, and stand there in a phony batters stance until he was either walked or struck out looking. And this had gone on for four years. Why his parents had let this go on for so long, I will never know. All I knew, as I stood in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Base Coaches box, was that this was going to be his **last opportunity to ever get a hit.** And then the Holy Spirit came on me (What! In a baseball game? The Holy Spirit came on Sampson in some unusual circumstances, too!), and I knew in flash what I was supposed to do. I called time out. Jarrod stepped out of the batter's box and looked at me quizzically. With everyone watching and listening, I said, as loudly as I could, for all to hear, "*Jarrod, BUNT!*" Everyone looked at me like I had gone insane. Jarrod's parents nearly lost their composure. Surely I was going to embarrass their little darling! The umpire had a look that to this day I can't quite categorize. But there was no doubt about the opposing coach, pitcher and catcher. All three had a look of "*Casey at the Bat*" disdain and contempt. The opposing coach clearly thought I had gone insane. But I was crazy like a fox. I knew that Jarrod would never have a chance to get a hit **unless he swung the bat.** And, after an entire season trying fruitlessly to get him to swing, I knew that would never happen. **And so I determined that if he would not put the bat over the plate, I would!** Jarrod stared at me

with a pleading look written all over his face. I simply shook my head sideways and said, "Jarrod, **BUNT!**" Jarrod tentatively extended his bat over the plate, all the while leaning back away from the plate just as far as he could go. A taunting, evil grin appeared on the pitcher's face. He wound up, and fired a bullet right over the heart of the plate. "**STEERIKE ONE!**" bellowed the umpire. Jarrod looked at me again, fear contorting his features. His father was now standing by the backstop, anger written all over his face. I simply shook my head sideways again and said, as loudly as I could, "Jarrod, **BUNT!**" The pitcher wound up again, and fired another bullet over the center of the plate. "**STEERIKE TWO!**" rang out from behind the catcher. Now the whole crowd was on its feet, shouting and carrying on. To the opposing coach, this matter had become high comedy, and he turned and began to make caustic remarks to his fellow coaches and his team on the bench. Jarrod was ghostly white. He was a legitimate albino anyway, but fear had drained every drop of blood from his face. The crowd behind the backstop had gone completely nuts. One final time, Jarrod looked at me. No child has ever looked more pitiful. To him, he was walking the Green Mile. All I did was nod my head in approval and cry out, one last time, "Jarrod, **BUNT!**" Jarrod now had his eyes closed. The bat was shakily extended over the plate. The pitcher took his signal, wound up, and fired what would be one last bullet toward the plate, to end this indignity and put this simpering whimp back on the bench where he belonged. **And then the most amazing thing happened. THE BALL SOMEHOW HIT JARROD'S BAT AND DRIBBLED OUT IN FRONT OF THE PLATE IN FAIR TERRITORY!** There was a collective gasp from everyone there; the crowd, the parents, the coaches, the players, even Jarrod himself. And for one brief moment in time, the sun stopped moving in its course in the heavens, and time stood still. Everyone stood and watched the ball dribble to a halt a few feet in front of home plate. And watch. And watch. Breathing a quick thank-you to Heaven, I shouted at the top of my lungs, "Jarrod, **RUN !!!**" Suddenly, everything snapped back into reality, and the time stream restarted. Stumbling out of the batter's box, Jarrod raced awkwardly toward First Base. The catcher, caught in a time warp of his own, jumped up and raced to the ball. Grabbing the ball with his right hand, he hurled it far over the First Baseman's head into Right Field. As the ball bounced into the Right Field corner, our First Base Coach urged Jarrod on toward second. And the Right Fielder, who, of course, according to standard baseball thinking, was the **worst** player on the field, fumbled with the ball and finally hurled it somewhere between Third Base and Left Field. Now, with the whole crowd shouting encouragement and exhortation, Jarrod rounded Second and barreled toward Third, where I was standing, waiting for him. And there was no doubt in my mind as to what I was supposed to do. **Jarrod was headed home.** I urged him around the turn, shouting for him to run and not stop. Finally, the Third Baseman retrieved the ball and hurled it toward Home Plate. And, as Jarrod, caught up in the excitement and having a Superman Moment of his own, went into a picture-perfect slide, the ball sailed over the catcher's head and banged up against the backstop. The crowd went wild. Not only were our parents cheering, but the parents of the other team were cheering as well, coming to realize the miracle that they had just witnessed. The opposing coach and his smart-aleck pitcher hung their heads in shame. And I held up my coach's scorebook, and wrote down "**HOME RUN!**"

I hope you understand why I have related this story. While this article is officially about the **disqualification of believers and the pursuit of excellence**, there is still a God in Heaven who is looking down on the Jarrods of this world, and the Coach Rays, looking for someone **on whose behalf He can show himself strong**. And I just want to encourage you. Perhaps you have not enjoyed much success in ministry or life in general. Don't stop. Don't quit. Keep going. Keep the bat over the plate. You never know when God may anoint that bat so that hits the ball. **And once the ball is in play, ANYTHING can happen!**

As my sons progressed through Little League, each level had its own All-Stars. And I began to notice a pattern. **The All-Stars at one level became the starters on the team at the next level.** What do I mean by that? At each level, the number of players and teams decreased dramatically. Many are called. Few are chosen. And the boys that had been **chosen as the best at one level, from among many players, became the ones who advanced to the next level.** This became very clear when both of my boys moved from Little League to Senior League. Suddenly, tons of boys who had been playing the game **just for fun** realized that there was **less fun and more work involved in competing, much less excelling, at the next level.** And for many of those boys, **the price was simply not worth the prize. And so they chose not to be chosen.** Get the picture? Then, a new crop of All-Stars emerged at the Senior League level. Many of those players had already excelled at the previous level. But there were always a few surprises. One boy labeled as a can't-miss would suddenly fade and disappear, dropping out. Another boy, considered a never-will, would hit a growth spurt and grow six inches in one year,

turning from runt of the litter to Goliath among men in just a single season. At the end of Senior League, another drastic cut occurred. Now, only the All-Stars, plus or minus a player, moved on to High School baseball, as the incoming freshman team. But now a new set of adversities faced each of the boys. Now they went from being All-Stars and top dogs to being just another geeky freshman trying to find a starting spot on the team. And the coaches were no longer their daddies, comforting and coddling them along the way. Instead, these men were battle-scarred, battle-hardened pros who had little use for whiners, cheaters or loafers. The level and quality of play had increased dramatically, but so had the demands placed on the individual players by competition, circumstances and coaches. And now, these former All-Stars found themselves not only battling the sophomores, All-Stars in their own rights from the previous year, but also other Freshman squads from all around the region, each the product of the same process in other communities. Out of this talent pool of four sets of All-Stars, a starting nine would emerge, capable of playing on a competitive level in High School. And that team would, in turn, be competing against other teams produced by the same **process of elimination**. And out of that process of elimination would come League champions and Regional champions and Semi-State champions and State champions. And out of that process of elimination would come a series of All-Star teams, drawn from the very best at the High School ranks. We had the privilege of living in Jasper, Indiana for over a decade, home of two of the winningest high school coaches of all time. Every year, Jasper would excel, perhaps losing only one or two games during the regular season, and always contending all the way to the finals. They became the only Indiana high school baseball team to ever win three consecutive state titles.

Now, consider for just a second. This is a brutal process. There are many broken dreams along the way. Many young men decide that it is not worth the price, and go in a different direction, some to excel greatly in some other area. My oldest son Robert quit baseball in his sophomore year, but went on to be a three year starter at offensive guard in football and All Southern Indiana his senior year. He found a **way and means to excel**. And, oh yeah, Jasper also excelled at football, too, with the winningest coach in Indiana high school football at the helm. Yes, the process of elimination was brutal. And sometimes harsh. And sometimes unfair. And never easy. But it produced excellence at the **highest possible level**, and a group of players who were **capable at playing at the next level, college ball**. And now the process began all over again, with the All-Stars at a high school level moving on to play college ball, once again against the All-Stars from all over the nation, who were all being relegated **once again** to the demeaning position of freshmen, competing against other freshman for a starting position on the college team, and having to compete against other college freshman teams, and all trying to make it as a starter at the varsity level.

Out of that considerably thinned group would come an even smaller number of players capable of playing at a pro level, **once again back in the Minor Leagues**. And then, a smaller contingent would make it from A Ball to AA Ball and from AA Ball to AAA Ball, and then (Oh, joy!) into the **Major Leagues**, only to find themselves competing against grown men who make a livelihood playing this game. And from that group will emerge a group of **All-Stars**, who will **be chosen from among their peers** as worthy of emulation and honor. And over a period of time, an **even smaller group of All-Stars** will excel again and again and again, establishing a record of **consistent excellence at the highest possible level**. And this extraordinarily small group of men will someday be inducted into Cooperstown, the **Major League Hall of Fame**.

But the boys who didn't have the talent and drive, who wouldn't pay the price, who went a different direction, all would **be eliminated or eliminate themselves during the process that produces this excellence**. In many ways, this world truly is the **survival of the fittest**. Christian grace and mercy and the whole concept of we being the body of Christ allows for an interdependence, just like the various organs of the body. Yet the body which is produced will only be as strong as its weakest link.

Now, take this analogy and apply it to Ephesians 4:11-13, which lists what we normally call the Five Fold Ministry. Consider the process of elimination that leads to the top of the heap. We all start as **Believers**, saved by faith through grace and not of works, lest any man should boast. But only a few of us then **move to the next level and become Witnesses**. It is at this level where what the Bible calls **Overcomers** start to emerge, for Revelation says that we overcame that old serpent, the Devil, by the Blood of the Lamb **and the Word of our testimony**. There are fewer Witnesses than there are believers. How many people do **you** know who claim to know Christ, yet will never speak of Him to others? What did Jesus say about those of us who are ashamed of Him? Now the elimination process

continues. Of the few who are willing to witness, an even fewer number are willing to study to show themselves approved, a workman not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. And so, a group of **Teachers** emerges. But beware, saints! For James, the half-brother of Jesus, says, "*Let not many of you be teachers, my brethren, for we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness, and we all make many mistakes*". As the level of responsibility and authority and power goes up, so does the level of accountability and the demand for increasing excellence, **just like Little League**. And out of that group of teachers will be found those who also have a heart for those whom they teach, and a group of **Pastors** will emerge, who can both **teach and minister**. Out of that group of ministers who care about men's souls and can teach the Word of God carefully and accurately, will emerge an even smaller group of men who have mastered the art of presenting the Gospel in such a powerful and compelling fashion that they will be able to lead significant numbers of unbelievers to Christ. So a group of **Evangelists** will emerge out of the lower office of Pastor. Some of those Evangelists will learn to hear the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit regarding timing and details and the secrets of men's hearts, and those men and women will begin to emerge as **Prophets**. Some of those Prophets will grow in their anointing to the point where **signs, wonders and miracles will start to emerge**. **Healings** will begin to appear on a regular basis. When they lay hands on people, the power of the Holy Spirit will come on them, and those people will be **baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in unknown tongues**. We will call these individuals **Apostles**. Over the sway of the breezes of history, some of those men will emerge as dominant above all others across time, **and they will write the Bible, carried along by the Holy Spirit, filled and saturated beyond measure and comprehension with the power, purity and glory of God**.

During this process, **many will have been called**. When the secrets of men's hearts are revealed at the Great White Throne Judgment, there will be some who rejoice, for they will have been found as **good and faithful servants**, who are qualified to enter into the joy of their Master. But there will also be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**, as untold billions of individuals realize that **they had been called, but were not found worthy or capable or being chosen for service by the Master at the level that they had been called to**. Many, many tears of regret and sorrow will be shed on that day, most of them from Christians who had been **called but not chosen**.

**That**, dear friend, is why Jesus says **what** He says **when He says it**. As the **last**, and then the **first**, have their accounts settled with the Master, and their **return on investment is calculated, only a few who were called will be chosen to go on to the NEXT LEVEL, to rule and reign with their Sovereign Lord, to enter into the joy of their Master!**

At this point, I have probably sent the cheap and easy grace folks into shock. Having been told that they will receive nothing but approval and blessings at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Hello? Is anybody listening?), they will collapse into a heap when suddenly every wicked, dark and hidden deed they have ever committed and never repented from will be hauled out and displayed before all humanity. This Great White Throne thing is going to take a **very, very long time**. But, then, why be in a hurry? We have **all eternity** in front of us to sort all this out, and administer both punishments and rewards.

In closing, let me leave you with one compelling thought. This is a massive universe. Our own galaxy has over **200 million stars**. And there may well be over **2 million galaxies**. I am sure that the new Heavens and the New Earth will have at least similar numbers. Perhaps God is looking for those who can administer a **whole galaxy** on His behalf. We know that there are those of us who will be called to judge angels themselves. Truly, **eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for them that love Him!**



# Day 14 – As Through Fire



<sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. — | Corinthians 3:12-15

In our discussion of Jesus' Matthew 25 **Prophetic Parables**, we have shown you how God will settle up with the nations of the world, fairly and equitably, at the **Great White Throne Judgment**. We have shown you how the **First Agreement (The Law/Works)** will result in **judgment**, either acquittal or sentencing, as a result of the conscience or heart being played back at the **Bema Seat**. And we have shown you how the **Second Agreement (Grace/Works)** will be concluded in the **Rapture of the Bride** at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal. So far so good. But there is one critical issue that we have **not** discussed. And that is **how God will deal with the works of the believer**.

In many ways, I thank God that He has brought me up in the Spirit and in the Kingdom apart from the ways of men. As I research the matters that I write about, I am astonished, disgusted and appalled at the bizarre, selfish and immature doctrines which have arisen in the body of Christ over the last few decades. They defy all logic and common sense, and, worst of all, fly directly in the face of the revealed Word of God. Let me provide you with a very important principle: **When your opinion or doctrine is at odds with the Word of God, you are wrong!** Most believers go into a condition of extreme denial when you try to tell them something that they don't want to hear. This is particularly true of the Pre-Trib Camp. They just close their ears and eyes and turn away without even attempting to hear when you even mention suffering for the sake of Christ. Prophecy smooth things to us, Pastor Ray! Tickle our ears. Tell us what we **want** to hear, not what we **need** to hear, even at the loss of our immortal souls. But, hey! They did that to Jeremiah, too! Once the leaders of Judah came to him, asking him to ask God about whether to stay in the country or flee to Egypt. And Jeremiah dutifully prayed and sought the Lord for 10 days before the answer came. And as soon as God had something to say, so did Jeremiah! The answer? Stay put! I'll protect you right where you are. Was that what the leaders wanted to hear? No!!! They wanted God to tell them that it was OK to run, run, runaway. And when that word was not received, they became angry with Jeremiah and accused him of lying to them! In so very many ways, the church today is in the same boat as those people back then. Pretending to be spiritual, but unwilling to change that about them which is selfish, sinful, carnal and worldly. Using grace as a lousy excuse to not only continue in sin, but actually to actively return to it. Bad idea. Really bad idea!

What then, Pastor Ray? Are you trying to tell us that we are justified by works rather than faith? Hardly. **Faith and Grace** are the foundation of the **New Covenant or Testament** through which we Gentiles are saved. And we are saved **by grace, through faith, and not of works, lest any man should boast. But there IS a balance!**

In order to understand the relationship between Faith and Works, we must turn first to the Old Testament, to the statement that riveted Martin Luther as he studied a clandestinely obtained copy of the Vulgate, the common Latin Bible of the day, and which launched the entire Reformation. Turn with us to the Book of Habakkuk.

" <sup>2</sup> Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it, <sup>3</sup> for the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it

will surely come, it will not tarry. <sup>4</sup> Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." -- Habakkuk 2:2-4

Whoop! There it is. The granddaddy of all faith Scriptures. And it is with that passage that the Reformation began. And launched over 100 years of bloodshed and violence. But you can't come to God without it. And you can't please Him. And you can't be saved without it, either. I shouldn't have to do this for the average person reading this book, but, if you are an unbeliever and somehow latched onto this little missal and are wondering what planet we come from, here are a few more faith Scriptures, just to show you how God thinks about these matters:

" <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." -- Ephesians 2:8-10

Notice how we are saved. **By Grace. Through Faith.** For what purpose? **For Good Works.** Am I lying? Have I twisted the Word of God somehow? No. **Not of Works. For Good Works.** Why, oh why, can't the competing and arguing fools within each camp stop blindly ignoring the revealed Word of God? How can it be any clearer? **It always begins with faith. It always results in works.** But faith **by itself** is always **incomplete.** Whaaat? Blasphemy! Burn him at the stake! Whoa, boys and girls! Are you willing to hear the **whole counsel of God?** You are? Good. Now please put out that fire and untie my arms, so that I can open up the Word of God for you and read to you for a bit. Let's see.... Ah, here it is:

" <sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything but faith working through love." -- Galatians 5:6

Hmmm... **Faith Working Through Love.** Three words. **Faith. Work. Love.** All tied together. All interdependent on one another. Always **starting with faith.** Always **ending in action.** Now, let's look at another Scripture, by another author, somebody named James...

" <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works'. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works... <sup>20</sup> But do you want to know O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup> Do you see that faith was working together WITH his works, and BY works faith was MADE perfect? <sup>23</sup> And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God.' <sup>24</sup> You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith ONLY"  
-- James 2:17-24

I've taken the liberty of capitalizing some critical words in this passage. Let's look at the passage as a whole, and deconstruct it, just as we have done other important Scriptures.

- (1) Faith **by itself**, if it doesn't have corresponding and resulting **works, is dead.**
- (2) **Faith and Works complement one another and work together.**
- (3) **Faith is made perfect by Works.**
- (4) **Faith alone cannot save you.**
- (5) **Works alone cannot save you.**
- (6) **Faith without works is dead.**
- (7) **Works without faith is dead.**
- (8) **You must have both, starting with Faith and resulting in Works.**

Kinda kills the All Grace camp, doesn't it? No matter how you look at it, and no matter how strongly you say you believe, **you must do something** in order for that faith to be completed. In order for that faith to have a channel to work through, you must have a **consequence**, a **result**, an **opposite but equal reaction.** And that reaction to the faith that you feel in your heart must always be done **through love.** Because if we don't have love, then all our actions are just a bunch of big noise, with no impact or consequence. At least that's what Paul said in I Corinthians 13:1-3.

But, that being true, and our justification coming **by grace, through faith, unto good works**, then what is the purpose of the good works, and resultant benefit for us to do them? Well, the primary purpose ought to be obvious by now. Since our works **complete our faith**, they bring us into right standing with God. Want an example? Sure! The Bible says in I John 1:9 that if we **confess our sins that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**. Let's look at that awesome statement for a moment. You can commit a sin, any sin. Size and severity don't really matter. Sin is still sin. And it separates you from God your Heavenly Father. That sin stays active and alive inside of you until you take a **specific action, or work**. You **confess** your sin. That confession is a **work**, a **concrete action taken on the basis of a spiritual conviction in your heart**. Howzabout that for a nifty definition for works? I just made it up! Didn't borrow it from some weighty theological dictionary. It just came into my heart and mind by the Holy Spirit. Thanks, Lord! And when you perform a **work** based on the **faith** that if you perform this work, that God will also perform a **work of His own in response, according to His Word, then you have completed your faith and compelled God to act on His faith and also to perform a corresponding work or series of works**. Did you get all that? I know it was a little complex. Your **work based on faith** triggers a corresponding reaction from Him consisting of another **work based on His own faith**. Your **confession** triggers His **forgiveness and cleansing**. Pretty neat stuff, huh? Didn't know it was this simple, didya? No weighty theological tomes. No **Piled Higher and Deeper** words. Just plain common sense, based on the Word of God as literally true, and taught through the graduate program at Hard Knocks University.

OK. So far so good. Are there any **long-term consequences for our works**? *Oh, yeah! There sure are!* And that is the topic of this E-Pistle. Sorry I have to spend so much time laying theological foundations. There is so much bad teaching out there today that I have found that I have to un-teach and re-teach the fundamentals of faith before I can get on to the deeper things of God. The writer of the Book of Hebrews had the same problem with his people. I love what he says in Chapter 5:

*"<sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food."* -- Hebrews 5:12

But now it is time to leave these elementary principles, just as he did in Hebrews 6:1, and get down to brass tacks. **Exactly what happens to the works, the things that believers do, in their lives?** Are we automatically absolved of all sin? Are there consequences? Are those consequences eternal?

May we have the answers, please?... And the answers are...

- (1) Yes, they get tested, seriously tested. And they either burn up or survive.
- (2) No, there is no automatic absolution of sin. There is forgiveness, based on repentance, but not absolution.
- (3) Yes, there are EXTREME AND SEVERE consequences.
- (4) Yes, these consequences are eternal.

In Revelation 7:9, we find the Rapture of the Bride portion of the Church, that 50% of the church globally that has cleansed herself and made herself ready, who has made sure to bring along not only just her lamp, but also an extra supply of oil. After having endured the first Six Seals, it is time for a Swat Team Rescue Operation led by Jesus to come to the outer edge of the atmosphere of this planet, and violently snatch away the **Woman He Loves**. That Swat Team operation leaves behind an interesting group of people. They consist of:

- (1) The half of the church who wasn't prepared and wasn't ready.
- (2) The Jews, who start believing in their Messiah very shortly thereafter.
- (3) The remainder of the unbelieving, rebellious world, allied with Hell and arrayed against Heaven.

During the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, the Wrath of God, while the world is literally having the hell beat out of it, the Bride is enjoying a wonderful honeymoon with the Lord in Heaven. After an unspecified amount of time (and way more than just seven years!), at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, Jesus returns with the armies of Heaven for a full-scale invasion to take back possession of the planet. There is a brief and very one-sided battle in which everyone on one side gets killed, and no one on the other side even gets scratched. Then follows a 1,000 year period during which Jesus rules the nations with a rod of iron. The details of all these events

will be the subject of other E-Pistles, so we won't belabor the point right now. During that 1,000 year period, or Millennial Reign, two groups of individuals will assist Him in the administration of the planet, and the oversight of a battered but rebuilding conventional human population left over when the battles are finally over. The first group is **the Bride**, who received their Resurrection bodies 1,000 years before in the Rapture. The second group, and very little has ever been written about them, is **the Martyrs**, those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the Word of God, and who had not received the Mark of the Beast on their foreheads or hands during **The Time of the Beast** in the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal. Although their resurrection is not recorded in Revelation, it is possible that it is recorded elsewhere in Scripture, perhaps in the Old Testament. At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan is let loose from the Abyss and goes out to deceive the Gentile nations all over again. There is one final battle of Armageddon, the second one, by the way, and then the permanent incarceration of Satan in the Lake of Fire. Having done all that, this damaged and no longer useful universe is destroyed, as described in Revelation 20:11 and II Peter 3:10. There then remains one final event which must take place before the new Heavens and a new Earth are created to take their place. We have come to **The Great White Throne or Bema Seat Judgment:**

*"<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup> The Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." -- Revelation 20:11-14*

We have already discussed how this event impacts all those who never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not them that we are concerned with at this point. Our attention is centered on those who **have** heard the Gospel, and have responded to it in some fashion or another. Astonishingly, at least to me, some Christians believe that the **Bema Seat of Christ** is a happy time for all Christians, and that nothing but rewards and blessings will be handed out. They come to this conclusion by saying that the Greek word *bema* refers to a place where Olympic laurels of victory were handed out. Therefore, they reason, the **Bema Seat** will be the same, all rewards, and no punishments. But is that really true? A little research into the use of the word *bema* and how it is used **in context** reveals a very different sort of picture.

*"When he was set down on the judgment seat (bema), his wife sent unto him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.'" -- Matthew 27:19*

*"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat (bema) in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha." -- John 19:13*

*"So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne (bema) and made an oration to them." -- Acts 12:21*

*"When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat (bema)." -- Acts 18:12*

*"Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat (bema). But Gallio took no notice of these things." -- Acts 18:17*

*"And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat (bema), he commanded Paul to be brought." -- Acts 25:6*

Wow! Talk about circumstantial evidence! In none of the six different Scriptures above, all using the Greek word *bema*, is there anything remotely resembling **rewards being passed out**. In every case, **judgment** is always indicated, which is why the term **judgment seat** is so often used to translate the word. The only other translation used is **throne**, when referring to Herod, but, when dealing with royal

authorities, the **throne** of the monarch was also always a **judgment seat**, or a place where important legal matters were decided and punishment or absolution was decided. But there is an even more obvious Scripture to back this **dual outcome** situation up.

*"For we must all appear before the judgment seat (bema) of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. – II Corinthians 5:10*

Now, if anybody knew what it was like to be arrested, jailed unjustly, beaten, and then hauled up before a **bema**, Paul did. And please note that when **he** used the term, he **did not** use it in terms of rewards to an Olympic victor, but rather as the scene of the rendering of a legal decision, **either good or bad**. Now this **good or bad** thing ought to wipe out forever **all by itself** any notion of the **Bema Seat** being a rewards only event. And comparing Scripture to Scripture doesn't help this misconception a bit. If you contrast what Revelation 20 says about the matter, it is in complete agreement with Paul in II Corinthians and all the Acts passages we just looked at. Paul reiterates this view in Romans 14:10, warning believers not to judge or show contempt for one another, because we will **all have to stand before the judgment seat (bema) of Christ**.

Now comes a very important point, and it is typically ignored by all the differing camps. There is a major difference between the **result of our works being judged and everyone else's works being judged**. **The result of the judging of the works of everyone who came to Christ on His Judgment Seat under the Works/Law Contract is either eternal life or eternal death. Absolute. Black and White. The Lake of Fire or the New Jerusalem.** Why? **Because they are standing before Him based on a Law/Works/First Contract basis.** Their works are the only portal for them, one way or another. Either fire or glory. No other options are available.

But for we who are believers, who have had the extraordinary privilege of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life by a **Faith/Grace/Last Contract basis, our eternal salvation is not dependent solely on our works**. **Remember that we are justified by faith, not works, except that works must follow faith in order to fulfill it and confirm it.**

But let's say that, after having made a confession of faith, we did make some sort of feeble attempt to live the Christian life. And that, from time to time, there was actually some circumstantial evidence which might link us to the Lord of Glory. That there are enough **works** present to confirm the **faith** which we knelt at an altar and said we professed. What then? Remember that when God poured the Gospel to the Gentiles out to Paul on that fateful day in Arabia, He downloaded a whole lot more than Paul was permitted to talk about initially. But gradually, over a period of time, the Lord allowed him to roll one piece of the puzzle out after another. In his first letter to the church at Corinth, he explained the difference between the works of believers and the works of the rest of the world.

*"<sup>11</sup> For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."*

– I Corinthians 3:11-15

In this analogy, Paul contrasts two kinds of works. On one side, **good works** consisting of such things as **gold, silver and precious stones**. On the other side, **bad works** consisting of such things as **wood, hay and straw**. In both cases the **foundation** is the same, **faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**. No other foundation can be laid. And we are **not** examining the foundation, laid by God through grace. No, instead we are examining the **superstructure, that which is built on top of the foundation, and which is constructed entirely by the individual through his or her works**. Do you see the difference? It is critical that you do so. Please go back and reread these last few paragraphs if you have any questions in your mind at this point in time.

When will this event take place? On **the Day**. On what Day? **In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, as his Gospel declares!** (Romans 2:16). There are not two separate judgments, as some teach, one for believers, one for non-believers. No, in **that Day**, God will judge **all**

**of the secrets of all of the hearts of all of the men and women who have ever lived.** Everything you have ever done will be rolled out for all to see. This is not a private therapy session, like Jesus to Peter after His resurrection. This is a public trial at the **Bema Seat of Christ**. All men will stand before **Him. Not the Father. The Son. He and He alone made the heavens and the earth. They were made for Him and by Him, and they are sustained by Him. Who else would be qualified to do it? And, dear friends, when He said that "no man cometh unto the Father but by me", He wasn't kidding. The way into the New Heavens and the New Earth and to the Father passes straight through Jesus' Bema Seat. Not just for believers. For everyone.**

Now come rewards and punishments. Paul tells us that if **our works are good works**, of high quality, like gold, silver and precious stones, **we will in fact receive a reward**. And isn't that what Jesus said Himself in the Parable of the Talents? He said, "*Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord*". And I would hope that both you and I, dear reader, will find ourselves in this first category. Because, just like the Democratic National Convention in Chicago so many years ago, when the police beat the anti-war resisters, and the crowd chanted, "*The whole world is watching! The whole world is watching!*", the whole universe will indeed be watching.

But what if my works haven't been very good, Pastor Ray? What if I know they have been nothing more than **wood, hay and stubble?** What if I serve a **good Lord**, but I've been a **bad boy?** It will be then, dear reader, that you will fall down on your knees and weep for two good reasons. The first reason will be because you could have had so much more and threw it all away, leaving you **empty-handed and unrewarded for all eternity**. But the second reason you will weep will be for joy, because **despite your sinfulness, you will still enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and obtain eternal life, but only through fire**.

I clearly remember some months ago when I explained what I call **the Gentile Escape Clause** to some young missionaries intent on converting the whole world to Christ by next Tuesday. They looked at me with great consternation, and asked, "*If this is true, then why even bother to convert the Gentiles at all?*" My answer was simple. **If you come in through faith and grace and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, your salvation is assured, even if your works aren't. If you come in through law and works, it's a crap-shoot. You may make it in, and you may not.** One is certain. One is uncertain. Which would you rather place your eternal security on? The sure thing, or the flip-a-coin option? I also added one more thing: **No other religion in the world promises that God Himself will come and dwell inside of you on a constant basis, filling you, loving you, guiding you, and carrying you home in His everlasting arms at the end of your life. HOW CAN WE NEGLECT SO GREAT A SALVATION?**

Dear friends in Christ, let me exhort you to live a life worthy of the high calling of Christ Jesus. Eternal salvation and eternal rewards await you at the end of your journey. Joy unspeakable and full of glory. Seated with Him in heavenly places. Like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And for those of you who have squandered most of your life, take heart! It is not too late. There are still good works stored up for you to do, and an eternal reward to gain by calling on His great Name! Take the time right now and commit or recommit your life to Him, surrendering your will and your walk into His Holy Hands. In Jesus' Mighty Name, Amen and Amen!

# Day 15~MEGA Tribulation



<sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

— Matthew 24:21-22

One of the great controversies within the Christian community is not whether there will be a Tribulation, but rather **when** that Tribulation will occur, and **how long** that Tribulation will last. Viewpoints ranged from the ridiculous to the sublime. Some camps place the Tribulation before the Rapture, others place it after the Rapture. And, despite all the controversies that rage, and all the so-called experts that are out there expounding their theories and doctrines, virtually no one bothers to go **directly to the Word of God in context** to determine what will happen and when it will happen. In this *E-Pistle* we will examine the Scriptural evidence for not only the **Tribulation** but also for the period of time following that called the **Great Tribulation**. And, again, it is simply a matter of using the **common phrases and symbols** to connect the Scriptural dots to each other. As we do so, we will find that not only is the Tribulation **not** located after the Rapture, but that there is **absolutely no Scriptural evidence for the seven-year period postulated by almost all prophecy experts!** Simply put, the whole concept of a seven-year, post-Rapture Tribulation is a complete and utter fabrication created by snipping and cutting Scriptures out of context and rearranging them into a predetermined pattern to suit the designs and plans of the authors. Now, without further ado, let's go directly to the Scriptures themselves to see if these things be so!

" <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of sorrows." – Matthew 24:4-8

Now, in Revelation, the Seals are outlined in the following fashion:

- Seal One -- **War** (crown, bow, conquering and to conquer)
- Seal Two -- **Ethnic Genocide** (that men should slay one another)
- Seal Three -- **Crop Failure** (wheat, barley)
- Seal Four -- **Plague, Famine** (sword, hunger, death)
- Seal Five -- **Global Persecution** (slain for the Word of God)
- Seal Six -- **Global reaction to seals One thru Five & Rapture** (earthquake, global blackout, meteorite shower)
- Seal Seven -- **The Wrath of God**

Now, the Rapture occurs at the very end of the 6th Seal, in Revelation 7:9; (vast multitude from every nation, tribe and tongue before the Lamb), and is further identified beyond a shadow of doubt in Revelation 7:13-14 (these are the ones who have come out of the **Great Tribulation**.) Remember that Scripture interprets Scripture. Now, let's look at the Matthew 24 passage above, and see if Jesus says the same thing there.

Matthew 24:6 -- And you will hear of **wars and rumors of wars** (Seal One)

Matthew 24:7 -- For **nation (Greek *ethnos*) shall rise against nation, and kingdom (Greek *basileia*) against kingdom**

Now, no offense to the King James folks, but they did a lousy job of translating that passage. The Greek word ***ethnos*** is the same word from which we get our word **ethnic**, and an **ethnic group** is a **type of people**, not a nation. And the Greek work ***basileia*** means **kingdom**, which is what we would call today a **nation**. A better rendering of Matthew 24:7 would be something like this:

"For **ethnic group** will rise against **ethnic group** and **nation** against **nation**"

Now, remember the first two Seals? **War (nation vs. nation) and Ethnic Genocide (Ethnic group vs. Ethnic group)**. The designations match perfectly, only in **reverse order**.

In Verse 7, we also find **famines (Seal Three), pestilences (Seal Four) and earthquakes (Seal Six) in various places**. Notice that Jesus didn't say these things would be **global**, but that they would be specific to **certain locations on the globe**. This matches perfectly with Zechariah Chapter 6, where the assignment of the horses is given (North, South, or Center of planet). And it also happens to match up perfectly with what has actually happened in history. We actually entered the Seals at the beginning of **World War I**, and have been in the midst of them since then. And please note something else that is **very** important. Jesus, after listing all these terribly traumatic events, says that they are only the **beginning** of the sorrows.

Now, there is another thing to take note of here: The **order** of these things in Matthew is not the same as the order in Revelation. The order of the appearance of the horses in Zechariah is not the same as the order in Revelation. But remember that the Bible is built on the principle of **Progressive Revelation**. Zechariah and Matthew properly list **what** is going to happen, but not exactly **when**. But Jesus, as **Son of God** (highest possible level of revelation), correctly identifies **the order in which these events will take place** in The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now, we move to Verse 9, and another place where the King James boys tanked it. Thank heavens the New King James gets it right:

*"<sup>9</sup> Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But he who endures to the end shall be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."*

– Matthew 24:9-14

Jesus says that **after** the traumatic events of war, ethnic genocide, crop failure, plague and famine that the people of the world will, in a twisted and bizarre kind of logic, blame the Church for all these events. As a result, they will deliver us up to **tribulation (Greek *thlipsis*)**. The King James Version translates this word as **be afflicted**, which makes no sense at all, since **exactly the same word** appears in Verse 21:

*"<sup>15</sup> Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup> "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."* – Matthew 24:15-22

Jesus says "For then there will be **great tribulation (Greek *megas thlipsis*)**." You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out what **megas** means. We get our overused phrase **mega** from it today. It's amazing how many words of ancient Greek and Latin have carried forward in our language today with



virtually no change in their meaning. And the Greek word **thlipsis** is translated time and time again as **tribulation**, both in the KJV and NKJV, except for that one strange occurrence in Matthew 24:9 in the KJV.

The only seal not covered in Matthew 6-8 in the **Fifth Seal of Global Persecution, i.e. The Tribulation (thlipsis)**, but it is clearly covered in Verse 9. And when everything goes you-know-where in a handbasket in the **Sixth Seal**, it turns into **Great Tribulation (megas thlipsis)**. It's even more fun if you switch quickly to Revelation 7:14, where one of the 24 Elders, talking about the Rapture, says, **"These are the ones who come out of the Great Tribulation (megas thlipsis)"**.

The Greek term used in both Scriptures is **identical**. And how in thunder the KJV boys could translate **thlipsis** one way in one place, and another way in the **same passage** is beyond me! So a revised summary would look like this:

**Seal Five -- Global Persecution – thlipsis (Revelation 6:9-11, Matthew 24:9-13)**  
**Seal Six -- Global Reaction -- megas thlipsis (Revelation 6:12-7:17, Matthew 24:15-28)**

And, to put the cherry on top of the sundae, go to Matthew 24:29-31, where Jesus **says "Immediately after the tribulation (thlipsis, Seal 5!) of those days, the sun will be darkened (Seal Six!), and the moon will not give its light (Seal Six!), the stars will fall from heaven (Seal Six!), and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. THEN the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven...And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they will gather together His elect from one end of heaven to the other (The Rapture!)."**

Now, given what we have just covered, **how in the world** can you read the Word of God **in context** and come up with a Pre-Tribulation Rapture? In fact, how can any honest man or woman come up with any other conclusion than to place the Rapture precisely where Scripture says it occurs, at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, just before the Wrath of God begins?

If we take Revelation as the snap-to grid, just as the Doctrine of Progressive Revelation indicates that we should, this is what the time line looks like:

<b>Seal</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Revelation Passage</b>	<b>Matthew Passage</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>War</b>	<b>Revelation 6:2</b> White Horse Bow, Crown Conquering and to conquer	<b>Matthew 24:6-7</b> Wars and rumors of wars "Kingdom" ( <i>basileia</i> ) will rise against "Kingdom ( <i>balileia</i> )"
<b>2.</b>	<b>Ethnic Genocide</b>	<b>Revelation 6:4</b> Red Horse Take peace from the earth People should kill one another Great Sword	<b>Matthew 24:7</b> "Nation" ( <i>ethnos</i> ) will rise against "Nation ( <i>ethnos</i> )"
<b>3.</b>	<b>Crop Failure</b>	<b>Revelation 6:5-6</b> Black Horse Wheat and Barley crop failure Olive Oil and Wine crops left alone	<b>Matthew 24:7</b> Famines and pestilences
<b>4.</b>	<b>Famine</b>	<b>Revelation 6:8</b> Pale Horse Death and Hades over 25% of earth Sword, Hunger, Death, Beasts of earth	<b>Matthew 24:7</b> Famines and pestilences in various places
<b>(All these are just the beginning of sorrows!)</b>			<b>Matthew 24:8</b>

<b>Seal</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Revelation Passage</b>	<b>Matthew Passage</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Tribulation</b>	<b>Revelation 6:9-11</b> Souls slain for the Word of God and their testimony	<b>Matthew 24:9-13</b> Deliver you to Tribulation and kill you Hated by all nations for My name sake Many will become offended Betray one another Hate one another Many false prophets Lawlessness will abound Love of many will grow cold
		<b>(He who endures to the end shall be saved!)</b>	<b>Matthew 24:13</b>
		Gospel preached to all the world	Matthew 24:14
<b>6.</b>	<b>Great Tribulation</b>	<b>Revelation 6:12-7:8</b>  144,000 male virgin Jewish prophets  Global earthquake Mountains and islands moved Global blackout  Meteorite shower Atmospheric blow-off	<b>Matthew 24:7,21-31</b> Great tribulation ( <i>megas thlipsis</i> ) Worst since beginning of world No flesh would have been saved False christs and false evangelists Great signs and wonders to deceive Earthquakes in various places  Sun will be darkened Moon will not give its light Stars will fall from heaven Powers of heavens shaken
<b>--</b>	<b>Rapture</b>	<b>Revelation 7:9-14</b> Great Multitude without number All nations, tribes, peoples & tongues Standing before the Lamb Clothed in white robes	<b>Matthew 24:30-31</b> Sign of the Son of Man will appear All the tribes of the earth will mourn See the Son of Man coming on the clouds He will send His angels with great sound of a trumpet They will gather His elect from one end of Heaven to another

***"These in white robes, who are they, and where did they come from?"***  
***"These are the ones who have come OUT OF the Great Tribulation!"***

**7. Wrath of God Revelation 8:1-18:24** -----

Pretty amazing, huh? Even more amazing for the purposes of synchronizing the two narratives is the **key phrase**, and also the title of the article (I wonder why?...) **MEGA (*megas*) Tribulation (*thlipsis*)!** Notice how both the Revelation and Matthew narratives use **exactly the same phrase, in exactly the same place in the timeline!** At this point, if you are still arguing against what these little articles calmly and factually proclaim, and arguing for a Pre-Tribulation (*thlipsis*) Rapture, you have ignored the truth that has plainly and clearly presented to you and are stubbornly clinging to a deception that you know in your heart is a lie, simply because what the Bible plainly teaches does not fit what you want to have happen!

I know that this statement is terribly harsh, but my experiences in dealing with the Pre-Tribulation crowd are that nothing short of a good, hard slap across the face will get their attention and make them start honestly examining their selfish, shallow, carnal viewpoints. God forbid that they, safely encamped in their Suburbianty and their Megachurches preaching shallow, positive, self-improvement messages instead of preaching repentance and holiness, should ever have suffer even a hangnail for the Gospel of

Jesus Christ while their brothers and sisters all over the world are being **tortured, persecuted, jailed and killed** at an alarming rate **because they will not deny the Lord who has saved their immortal souls**. Heaven forbid that they should actually have to fast and pray just to be given their daily bread. And Heaven forbid that these fat cows of Samaria, unconcerned for the poor and sick in their midst, should miss even one teensy appointment in their hair salons, streaking their hair and painting their toenails and wearing more bling than Neon Deon. Yes, I know, this is probably making you very mad. But when was the last time that anyone, much less any pastor of yours, had the guts to tell you that you are a prisoner of your sins and a disgrace to the Kingdom? When was the last time that anyone told you that you need to drop to your knees right where you are and repent for all of your sins, and truly be saved and filled with the HOLY Spirit, so that you can escape the wrath to come? And when was the last time that anyone told you that unless you change, and become like Him, that you will be LEFT BEHIND in the Rapture of the Bride to face the unmitigated horror of the Beast and His Mark?

Dear friend, if I did not care for your soul, I would not stand face to face with you and confront you. If I did not love you, I would tickle your ears and tell you what you want to hear. But because I love you, and because there may be no other voices out there who care enough for the truth to warn you, as a Watchman on the Wall, I **must** take this opportunity to warn and confront you, so that there might be a hope that you would come to your senses and repent. If I fail to warn you, **your blood will be on my hands**. I have made enough mistakes in my life. I don't need your sins heaped on top of mine, and your blood on my head. I cry out to you, dear brother or sister in Christ, please read this *E-Pistle* again and again until the truth finally seeps into your mind and your heart. And then turn to the Lord, Who is merciful, and He will forgive you and receive you back into sweet fellowship with Him and His precious Holy Spirit. We are about to enter into **MEGA Tribulation**. **Are you ready???**



# Day 16 ~ The Dilemma of Daniel



<sup>15</sup> “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup> “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.”

~ Matthew 24:15-20

In our last *E-Pistle*, we talked about the placement of the **Tribulation** and the **Great Tribulation** in the End-Time scenario, and how they relate to the positioning of the **Rapture**. Now we come to an equally controversial issue: **The placement of the prophecies of Daniel into the whole End-Times mix**. In order to do this, we have to use what I will call **The Subroutine Principle**. I spent over 30 years in the data processing industry, and wrote untold thousands of programs during those years, some of extreme complexity. In every program, there is a **Main Program**, describing major steps or procedures in the program, followed by a whole series of **Sub-Programs or subroutines**. Each subroutine is designed to handle a specific task, and nothing else. It keeps developing logic from turning into a quagmire of chaos, and makes it easier for someone other than the developer to follow the logic of the program. When I started in my data processing career, I followed a brilliant but erratic and emotionally unstable individual named Dave. I won't go into what Dave did while he worked for NCR Corporation, or what he did when they let him know he was being let go, but unstable is the kindest thing I could say about the guy. I also had to try and decipher his programs, with not a shred of documentation. It was a traumatizing and educational process, during which I learned to value logical, rational thought and leaving a good trail of breadcrumbs for those who would come behind me. As a result, I was able to develop tremendously complex blocks of code inside programs without losing track of where I was or what I was trying to do. I wrote some programs with subroutines that went eight levels deep. Now, for those of you who don't know or understand programming, you may well say, "So? What's the big deal?" There is an unwritten rule about the human mind. Because of the three-dimensional world in which we live, our minds have a great deal of difficulty imagining a reality that expands beyond **three** dimensions. We can generally only remember three things at one time. And we can generally only follow a logic path three levels deep. For example, anyone can envision a square of 2 dimensions. Almost everyone can imagine a cube of 3 dimensions. But try to draw for me a **four**-dimensional figure with equal length sides. Head spinning? Now you understand just a little of the stretch of logic required to go **eight** levels deep!

How does all this tie into the study of the End-Times? Very simply. As I began to study the Scriptures, I found that most major passages had a **single theme, like a Main Program, and sub-plots within the single theme, just like Subroutines**. As you read through your Bible, you will find many small notations, generally in the center of the page, marking **Scripture references** which are "called" by the main passage, either by **key word, phrase** or **symbol**. These are generally called References, since they refer to a similar or related passage. The general rule is that you do not insert prophecies from Old Testament prophets randomly, but logically and in an orderly fashion, **when they are "called for" by the main text**. As you read through the Revelation of Jesus Christ, you will be absolutely amazed at how many times Zechariah is "called" during critical portions of the text. The Scroll written on both sides is mentioned in Revelation, Zechariah and Ezekiel. The four horses of different colors are referred to in both Revelation and Zechariah. It is by cross-referencing these passages by common reference or symbol that I have been able to bring out of the Holy Scriptures the revelations which I have shared with you. The number of references to Zechariah and Isaiah far outnumber the references to Daniel, yet we have become obsessed with Daniel in our End-Times theology. Is that obsession reasonable? Hardly. The

question then becomes **how often** is Daniel “called for”, **when** is he “called for” and **which of his prophecies** are “called for”?

First, let’s look at the Matthew narrative. All through Jesus’ discourse, starting in Matthew 23, there are no references to anything Daniel said until we get to Matthew 24:15:

*“<sup>15</sup> Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup> “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”* – Matthew 24:15-22

Now, there’s a clear reference to an Old Testament prophet, if ever there was one! But what is this **Abomination of Desolation** that Jesus and Daniel are referring to? Ah, dear friends, this is where the fur starts to fly! Because **who** or **what** this refers to critically changes the meaning of the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 23-25, and completely rewrites our understanding of *eschatology*, or the study of the End Times. Let me warn you up front, the discussion of this topic will absolutely consume us for the next several E-Pistles, so brace yourself for the deepest digging you have ever done in the Holy Scriptures. We have several tasks before us, so let’s begin.

**Task # 1:** We need to find out **where** in Daniel the **Abomination of Desolation** is referred to.

In order to do so, we must first turn to Daniel, Chapter 8, where Daniel had another of his notable dreams and visions. In the vision, which occurred in the third year of King Belshazzar, Daniel saw a **ram** standing beside the Ulai River. There was something odd about the ram: **one of its horns was higher than the other**. The ram was pushing **north, south and west**, and no one could stop it. While Daniel was watching this ram in amazement, suddenly a **male goat** came from the **west**, across the surface of the whole earth, and **without even touching the ground**. Talk about nimble feet! The goat also had a large, “notable” **horn** between his eyes. This goat coming from the west ran at the ram with the uneven horns with tremendous power, attacked him, broke his two horns and trampled him. After his victory over the ram, the male goat grew very large, but when he became very strong, the large horn was broken and in place of it **four notable horns** sprang up, towards the **four winds of heaven**. Out of one of those four horns grew a **little horn** which grew toward the **south**, the **east** and toward the **“Glorious Land”**. Now, that’s an awful lot of symbols already, and I’ll bet your head is spinning, but it gets much worse. In fact, I would recommend taking a tablet of lined paper and making a list (and not the kind that Santa makes!). In a column on the left hand side, label it **Scripture**, and then write another label about two inches to the right entitled **Symbol**. Then, right near the middle of the page, write down another heading entitled **Meaning, Person or Event**. Now, take the words that I have highlighted in bold font and write them under the Symbol column. Then, go to Daniel Chapter 8 and look up the various symbols I just listed for you, starting with Daniel 8:1. When you are finally done, your worksheet should look something like this:

<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Meaning, Person or Event</b>
Daniel 8:3	Ram	
Daniel 8:3	Two Horns, one higher than other	
Daniel 8:4	Pushing west, north & south	
Daniel 8:5	Male Goat from the west	
Daniel 8:5	Not even touching the ground	
Daniel 8:5	Notable Horn, broken	
Daniel 8:8	Four notable horns	
Daniel 8:8	Four Winds of Heaven	
Daniel 8:9	Little Horn, growing south, east	
Daniel 8:9	Glorious Land	

It has always intrigued me how much information God can pack into a picture versus the written word. The ancient Chinese adage says that, "One picture is worth a thousand words". That is very true. In fact, our minds were created to process information **symbolically**, then **verbally**, then **mathematically**. That's why none of us have problems understand pictures. That's also why comic books have always been as popular as they are, and why artists have drawn pictures on everything from canvas to the Sistine Chapel to the deserts of Arizona to the caves of France. I can try and tell you just how beautiful a picture of a sunset is, but no matter how many words I use, I will never be able to capture and transmit the beauty of the event to you unless I can show you a **picture**. I remember one time Bev and I were driving to Lake Erie for a church conference when we drove through a terrible thunderstorm. After hours on the road, driving in relentless rain, we finally hit clear skies. And then we saw something so beautiful that we, along with dozens of other drivers, stopped our car and got out to look at. There, arching all the way from one corner of the sky to the other was the biggest, most beautiful rainbow we had ever seen! It filled the entire horizon. And, just underneath it and slightly smaller, was a second "ghost" rainbow, dimmer but just as beautiful. Even a policeman had stopped his car and was taking pictures of the spectacle. Unfortunately, we didn't have a camera. But I can still see it clearly in my mind's eye. Unfortunately, all I can do is use words to try and describe to you what I saw. Imagine the frustration of being one of the great prophets and seeing some of the things that they saw, and then trying to relate these **supernatural** events in **natural** words to the **sub-natural** brains around them. No wonder they got frustrated. Exactly what do you do when you see a **living gyroscope with human and animal faces and wheels that move back and forth and emit electrical discharges?** Why, you call it a **wheel within a wheel!** That was Ezekiel's problem. And Daniel's problems weren't much easier. And, to make matters worse, **each one of those symbols inside the picture had a meaning of its own.** No wonder Daniel became overwhelmed to the point of getting sick when such massive amounts of information were downloaded into him in such a short span of time. Let's take a look at what actually happened:

*"<sup>15</sup> Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. <sup>16</sup> And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."<sup>17</sup> So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end."<sup>18</sup> Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. <sup>19</sup> And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be." -- Daniel 8:15-19*

When Gabriel appeared, his presence was so overwhelming that Daniel was afraid and fell on his face, blacking out as he fell. Gabriel not only had to pick him back up, but bring him back to consciousness as well. All of this over a vision, and Daniel as one of the most intelligent and anointed men of all time. Just imagine if it were you or I...

Now that Daniel is once again conscious and alert, Gabriel begins to explain the vision to Daniel, along with what each of the symbols represents:

*"<sup>20</sup> The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. <sup>21</sup> And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. <sup>22</sup> As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power. <sup>23</sup> And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. <sup>24</sup> His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. <sup>25</sup> Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means. <sup>26</sup> And the vision of the evenings and mornings which was told is true; therefore seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future." -- Daniel 8:20-26*

Now we can go back and start filling in the blanks. The **Ram** is the **Kingdom of the Medes and the Persians**. And, looking backward into history, we can also know why **one horn was larger than the other**, because although the **Medes** dominated the empire early on, the **Persians** eventually overcame

them, thus becoming the dominant, or **larger of the two horns**. So far, so good. The next player to enter the scene was the **Male Goat**, which, according to Gabriel, represented the **Kingdom of Greece**, or, as history knows it, the **Macedonian Empire**. Again, from history, we know that the **Notable Horn** was the famous conqueror **Alexander the Great**, who built that empire. Why was the goat moving from the west? Because Alexander launched his attack from Greece and Macedonia, **west of Babylon, where Daniel lived**. And why was the goat moving so fast that he didn't touch the ground? **Because Alexander had invented his very own version of what Hitler would later call *Blitzkrieg*, or *Lightning War*, a military thrust so rapid and sudden that enemy armies would be overrun in what seemed to be an instant**. Thus, the goat appeared not to be touching the ground, so fast was he moving. In just 13 short years, Alexander conquered the entire known world. What, then was all this about the **Notable Horn being broken**? As most folks know, Alexander, after conquering the entire known world, was **struck down suddenly by a fever or possibly poisoned just one month shy of his 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday**. His kingdom was massive, stretching from Greece across Europe and Asia all the way into India, and south to Egypt, Cush and Northern Africa.

After Alexander's death, his empire was divided among his **four main generals**, hence the reference in the prophecy to **four notable horns**. What about the **four winds of heaven**? Well, the empire stretched in every direction, **north, south, east and west**. Well, what about the **Little Horn**? Now, dear friends, the plot thickens. Considerably.

Up until now, Daniel's vision has concerned itself with events on a grand scale, affecting millions of people, and a huge percentage of the known world. But when the vision moves past the Four Notable Horns to the Little Horn, the focus of the vision narrows. Suddenly we are dealing with **one man** who is going to cause terrible harm in the **Glorious Land**, or **Israel**. Up until now, events have affected empires. Now, they will affect a single country, **Judea**, and its people, **the Jews**. And this man is not a nice man. He has **sinister features**. Heck, he even looks evil! And he acts evil, too! He understands **sinister schemes**. He will be powerful, but **only because someone else has given him power**. He'll be massively destructive, but, despite his evil actions, he will appear to prosper with no consequences. **And he will have a "thing" about the Jews. He will want to kill them all**. Just as in every satanically driven empire in history, from Pharaoh killing all the baby boys to Hitler exterminating six million innocent people, there is always an underlying **hatred of and a desire to destroy God's chosen people**. But, as always, when someone chooses to try and destroy God's chosen people, **God chooses to destroy them**. This is a very important lesson for the leaders of all the nations to learn once and for all. **Do not lift your hand against God's anointed**. They may not be godly right now. They may not be spiritual. They may not yet acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their lives, but they have never ceased being the chosen people of God. As such, the Lord promised Abraham that he would **bless those who blessed Israel and curse those who cursed them**. Yet, with a perfect track record of divine retribution regarding those who persecute the Jews, the world continues to seek out and torment those who have been chosen by God to carry His Word to the world. It does not matter that they have failed. The Holy Spirit will yet fall on them, and they will weep for Him who they pierced as one mourns for his only son. Simply put, if you want to get into trouble with me, just start messin' with my kids!

Who is this evil and villainous man? Well, there have been a million opinions about who is he, but, based on the timeline and the empires involved, it can only be one man: a fellow known as **Antiochus Epiphanes**. But before we start to talk about what most theologians consider to be the forerunner or early model of the Anti-Christ, we need to go back and fill in the chart we have been working on. With the answers we have just gathered; let's see what an updated version of the chart looks like:

<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Meaning, Person or Event</b>
Daniel 8:3	Ram	Medo-Persian Empire in which Daniel is dwelling
Daniel 8:3	Two Horns, one higher than other	Persians stronger than Medes, dominate kingdom
Daniel 8:4	Pushing west, north & south	Directions in which the empire expanded
Daniel 8:5	Male Goat from the west	Greece, Macedonian Empire
Daniel 8:5	Not even touching the ground	Warfare methods very quick, Blitzkrieg
Daniel 8:5	Notable Horn, broken	Alexander the Great
Daniel 8:8	Four notable horns	Four Generals who took over when he died



Daniel 8:8	Four Winds of Heaven	Empire expanded in all directions; north, south, east, west
Daniel 8:9	Little Horn, growing south, east	Antiochus Epiphanes
Daniel 8:9	Glorious Land	Israel

So far, everything that Gabriel has told Daniel has come to pass **to the letter**. In fact, so amazingly accurate are all of Daniel's prophecies that so-called Bible experts have said that they are all examples of *vaticinium ex eventua*, or, in plain English, **prophecy written after the event**. In other words, nobody could possibly have heard from God like that, **so they must have written it after it occurred, and then pretended that it was written long ago**. I shudder to think about what percentage of Christians don't believe that the Bible is accurate or reliable or even truthful. They have been taught **from their pulpits** that the Bible is riddled with errors and inconsistencies, and, of course, **people just don't hear from God like that. Then, now or ever**. Boy, have I got news for them! They sure don't serve the same God I do! And why do the pastors preach this nonsense from their pulpits? **Because that's what they were taught in cemetery, er, ah, seminary!** It is the **seminary professors themselves who are teaching doubt and unbelief to their students**. Those students become our pastors. And they pass that doubt and unbelief right down the line to their people, who believe what they are told, because, after all, these men are supposedly learned and knowledgeable and are responsible for guiding them into all truth, when, in fact, they are leading their own congregations straight into the bowels of Hell itself! Yeah, I know. I'm a real hard-liner. But after watching 30 years of this nation sliding inexorably into the gaping jaws of Hell, I have no use for those in leadership who set a low, weak, cowardly standard and tell their people it's all good and that it's OK to sin, 'cuz good ole God loves you sooooo much that He would never let you perish! What a terrible judgment awaits these men at the Great White Throne. And, yes, you and I and they and **everyone** will stand before the Bema Seat of Christ, to receive what we did in our bodies, either **good or bad**. Oh, don't get me going! If I could saw open my head and let you crawl inside my brain and see, as a pastor, from a pastor's heart, the incalculable damage that has been done to the body of Christ because of doubt and unbelief in the integrity, authority and authenticity of the Word of God, you would shudder in unbelief yourself, and break down weeping for all the souls I have seen ruin themselves and those around them because of the lies that they had been taught. Almost all have caused their lives to enter into a condition of total wreckage, and many have forfeited their immortal souls, gone back on God, and are now leading backslidden, sinful, rebellious lives.

Let me get back on track for just a moment, though. We were talking earlier about the fact that many Bible scholars believe that the Book of Daniel was written **after** the events described in his prophecies, simply because all of them contain such startling accuracy, and that some overzealous Scribe attached Daniel's name to the book in the hopes that it would lend credibility and authenticity to it. There is, however, a nasty catch in that theory, and I would like to examine it for a second. Now, our little buddy Antiochus Epiphanes was a Seleucid, a successor to one of Alexander's four generals, who ruled over part of his former empire. After his death and a period of political and military shuffling back and forth, the empire eventually settled from four into three pieces; the Antigonid Empire in Macedonia and Greece, the Seleucid Empire in Mesopotamia and Persia and the Ptolemaic Empire in Egypt, Palestine and Cyrenaica. Antiochus ruled over the Seleucid Empire, and, as such, was the ruler over Israel as well. He ruled over Israel from **175 BC to 164 BC**. Remember those dates. For those of you who are not familiar with how to understand **AD and BC** dates (not **CE and BCE**, for those cowards who are unwilling to admit that Jesus is Lord over all history!), here's how it works:

Let's say that you were born in **1930 AD** and died in **2000 AD**. How old would you have been when you died? Well, you would just calculate it like this:  $2000 - 1930 = 70$ . That's simple enough. But **BC** dates run **backwards** from **AD** dates, so instead of being born at a **lower number** (1930) and dieing at a **higher** number (2000), it works **just the opposite**. If you had been born in **2000 BC**, and lived for 70 years, you would have died in **1930 BC**. Everything in western history centers around the supposed date of Christ's birth, as well it should. No other man has so influenced history as our own Lord and Savior Jesus. And, to further complicate things, **there is no Year Zero**. So we move from **1 BC** to **1 AD** when we cross over the **BC/AD** timeline. And, to further confuse the issue, it would now appear that when Rome established this dating system, they miscalculated by about six years when Jesus was **actually** born. So, if the truth be known, Jesus was probably born in about **6 BC**, and was crucified, dead, buried and resurrected in either **26 or 27 AD**. Now, I know that's confusing, but just stay with us, OK? The key

thing to remember is that Antiochus ruled from **175 BC to 164 BC**, or a period of about 11 years. All the grief that he caused, and everything unkind but deserving that Gabriel had to say to Daniel about him happened during that time span. Now, for the Book of Daniel to have been written **after the fact** would mean that it would have to have been written **after 164 BC**. But Daniel **lived** during the **6<sup>th</sup> Century BC**, or almost **400 years** before the events that he prophesied. And to lend authenticity and credibility to his claims, the Book of Daniel is found, intact with all of his prophecies, in what is called the **Septuagint, or Translation of the 70**. Now, what the heck is the Septuagint? Well, one of the things that Alexander the Great and most of his successors did was to vigorously promote Greek culture and language throughout the empire, during and after its breakup. As such, Greek was the *lingua franca*, or language of exchange for the known world, just as English is the dominant language in the world today. Since many of the Jews had been scattered across the kingdom, Hebrew had begun to pass into history. Many Jews didn't speak or understand Hebrew at all, and so a new translation of the Jewish Scriptures became necessary, this time in Greek, the language that everyone understood and spoke. Under the sponsorship of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who ruled from **285-246 BC**, a new copy of the Scriptures of the day was undertaken. This new copy of the Holy Writings of the Jews included the Book of Daniel, **just as we have it today, almost 100 years before Antiochus Epiphanes came into power!** That also meant that the Book of Daniel had been recognized as part of the Scriptures and its author a universally recognized prophet of God **for hundreds of years before it was translated into Greek**. So this nonsense about Daniel being written after the fact is just that, total nonsense, and can be documented clearly from history.

But there's another aspect of Daniel's prophecies that I'd like to bring up, and that is **whether or not God speaks to men about what will happen in the future**. The men who laughably say that this cannot happen say this largely **because they themselves do not believe**. Not only in the possibility of such a thing happening, but in general terms regarding **all the things of God**. These are the kind of men who teach their people that the Word of God is **symbolic, inaccurate and not to be trusted**. If you attend such a church, do yourself a big favor. **Go somewhere else**. Go somewhere where the Word of God and He who spoke that Word is held up to be accurate, truthful and authentic, and, most of all, **binding on the actions and doctrines by which any man or woman may live righteously, successfully, peacefully, and obtain eternal life when this life is done**. Let me explain from personal experience why and how the mechanism of prophecy works and is true.

Many years ago, I was working with a "Christian" businessman who was involved in TV ministry. Television has always been a major passion in my life, and we are on TV today. I have a complete video editing system equal to any public access station sitting in the "World Headquarters" of *Unrolling the Scroll*. We would record every Saturday evening. I would travel from Marengo, IN to Jeffersonville, IN, located near Louisville, to help with the recording each week. As a part of the crew, I also had a half hour segment of my own during the taping, where I would preach and minister to the camera. We all thought that our efforts would end up on TV in the Louisville area. Sadly, it never happened. The man we were working with was so unstable that none of the tapes were ever aired, even though he was worth about \$13 million. But we didn't know that at the time. Here's what happened: I got to the studio a little early that day, and decided it would be a good time to get in some serious prayer time regarding what my topic was going to be that night. As I prayed, the Lord spoke clearly to me and said, simply, "John Thomas". I countered, "Lord, I know John Thomas. He is the pastor of an Assemblies of God church in the city where I live." "No," the Lord replied, "Not that John Thomas. ANOTHER John Thomas". From that point on for the next few minutes, the Lord proceeded to tell me **in detail** about this new John Thomas. How he had started in ministry. How he had been rejected by everyone around him. How doors had closed to him, one after another. And how he was still God's chosen man despite all that rejection, and that God was about to open major doors of ministry that he was supposed to step through and not worry about the rejections of the past.

In my own mind, I thought that surely when I did my half hour segment that the Lord would tell me when to share this information, and that, when the program was finally aired, that a John Thomas would be somewhere in the viewing audience and would receive this prophetic Word of Knowledge. That's what **I** thought. God had different ideas. After we taped the segment, I went and sat down with the rest of the ministry teams and a small audience there in the studio. As far as I was concerned, my job was done for the evening. And then a short, dark-haired young man came up to me with a strange and intense look in

his eyes. "Do you know my name?" he asked me. "No", I replied, "but I think I am about to find out!" "MY NAME IS JOHN THOMAS", he replied, "and EVERYTHING YOU JUST SAID ABOUT ME IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE!" Needless to say, an animated discussion followed after that. Every single detail that God had given me during prayer only hours before was confirmed as John outlined to me how he had been filled with the Holy Spirit and how he had been rejected by one group after another after being filled with the Spirit of God. It seemed that he was an evangelist, but that all doors had been closed to him. Guess where he preached the following Sunday? I'll let you figure that one out for yourself.

Consider the details of the event. I had been shown in great detail about the life of a man, **including the full name of the man himself!** This is why I say that a true prophet of God does not prophesy "Glittering Generalities". It's easy to say things like "God wants you to know that He loves you" and "He knows that you've been through a hard time". Boy, that's a tough one to figure out. What percentage of the people that you pray for could have those words spoken over them, **and still be correct?** Almost 100%, I would reckon. And that, sadly, is the condition of the "**prophetic ministry**" that we have in the church today. **True prophetic revelation always reveals details about the individual that no one but they know.** When this kind of **true** prophecy occurs in the church, men really **do** fall down and say, "God is really in the midst of you!" Now, have I had this kind of event happen only once? Hardly. In fact, this kind of thing happens **all the time** when I minister to God's people, **particularly when I minister to those about whom I know nothing at all.** Otherwise, **my own understanding comes in and clouds the prophetic picture.** Now consider: If God could show me the **full name of a man, could He not show Daniel exact details about events that would happen far in the future? Could He not show Isaiah the name of the Gentile, Medo-Persian king, Cyrus, 450 years before the fact, and tell him in exact detail how he would capture Babylon, and why God had given him all the kingdoms of his world?**

Friends, I don't know what kind of God you serve, but **I serve a supernatural God who is still on the Throne, and still speaking to His prophets even today! In fact, the Lord tells me to share something with you, even in this E-Pistle.** Remember that the **Seven Thunders** said some things that John was not allowed to write down? **God will soon reveal what those Seven Thunders said, and it will mean great trouble to the world. The prophetic gift and the prophetic office are still in business today, and will stay in business until He who is perfect comes back. Then, our imperfection will be replaced with His perfection, and we will no longer see through a glass darkly and prophesy incompletely, but will behold Him clearly in all of His glorious completeness!**

We are not nearly done with Daniel, but we are done for today! Stay tuned for tomorrow's E-Pistle, entitled **A Pig in a Poke!** May God richly bless you as you walk in faith and obedience to Him!



# Day 17~ A Pig In A Poke!



<sup>15</sup> “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup> “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. – Matthew 24:15-20

In our last E-Pistle, we began to explore Daniel’s vision in Chapter 8 of the Book that bears his name. As we went along, we found a whole series of symbols which we documented and eventually identified. Finally, in our process, we came to an individual named **Antiochus Epiphanes**. According to the prophecies given to Daniel by Gabriel, this individual would be a hater of the Jews, and would do everything he could to stamp out Judaism and Israel. Let’s see if history bears out this prediction, as well as the other details of his life and kingship. First, let’s review what Gabriel told Daniel about Antiochus:

*“<sup>23</sup> And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. <sup>24</sup> His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. <sup>25</sup> Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means.” -- Daniel 8:23-25*

Man! That’s a lot of characteristics to match up, isn’t it? Now, in order to find out if Antiochus is our guy, we need to go to the history books, and knock down one Philistine at a time, if you will. Looks like it’s time for another checklist! Let’s see if we can get some kind of personality profile on this guy, shall we?

**1. When the transgressors have reached their fullness:** In retrospect, he probably qualifies as the worst individual ever to rule over the Jews in their history. Granted, the Assyrians had been awfully tough on the Ten Northern Tribes, and the Babylonians had been somewhat rough on the Jews and Jerusalem, but, even then, the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians had a long-standing reputation of showing at least a reasonable degree of tolerance toward the customs and religion of their conquered nations. But with the advent of the Macedonian Empire and Alexander the Great, a whole new ballgame started. Alexander was bound and determined to Hellenize all the conquered lands that he ruled, and all of his generals, including the Seleucids, and notably Antiochus Epiphanes, were fanatical in carrying out that policy. So, Antiochus really does represent the zenith of transgression regarding the religion and customs of the Jews up to that point in time in their history.

**2. Fierce features:** That’s a tough one. All we have to go on is the coinage of his realm. Power-mad monarchs just **love** to have coins cast and circulated with their own likeness stamped on it. But it’s hard to say from the coins how mean looking he really was. On some of them, he looks fairly good looking. But that may well be the result of a spin-meister in his administration. Other coins give him a nose like the beak of an eagle. But even that’s not conclusive. Big noses and Greek coins seemed to go hand in hand. You should only see what Athena, the goddess of wisdom looks like. Good thing she was wise, ‘cause she sure wasn’t good lookin’! And don’t even ask about Helen of Troy. The face that supposedly launched a thousand ships might well have sunk them as well!



**3. Understands sinister schemes:** Boy, does Antiochus qualify on this one! His father was Antiochus III the Great (they sure did like that first name, didn't they?). Actually, his older brother, Seleucus Philopator, became king after their father died. But then Seleucus died as well. Antiochus had been held hostage in Rome for some time, but had been swapped in a prisoner exchange for the son and rightful heir of Seleucus, Demetrius I Soter. With his older brother dead, and his brother's son, the rightful heir to the throne, safely locked away in Rome, Antiochus took advantage of the situation and proclaimed himself co-regent with another of Seleucus' sons, the infant Antiochus (again with that name! Boy what a fixation!), whose murder he calmly orchestrated a few years later. Nice guy, killing family members that are mere children! Plus, we have at least two more major events documented later in this article that also qualify for the word **sinister**. I think we have a winner, Bob!

**4. Power shall be mighty:** Antiochus qualifies on this point as well. Seems that the neighboring dynasty in Egypt, the Ptolemies, was demanding the return of Syria and the surrounding territories. Antiochus decided the best way to handle the situation was to launch a **pre-emptive strike** against Egypt and invaded, succeeding in conquering everything but Alexandria. He then captured Ptolemy, effectively ending the war, and agreed to let him stay on as king, but only as a puppet of Antiochus. A series of diplomatic maneuvers quickly followed, which forced Antiochus to launch another invasion of Egypt, resulting in the re-capture of Egypt, again except for Alexandria, and the capture of Cyprus. Eventually, he ran afoul of Imperial Rome, and had to back off, losing his control over Egypt and Cyprus.

**5. Not by his own power:** Another winner. First of all, he goes nowhere without being let out of prison. Secondly, there was a great deal of conniving behind the scenes to pull this whole thing off. It seems that King Eumenes of Pergamum helped Antiochus gain control of Antioch and the Seleucid throne. So Antiochus clearly did not ascend to the throne without the intervention of another ruler, who also must have had certain stakes in him ruling, rather than his brother. Sounds like politics as usual, right? You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours...

**6. Shall destroy fearfully:** Just read all of point 9. 'Nuff said!

**7. Shall prosper and thrive:** Appallingly enough, he really did. Other than a couple of nasty military reversals, he enjoyed great material wealth and power during the time that he ruled. It really raises the question of "Why do the wicked prosper?" But prosper he did.

**8. Shall destroy the mighty:** Again, just read point 9. This guy is just an early warning prototype for Adolph Hitler. He was consumed with destroying everything around him, and was obsessed with trying to expand his kingdom into Egypt.

**9. Shall destroy the holy people:** This is where Antiochus really "shines", in a demonic sort of way. After he was forced to withdraw from Egypt in 167 BC, he decided that he would give himself some "comfort food" by exercising his military and cultural muscles against, you guessed it, Israel! Since all of Alexander's generals and their descendents were strong advocates of Hellenizing their subjects (converting them from whatever belief systems and customs they already had to a completely Greek world view, including their language, mannerisms, dress and religion), Antiochus decided that this would be a good time to convert those troublesome Jews out of their stubborn resistance to all things Greek and force the Greek culture down their throats, whether they wanted it or not. According to Josephus, the great Jewish historian of that era, there was considerable dispute in Jerusalem regarding this Hellenization policy. There had also been a fierce battle in Jerusalem over who would be the high priest. One candidate, Jason, stood strongly for tradition Jewish religion and custom. The other candidate, Menelaus, went so far as to abandon his priestly garb in favor of Greek clothing, and expressed a desire to Antiochus to abandon traditional Jewish law and governmental forms for those of the Greeks. Some of the people sided with Menelaus, but the majority of the people stood firm with Jason. Menelaus then appealed to Antiochus to let them build a gymnasium in Jerusalem. Now, today when we hear that word, we shorten it to "gym" and think of it as a place for physical education and basketball, but in that day, it was far more than that. According to one definition, gymnasium comes from the original Greek word *gymnasion*. (Boring! Not really. Just hang on for another sentence or two) *Gymnasion* is derived from the common Greek adjective *gymnos*, meaning "naked", by way of the related verb *gymnazein*, whose special meaning was "to do physical exercise". The verb had this meaning because **one undressed for exercise**. Now,

when you and I went to high school, we all had to take gym. That meant going into the locker room with all the boys (or all the girls), and changing into a gym outfit. Afterwards, some of us quickly showered and changed back into our school clothes. Some of us just changed clothes and left a tangible vapor trail behind us for the rest of the day. I won't go into all the stupid stuff that happened in locker rooms and shower rooms when I was in high school and college, but I will tell you that the first time I **ever** appeared in my birthday suit in front of anybody other than my mother, my father or my doctor was in high school gym. For those of us who do not have ripped abs and a six pack for a tummy, this can be a traumatic event. Most of us just have ripped pants and a six-pack **in** our tummies! But in ancient Greece, things were just a teensy bit different. When you went to a gymnasium, you took off your clothes. **Period.** All physical activity was done **naked**. In fact, the early Olympics were done **totally in the nude**. The practice of exercising in the nude had its beginnings in the seventh century BC. The custom apparently began in **Sparta**, and while various theories have been advanced, it is commonly thought that the main reason for doing so was to emphasize **the erotic appeal of the male body**. Another tradition that developed in conjunction with this was that of **oiling the body**, a custom so costly that it required **significant public and private subsidies**. Now, if you are good, devout Jew, does the thought of **heavily oiled, naked, muscular men in a public place** appeal to you? And, even more, does it find favor with **the Holy One of Israel?** I don't think so, do you??? But it gets worse, **much worse**.

The Greek fascination with the male body, coupled with athletic nudity and decoration with olive oil, was just a precursor or introduction to something far more evil and wicked. You see, in ancient Greece, there was a commonly accepted activity called **pederasty**. Now, I know that this word is probably unknown to most of you. And it is with some trepidation that I make you aware of it. But you must understand that Antiochus didn't just want the Jews walking around in togas. There was something **far more evil afoot**. In ancient Greece, it was not uncommon for an **older man to "fall in love" with a young boy, and to enter into a lover's relationship with him!** In fact, many of these relationships were formalized in public ceremonies equivalent to today's marriage ceremony. This practice began in ancient **Sparta**, the Greek city-state that we have so long honored for their tremendous military abilities. What is not widely known or advertised is that these Spartan "warriors" were often **male lovers** with one another.

And so, by requesting to build a gymnasium in Jerusalem, Menelaus was opening Jerusalem to **the practice and promotion of openly homosexual activity between older men and young boys, to the exclusion and disdain for the natural affections which should be shown only to a woman.**

Now, to help put a good "spin" on things, it was argued that gymnasiums could and would also be used for scholarly and philosophical debates. Uh huh. Kinda like arguing that Playboy magazine has "redeeming social value" because they put one intelligent article in each issue. No, you're not reading the magazine for its intellectual qualities. **It's all about the flesh.** Menelaus was openly inviting the devil to come into Jerusalem and set up the same perversions and wickedness that had defiled the rest of the world. Small wonder, then, that the Jews were outraged and resisted him.

In addition, when Antiochus agreed to let Menelaus build a gymnasium in Jerusalem, some of the Jews went so far as to **disguise the circumcision of their private parts so that they might be Greeks even when undressed**, according to Josephus. Now, don't even think of writing me and asking how they intended to do this. I have no clue. I don't know, and I don't **want to know**. There is such a thing as **too much information**. In fact, I almost feel bad that I had to bring this information to you. I was not seeking it. But as I followed one article after another, they fell together in a remarkable chain of events that clearly indicated that God wanted this wickedness exposed. Do not be quick to glorify Greek culture. In fact, Greek philosophy almost totally ruined the theology of the church from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century on. The foundational truths established by God over 4,000 years were quickly eroded away by Greek "logic". Soon **faith in God** was replaced by the **wisdom of men**. And that's **always** a bad exchange. In fact, our entire scientific community is founded on the Greek schools of wisdom and knowledge. Small wonder that they almost uniformly reject the supernatural and a Creator God, and instead glorify man and his knowledge. Seems like wanting to be God is still the main problem with all His created beings, and that **homosexuality and sexual perversion go hand in hand with this deification of that which is created, while rejecting the Creator**. Paul, in Romans Chapter 1, strongly addresses this issue. We will not go there, for that is not the topic of this article, but I would recommend to you that you study

closely what Paul has to say in that chapter about sexual perversion, and then apply it to today's so-called "gay" lifestyle.

Now, if this were all, it would be enough. But, for Antiochus, **it was only the tip of the iceberg.** According to **I Maccabees**, documents written between Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, and Matthew, the first book in the New Testament, Antiochus was just beginning. In 169 BC, after defeating Egypt, Antiochus came to Jerusalem with his army. Coming to the temple, he **entered the sanctuary (already considered a defilement, for Gentiles were never allowed past the court of the Gentiles), and took the golden altar and the wonderful, almost six foot tall Menorah, with all of its lamps for light. He also took the Table of Shewbread, the cups, the bowls, the golden censers and the veil that separated the rest of the temple from the Holy of Holies! He even stripped the gold ornamentation from the cornices and the façade of the temple.** Not stopping with the defilement and looting of the Temple, he also took away the gold and silver and precious vessels. And any treasury that he could find, he broke into. In addition, many innocent people were murdered in the process. Now I ask you, **would you want a man like this setting the moral and religious tone for your country???**

But Antiochus **still** wasn't done! Two years later, in 167 BC, he sent one of his captains to levy tribute in the various cities of Judah. When he came to Jerusalem, he **plundered and set fire to the city, destroying its houses and the surrounding wall.** Men and women were taken captive and their livestock confiscated. Then, to add insult to injury, he proceeded to build up the **city of David** and turn it into a Hellenic stronghold, right in the heart of Jerusalem. Once safely entrenched there, he issued an edict which has only seen its equivalent in Nazi Germany. Here are the rules which he established in that edict:

1. **They were to all be one people.** (On face value, not a bad or evil statement)
2. **Each subject was to abandon his native customs.** (Uh oh. Can we see where this is going?)
3. **All sacrifices were forbidden.** (Well, there goes the neighborhood. Not to mention the Temple)
4. **Sabbaths and Feast Days were to be profaned.** (Getting worse...)
5. **To desecrate the Sanctuary and the Priests.** (Now he's getting personal!)
6. **To build high altars and shrines and idols.** (Just keep it up, buddy!)
7. **To sacrifice swine and unclean animals.** (Now we're talking war!)
8. **To leave their sons UNCIRCUMCISED.** (Violating the most fundamental covenant of all!)
9. **To forget the Torah and change all their observations.** (I don't believe what I'm hearing!)
10. **Execute ANYONE who violates these ordinances.** (All right. That's enough. Stop!)
11. **Erect the ABOMINATION THAT DESECRATES on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Hislev by SACRIFICING A PIG ON THE ALTAR OF BURNT INCENSE!** (Congratulations. You wanted a war? **You got a war!!!**)
12. **Sacrifice incense at the doors of the houses and in the street.** (Too late now. Too late.)
13. **If you find a Torah, tear it up and burn it!** (You got the spears? Bows? Arrows? Good!)
14. **If anyone is found with a scroll of the covenant or observing the Torah, put him to death.** (Everyone ready? Good. On the count of three...)

Those were the rules, subject to Pastor Ray paraphrasing, taken from **I Maccabees 1:29-33, 41-57.** Now, you tell me: are the godly, devout Jews going to put up with this nonsense for very long? The only logical response to this is **open war**, and that's exactly what Antiochus Epiphanes got! At first, it was individual resistance, and Antiochus was brutal in his response. According to Josephus, he tortured and crucified anyone who resisted him. Women who had their children circumcised were killed, and their children hung around their necks. What if it was **your** son and his wife and **your grandkids** that were hanging outside on the road into Jerusalem? I don't mean to gross you out, but **does Antiochus qualify** on this point? Yes??? I thought so.



**10. Shall cause deceit to prosper:** It seems that after nearly destroying Jerusalem the first time around, Antiochus sent Apollonius, a deputy, to collect taxes two years later and secretly commanded him to kill all the grown men and to sell the women and boys as slaves. When he arrived in Jerusalem, he pretended to come in peace and waited until the Sabbath. The Jews were resting, as Scripture dictates. Apollonius ordered his men to parade under arms. And then, as a crowd gathered to watch the spectacle, he killed everyone who came out to see them, then rushed into the city with his armed men and killed a great many more people. It marked the beginning of the greatest holocaust that Israel had seen in a very long time, as we have described in criteria number nine. Ironically, it was yet another of his dirty deeds that actually led to his own death. In II Maccabees 1:13-16, it describes how this arch-villain met his final end:

*"<sup>13</sup>: For when the leader reached Persia with a force that seemed irresistible, they were cut to pieces in the temple of Nanea by a deception employed by the priests of Nanea. <sup>14</sup>: For under pretext of intending to marry her, Antiochus came to the place together with his friends, to secure most of its treasures as a dowry. <sup>15</sup>: When the priests of the temple of Nanea had set out the treasures and Antiochus had come with a few men inside the wall of the sacred precinct, they closed the temple as soon as he entered it. <sup>16</sup>: Opening the secret door in the ceiling, they threw stones and struck down the leader and his men, and dismembered them and cut off their heads and threw them to the people outside."*

Truthfully, I can't think of a more appropriate way for this wicked man to meet his end. He had employed deceit to rob and destroy the innocent people of Jerusalem, all for the purposes of taking their treasures. And it was with the treasures of another land that he himself was lured to his doom. There's an old Irish proverb that goes like this: "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." Antiochus was baited and caught with the lure of wealth. His deception worked in Jerusalem, but **it only worked once**. The second time around, he was caught in his own trap. Congratulations, Antiochus! You qualify completely as a sneaky, deceitful guy!

**11. Shall exalt himself in his heart:** Again, Antiochus qualifies **in spades**. He called himself Antiochus **Epiphanes**. Epiphanes means "God revealed". Gee! He thinks he's god! On the other hand, the Jews called him Antiochus **Epimanes**, which means "The Mad". Personally, I vote with the Jews on this one.

**12. Shall destroy many in their prosperity:** Do you even need to ask? But, just for the record, according to II Maccabees 5:14, **80,000 were killed in three days, 40,000 of them in hand-to-hand combat, and another 80,000 sold into slavery.**

**13. Shall rise against Prince of Princes:** From a Christian perspective, this is a tough one. When we read the phrase **Prince of Princes**, we think automatically of our own Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But if that is the case, then Antiochus is automatically disqualified, because he lived almost 200 years before Jesus. That role belongs to Herod and Pilate. But if the Prince of Princes is **Onias III, the anointed High Priest of the temple**, then we may have a winner. Onias III was removed from office by Antiochus, and was replaced by Jason, whom we have already discussed. This point is clearly disputable, so we can't draw any absolute conclusions from it.

**14. Shall be broken without human means:** On our final criteria, Antiochus is once again a winner. This time, I want to quote directly from II Maccabees 9:

*"<sup>3</sup>: While he was in Ecbatana, news came to him of what had happened to Nicanor and the forces of Timothy. <sup>4</sup>: Transported with rage, he conceived the idea of turning upon the Jews the injury done by those who had put him to flight; so he ordered his charioteer to drive without stopping until he completed the journey. But the judgment of heaven rode with him! **For in his arrogance he said, 'When I get there I will make Jerusalem a cemetery of Jews.'** <sup>5</sup>: But the all-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, struck him an incurable and unseen blow. **As soon as he ceased speaking he was seized with a pain in his bowels for which there was no relief and with sharp internal tortures** -- <sup>6</sup>: and that very justly, for he had tortured the bowels of others with many and strange inflictions. <sup>7</sup>: Yet he did not in any way stop his insolence, but was even more filled with arrogance, breathing fire in his rage against the Jews, and giving orders to hasten the journey. **And so it came***

**about that he fell out of his chariot as it was rushing along**, and the fall was so hard as to torture every limb of his body. <sup>8</sup>: Thus he who had just been thinking that he could command the waves of the sea, in his **superhuman arrogance**, and imagining that he could weigh the high mountains in a balance, was brought down to earth and carried in a litter, making the power of God manifest to all. <sup>9</sup>: **And so the ungodly man's body swarmed with worms, and while he was still living in anguish and pain, his flesh rotted away, and because of his stench the whole army felt revulsion at his decay.** <sup>10</sup>: **Because of his intolerable stench no one was able to carry the man who a little while before had thought that he could touch the stars of heaven.** <sup>11</sup>: Then it was that, broken in spirit, he began to lose much of his arrogance and to come to his senses under the scourge of God, for he was tortured with pain every moment. <sup>12</sup>: And when he could not endure his own stench, he uttered these words: 'It is right to be subject to God, and no mortal should think that he is equal to God.' "

Amazingly, as we discovered earlier in this article, all of that broke him but did not kill him. Based on the way he died, it seems that the breaking process only went so far and lasted so long. The degree of arrogance and stubbornness required to ignore this kind of Divine chastisement is almost beyond imagination. Rulers all over the world seem to forget that it is the Lord that raises them up and pulls them down. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that lesson the hard way. So did Pharaoh, the ultimate way, when two walls of water probably 50 feet high collapsed on him and his troops at the Red Sea. Does Antiochus qualify on this final point? What do you think?

So, when all is said and done, is Antiochus Epiphanes our man? Is he the individual referred to prophetically in Daniel Chapter 8? On the whole, I'd have to say, **"Yes!"** Although there are some points where the match isn't exact or sure, **on every major point he scores right off the chart.** Clearly, this man represents a kind of **Anti-Christ**, just as Adolph Hitler would many, many years later. Is he the ultimate Anti-Christ? No. Absolutely not. He's not even close. But he fits the **general** pattern.

Our quest for the Mystery Man of Daniel 8 is over. But our quest for the individual who fulfills the **rest** of Daniel's prophecies is just beginning. Starting with tomorrow's E-Pistle, we will continue our search for the **real Anti-Christ** by backing up to Chapter 2, in our article entitled **Head of Gold, Feet of Clay**. Until then, keep your life pure, holy and free of defilement from the sin of the world, that you may have the right to enter into the **Eternal City of God to rule and reign with Him who rules and reigns forever!**

# Day 18 – Head of Gold, Feet of Clay



<sup>31</sup> “You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor *was* excellent, stood before you; and its form *was* awesome. <sup>32</sup> This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup> You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. <sup>35</sup> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. – Daniel 2:31-35

The more that someone studies Daniel, the more blown away they have to become over the incredible detail and accuracy of the visions and dreams that were given to Daniel during his time on earth. Even more remarkable about them is the fact that Daniel was never more than a **part-time prophet!** After Jerusalem was captured, most of the brightest and best of the nation were carried off into captivity in Babylon, to serve the best interests of the empire, at the discretion of the emperor. Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, quickly rose to prominence among all the young captives by virtue of their extraordinary character, integrity and intelligence. Each of them was renamed with Babylonian names, in order to try and get them to forget their Jewish heritage. Daniel was renamed Belteshazzar, Hananiah was renamed Shadrach, Mishael was renamed Meshach, and Azariah was renamed Abed-Nego. There is a remarkable story about Daniel that is hidden in the Bible, woven into the circumstantial evidence of the Scriptures. I discovered it as I was researching other matters not even related to this book. It would require a whole article in and of itself, which will have to wait until a later date. I know, I know. I drive you craaaaaazy when I do this do you! Let me challenge you to search the Scriptures daily **for yourself** to see if these things be so. **I can prove,** by means of circumstantial evidence, that **Daniel was directly responsible for the Children of Israel being permitted to return home to Judah!** **I can also prove, by circumstantial evidence, that Daniel was also responsible for the Magi showing up hundreds of years later at the doorstep of Herod the King, saying, “Where is He who is born King of the Jews?”** It is an amazing journey that ties Daniel to the prophet Jeremiah, the prophet Isaiah and General and eventually King Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire himself. It was the final act of grace of an extraordinary Man of God before he retired permanently from public service. Now that I have tormented you sufficiently, I hope and pray that you begin to search the Bible yourself for the **rest of the story,** as Paul Harvey used to say. Now, back to the main plot!

All three young men established themselves as leaders within the Babylonian Empire, but Daniel excelled beyond them all. He quickly established himself as one of the King’s advisory council, much as the President of the United States surrounds himself with a group of men whose function it is to advise and counsel him in matters of state. These men in Babylon were referred to as **magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and Chaldeans.** In most of the world, even today, there is no distinction between natural and supernatural knowledge. We, in the Western World, make an extreme division between the two, and subconsciously label all **scientific or empirical** knowledge as **good,** and all **supernatural or mystical** knowledge as **bad.** But that is not correct. The Bible says that **My people go into exile for lack of knowledge.** And the type of knowledge that Holy Scripture is referring to is **supernatural** knowledge. Now, we are not talking about evil or arcane knowledge here. Under no circumstances would I ever

encourage you to seek out the demonic side of knowledge. James clearly says that there is a difference between the two:

*"<sup>15</sup> This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."* – James 3:15-17

There is a **divine** side to supernatural wisdom and knowledge. It has **nothing** to do with knowing all the names of the angels or the supposed levels of heaven or any of those things. It has **everything** to do with knowing the Lord and the power of His might and His ways and means. Our constant mistake is in assuming that God thinks like we do or operates like we do. We tend to see Him as this really, really old guy with white flowing hair, a bad attitude, and lots of power. Nothing could be further from the truth. In Isaiah, God specifically tells His prophet that His ways are not like our ways, and that His thoughts are not like our thoughts. He then goes on to say that there is a **quantum difference** between His thought processes and methodologies and our own. At this point, most pastors stop in their sermons, and saying something stupid like, "*Y'all see, brothers and sisters, God's ways are a mystery, beyond knowing or understanding!*" It is at that point in time that I calmly and quietly get up and leave the sanctuary looking for something more intelligent, maybe like Barney the purple dinosaur. Am I being a little hard? Maybe. But if that pastor would only bother to read the **rest of the story** (there's that phrase again!), he would discover that God has sent us **His Word** so that we **can** be on His Ways and Means Committee. He even uses an analogy that everyone should be able to understand: **The Rain**. Here's how He explains it:

When it rains, the rain doesn't stop short of the hitting the ground. On the contrary, it waters the earth, causing the earth to bloom and blossom and to **produce fruit**. That fruit is in turn converted into **seed for the sower** and **bread for the eater**. Having **accomplished what it was sent to do**, the rain returns again into heaven in the form of evaporation, only to fall as rain again and begin the cycle all over again. Nothing could be simpler or more fundamental to our understanding of this physical world in which we live. But now, the Lord adds an interesting twist: **it works exactly the same way with His Word**. It goes forth from His mouth and it **never** returns to Him without accomplishing what He sent it to do, just as the rain never returns to the heavens without accomplishing what it was sent to do. And it doesn't matter **who** speaks His Word over a situation. Once **someone** has spoken the Word of Faith over a situation, it releases God's Word to accomplish what He sent it to do. In fact, having released His Word into us, He now looks almost exclusively **to us** to release it over the situations in our lives. We, then, become the source of the rain which waters, causes to blossom and bloom, and produces seed for us to sow and break for us to eat. So often, we plead with God to do something for us that He has, in fact, already done. We say that we are waiting on Him, and yet He and the situation which we face are generally waiting on us instead.

It was with this kind of knowledge and wisdom that Daniel entered the political area of ancient Babylon. Granted, his "colleagues" were using the "dark side of the force", if you will. But just because they gained their information from the demonic realm didn't mean that Daniel had to do the same. And because the **source** of his wisdom and knowledge was so far superior to their source, so his wisdom, knowledge, insight and understanding into all manner of temporal affairs was vastly superior to all of them put together. Daniel proved this conclusively again and again. Every single time Daniel, and Daniel alone, came up with the correct answer. Again and again, his adversaries and so-called fellow members of the council came up empty-handed. This happened so often that the name of Belteshazzar, Daniel's Babylonian name, came to represent the zenith of all the *Magi*, or men of wisdom and knowledge. Down through history, through the Babylonia Empire, past the Medo-Persian Empire, surviving the onslaught of the Macedonian Empire, and even outlasting the iron rule of the Roman Empire, the name **Belteshazzar** grew in legend and fame as the greatest of the great. The penultimate **Wise Man**. And a man whose **prophecies were to be studied with great diligence, because he had already accurately predicted the rise and fall of three world empires when a group of Magi packed up their bags and traveled west toward Judea around 8 BC**. That's all I'll say on that matter for right now. I have given you some substantial clues in your search for truth, wisdom and knowledge. For right now, I'll let you do the rest...

Daniel was a full-time advisor to the Kings of both Babylon and Medo-Persia. But it is as a prophet of God that we remember him today. His career gained notoriety in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. The king had a very troubling dream, so troubling that he immediately assembled **most** of his advisory council to him. Notice I said **most**. For whatever reason, Daniel was not included in this important assembly. Once they had been gathered together, the king made a troubling confession:

" <sup>1</sup> Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. <sup>2</sup> Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. <sup>3</sup> And the king said to them, 'I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.' " – Daniel 2:1-3

Immediately we run into some translation problems. There are two schools of thought about what happened that night in Nebuchadnezzar's bedroom. Some argue that he had the dream and then **couldn't remember it the next morning**. They argue that when the king said, "my spirit is anxious to know the dream", it means that he couldn't remember the dream, only the fact that it had been very troubling. Others argue that the king remembered the dream and earnestly wanted an **accurate interpretation of the dream, but didn't exactly trust the interpreters**. Often, individuals in positions of power become surrounded with **sycophants**, or **Yes Men**, who tell them what they **want** to hear, not what they **need** to hear. There's not a rock star, boxer or professional athlete who isn't surrounded by an entourage of individuals who stroke their ego and tell them what they want to hear, all for the purpose of gaining access to power, wealth and influence through the individual to whom they have joined themselves.

True to form, the advisors chimed right in:

" <sup>4</sup> Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, 'O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.' " – Daniel 2:4

Now, there's a toughie! Your majesty, all you have to do is **tell us what you dreamed**, and we'll be more than glad to **make something up!** It doesn't take any kind of wisdom or understanding, either natural or supernatural, to concoct something that will have the correct spin on it to make His Majesty happy with what you said. Nebuchadnezzar wasn't real impressed, either. So he tightened up the thumb screws a little bit with his answer:

" <sup>5</sup> The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, 'My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. <sup>6</sup> However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.' " – Daniel 2:5-6

Well! There's a carrot and a stick if ever I've seen one! For those of you who are not familiar with the expression, it was used in relation to the problems of getting a donkey to move. You had to put a **carrot in front of him** to provide him with a sufficient amount of **positive encouragement**. But you also had to put a **stick to his rear end** to provide him with an equal amount of **negative punishment** for failure to perform. The carrot in this case was obvious: gifts, rewards, and great honor. And the stick was equally obvious: **be cut in pieces and have your house turned into an ash heap**. In normal circumstances, this kind of twin tower motivation would get anybody moving. But these aren't normal circumstances. The king is requiring that these men who say that they have supernatural revelation from the gods to put their money and their lives where their mouths are. And they are starting to squirm, because they know that they can't deliver the goods!

" <sup>7</sup> They answered again and said, 'Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.' " -- Daniel 2:7

Clearly, they are in deep trouble, and they know it. But while they are still trying to stall for time, the king lowers the boom:

" <sup>8</sup> *The king answered and said, 'I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: <sup>9</sup> if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.' "* – Daniel 2:8-9

Now it all starts to come out: the King already knew that they would stall for time, because they didn't know the answer from the very start. And so he says, in essence, "*You tell me the dream, and then I know that you can tell me the interpretation*".

I want to take just a moment at this point in the story to backtrack just a bit. Remember how I said that there was some disagreement about whether the king remembered his dream or not? Where does that controversy come from? Well, it seems that when the translators of the KJV did their translation, they translated it differently than the translators of the NKJV did. What is the difference? Let's compare translation to translation to take a look. The KJV renders the passage in question like this:

" <sup>5</sup> *The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.' "* – Daniel 2:5

That particularly phrase is what has made various commentators think that the king had forgotten his dream. But I've got bad news for the KJV purists: it's probably not the correct way to translate that passage. We first noticed the discrepancy when we were doing a Bible study on the matter, and one of our members, who has a KJV, read the passage. I was following in my NKJV and noticed immediately that his version didn't agree with mine. And then I remembered back in time when I myself had taught that particular passage in that way, based on the translation that I was using at the time. Time changes things. It certainly has changed me. And it changes the way we view things, too. When our friend read the passage, I commented on the difference, and promised them that I would do some research on the matter. What I found was very interesting indeed. Initially, I compared translations, to see if there was a preponderance of evidence. That's a phrase used in law to indicate that there is so much evidence for a particular argument that it would hold up in law. What I found was, frankly, both amusing and a testament to our human imperfection. I looked up 12 different translations. What was the verdict? **A flat-footed tie!** Six versions supported the view that the king had forgotten the dream. Six didn't. Here's how the score came out:

**King forgot his dream:** KJV, NIV, Amplified, 21<sup>st</sup> Century KJV, American Standard, Young's Literal

**King remembered his dream:** NKJV, NAS, The Message, New Living, English Standard, Contemporary English

Well, that was certainly definitive, wasn't it? So the next place I went was to the **original Aramaic text**. I sometimes suspect that there are plenty of folks out there who sincerely think that the Bible was written in Elizabethan English (Shakespearean English, the language of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century). As one little old lady said, "*If it was good enough for Saint James, its good enough for me!*" I won't even grace the statement with an argument. The good King James of England was no saint! Actually, our Holy Scriptures are written in **three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek**. Why three? Well, the first language ought to be obvious. Hebrew is the original language of the Children of Israel. And it continued that way until the southern kingdom of Judah was deported to Babylon. There, they were subjected to enormous pressures to blend into the culture. And those influences were, to some degree, successful. The book of Daniel is written in two languages, Hebrew and Aramaic. Why Aramaic? Because it was the language of the day, the *lingua franca*, or language of exchange between various peoples. That leaves one language, Greek. Why Greek? Because someone who came later in the historical timeline was even more successful than the Babylonians in standardizing the culture of the day, a young Macedonian general named Alexander the Great. Alexander and his successors were insistent and often ruthless in enforcing Greek culture and language on their conquered peoples. We discussed what happened when Antiochus Epiphanes tried that with Judea in our last E-Pistle. Alexander and company were so successful, and the dispersion of the Jews so thorough, that it became necessary to even rewrite what we call the Old Testament into Greek, a translation which we now know today as the **Septuagint, or LXX** (the number

70 in Latin). In order to make the Law and the Prophets readable to a new generation of Jews who no longer understood Hebrew, 72 Scholars met in Alexandria, Egypt to translate the sacred Scriptures into Koine Greek, or the common version of Greek used during that day. The basic translation process occurred in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and continued on into the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Even after the Roman Empire conquered what was left of the four mini-empires left to Alexander's four primary generals after his death, Greek language and culture remained the standard for the new empire. So thorough was this process that the Romans even adopted the Greek gods, renaming them for their own purposes. When the New Testament was finally recorded, it was recorded in Koine Greek.

Where were we? Oh, yes! We were talking about the **Aramaic words the king actually used!** Sorry I wander afield like that from time to time. I have learned so very much myself in writing these books that I just can't help myself sometimes, and have to share some of this cool stuff with you.

**Anyway.....**I looked at the actual Aramaic words that the king used when he said what he did. Then I looked at **every other time those words were used in the Bible!** Am I that smart? Nah! There is a great internet tool out there called the **Blue Letter Bible**. Their URL is [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org). It takes a little time to get used to the tool and use it properly, but it is powerful! Each word in the entire Bible can be broken out into the original language, and then, with a single click, you can see **all other uses of that word, in context, throughout the entire Bible**. The first word I looked up was the Aramaic word *millah*, which means **word, utterance, command, thing, affair or matter**. In almost every single occurrence of the word, it was used in the context of a **command, utterance or decree**. Hmmm... That doesn't sound like the translation in the KJV. The next Aramaic word I looked up was 'azad, which means **to be gone**. Double Hmmm... That, at first glance, **does** look like the KJV translation. But when I researched the **context in which the word is used, everything changed**. It is only used **twice in the entire Bible, both times by the king himself!** Once, when he first says that the matter has **gone from him**, and then again, when he reminds the various Magi that **the decree has already gone forth from him**. Triple hmmm... So, instead of saying that **he couldn't remember the dream**, he was actually saying that **the decree had already gone forth from him**. But there was still one word to research, the Aramaic word *min*, which means **from, out of, as a result of, by reason of, from this time, according to**. This was the killer. Instead of meaning **lost**, or some similar word, every occurrence of the word in the Bible implied **originating from or coming out of**. When all of the smoke cleared, I had three words that, in essence, said **exactly** what the NKJV said. The Ray Young quasi-literal translation of that passage would read, *"I am making a decree right now. Listen carefully, boys! If y'all don't tell me what I dreamed, y'all are dead meat!"*

Having taken that little side trip, we now return to the program currently in progress...

Now all the wise men were clearly on the ropes. The king wasn't going to budge an inch. And so, they pleaded the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment, or its Babylonian equivalent, trying to weasel out of their impending disaster:

*"<sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, 'There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. <sup>11</sup> It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.' "* – Daniel 2:10-11

When his highly paid, highly respected, highly pampered advisors informed him that:

- (1) No human could answer his question.
- (2) He had no right to ask the question to begin with (kind of a cheeky comment to tell a king!)
- (3) Only the gods could answer his question and...
- (4) They weren't answering the phone right now!

The king, an absolute despot, and used to getting his way all the time, flew into a rage, and, in the time-honored solution to everything in the Middle East, order his soldiers to **kill them all!** Things looked mighty grim for the royal advisors until the carnage reached the house of Daniel and his three friends. When, Arioch, the captain of the king's royal guard, came to kill Daniel, Daniel somehow persuaded him to stop for a moment. Why, Daniel asked, was the king killing all the advisors? When Arioch told him,

Daniel also somehow persuaded Arioch **not** to kill him until he could talk to the king, somehow made it to the royal palace alive, and somehow persuaded the king to **give him a little time to get the answer**. Please notice the difference between the response of a true believer and an unbeliever. The unbeliever says **it can't be done**. Why? **Because all they have to rely on is their own natural understanding**. But when the impossible comes to a believer, they should answer, "Give me a little time to ask God. I'll bet HE knows!" Sure enough, with Daniel and his three friends praying, Daniel was given **the exact same dream** that the king had been given! The next day, ole' Dan showed up at the royal palace all smiles. He then proceeded to tell the king what he had dreamed. What was the dream? Here goes:

"<sup>31</sup> You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. <sup>32</sup> This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup> You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. <sup>35</sup> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." -- Daniel 2:31-35

Let's break the dream out into its components. We have **seven major pieces** to the puzzle:

- (1) The head of gold.
- (2) The chest and arms of silver.
- (3) The belly and thighs of bronze.
- (4) The legs of iron.
- (5) The toes of iron and clay, and...
- (6) The stone not cut out without hands which then expands into...
- (7) The great mountain which fills the whole earth.

Nebuchadnezzar was absolutely blown away! This is **exactly** what he had dreamed, right down to the very last detail. And, after having listened to his whiney advisors tell him that **nobody except the gods knew the answer**, here was a man who had told him every detail! And, to make matters even worse for the other advisors, this man had made it very plain **up front** before he recounted the dream that **it was his God that had made the interpretation possible!** He was taking no credit for himself. None of the usual, ridiculous posturing and self-congratulating that he was used to seeing out of his **other** advisors. This man clearly stood **head and shoulders** (if you'll pardon the **very** bad play on words!) above all the other advisors he had. And yet, when the advisory council had been gathered just the other day, this man had not been included in their ranks! The king must have been thinking quietly in his mind, "Boy, where you been all my life?" It was at that very moment in time that Daniel moved from the minor leagues into the major leagues as far as royal advisors were concerned. More than that, actually. Once Daniel had also given the king the interpretation, here's what the king did for Daniel:

- (1) Fell on his face prostrate before Daniel
- (2) Commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him (as if he were a God)
- (3) Admitted that Daniel's God was the God of gods and the Lord of kings (himself included)
- (4) Promoted Daniel
- (5) Gave him tons of gifts (Christmas came early that year!)
- (6) Made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon (like being mayor of Washington, DC. Well...maybe a lot better than that!)
- (7) Made him Chief Administrator over all the *Magi* of Babylon

Does this scenario ring a bell? Howzabout what happened when Joseph stood before Pharaoh and interpreted his dream? You see, dear friends, when a man or woman will make a quality decision to walk deeply with God, the Lord will show him things that He will show no one else. Just last night, I got a call from a brother in Canada who is also named Raymond, and who is also a prophet. We talked for quite a while. In the **first ten minutes**, he prophesied **very accurately** into some key issues that I had outstanding with God, awaiting an answer. Each of those answers was received very gratefully by me. At the end of the conversation, God gave me the **last ten minutes**, and I began to return the compliment.



As I prayed and prophesied over him, the Lord showed me in his Indian outfit, doing a war dance before the Lord, and stirring up the gift of prophecy at the same time. Although I knew he was part Indian and part French, I had no idea in the natural if he had ever done anything like this. But, when God shows you something in a vision, you simply pass it on, exercising wisdom in the process. It turns out that is **exactly** how the Lord has him go into the Spirit, stirring up the anointing and the gifts. I then went on **in detail** to describe certain things that had been happening in his life, and certain things that **he** had before the Lord. He was totally blown away. Friends, **true prophecy always involves the revealing of accurate details about the individual.** No more "Glittering Generalities". No more Charismaniac junk. **True power. True accuracy. True holiness. They all go together. And they will be one of the hallmarks of the Final Great Awakening.** Power beyond imagination. Accuracy that will bring true repentance and conversion. And purity that will be unimpeachable. **True men and women of God. Walking in the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ.**

And, speaking of **stature**, we're going to have to wait until tomorrow to find out about that **statue** that Daniel had seen. Sorry! We've run out time for today. Come back tomorrow, for **Writing on the Wall.** Until then, may God make you as precious as gold and as strong as iron in His sight. Amen and Amen!



# Day 19 – Writing on the Wall



<sup>3</sup> Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which *had been* in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup> They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. <sup>5</sup> In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. <sup>6</sup> Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other. – Daniel 5:3-6

In yesterday's E-Pistle, we began to investigate the remarkable dream given to both King Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel in Chapter 2 of the book that bears his name. After yesterday's article, some of you may be asking yourselves, 'Why is Pastor Ray dealing with this particular prophecy? It has already been fulfilled for the most part and doesn't really apply to the end times, does it?' True, much of this prophecy has in fact been fulfilled, but part of it hasn't been, and that part directly applies to the end times **and** interfaces directly into **another vision** that Daniel had later on in Chapter 7, which applies **to our current age and political situation**. So bear with us, dear friends, as we check out Daniel's amazing statue.

Having given a totally accurate recounting of the king's dream, Daniel proceeded to lay out for him what each component of the statue represented. Most Bible scholars agree on this interpretation, so I'm not giving you anything revelatory in this article, just information that you need to understand what will be happening **after** these empires came to pass. Daniel clearly identified the **Babylonian Empire** as the **head of gold**. That is totally appropriate, because Babylon was legendary for its opulence and wealth. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were considered to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, along with Pharos, the Great Lighthouse of Alexandria, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes and the Great Pyramid of Giza. Babylon's wall was so massive that it was supposed to be 200 feet thick, and you could turn a chariot of a dozen horses around on the top of it.

Daniel also got to personally see the rise of the second of the empires he had prophesied, and was directly involved in the fall of the Babylonian Empire when it happened. In Chapter 5, the Babylonian King Belshazzar made a deadly mistake. Even though his capital city was besieged by the invading armies of the **Medo-Persian Empire**, he threw a huge party for 1,000 of his nobles. If ever there was someone born to be a fool, he was the one. **You do not throw keggers for your friends when people are shooting at you!** It just boggles my imagination to think about the absolute arrogance and stupidity of Belshazzar. It didn't matter that the surrounding countryside lay in ruins, villages and cities burned to the ground, crops destroyed, wells stopped up and his citizens by the untold thousands dead. Hey, guys! Let's throw a party! Arrogant, unfeeling, stupid jerk! No more deserving of kingship than some toad on a lily pad! And, to add insult to injury, Belshazzar **made a point** to bring out all the gold and silver vessels (cups, bowls, etc.) that had been **used in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, and then drink from them, toasting the gods of their lands!** Did you ever just want to haul off and punch somebody right in the face? No? You do know that lying is a sin, right? I know I have. There have been times when I would have gladly laid someone out on the floor for what they did if I weren't a man of God! Now, imagine if you are God. How would you feel about what Belshazzar had just done? Would a punch in the nose be in order? Yes? Well, God didn't do that. He just **wrote him up** for misconduct, and collapsed

his kingdom that very night! Most of you are familiar with the story, I am sure. In the midst of the party, suddenly the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the wall of the king's palace. Belshazzar was so unnerved that the **joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked together**. Now, I understand what the Bible says about his **knees knocking together**, but I had to do some research on his **hips being loosened**. As I studied some of the alternate translations, the best explanation I found was that **his legs gave way underneath him**. I've never seen anybody's knees knock together from fright, but I've heard of it happening. I have, however, seen someone collapse into a heap when they learned that someone dear to them had been killed. They didn't fall down. They went straight down into a heap. Their legs simply gave way underneath them from the shock. Both actions are totally involuntary. The stress or trauma involved is so great that the physical action occurs without the individual having any control over it. Sadly, Belshazzar wasn't any brighter than his father when it came to interpreting supernatural messages from Heaven. Remember when Nebuchadnezzar had his dream and called every wise man, Chaldean, astrologer and *Magi* into his throne room to interpret the dream **except the one he needed to call?** Only **after** they started killing off all the Wise Men in Babylon was Daniel finally brought into the picture. The result? Immediate resolution! Now it's his son's turn, and he proceeds to make the same mistake his father made! Everyone is called in, with the usual lack of results. Everyone, it seems, except **for the one man who could truly solve the problem!** Finally, after everyone had his turn and failed miserably, and Belshazzar was white as a sheet with fear and dread, his momma stepped into the picture:

*"<sup>10</sup>The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, 'O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change.'<sup>11</sup> There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.<sup>12</sup> Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.'" -- Daniel 5:10-12*

What an introduction! Clearly, the Queen Mother knew what she was talking about. She had watched Daniel and his God bring her husband to his proud and arrogant knees on more than one occasion. She had suffered while her husband, totally stripped of his mind and sanity, grazed in a field like some dumb ox for seven terrible years. She had also watched as her husband slowly but surely changed from an arrogant, carnal, worldly, power-drunk despot who believed in gods made of wood and stone and gold and silver into someone who truly believed that there was only one God over all, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that this God had placed him on the throne of the most powerful nation in the world for a Divine plan and purpose that went far beyond what he as king was aware of. And she had watched this God shape and mold her husband into a man of dignity and honor and faith. There is no doubt that the behavior of her son not only reminded her of her husband before his conversion, but also deeply troubled her, for she, too, had become a believer in the God of Daniel, and knew that Belshazzar's conduct and the writing on the wall could only mean deep and terrible trouble. Even so, nothing but praise flowed from her lips for this remarkable Man of God. **Light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him**, she said. Not only that, but his character was unimpeachable. He had an **excellent spirit** (a good attitude), **knowledge, understanding dreams, the ultimate Shell Answer Man, the ultimate problem solver**. Why was Daniel not already at the party? Common sense should tell you that this righteous man had no use for a drunken orgy. In addition, it appears that Daniel had retired from public service at some time prior to this event. Perhaps, like most presidential advisors, he had been asked to step down and had been replaced when Nebuchadnezzar had died. Under a new king, a new set of advisors would probably be in order, as the young king coming in would want to stamp his personality on the kingdom and his own administration. Whatever the reason, once again the **man with the answer had to be summoned**. And this meeting had all the earmarks of a video tape replay, only now Daniel was the old man and the king was the young man. The passage of time had reversed the tables in that respect, but the question still remained the same:

*"<sup>13</sup> Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, 'Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah?'<sup>14</sup> I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in*

you. <sup>15</sup> Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. <sup>16</sup> And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.' " -- Daniel 5:13-16

Down through the annals of time, a call reverberated. Ancient Joseph looked up from his resting place in the bosom of Father Abraham and smiled. History was repeating itself. Once, a young Hebrew man of 30 had stood before the most powerful man in the world, and a Pharaoh had learned what God could do with a man who would listen to the voice of the Almighty. Then a second time, the greatest leader in the world listened intently as another young Hebrew man helped him to understand those things that were beyond his understanding. In both previous events, the outcome was positive. Not so this time. Belshazzar had crossed over the invisible line drawn in the sands of time. Daniel had prophesied to his father that the **golden head** would be replaced by a **chest and arms of silver**. Now, it was about to take place.

Unbeknownst to Belshazzar, while he and his cronies had been busy partying, a Medo-Persian king named **Cyrus** had been busy himself. Only Cyrus wasn't partying. According to history, on October 12 of 539 BC, troops under the command of Cyrus's General Gubaru entered Babylon without any resistance from the Babylonian armies. Herodotus, the great Greek historian, explains that to accomplish this feat, the Persians **diverted the Euphrates river into a canal so that the water level dropped "to the height of the middle of a man's thigh"**, which allowed the invading forces to march directly through the river bed and enter the city at night. On October 29, Cyrus himself entered the city of Babylon and arrested Nabonidus, the real king of Babylon, who had been absent from the throne and the city of Babylon for ten years, and in whose place the nefarious and incompetent Belshazzar had reigned.

But while Cyrus's troops were busy digging away in order to divert the typically shallow Euphrates, Daniel was busy reading the **writing on the wall**. He calmly informed Belshazzar that he could keep his gifts. He wasn't interested in them. And, yes, he could and would read the handwriting on the wall for him. But before he did, he sternly rebuked Belshazzar and reminded him of how God had humbled his father and driven him mad and made him act like a wild animal until **he knew that God ruled over the affairs of men, and appointed whomever He wanted as king**. And then, with that weathered hand pointing at the arrogant young ruler, Daniel also reminded him that **although he knew all this, Belshazzar had never humbled his heart or repented**. In addition, Belshazzar had set himself **directly against the Almighty** by doing what he had done with the sacred vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem. And so God had judged him and his kingdom and found him wanting. Four words had been written on the wall that night. **Only four**. When God finally speaks on a matter, He doesn't need to say much. And here is what the God of all the earth had to say:

## ***Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.***

What did it mean? It wasn't as if the four words were written in some obscure language. No, these weren't words in ancient Hebrew. **These were words written in Aramaic, the common language of the day**. It was not a matter of **reading** the handwriting on the wall. It was a matter of **understanding** what had been written. It was a matter of **interpretation**, something Daniel had been specially gifted in. But was it really some semi-magical anointing reserved only for men like Daniel? No, dear friends. Daniel was walking in what we in the church call today **the Charismata, or Gifts of the Holy Spirit!** Specifically, Daniel operated in **the Word of Wisdom, the Word of Knowledge, Faith (To be sure! Consider the lion's den!) and Prophecy**. These four manifestations of the Holy Spirit set Daniel apart from everyone around him. They gave him Divine favor with kings and authority in and over world empires. **A man truly led by the Spirit of the Living God is the most valuable asset in the entire world**. He will know "*when to hold 'em, when to fold 'em, when to walk away, and when to run*". Allow me to share a brief story from my own personal scrapbook. I know I am veering off the story line again, but this tale is worth the telling and relevant to the topic. Many years ago, I lived in Jasper, Indiana, a small, industrious town of largely Germanic woodworkers who had built a miniature furniture empire in that small community. Also in that community was a struggling Christian bookstore named The Son Shoppe. I knew the owners of the store very well, and considered them to be close personal friends. But

as badly needed as the bookstore was, it was struggling mightily against financial pressures which threatened to close them down after being in business only a short time. The Christmas season was coming up, and they had absolutely no inventory for the store. The shelves were almost bare. And since most retailers do as much as 80% of their annual business during the Christmas season, the Son Shoppe was staring disaster in the face. No merchandise to sell meant no profit. And no profit meant that the store would be closed in a matter of months, out of money and out of business. As a close personal friend, and a minority shareholder in the store, I went to the wonderful lady who operated the store and felt led by the Lord to ask her how much it would take to fully stock the store so that they would be ready for Christmas. Without hesitation, she replied, "\$10,000! Not a penny less!" I certainly didn't have \$10,000, nor did I know anyone who did, but I promised I would pray fervently about the matter. I pleaded with the Lord to somehow provide the finances which we so desperately needed. And as I prayed, I **listened to what God had to say back to me.** Most Christians, particularly the ladies (I know I'm going to get beat up on this one!), seem to think that prayer is **talking TO God.** And so they talk, and they talk, and they talk, and they talk. I sometimes wonder if the Lord gives his daughters what they want because they **just won't shut up!** That is, after all, what the little widow woman did with the unrighteous judge. **She wore him out with her continual coming!** And gentlemen, lest we complain too much about that, please remember that **Jesus commended her for her unrelenting determination to get what she wanted.** And ladies, you and I both know that women get what they want from their men by asking and asking and asking and asking until we finally say, in desperation, because the game on TV only has two minutes left and the score is tied, "*Sure, honey! Whatever you want! Use the credit card! Go! Buy!*" Gentlemen, do you **really think they don't know what the score is? Do you really think they don't know how much time is left in the game? When they walk in front of the TV screen as the final shot or the last pitch or the final kick goes off, do you think they are doing this randomly???**

Gosh! Did I say that out loud? Well, er, ah, as I was saying, most **people** think that prayer is talking **to** God. *Au contraire!* Prayer is not talking **to** God. **Prayer is talking WITH God!** That was the secret of Daniel. It is the secret of all prophets. We have learned over time, the hard way, that effective communication with God involves **shutting up and listening!** Between you and the Lord, which one of you knows more? Which one of you has more resources? More solutions? Is smarter? Older? Wiser? Hmm... Seems to me that if we would only learn to **listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, things might go a whole lot better for us in our lives.** And in this case, as with so many other times before and since then, I prayed and then listened...

And the Lord, in that still small voice, said just **three words** to me. Daniel only got four. And actually, it was three, because God repeated the first word twice. What did God say to me? "*Call Orville Martin*". Now, the minute He said that to me, I began to argue with him. Orville was a dear friend who lived in Rockport, Indiana, about 45 minutes drive time away. Orville was a relatively successful insurance agent who had been in the community for many years and was highly trusted and respected. Orville was also a Spirit-filled Christian who was a member of the local Methodist Church, and who was actively engaged in the lay pastorate, working Monday through Saturday, and then driving to a little Methodist church in the country to preach on Sundays, and to take care of the sheep there. Orville had been instrumental in helping me start my own business, and had loaned me \$5,000 to get off the ground. The agreement between us was that I was to pay him back as I was able, and at zero percent interest, just as the Bible says we are to deal with one another financially. I had not been very successful in paying him back, and I felt very bad about it. Then, in a separate incident which I do not have time to relate here, miraculously cancelled the entire remaining debt which I still owed him, to the tune of \$4,800! Don't tell me God isn't good! But because of my inability to pay the last loan back, I was reticent to go to him again, even though it was for a just cause. And so I argued with God. Surely I couldn't go back to Orville again. I had used up all the good graces I had coming the last time. But the Lord was insistent. "*Call Orville Martin*". He repeated Himself again and again. I wonder how He is able to deal with our stubbornness. Finally, I gave in and got ready to make the phone call...

Our story now has to switch to Rockport, Indiana, and my dear friend Orville. It seems that Orville had a little "mad money" to play with as a result of years of successful operation, and that he liked to dabble in the stock market. He had worked with his broker and had singled out a particular company that seemed very promising. Orville had taken \$10,000 of his "mad money" and invested it in this particular company.



And, sure enough, God had thoroughly blessed the investment, and Orville, just as the Biblical parable of Matthew 25 states, had **doubled his money**. His \$10,000 investment had generated **\$10,000 worth of profit**. Orville praised the Lord for His blessings and kept the money invested in the company in question. And then, one day after preaching in that little country church in Spencer County, as he drove home, the Lord spoke to him. "Orville", the Lord said, "*First thing Monday morning I want you to sell all your stock in that company and get out of the stock market!*" Orville was stunned. He questioned the Lord as to why this was necessary, but all he got was the same answer over and over again, just as I had been given the same three words over and over again. Dear friends, **if you want to HEAR from God, you must learn to OBEY God!** If He knows that He can trust you to listen to Him and obey Him, He will begin to talk to you on a regular basis! After years of walking with God, Orville knew the voice of the Lord, and so, when Monday morning dawned bright and early, he called his stockbroker and gave him the ultimatum: **Sell the stock immediately!** True to form, the stockbroker argued with Orville over the phone. This was a great company with a tremendous future, he insisted. Surely it made no sense for Orville to sell his stock in such a promising and profitable young company! But Orville knew the voice of his God, and stuck to his guns. The stock was to be sold **immediately**, and the principle and interest placed in Orville's checking account. The stockbroker reluctantly but obediently did what Orville said. Later on that same day, a scandal was uncovered in that very same company, and the stock of the company crashed, dropping so low that had Orville still had his money invested in the company, he would have lost both in interest and his principle, or **\$20,000!** Needless to say, Orville was extremely grateful to God for rescuing him from what would have financial disaster. But then it dawned on him: if God hadn't intervened **at that precise moment in time**, everything would have been lost. Why had He done so? What was His purpose? It was at that point in time that Orville realized that although the \$10,000 principle still belonged to him, **the \$10,000 profit belonged to God**. And so he began to pray. Where did the Lord want that \$10,000 to go? What was His will in the matter? At the same time that Orville was wrestling with what to do with the money, I was wrestling with whether or not to call him to ask him for \$10,000. Pretty amazing, huh? And please note: **in order for this miracle to occur, both men were going to have to hear the voice of the Lord AND OBEY IT!** If I decided not to ask, the Son Shoppe might perish. If Orville changed his mind, as I have seen other Christian businessmen do, and gone back on God, he and the Son Shoppe might have been ruined. There was another time in our lives when God spoke to a Christian businessman and told him to give us a house, brand new, debt free. He showed us the houses in the brand new development, and then hardened his heart and backed off the deal. He never accomplished anything for God, because disobedience was the governing pattern in his life. Thank God that Orville Martin was made of different stuff than him. I finally decided that the worst he could do was say no, so I made the call. Orville listened to my story, and then simply said, "*When can you come down?*" We set a date and a time, and I dutifully drove from Jasper to Rockport, praying in the Spirit most of the time and crying out to God for mercy for the bookstore. When I got there, Orville was in his office. We talked for a while, and then he said, "*Come with me*". We went into a back room where a massive, old-fashioned safe sat. It must have weighed a ton. Orville spun the dial on the safe a couple of times, and then turned the handle with a strong heave, tugged, and the juggernaut of a door slowly swung open. Orville reached into the safe, pulled out a metal container, opened it from the top, and calmly deposited **\$10,000 cash into my shaking hands, in the form of ten \$1,000 bills!** I didn't even know that they printed money in that size denomination. I know that they don't anymore. I remember driving home with those ten bills in my wallet, praying to God that nothing happened to me between Rockport and Jasper. I drove directly to the Son Shoppe. Doris, my friend the manager, was in. No one was in the shop at the time, so I motioned for her to come with me to the back room. And there, I dutifully pulled out my wallet, and, one at a time, **placed those same ten \$1,000 bills into her hands**. She wept openly as I did so. A miracle? Yes. Supernatural revelation? Yes. Any different in nature from what Daniel did all through his life and ministry? **No**. All Daniel did, throughout his whole career, was **to listen to and obey the voice of the Lord as He spoke to him**. Today, dear friends, we have the power and revelation that was available to Daniel available to us through that very same Holy Spirit.

One more note before we return to the story at hand: I worked late into the early hours of the morning on this article, and when I went to bed I commented to my wife that although I was getting to tell God's story about The Revelation of Jesus Christ, that the Lord was also permitting me to tell the story of my own life, one tale at a time. As I reflected on that thought, it also occurred to me how many times God has supernaturally intervened in my life, and how many times I have heard His voice and received

supernatural revelation that delivered either myself or someone else. And then I turn my attention to Daniel. Not every waking moment of his life involved hearing a voice from the sky, or seeing an angel, or interpreting a dream. Many of his days were probably just as pedestrian as ours, just going about his business, being a competent administrator. But there were those days when the Divine impinged in on His life, and the voice of the Lord, entering through an open and willing set of ears, transformed not only his life, but untold thousands of lives around him, and untold millions of life stretching out into the future of mankind.

Speaking of Daniel, we left him staring at a wall with four Aramaic words written on them. It's finally time to learn what God said that fateful day.

- (1) *Mene* – Also spelled *minah* or *maneh* -- a weight or measurement; usually 50 shekels
- (2) *Tekel* – To be weighed
- (3) *Upharsin* – To break in two, divide

Please, Daniel, tell us what these three words mean. Very well...

"<sup>26</sup> *This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; <sup>27</sup> TEKEK: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; <sup>28</sup> PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." <sup>29</sup> Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom." – Daniel 5:26-29*

Can you imagine the stunned silence in the banqueting hall as Daniel's words rang out? I am sure that every goblet that had been raised in drunken mirth suddenly was placed on the table. Every holy ornament and vessel that had been defiled with the sins of foolish men was quickly washed out and dried. The party is over. Everyone go home. We have no reason to celebrate. The party is over.

Belshazzar sat there in stunned silence, his legs still not quite able to hold him. The Queen Mother looked on, her heart breaking for her foolish son and all of his people, whom he had led into life-destroying sin. The partiers silently melted into the night until the vast banqueting hall echoed every action in its emptiness. Belshazzar had made a promise, and so he ordered the purple robe and the golden chain placed on Daniel, and solemnly declared him the third ruler in the kingdom, behind Nabonidus, the mad absentee ruler and his reckless assistant, Belshazzar. But it was all a sham. For that very night the soldiers of the Medo-Persian army marched into Babylon without a fight. Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede received the kingdom. One of his very first actions as the new king of the combined Medo-Persian, Babylonian Empire was to name new administrators, in order to preserve order and rule the kingdom wisely. So huge was the empire that it required 127 men to rule the various regions of the country. Contrast that to the United States, which requires only 50 governors to wisely administrate over the states. Over these 127 governors was placed a small group of three trusted men, the three men whom Darius felt were the most competent, most reliable, most trustworthy men in all of his massive empire. Daniel was one of those three men. But he excelled even beyond that:

"<sup>3</sup> *Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm." – Daniel 6:3*

We would end this part of Daniel's story here, with the transition between the empires of **gold** and **silver**. The crown had been passed to a metal of somewhat **less value**, but of somewhat **more durability**. Each change of the guard would result in an empire of less glory, but more durability, until the empire that governed would be made of **iron**, a very ugly metal with no real beauty to it, but strong and hard and seemingly unbreakable. And, since we have run out of time for today, but have not traveled through all the checkpoints in Daniel's dream, we'll just have to pick it up in tomorrow's *E-Pistle*, entitled **He Is My Shepherd**. Just remember, when God weighs you in the balance, will you be found **worthy** or **wanting**? See you tomorrow.



# Day 20 – He Is My Shepherd



<sup>26</sup> Who confirms the word of His servant, and performs the counsel of His messengers; Who says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited,’ to the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built,’ and I will raise up her waste places; <sup>27</sup> Who says to the deep, ‘Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers’; <sup>28</sup> Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” and to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”” – Isaiah 44:26-28

If you will remember in a previous E-Pistle that I promised some day to show you the **hidden** story behind the **known** story of Daniel? Well, **now is the time**. Pulled out of retirement, Daniel served faithfully under Darius the Mede, enduring the trial of the Lion’s Den, and prospering again just as he had done under Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon. Daniel’s public career spanned four kings, two in Babylon and two in Medo-Persia. But the hidden story to which I have alluded is found in the final year of Daniel’s public career. Cyrus had just ascended to the throne, taking over for Darius. Daniel knew that it was time to retire, but he also knew that he had **one last task to perform for his God and for his people**. Critics might say, “*Four different administrations? How old would Daniel have been for that to be true? Surely that is impossible!*” Ah, the eternal skeptics! May I remind you that Daniel was a **very young man** when he came to national prominence? May I also remind you that he was so young that he was not called with the rest of the *Magi* to try and tell and interpret the King’s dream? Unlike most Presidential advisors, who are old and hoary, white-haired and pot-bellied, when they are called upon to serve the head of state, Daniel and his three Hebrew friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, were **young men, wise beyond their years**, when they came into positions of influence. Let’s examine the Biblical record to see if this is true:

“<sup>17</sup> *As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.<sup>18</sup> Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>19</sup> Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king.<sup>20</sup> And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.<sup>21</sup> Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.” – Daniel 1:17-21*

Here we have the clear-cut evidence: All four young men are head and shoulders better than all the young men from Babylon proper, and, when promoted into positions of prominence proceed to demonstrate that they are **ten times better than all their associates put together**. In addition, Scripture clearly says that Daniel continued in his position, with a few mini-retirements apparently sandwiched between the beginning and the end of his professional career, from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon to Cyrus, King of Medo-Persia. Additional Scriptural evidence can be found at the end of Chapter 6:

“<sup>28</sup> *So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*” –Daniel 6:28

Beyond that, a little additional research will uncover the fact that his final and most massively detailed prophecy occurred in the reign of Cyrus:

" <sup>1</sup> *In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.*" – Daniel 10:1

Ironically, this final and most detailed prophecy is also probably the most highly disputed and controversial prophecy in all of Holy Scripture. In an article coming up in this Episode, we will investigate that prophecy in depth, but that is not our task today.

Instead, imagine that you are Daniel. You are perhaps in your 70's or 80's. Your mind and spirit are still sharp and clear, but the same cannot be said for your body. It is difficult for you to get around. Your joints are stiff, and your once youthful body has become feeble. But there is one last task to perform for the glory of God before you finally sit down to rest. The Lord has already spoken to you about your impending death, but you have peace with the matter:

" <sup>8</sup> *Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, 'My lord, what shall be the end of these things?'* <sup>9</sup> *And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.'* <sup>10</sup> *Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.* <sup>11</sup> *And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.* <sup>12</sup> *Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.* <sup>13</sup> *But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.'* "

– Daniel 12:8-13

How did this final unwritten chapter in the Book of Daniel's life go? Perhaps the story went something like this: One evening Daniel came to the king with an ancient scroll in his hands. "Good evening, Your Majesty!" he may have said. "Good evening, Daniel", the king might have replied. And so the two exchanged pleasantries for a few moments. Daniel was an old man. The years were starting to wear on him. But his mind and heart were as clear and vibrant and strong as ever before. His eyes glistened with the joy of performing one last task for his Eternal Master. The king inquired about the scroll he carried. What mysteries did it contain? Daniel smiled, and opened up the **Scroll of the Prophet Isaiah**. "Your Majesty", he said, "I have something very interesting that I would like to show you. It concerns you, your kingdom and your future". Intrigued, the king leaned forward and looked at the dusty old document. It was written in ancient Hebrew, a language he did not understand. "What does it say, Daniel?" asked the king. "I know God has spoken to you and through you many times in the past. What lies in the future for me and for my kingdom? Is your God pleased with me? Will my kingdom endure? What must I do to live a life worthy of His support?" And Daniel just smiled, and began to read out loud:

" <sup>24</sup> *Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: 'I am the LORD, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself; <sup>25</sup> Who frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad; Who turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness; <sup>26</sup> Who confirms the word of His servant, and performs the counsel of His messengers; Who says to Jerusalem, 'You shall be inhabited,' to the cities of Judah, 'You shall be built,' and I will raise up her waste places; <sup>27</sup> Who says to the deep, 'Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers'; <sup>28</sup> Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built,' and to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'* " – Isaiah 44:24-28

To Cyrus, the first few lines were pleasant enough, for he had heard many such things from various holy writings before, and he was a compassionate and deeply religious man. He honored many gods and always tried to return their sacred objects to their homeland so as not to offend them. Heaven knows, with so many conquered peoples and conquered lands, ruling with an iron fist after his predecessor, Belshazzar, would have been sheer insanity. The people had suffered enough under that fool. When he and his men had entered the city, it was not to shouts of terror. Rather, it was to cheers and loud hoorays, as if he were the liberator rather than the conqueror.

But suddenly, something he heard jerked him back to attention. Had he just heard his **own name** coming from the holy writings of the Jews? He interrupted Daniel, and asked him to read the passage again, this time more slowly. Yes, in fact, his very own name was mentioned in this passage. "How old is

*this scroll?"* the king inquired with amazement. *"More than 400 years old, Your Majesty"* Daniel replied. *"Is my name, the name of Cyrus, a common name in your language?"* asked the king. *"No, Your Majesty"*, replied Daniel, *"It is found nowhere in our language except for this passage, and this passage alone"*. The king sat stunned. Did this mean that the God of Daniel knew him by name? What was it that this God required of him? As Daniel read further, it became crystal clear to the king why God had chosen him of all men to rule the largest empire in the history of the world. It also became crystal clear that this God of Daniel's knew everything about him; past, present and future. He was supposed to rebuild Jerusalem. He was supposed to lay the foundation of the Temple. And Cyrus was completely convinced. This God of Daniel's was so powerful that He even knew how Cyrus had conquered Babylon, **including drying up the Euphrates River**. Then Daniel read the next passage, and the king's amazement grew into wonderment.

*"<sup>1</sup> Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—To subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut:<sup>2</sup> I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron.<sup>3</sup> I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, Who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.<sup>4</sup> For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.<sup>5</sup> I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,<sup>6</sup> That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me."* -- Isaiah 45:1-6

Questions flooded the king's mind. Daniel had said that these writings were over 400 years old. How could a prophet of another people have known all these things? Not only had the passage **named him by name**, it had also clearly **predicted the way in which he had caused Babylon to fall**. Babylon had been considered impregnable. With walls 200 feet thick, and the Euphrates River flowing **under** those massive walls and then back out on the other side, it was impossible to put Babylon under siege. With a river flowing through the city, water would never be a problem, and with water, irrigation could make a complete farming subsystem possible. With crops of grain readily available, raising animals for food was also no problem. Babylon was the one city in the world which could not be taken using the standard military tactic of siege by an invading army. Some had tried to swim in the river under the massive walls, but encountered **gates of bronze and bars of iron** which blocked their way. With enemy archers on the wall waiting for someone to surface for air, it was impossible to cut through them. But as Cyrus pondered the problem, an idea slowly began to form. An idea so preposterous, so outsized, that no one but him could have thought of it, or so Cyrus himself thought. If the river was the source of Babylon's **strength**, then it also must somehow be the source of Babylon's **weakness**, if one was to be found. And then the idea came to full fledged maturity: **block the river and take it away from the city**. It would be a massive undertaking. The Euphrates was known to be shallower than most major rivers, much shallower than the Tigris, it's sister river, and much shallower than the Nile of Egypt, so far away. But to divert an entire river for even a brief period of time would require the efforts of his entire army, and untold miles of canals and a complicated series of locks and dams. Even then, the effect would only be temporary, perhaps a few hours or days, before the mighty force of the river would reestablish itself in its normal course. But temporary would be all that Cyrus needed. Babylon would have to be placed under siege, so that no one could come in or out. And then, miles upstream, far beyond the sight of the watchtowers of the city, the engineering project of the century would have to be carried out. And so the most unusual strategy ever undertaken to conquer a city began. Finally, everything was ready. All that was necessary was for the Babylonian defense forces to relax their guard, and for the cover of night to hide what would be happening to the mighty Euphrates. When Belshazzar, in his infinite wisdom, chose to launch a near city-wide drunken orgy, Cyrus knew that the time had arrived. As the sun began to set, miles upstream, a series of locks and dams were simultaneous deployed. As darkness covered the city, the river began to slowly but surely recede, dropping lower and lower. Finally, according to the great historian Herodotus, the river had shrunk to a point that it only came up to mid-thigh. Cyrus's troops waded through the waters and under the giant wall, to the place where the **gates of bronze and iron blocked their way**. **Cutting through them**, the troops moved quickly into the city, opened the gates, and allowed the rest of the army into the city. Babylon had been captured almost without bloodshed, and certainly without a fight, and **every single word that Isaiah had prophesied had come to pass**.

Now the ancient king knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that **there was only one true God, that this God was the God of the Hebrew people, and that this one true God had actually named him before he was born and had appointed him to rule over the known world.** Granted, he would still officially pay homage to other gods in formal documents in order to appease the peoples that he ruled over, **but in his private worship, there would only be one name named in quiet whispers of prayer, the name of Yhwh, the God who made the heavens and the earth and who formed and named him.** No matter what the secular records show, Cyrus the King of all the Earth was now Cyrus, Servant of the Lord of Hosts. And whatever his new-found God desired of him, that he would do.

Cyrus turned one final time to the ancient scroll and asked the Man of God, "What does my God require of me? What would He have me to do?" And Daniel answered, "Exactly what He has written in the book concerning you: that you are to rebuild Jerusalem, re-lay the foundation of the temple, and LET MY PEOPLE GO HOME AGAIN."

"I will do all that He has asked of me", Cyrus replied, dropping his head in reverence and awe, "Thank you, Daniel, for doing something far more wonderful for me than the blocking of a mere river. You have allowed your God to speak to me down through the ages. I now know who I am, why I was born, and what I must do. No greater gift can be given a man than for him to know the purpose for which he was sent from heaven to earth to perform. I am eternally indebted and forever grateful to you. Thank you, Man of God."

Is that how the story actually went? Sadly, in this lifetime, we will never know. But something like that **must** have happened between the two men in real life. How do we know? Because the historical and Scriptural record bears it out, in Cyrus' very own words:

"<sup>1</sup> Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, <sup>2</sup> Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. <sup>3</sup> Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem." – Ezra 1:1-4

How amazing! Notice how the edict from Cyrus echoes almost word for word the prophecy given by Isaiah? And who, pray tell, was the only man in a position of trusted authority and power sufficient to gain access to the king? And who would know both the Hebrew and the Aramaic languages, so that the words written on the scroll could be translated into a form that the king would understand? Only one man comes to mind: **Daniel, a capable administrator through two empires and four kingships, a man attested to as being filled with the Spirit of the holy gods, a man able to translate and interpret dreams that would affect the world, a man who could shut the mouths of lions, a man recognized as the greatest Magi of all time.**

So deeply moved was King Cyrus that he did one other thing that God required of him:

"<sup>5</sup> Then the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> All those who were around them encouraged them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered. <sup>7</sup> King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; <sup>8</sup> and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. <sup>9</sup> This is the number of them: thirty gold platters, one thousand silver platters, twenty-nine knives, <sup>10</sup> thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a similar kind, and one thousand other articles. <sup>11</sup> All the articles of gold and silver were five thousand four hundred. All these Sheshbazzar took with the captives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem." – Ezra 1:5-11

Can this passage of Scripture be trusted? Too often so-called scholars mock and sneer at the accuracy of the Word of God, acting as judges over the Words which proceed from the mouth of God Himself. They call into question every statement in the Bible, teach those who sit in their classes that the Bible is not trustworthy or reliable, and equip men and women to go throughout all Christianity, spreading doubt and unbelief into the hearts of their congregations. Shame on all of them. There is a special place reserved in Hell and in the Lake of Fire for men, who, when given the privilege of teaching the precious, Holy Word of God, instead spread the lies of humanism, exalting themselves and attempting to cast down the very God who created them and gives them breath. Lest there be any doubt about this event, we refer to the famous **Cyrus Cylinder**, discovered in 1879 in one of the temples of ancient Babylon. It contains the **very first human Bill of Rights** and makes provision for captive peoples to return to their own native lands. It was translated into all the official languages of the United Nations in 1971, and a copy of it is on display there. Its mandates and governing principles were so sound that it unified and stabilized the largest empire ever created in the history of the world up to that time, and produced a form of government so stable that it lasted for over 200 years. Here, then, is proof of Cyrus' decree to restore the temple in Jerusalem:

*"In the first year of Cyrus the king, King Cyrus decreed: Temple of God in Jerusalem. The Temple will be rebuilt as a place at which sacrifices are offered and to which offerings are brought to be burnt. Its height is to be sixty cubits, its width sixty cubits. There are to be three thickness of stone blocks and one of wood. The expense is to be met by the king's household. Furthermore, the vessels of gold and silver from the Temple of God which Nebuchadnezzar took from the sanctuary in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon are to be restored so that everything may be restored to the sanctuary in Jerusalem and be put back in the Temple of God."*

Not too long before, a foolish king had taken those 5,400 gold and silver vessels and had used them to toast the gods of wood, stone and metal, gods who are not really gods at all. The One True God had written judgment against him on his own palace wall. That judgment had been swift and merciless. Belshazzar had perished that very night. But now a man of much nobler character had gathered those same vessels and entrusted them to Sheshbazzar, the new prince of Judah, to be taken back to their rightful resting place. Just as Jeremiah the prophet had prophesied some 70-plus years before, the children of Israel were going home to Jerusalem with full funding in place to rebuild the House of the Lord, and, under the later leadership of Nehemiah, to rebuild the walls of the Holy City. The prophetic loop was complete. The empire had passed from the **head of gold** to the **arms and chest of silver**. The people of Media and Persia had combined together to bring down the most powerful empire in the history of the world, all without a shot being fired, if you will. **Two arms of silver had proved to be greater than one head of gold.**

Over 200 years would pass before the next phase of divine succession would occur. A young man named **Alexander** would take the throne of Macedon after the death of his father Philip. Out of Macedon would come a Goat with a Single Horn, moving so fast that its feet didn't even touch the ground. And Alexander the Great would, in 12 short years, conquer all the world around him, driving deep into India and enlarging the territories held previously by the Medo-Persians. The **belly and loins of brass** would replace the **arms and chest of silver**. Ironically, in a sly twist of fate that no one but God could have known, historians refer to that period of time as the **Bronze Age**, because of the common and frequent use of brass for weapons and implements. After Alexander's tragic death just shy of his 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday, the empire fragmented into four pieces, ruled by his four generals. One of those generals would eventually produce a king named Antiochus Epiphanes, whom we have discussed at length. But Daniel's dream was not done yet. More world empires were yet to come. In our next E-Pistle, we will examine the next transition, from a **belly of brass** to **two legs of iron** and beyond. In these last few articles, I have shared with you some of the deepest revelations I have ever received from God. Daniel's involvement at every level in the restoration of the Jews to their homeland is an invisible keystone in their history. Without him, none of this would have happened. And if not for **Belteshazzar**, the greatest **Magi** of all time, a small band of **Magi**, studying his writings concerning the appearing and anointing of a special **Prince or King of the Jews**, would not have traveled two years following a star from Babylon to end up in Jerusalem, asking, "Where is He who is born King of the Jews?" Because of what Daniel (Belteshazzar to them) had written, they knew **to the very year** when the anointed Prince would appear. The star was just gravy on the biscuits for them. It only confirmed what they already knew by ancient prophecy from

the greatest Wise Man of them all, the prophet Daniel. Following their wise example, in the next few E-Pistles we will examine the rest of Daniel's prophecies, following a remarkable historical trail that will eventually lead past the Anti-Christ and all the way to the permanent establishment of the government of God on Earth, through His Only Begotten Son and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ! Friends, serve Him always! He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He, not men, rules over the affairs of man. And He is coming again in great splendor and power, to sit on the throne of His father David. Even, so, Lord, come! Maranatha!



# Day 21 – Ten Toes To Go, Please!



<sup>41</sup> Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. <sup>42</sup> And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. <sup>43</sup> As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

– Daniel 2:41-43

A few E-Pistles ago, we examined the dream which King Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel both had. In that dream, the Lord traced the timeline for most of the empires of the ancient world, beginning with the **Head of Gold, Babylon**, moving down to the **Arms and Chest of Silver**, the **Medo-Persian Empire** into the **Loins of Brass**, the **Macedonian Empire**, dividing into the **Two Legs of Iron**, the **Roman Empire**, and finally terminating with the **Feet of Iron and Clay**, the **Middle Ages of Europe**. At that point, the prophecy jumps the time-line track and leaps forward to the establishment of the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ, with the **Rock Not Cut With Hands** that turns into a **Mountain That Fills the Whole Earth**. The scope and breadth of the vision is amazing. God, in one dream, traces out several thousand years of human history, in such simple, direct symbols that with only a few hints, Biblical scholars should have been able to figure it out. **However...**

It would seem that even with **all the answers provided in detail, in context**, that there are theologians who just somehow know better than God Himself how to interpret these passages. When I went out on the web and began researching this particular prophetic dream, I was amazed to find that there is a whole camp of so-called experts who don't believe that Daniel was actually written by Daniel at all, but rather was compiled sometime during the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC by someone **claiming** to be Daniel. Now, that's quite a trick, considering that Daniel has been an acknowledged part of the Hebrew Scriptures since the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC, and was included in the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, about 150 years **before some of his prophecies came to pass**. I guess they think that ole' Dan somehow wrote the prophecies after the fact, and then jumped in his personal time machine and went back some 400 years to plant his prophecies in ancient Babylon. Crazy is not an adequate description of the thinking processes of some of these folks.

Now, if they could do that to a prophetic dream or vision with the answers already provided, imagine what they could do with one **with only the symbols?** Without any **standard rules of interpretation**, the person analyzing the passage can simply make up meanings **as he goes**. It becomes a totally subjective matter, and any and all interpretations are fair game. When we come to the dream about the four beasts, it is truly "*Katie bar the door*" in terms of various and mostly crazy versions of what the dream means. In case you've never heard that phrase, I decided just for the fun of it to research where the phrase came from. It is first found in a poem called "When Lide Married Him" by James Whitcomb Riley, which was published in a collection called *Armazindy* in 1894. A young lady marries a known drunkard against family advice and forcibly reforms him. One stanza ends with the line: "*When Lide married him, it wuz 'Katy, bar the door!*" , suggesting trouble ensued.

And when folks don't use the standard methodologies for Biblical interpretation, trouble does, in fact, always ensue. What kind of rules are we talking about? Very simple ones. I haven't discussed them much in this book, but I spent a great deal of time discussing them in **Episode One – The Revelation of Jesus Christ**. Let's review them again for just a second.

- (1) God knows what He is doing, and is perfectly capable of saying **exactly what He means** in His Word. In fact, at the end of both the Old and New Testaments, He specifically warns us not to **add to** or **take away** from the words of this covenant (Deut 12:32, Revelation 22:18-19)
- (2) The Word of God is **literally true**, particularly regarding prophecy (Think about the birth, life and crucifixion of Jesus!)
- (3) If the Word explains the meaning of a passage, either **in the context**, or **by means of a symbol reference to another passage** which explains the symbol, **we are not permitted to insert or make up our own interpretation.**
- (4) When dealing with multiple sources of revelation, always go with the **final statement on the matter.**
- (5) In sorting out the **significance** of Scriptures, place them in **this logical and Scriptural order :**
  - (a) The testimony of Jesus as **Son Of God** (after His resurrection)
  - (b) The testimony of Jesus as **Son Of Man** (prior to His resurrection)
  - (c) The testimony of the **Apostles**
  - (d) The testimony of the **Prophets**
  - (e) The testimony of **Other Individuals**

And, as I have thought about it, I'd like to make an addition to that list:

- (6) Do not attempt to **mix and match symbols** when trying to interpret passages explained using symbols. Let me give you a real example from the Book of Daniel, using the prophetic dreams of Chapters 2 and 7 to show you what many Biblical interpreters do.

In Chapter 2, we have the now-famous statue of Nebuchadnezzar. The delineation of the statue is very clear.

Head of Gold	--	Babylonian Empire
Arms and Chest of Silver	--	Medo-Persian Empire (Medes-one arm, Persians-the other)
Loins of Brass or Bronze	--	Macedonian Empire (in the <u>Bronze Age</u> , no less!)
Legs of Iron	--	Roman Empire, with a clear division between: The Western Catholic Roman Empire in Rome and...
		The Eastern Orthodox Roman Empire in Constantinople
Feet and Toes of Iron & Clay	--	Europe and the Middle East through the Dark Ages

It is interesting to note several things about this **Two Feet / Ten Toes** period of history. First of all, Rome was the last world power to successfully unite and maintain a single political system which included both nominally Christian Europe and the stringently Muslim Middle East. Clearly, we are looking at iron and clay here. And there are two ways to interpret the iron and the clay. One take on this matter is that since Europe is now only nominally Christian, and is really more atheistic than anything else, it should be view as the **clay** portion of the feet and toes. The Middle East is fervently, passionately Muslim, and as such should be view as the **iron** portion of the feet and toes. But there's another way to view the iron/clay split. After the collapse of the Roman empire and the disintegration of Europe into a pack of squabbling, feuding nations, the **Goth and Visigoths** who had successfully sacked and burned Rome began to coalesce into a series of nations of their own. True to form, they remained very aggressive and warlike. They became known as **Germany, Austria and the western portion of Russia**. All descendants of Noah's son Japheth, these **Aryans** were viewed as tough, stern, hard-working and very nationalistic and aggressive. As such, they have been responsible for the last two World Wars and will, in my opinion and the opinion of other reputable Bible scholars, also be responsible for World War III and the Battle of Armageddon. Surprised? I was too, when I first began my research on this matter. There will eventually be at least one E-Pistle called **Gog and Magog**, which will outline this subject in great detail. Clearly, they are a group of nations made out of **iron**. Contrast that to the constant instability of the nations of the Middle East, and you can see why they must be referred to as nations of **clay**, with very little strength and durability. Perhaps both viewpoints are true. Wouldn't **that** be interesting?

There is another thing about the **Ten Toes** that jumped out at me the other day, and I've never heard any prophecy teacher talk about this. Typically, when experts about the End Times begin to talk about



the **Ten Toes** of Daniel's statue, they liken them to **ten nations**. I couldn't agree more. In that, they are absolutely correct. Some, like Robert Van Kampen in his monumental work *The Sign*, link the **Ten Toes** of the statue to the **Ten Horns** of the **4<sup>th</sup> Beast** in Daniel's dream in Chapter 7. I also agree there. And I want to take just a moment to thank the now-deceased brother for his remarkable scholarship. Although I do not agree with all of his interpretations and methodologies, he made a critical contribution to me through his book when I first discovered the true location of the Rapture. I had been taught, like all good Charismatics, that there was going to be a **Pre-Tribulation Rapture**, and that we were going to miss all of the bad, nasty stuff that was going to happen to everyone else but us. But one day the Lord challenged me to **teach** the Revelation of Jesus Christ. After an extensive period of arguing, I reluctantly agree to do so. But then came the nasty part. If I was going to **teach** Revelation, I was going to need to **study** Revelation. I made a determination that I was not going to hitch-hike on everybody else's stuff, which is what the vast majority of pastors do. Many of them have not had an original thought or sermon in years. Mad about that statement? If the shoe fits...

I made several decisions which have permanently affected my life in ways I could not have possibly imagined. First of all, I was going to lay aside all **preconceived notions** about what the Book said or how to interpret it. Second of all, I was going to view the book as **logical and chronological**. Last of all, I was going to view the events as **literal, not symbolic**. That's when I made the jolting discovery early on in my studies that the Rapture wasn't going to happen till the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, at the close of the **Great Tribulation**. This put me at variance with almost 100% of the teaching on the matter back then and still today. What I teach is not popular. **But it is correct**. After a while, I grew tired of butting heads with everyone else who believed just the opposite, and I became discouraged. True prophets tend to get discouraged often, because they are generally assigned the task of trying to warn a group of people who don't want to be disturbed, and correct a group of people who not only don't want to **be corrected**, but who have long since passed the point of **being correctable**. I almost considered giving up and no longer teaching on Revelation. But one day, a package arrived mysteriously in the mail. In it was a copy of Van Kampen's *The Sign*. I had not ordered it. Heck, I didn't even know Van Kampen existed! Somewhere, someone decided that I needed a copy of that book. Someone clearly lead by the Holy Spirit and sent by the Lord Himself. And I am eternally grateful. After speed-reading the massive text, I was greatly encouraged. Here, too, was a man who had come to the same conclusion as I had, and had meticulous research to back it up. And so I continued to be till this day an advocate of the **Pre-Wrath Rapture** position, the only position supportable **in context** from the Sacred Scriptures.

**Now, back to them thar toes!** The **Ten Toes** of the statue match up with the **Ten Horns** of the 4<sup>th</sup> Beast. In fact, drawing a timeline between them produces some very interesting results which we'll get to later. But at this point, prophecy experts make a serious mistake. **They treat the Ten Toes/Horns** as if they are some sort of extension of the **European Common Market**. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even through this is a little out of sequence, it is relevant, so bear with me. Please remember back to the **Two Iron Legs**. Remember that we said that one of them was located in the **West, based in Rome**. The other leg was located in the **East, or Middle East, based in Constantinople**. Now, for those of you who are lousy with geography and word etymology or origin, Constantinople means, simply, *Constantine's Polis (City)*. Polis is the Greek work for city. From it we get words like *political* and *metropolitan*. After the Turks and the Ottoman Empire conquered the Eastern portion of the Roman Empire, they renamed the city and called it what it is known as today, *Istanbul*, located in what was known as **Asia Minor** and is known today as **Turkey**. So, what does all of that have to do with toes? Simple! **Just as each human foot must have five toes each, so the political feet of Daniel's statue must also have five toes each!** Most prophecy experts have virtually **all of the ten toes located in Europe**. That just can't be. It would be like having one foot with 8 toes, and the other foot with 2 toes. Somebody put together like that would sure walk funny, wouldn't they? Instead, **only five of the toes are located in Europe. The other five must be located in the Middle East!** This completely skews the standard association of the EU with the Toes/Horns, but it makes perfect Scriptural, political and economic sense. This raises the obvious question: **Who are the Ten Toes/Horns?** It is at this point that we move from Scriptural certainty to personal speculation. All I can do is give you my **best guess** on the matter, but here goes!

**The Five Toes of the Western /  
Rome / "Christian" Foot:**

**Italy (Gotta be! Because of Rome)  
Germany (The Aryan Iron)  
Austria (The last two WW's started there)**

**Russia (For reasons we will discuss later)**  
**England (Shocked? So was I!)**

**The Five Toes of the Eastern /  
Istanbul / "Muslim" Foot:**

**Iran (Part of *Peras* Persia)**  
**Iraq (Part of *Peras* or Persia with Iran)**  
**Syria (Israel's most hated neighbor)**  
**Turkey (Known in Ezekiel as *Togarmah*)**  
**Libya (Known in Ezekiel as *Put*)**

Now remember, this is a **best guess**, based on various prophecies from Daniel and Ezekiel, trying to tie them all together is some rational sense. We have left out a number of possible candidates, and, in my opinion, non-candidates. Here are some of them, and why I left them out:

- France** No offense, guys, but, uh, when was the last time that you **won** a war? The standard joke in WWII was that all French tanks came with two gears: **Reverse** and, ummm, oh yeah, **Reverse**. I still remember pictures and films showing Charles De Gaulle posturing and taking credit for all the work that the Brits, Americans and Canadians did during the invasion. Am I belittling the Resistance? Hardly. But after Napoleon had that nasty little run-in with the Russian winter, France's military has never been the same.
- Spain** Never a factor in European politics since the Inquisition. Lovely place to visit. A non-player.
- Greece** Not a political factor since Alexander the Great. Sorry, boys!
- Ethiopia** Really needs to be included in the list **somewhere**, since it is Communist, along with Libya, which aligns it politically with anything that any part of the former USSR has in mind regarding world conquest, and since is it specifically mentioned in Ezekiel as being the southernmost ally in the Armageddon Army that comes against Israel. But I ran out of toes, and they are neither East nor West, but South.
- Saudi Arabia** You know the old joke about the French being lovers, not fighters? The same thing can be said of the Saudis. Only they aren't lovers, just financiers to the entire world of terrorism. The Saudi government is so weak that it relies on a steady stream of billion dollar bribes to all of the various *Hamas* and terrorist groups around the world. Without Saudi oil money, there would be no significant terrorist threat in the world. You know, AK-47's and Scud missiles cost a pretty penny to produce. And I'll guarantee you that the boys doing the blowing up don't have the money to make it happen. I would dearly love to include Saudi Arabia in our **Unholy Ten Toes**, but, sadly, they're only corrupt enough to qualify, not militant enough. However, if you want to drop Libya off the Big Ten and put the Saudis in their place, OK by me. Just remember, **they are not mentioned by Ezekiel**, and his list is definitive in determining the Unholy Ten.
- Jordan** Just a shattered shell of a nation, with no real clout. Owned and operated by Syria, for the most part.
- Lebanon** Same thing. Total non-player. Just barely alive as a nation. More frequently used as a place for everybody to take target practice at each other. To think it used to be one of the most beautiful nations in the world. The Cedars of Lebanon were legendary for their beauty and strength. Just another example of what happens when you let Palestinians move into your neighborhood. Boy, I know I'll hear it on that one. But, as a true prophet of God, I am obligated to tell it **just like it is**. Don't expect me to be politically correct. Those people are headed straight for Hell because they fear man and not God.
- Egypt** **Definite** non-player. Why? Because with the Camp David Accord, Egypt took itself out of the running to lead the charge against Israel. Plus, they and Syria took a **terrible** pounding in the Yom Kippur war in 1973, after Israel turned the tide with the assistance of US, led by president Richard Milhous Nixon. There's a story there I'll bet you don't know. Whatever sins Nixon may have committed at Watergate, he single-handedly saved Israel from total

annihilation by the Arabs with a massive airlift of military equipment and supplies done **in one night**. This same US involvement will occur later in the Book of Revelation. More on that later.

That about wraps up all the pretenders for the throne. As you can see, particularly if you are a student of history, there is a core group of nations who have successfully managed to get us into trouble **time and time again**. The only nation that **must** be on the Bad Guy List but **shouldn't be** is **England**. It breaks my heart to put them there, but I have to, based on the interpretation of the dream that Daniel had in Chapter 7, along with the corollary Scriptures which link to it in Revelation Chapter 13. Much as I don't want to have to say it, it appears that England will eventually become a **strong supporter for the Anti-Christ**, lending a great deal of **verbal support** to his kingdom. Why do I say that? More later on about this subject in a future article, probably not even in this Episode.

Somewhere, way back in this article, I was talking about **mixing unlike symbols**. We had to kind of go off on a tangent for a bit, but let's come back to that point for a second. It's a darned good thing that I didn't find out what **other people thought** about Revelation and Daniel, et al, before I began to do my research. If I had, all I would have ended up with was a rehash of other people's ideas and interpretations of the Scriptures. Instead, I determined to read all of them just like I was reading Revelation, and it has allowed me to introduce fresh thinking into the matter. Once I realized that all of Revelation **called** for various prophetic passages just like a main program calls for the various **subroutines** that make it run, I knew that any matching of elements **between** prophecies would have to be based on **one of two keys: symbols and phrases**. That's how I can safely connect **ten** toes to **ten** horns. I also found that other writers and researchers all went astray when they tried to link things together across Scriptures in any other way but by **symbol** or **phrase**. Although I learned a great deal from Robert Van Kampen, I also noticed that he tried to link the Olivet Discourse into the Seven Seals in **order of listing, not by symbol or phrase**. In doing so, he veered sharply off course, and, in my opinion, missed badly on some key issues. Let me give you an example of what I am talking about by examining the dream that Daniel had in Chapter 7 (Finally! Yea!).

*"<sup>1</sup> In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. <sup>2</sup> Daniel spoke, saying, 'I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. <sup>3</sup> And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. <sup>5</sup> And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' <sup>6</sup> After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. <sup>7</sup> After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. <sup>8</sup> I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.' "*

– Daniel 7:1-8

In Daniel's dream, he sees **Four Beasts**. In order of appearance, they are:

- (1) **A Lion with Eagle's Wings**
- (2) **A Bear unable to raise up on one side, with Three Ribs in its mouth**
- (3) **A Leopard with Four Heads and Four Wings**
- (4) **A Terrible and Dreadful Beast with Iron Teeth, Bronze Claws and 10 Horns**

What many Biblical expositors have done with the passage is to try and link it with the dream of the statue in Chapter 2. Here's how they link things up:

<b>Head of Gold</b>	<b>Babylonian Empire</b>	<b>Lion with Eagle's Wings</b>
<b>Arms and Chest of Silver</b>	<b>Medo-Persian Empire</b>	<b>Bear unable to rise up</b>

**Loins of Brass**

**Macedonian Empire**

**Leopard with Four Heads  
and Four Wings**

**Legs of Iron**

**Roman Empire**

**Terrible & Dreadful Beast  
with Iron Teeth**

Their argument for making this linkage is that the Leopard with Four Heads and Wings corresponds to the breakup of the Macedonian Empire after the death of Alexander the Great into four empires, and that the Terrible and Dreadful Beast with Iron Teeth corresponds to the legs of Iron in the Roman Empire. And to be honest, that's not too bad a match-up, but it's certainly not perfect, nor as clean as I prefer the match-ups to be when I teach them. Fortunately, I was totally unaware of that particular interpretation when I read that passage and tried to make some sense of it. I was not **predisposed by the teaching of others**. Many of you ask how in the world I receive from God the revelations I receive. Part of it has to do with shutting up and listening. A large part of it, in fact. God won't talk while I have my gums flapping. So I try to spend as much time in prayer as I can just asking questions and then sitting back and listening to what the Spirit says. Another part of it, and the part that is particularly relevant to this discussion, is that I don't view the **Torah** through the eyes of the **Mishnah**. For those of you who have been with us for a while, you understand immediately what I am referring to. For those of you who don't, here's what I mean: Paul said that when the Jews read Moses, they have a veil over their eyes. That veil is the teachings and doctrines of men, called the **Mishnah**, or Second Law, by the Jews. It is all the compiled writings of the various rabbis down through the years, commenting on the **Torah**, or the written Word of God. The **Torah** is **God's opinion of man**. The **Mishnah** is **man's opinion of God's opinion of man**. Understand the difference? Good! By not viewing this prophecy **in the light of what others had already said**, I was able to receive a fresh, totally different outlook on the subject. The standard "take" on all of Daniel's prophecies is that they all somehow **relate to the same time span**. I disagree totally. When I looked the dream about the four beasts, I asked myself, *"Is there any unique, clearly identifiable symbol here that I can use as a foothold, to anchor this prophecy accurately in the timeline?"* Lions with Eagles Wings were no help in and of themselves. Many nations have used the lion or the eagle as their national symbol, including the good ole U.S of A. The leopard with wings wasn't much help either. **But when I looked at the bear, everything fell into place!** What did I discover? Well.... Since we've run out of space and time for today, I guess you'll just have to come back tomorrow (or keep reading today!) to find out why our next *E-Pistle* is entitled **Lions and Leopards and Bears, O My!** Until next time, may the mind of Christ be active and alive in you, guiding you into **all** truth!

# Day 22 – Lions and Leopards and Bears, O My!



<sup>2</sup> Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. <sup>3</sup> And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. <sup>5</sup> "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' ~ Daniel 7:2-5

We have been talking about the dream/vision of Daniel Chapter 2 for the last few E-Pistles, and we found out that even with the correct answers underlined and circled, many Biblical expositors still have difficulty accepting what God tells them at face value. Imagine how much more fun it will be when we can take a passage in which no real clear-cut explanation is given? We now move in non-sequential and non-chronological fashion from Chapter 2 to Chapter 7, where we encounter another strange dream. This one Daniel won't have to share with anyone. This is his exclusively. We jump to the brief and tragicomic administration of Nebuchadnezzar's son or grandson, a lad named Belshazzar. Belshazzar is referred to as the son of Nebuchadnezzar, but we also know from history that there was another king officially ruling in front of him, someone name Nabonidus, who was basically king-in-abstentia and also reported to be more than a little wacky to boot. Regardless of the historical particulars, Belshazzar was in charge, and it was under his incompetent administration that Cyrus and the Medo-Persian army conquered Babylon without a bang or a whimper. As I've studied Daniel, I've discovered some interesting facts that are hidden between the lines, such as his involvement in the return of the Jews to their promised land. Here's another interesting side bar: **most of Daniel's significant prophetic dreams and visions seem to center around changes in administration or empire.** That's the case with this dream, for sure. Let's pick up with the narrative:

" <sup>1</sup> In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. <sup>2</sup> Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. <sup>3</sup> And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other." – Daniel 7:1-3

As a quick FYI, when you see the phrase **the Great Sea** mentioned in Scripture, they are almost always referring to the **Mediterranean Sea**. Also note that Daniel **wrote the matter down**, probably immediately after dreaming the dream. Experts on dreams say that you ought to keep a pen and paper by your bed for those occasions where you dream something that's from the Lord, not Pizza Hut! Unless you write the details of your dream down right away, they tend to fade and get all jumbled together as the day goes on, sometimes even during the first few minutes after waking. I keep pen and pad by my bed, just in case. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who wrote the great poem *Kubla Khan*, awoke from sleep with the poem fully formed in his mind. He feverishly began to write it down, only to be interrupted by a knock at the door. When he stopped writing and went to answer, no one was there. Frustrated, he returned to complete the poem, only to find that the remainder of the poem had vanished completely from his mind, never to return again! Meanwhile, back at the dream...

" <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. <sup>5</sup> "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its

*mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' <sup>6</sup> "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. <sup>7</sup> "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. <sup>8</sup> I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words." – Daniel 7:4-8*

Ever had a dream that started out kinda normal, then went from strange to stranger to stranger still? This is gonna be one of those dreams! We begin with a **Lion with Eagle's Wings**. Daniel views this as one beast, but it will actually turn out to be **One and a Half World Empires**. That may sound a little strange right now, but it will make sense later on. After that comes a **Bear With Three Ribs in its Mouth that can only rise up on one side**. Getting a little stranger? Next comes a **Leopard With Four Heads and Four Wings**. (Pastor, are you **sure** this isn't a pizza dream?) Hold on. It gets even stranger. Next comes what can only be described as a **Monster**. It isn't like any of the other three animals. At least they bear some vague resemblance to normal earth creatures. Not this one! Daniel calls it **dreadful** and **terrible** and **exceedingly strong**. It has **huge iron teeth** and **brass claws** (we learn that part later on). It also has **ten horns**. Sounds like something straight out of science fiction. You know, *The Creature from Planet X*, or some such nonsense. But to take strangeness to the max, there is a range war going on atop the creature's head. There is a **little horn** sprouting out of the creature's head (as if it didn't have enough already!), and it **displaces three of the existing horns**. Ready for the capstone? This horn has **eyes like a man** and a **mouth speaking pompous words**. And you thought that trash-talking was limited to the NBA! If most of us walked into the psychiatrist's office and told him a dream like that, he'd be gleefully signing us up for long-term therapy at \$100 an hour. But God doesn't think like us. His thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways and means committee doesn't even meet on our planet. This dream may look like absolute lunacy to us, but every single element of the dream has been packed with significance and meaning by God. Why give a dream instead of just sending an email? It's because of the way that the human brain is engineered. We process information in one of three forms: **pictures, words** or **numbers**. Although, as any good student in quantum physics can tell you, it all boils down to numbers, that's not the most effective way to transmit information from one person to another. Most people are lousy with numbers. So showing someone a mathematical formula isn't going to do the job. The next step up the line is **words**. That's the tool I'm using to communicate with you. But even so, words have a limit. I can go to great lengths to describe to you a beautiful sunset. I can expound at great length about the myriad colors that streamed forth out of the corona, blah, blah, blah. But if I show you a **picture** of the sunset, all the information that it took literally thousands of words to poorly convey are transmitted to you in a moment of time with a single **picture**. The old Chinese adage that **a picture is worth a thousand words** is so very correct. So far, so good. But what about this dream stuff? Why does God send us information in dreams with all these crazy symbols interwoven into them? And why, for crying out loud, does most of this stuff have to happen between 3:00 and 5:00 in the morning, just when you are sleeping? Couldn't God just send you an open vision during the middle of the day during coffee break? There are several answers to that question. Let's tackle the basic nature of dreams for starters.

First of all, you have to understand the role that dreams play in the human psyche. We are a **composite, triune being**. What does that mean? That there are **three parts to us; spirit, soul (mind, will & emotions) and flesh**. Before you were conceived in your mother's womb, you already had existence. God told Jeremiah that he was already called to be a prophet to the nations **before** he was even conceived in his mother's womb. That, by the way, should forever end the argument about when a "fetus" becomes a living human being. And, by the way, the word *fetus* means "offspring" or "bringing forth", not "something we can kill whenever we want to if it is inconvenient to us". Yeah, I'm pretty hard-line on abortion. I didn't use to be. But then I started taking the Word of God seriously and began to study it as an absolute, inerrant guideline for all the aspects of my life. It's so very simple. If the being that would become known as Jeremiah **predated his conception**, then there was no time at which he wasn't fully human. The genetic program that created his entire body, his DNA, supports this as well. From the point at which the sperm from his father interacted with the ovum from his mother, creating a totally new biological program which would form his complete body and repair it for 70 or 80 years, that program **never changed**. The DNA of Jeremiah from day one of conception was identical to the DNA of

Jeremiah as an old man as he lay dying on his bed. Therefore, Jeremiah was both **genetically** and **spiritually** complete as a human from the moment he was conceived. That certainly predates the second or third trimester or whatever artificial guideline medical science wants to impose.

Before you were born, you were **100% spirit**. That's difficult for us to conceive. The birth process is so traumatic to our spirit being that it almost totally submerges it in the **flesh**. Suddenly we lose our identity and self-awareness as we are thrust unceremoniously into a world where the very first thing that someone does is to hit us hard where we weren't expecting it. It doesn't get much better from that point on. Although we receive, generally speaking, a lot of encouragement and support in growing up, there are still a whole lot of whacks along the way as well. Why is that so? Because, traumatized by the birth process and wrapped in flesh, our spirit man or being kind of folds up its tent and goes into shock for a long period of time. When we are born, the flesh dominates us and is extremely strong. A small child is almost **100% flesh**. When we are hungry, we cry. When we are thirsty, we cry. When we experience pain, we cry. When we don't get something we want immediately, we cry, pout, rage, throw temper tantrums and become violent. The flesh **wants what it wants when it wants it**. The flesh **never** gives any thought to **consequences**. Truth be damned. Full speed ahead! It doesn't matter that eating a whole gallon of ice cream will give you a tummy ache of monumental proportions. Eat it anyway. It doesn't matter that sleeping with that woman will give you aids and violate your marriage vows and destroy the relationship and the trust with your wife which you have so carefully crafted during courtship over a period of several years. Consequences be damned. Do it anyway. It doesn't matter that living in hedonistic sin, caring only for the moment, will send you into an eternal lake of burning fire. **Eternal soul be damned. Do it anyway.** Dear friends, the flesh is not your friend. It cares only for itself, not for you. It's **sole** and **soul** concern is to have what it wants at that moment in time. The flesh lives **only in the present moment**. It is an animal during rutting season. It was never meant to dominate and control your life. It is only a **temporary vehicle to get you to where you need to go**. Most people I know, including Christians, are totally driven by the flesh. Truthfully, as a young man, so was I. And my experiences in the last three years of my life, when I have been wracked with pain and had to battle cancer and a heart attack and the debilitating consequences of chemotherapy which left the nerve endings in my hands and feet severely damaged and in constant pain have served to drive the flesh back where it was always intended to be: **a means to an end**. Nothing more. Nothing less. It is just a temporary earth suit which will shortly be cast off, and traded for something far more permanent. It is not to be allowed to dominate you. It is meant to be at the bottom of the totem pole.

So much for the flesh. Now we come to the **soul**. It is the development of your personality, a mesh of intellect, will, emotion and character which makes you up. It is your soul which is shaped and developed from the moment of birth until the day you die. It is the one portion of you which is **never meant to stop growing**. Your flesh grows until about the age of 25 or 30 and then is engaged from that point on in trying to maintain itself against the ravages of time and decaying mitochondria, ending eventually in a condition which we call death. At some point, your body simply loses its ability to self-support and regenerate. It didn't used to be this way. You were originally engineered to live forever. A little incident in a garden spoiled all that. But even after that, we lived just short of **one God-day, or 1,000 man-years**. II Peter 3:8 gives us the key to understanding the passage of time in heaven relative to the passage of time on earth. Earth time is called *Chronos* or "tick-tock" time. Heaven time is called *Kairos* or constant, free flowing time. And one day in heaven is the equivalent of 1,000 years on our planet. The seven days of creation were based on Kairos, not Chronos, time. Based on that, Eve was several hundred years younger than Adam, and more immature, more naïve and more vulnerable. Small wonder, then, that Lucifer made his seductive offer to her, not to Adam. He knew better. She did not. I won't take this article to go into all of the ramifications of all of this, but it is well worth a moment of contemplative thought. Adam did, in fact, die in the same day he sinned. If one God-day is a thousand years, how old was Adam when he died? Even Methuselah, the oldest man who ever lived, only made it to 969. All within the span of one day, from God's perspective. And when Jesus said He would return soon, He wasn't lying. From heaven's standpoint, he's been gone for less than two days. Think about it.

**The development of the soul** is the single most important aspect of our existence. It, along with our unchanging, eternal spirit, are the only parts of us that pass into eternity. The flesh does not go along for this journey into the next level of existence. It is left behind, a sad, braying donkey sitting mournfully by the side of the road. I tell people that the *charismata*, or gifts/manifestations of the Spirit are **the gifts that God gives to you. What you are and what you become, however, is your gift back to God.**

What you are at the point of death in terms of character, morality, compassion, grace, mercy, integrity, faith, truth and virtue is what you remain **for all eternity**. Once the soul has been formed, it does not change after the point of physical death. Sadly, most people stop developing at about the same time they stop growing physically. I know many people who are still going to the same places and hanging out with the same people that they associated with in high school. 18 becomes the defining point in our lives. Too many of us spend the rest of our lives remembering when. It should be obvious, but I have to say it. **Your future does not lie in your past.** Get on with your life. You can't undo the mistakes nor recreate the victories. What you do today shapes where you will be tomorrow.

Because of the fact that our spirit has to compete, and often poorly, with our flesh and our soulish realms, it is very difficult for God to speak to us through the Holy Spirit during our waking hours. Most of us, me generally included, are very short on activities that strengthen our spirit man and very long on those things that build up and amplify the control of our flesh and our soul in the affairs of our life. Because of this massive imbalance, God often has to wait until both the flesh and the soul have gone into a period of relative inactivity. That's primarily why we sleep. It's not likely that the body actually needs 8 hours of sleep, but unless we have a certain amount of REM activity, which is where dreaming occurs, we end up in a condition of psychosis which can sometime be unalterable and incurable. We know that from extensive testing in the past few decades. Part of dreaming helps your "subconscious" to unwind and deal with events, both from that day and from past unresolved issues. What psychiatrists call the "subconscious", we might call the "spirit". Only when the constant chaos, racket and furious mental activity of the day finally calms down is the channel of the spirit finally clear enough of static for information to finally start coming through. But this clear channel condition does not persist for very long. So it becomes necessary to **compress** and **encode** that information into some kind of data stream that can be downloaded quickly, with maximum retention. In fact, I went to bed in the middle of this article. That was about 1:00 in the morning. I awoke at 5:00 this morning with a dream still fresh in my mind about this subject. The Lord prompted me to go to the keyboard and start writing, but before I did He had me write down this single, simple but powerful sentence: **Dreams are a means of compressing and encoding data.** Having been in the computer industry for over 30 years, I immediately understood what He was saying. In the data processing industry, information processing and communications demands have grown so quickly in the last few decades that we are constantly hard-pressed to keep information moving fast enough to meet the demands to send and receive it. At first, we were content to send text at 300 BPS (bits per second). Imagine! How wonderful! But then someone wanted to send a **picture!** Oh, horrors! Would the users **never** be satisfied? So we worked very hard on how to **compress data**, so that more of it could be transmitted in the same amount of time and space. Granted, hardware got faster, but it didn't get faster quickly enough, and so the software people had to lend a hand. Then, security issues began to enter into the picture, as more and more people began to use and abuse the world wide web for their purposes. So it became necessary to not only **compress** the data that we were sending, but also to **encode** or **encrypt** it, so that others would not be able to intercept, understand and misuse data not intended for them. Now, take that concept and place it into the spirit realm.

One of the huge misconceptions about the spirit realm is that everyone and everything there is a "friendly ghost", like our little friend Casper. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as in the natural realm, you have to be on your guard and very careful who you talk to and what you say. Just because someone or something says it is your friend and your "guide" doesn't necessarily make it so. For that reason, when God is sending you information on the Holy Spirit Hotline, He sometimes uses these compression and encoding techniques called dreams. More information can be transmitted in a single picture than through a mountain of words, and, if that information is transmitted in symbolic form, it also encodes it, making it more difficult for the not-so-friendly spirits out there to make heads or tails of it. But, once encoded, it also requires a little work to **decode** it. That's where all of us "prophecy experts" come in. All of us think we have the perfect cryptographical algorithm to "break the code". All of us think that all of the others guys have it dead wrong. Certainly, there's no ego involved in all of this, is there? One of the key mistakes made in trying to decode the message is that, since the Holy Spirit encoded it in the first place, it is also going to take the same Holy Spirit to decode it as well. Most decoders try to use only their intellect. That simply doesn't work. Until you learn the keys to decoding, you will forever be running into a brick wall, or coming up with the most outlandish "interpretations". At the same time, since the first gift of the Spirit is wisdom, you have to apply that as well. Once the Holy Spirit shows you the key by **revelation**, you must then pursue the matter by **investigation**. Everything that God has given me has consisted of an "aha!" moment where the key became suddenly, instantaneously evident, follow by a lot



of hard work and research to confirm the matter. Here's how the Lord gave it to me: **I have the revelation by inspiration, but the confirmation by investigation.** Let me give you an interesting example of how it works.

While I was still working as a programmer at a Louisville hospice, I was walking down the corridor one day admiring the beautiful crabapple trees around the building. It was spring, and all the trees were in riotous, glorious bloom. Swept up in a moment of appreciation for God and His creation, I said, "*Lord, thank you for these beautiful trees and this beautiful springtime!*" To which, much to my amazement, the Lord immediately replied, "*You know, it used to be that way all the time in the Garden of Eden*". That statement stopped me cold in my tracks. I asked Him to repeat the statement, and He did. Hmm... That would seem to be a **revelation by inspiration**, a single data download from the mind of God into my mind through the Holy Spirit. But **confirmation by investigation** was now required on my part. Often God will give you a little nugget of truth, and it will take you days, weeks, months or even years trying to buff it, polish it, shape it and bring it into the form He desires for it. He never gives me finished goods, only raw materials, often requiring repair. Anyway, I began to dig through my Bible in order to see if the **Scriptures confirmed the revelation**. And that, dear friends, is the bottom line on any supposed revelation from God. If it doesn't match up with existing Scripture, your "revelation" is **not** from God. It is definitely from a spirit, all right, just not the right **kind** of Spirit. Once I researched the matter, I found that the seasons didn't begin until **after** the flood, so it must have been perpetual springtime in the Garden of Eden. Apparently the Earth's axis was straight up and down prior to the flood. One of the events which happened during the flood, or, perhaps even causing the flood, was the sudden, radical tilting of the earth's axis, producing massive damage to the then-seamless tectonic shell, shattering it into a million pieces, forming what we now know as the tectonic plates, and causing the vast amount of underground water to burst forth as "fountains of the deep". In the equatorial part of the earth, where water is often abundant and fairly consistent, there is no such thing as a growing season. Things grow non-stop. In northern climates, trees that are cut down always display rings of growth. The spring comes. The tree grows. The summer comes, the tree slows down. The fall comes, the tree stops. The winter comes, the tree retreats. But in tropical climates, trees don't have rings because they never stop growing. I know because I've seen pictures in India of coconut trees cut down, and, sure enough, they don't have rings at all. So Genesis seemed to confirm what I thought I had heard the Spirit of the Lord say to me. Then I went to Ezekiel and Revelation and discovered that the Tree of Life, which will grow in abundance beside the River of Living Water, will bear its fruit **every month**, thus involving a 30 day reproduction cycle. And, back to the garden for a second, this would **have to be true of all fruits and vegetables there**. Consider: since Adam and Eve did not **till the soil until their expulsion from the Garden, but rather tended to the trees and shrubs which grew there, they had to have a constant, daily supply of fresh fruits and vegetables in order to survive**. The whole concept of harvesting and storage was totally alien to them. You did know that they were total vegetarians in the Garden, didn't you? Eating meat was not introduced until **after** the Firmament Above was destroyed, thus allowing lethal UV radiation to come pouring down on the surface of the planet, diminishing the viability and nutrient value of all plants significantly, and reducing the lifespan of man incrementally from 900+ years all the way down to 110 by the time of Joseph. Don't believe me? No problem. Be a Berean, and search the Scriptures yourself to see if these things be so. Don't take my word for it. Take **His!** By the time I had done all the supportive research, **everything I could discover by investigation confirmed what He had told me by revelation**. I want to recommend this methodology to you, dear friends. You can use it successfully not only to test what you feel you are receiving from God, but also what **others** claim they are receiving from God as well. It will keep you out of significant trouble.

Sorry I've wandered so far afield in this E-Pistle, but the Lord put it on my heart that I needed to discuss these matters with you. Perhaps you are at a critical juncture in your life, and you need to know what I've just told you. If so, please accept it with our blessings from His Hands.

Meanwhile, back at the matter at hand...

Now that you understand to some extent the **why and how** of dreams, and particularly this dream which Daniel had, we can now begin to decode it, piece by piece. This is where the fur starts to fly. And given that we are talking about lions, and bears and leopards and monsters, **fur** is certainly something that you would expect to find aplenty. (Bad pun!) Traditionally, scholars have tried to make the dream of Chapter 7 parallel the dream of Chapter 2. Their thinking goes like this:

## Chapter 2

Head of Gold  
Chest and Arms of Silver  
Loins of Brass

Legs of Iron

## Meaning

Babylonian Empire  
Medo-Persian Empire  
Macedonian Empire

Roman Empire

## Chapter 7

Lion with Eagle's Wings  
Bear with ribs in its mouth  
Leopard with Four Heads  
and Wings  
Terrible and Dreadful  
Beast

Their point of argument is that since, after the death of Alexander the Great the empire fractured into four parts, these four parts correspond to the four heads and wings of the Leopard. They then argue that the Terrible and Dreadful Beast must be the Roman Empire, who crushes and tramples everything in its path. But, at least to me, there is no linkage between a Head of Gold and a Lion with Eagle's Wings and the Chest and Arms of Silver and a Bear with ribs in its mouth. They fail to connect the dots using **symbols and phrases**. Even though this interpretation is widely accepted, it also has some additional nasty holes in it. People who want to make the Terrible and Dreadful Beast into the Roman Empire also want to make it into the Empire of the Anti-Christ at the end of the age. And **that** I have trouble with.

Fortunately for me, I was never exposed to that theory until **after** I had prayed and studied myself about this passage. I was not preconditioned to see the **Torah** in the light of the **Mishnah**. So, as I studied this passage, I looked for **symbols that matched up properly**. Much to my surprise, I discovered a connection, which, as far as I know, has never been suggested before now. Why? Because most of us merely **borrow what has been done and said in the past and repeat it as if it were Gospel truth**. No fresh revelation. And certainly no critical investigation to see if these things really make sense and add up. Once a **single key symbol linked up, every other symbol linked up as well**. And that, dear friends, will be the subject of our next E-Pistle, entitled **Beware the Bear!**

# Day 23 – Beware the Bear!



<sup>2</sup> Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. <sup>3</sup> And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. <sup>5</sup> “And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’”  
– Daniel 7:2-5

In our last article, we discussed the conventional interpretation of Daniel Chapter 7, and why I feel that it just doesn’t make sense. For the last two days, I have been hinting heavily that there was a better way to view this dream, and today I roll it out for your perusal. The key to everything that will follow in this article centers on the figure of the **bear**. Operating with the understanding that each of these symbols represents a major world country or empire, I read carefully through Daniel 7. There were a million possible interpretations for the first beast, but when I came to the **second** beast, my eyes flew wide open! There could be absolutely no doubt about which country was referred to here! In all of recorded history, no other nation has been referred to as a bear other than **Russia!** And then, as I examined the rest of the characteristics of the bear, its identity was even more firmly locked in. It had **three ribs in its mouth**. That meant, clearly, that it grew by **devouring other nations around it**. If any nation **ever** qualified, Russia **clearly** qualified on that count. According to Wikipedia, the wonderful online internet encyclopedia, at the height of its power, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or USSR, was comprised of 15 republics, 11 of which they had “eaten” or annexed. Those 15 “republics” were Armenian, Azerbaijan, Byelorussia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. From 1945 until its dissolution in 1991—a period known as the Cold War—the Soviet Union and the United States were the two world superpowers that dominated the global agenda of economic policy, foreign affairs, military operations, cultural exchange and sports. During the USSR’s collapse (and formal dissolution in December 1991), all 15 former republics became independent countries. Eleven of these states are aligned through a loose confederation known as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Turkmenistan, originally a full member of the CIS, is now an associate member. **The three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) did not join this Commonwealth**; instead, they joined both the European Union and the NATO alliance in 2004. How interesting, considering that the Bear is pictured holding **three ribs** in its mouth.

The other aspect of the bear is even more telling. Daniel says that **it is raised up on one side**. That would mean that its front and rear paws on one side are raised up, while the front and rear paws on the other are **unable to move**. If you look closely at the former USSR, you will notice that its **northern border** is located entirely in the **Arctic Circle**, and is, as such, literally **frozen in place and unable to move**. Only on its southern side is Russia able to move or “rise up”. In fact, one of the principle driving ambitions of Russia has always been to have a **warm water port**. Because of Russia’s location in the **far north** (hint, hint!), most of its ports are frozen for most of or part of the year. And because shipping still is one of the most dominant ways of moving goods throughout the world, the Russia economy is severely handicapped by not having a maritime location that is free from ice and capable of being navigated year-round. In fact, let’s take this little discussion a bit further, and look deep into the psyche of the Russian

soul. Russia has always struggled with a sense of inferiority, particularly in regards to Europe. The desire to emulate Western culture drives the Russian people, as does the innate frustration at not being able to dominate that culture and set the standards themselves. So great is this obsession that it has produced such people as **Vladimir Zhirinovsky**. A military commander and lawyer who is known as "Mad Vlad" among his detractors, Zhirinovsky represents the very worst in the Russian mindset. Born of Jewish parents, Zhirinovsky denied his Jewish ancestry for years, and remains **violently Anti-Semitic** to this day. Referring positively to a comment in which US Politician Pat Buchanan labeled the United States Congress "*Israeli-occupied territory*", Zhirinovsky remarked that, "*We have the same situation in Russia.*" He said that both countries were "*under occupation*" and that "*to survive, we could set aside places on US and Russian territories to deport this small but troublesome tribe.*" He had an active involvement with Iraq's Saddam Hussein, and sent "military advisors" to help the Iraqi dictator stay in power. Zhirinovsky has been quoted to the effect that, among other things, Russia should **retake Alaska** by using force, construct large fans to **blow Russia's nuclear waste into Germany and the Baltic republics**, and **use nuclear weapons against its adversaries**. In addition, he has written an autobiography entitled "*The Final Thrust South*", and has stated that he looks forward to the day "*when Russian soldiers can wash their boots in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean*". And remember **those three ribs in the mouth of the Bear?** Well, Zhirinovsky promised to **take away the independence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania**. "*You are standing in our way to the seaports*", Zhirinovsky said. In his autobiography, he argues for a division of the world by the great powers that would allow Russia to acquire Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan. Many of the ills that afflicted Russia, he believed, came from the southern regions of the former Soviet Union and the countries that extend southward to the Indian Ocean. Making them a part of Russia would make Russia peaceful, prosperous, and void of ethnic conflict. In addition, Zhirinovsky is a devoted admirer of Adolph Hitler and his policies. "*I am the Almighty. I am the Tyrant. I will follow in Hitler's footsteps.*" Zhirinovsky has been quoted as saying.

A crazy man, you say? A radical minority, ready to be strait-jacketed and carried away to a mental institution? If you think so, then consider this: **Zhirinovsky's political party once garnered almost 25% of the vote in a Russian election**. That meant that in the 1990's when that election occurred, **1/4<sup>th</sup> of the Russian people shared his convictions with him**. As Russia continues to deteriorate politically and economically, with former KGB agents now running the Russia Mafia, people will continue to become more politically polarized. All that is required is a **devastating economic crisis**, and the door will be open for Zhirinovsky and people like him to ascend to power in Russia just as Hitler did in Germany after our Great Depression threw all Europe into uncontrollable hyper-inflation. Hitler gained power by using a violently anti-Semitic platform, with a "Final Solution" in the back of his mind, and Germany's "manifest destiny" on his lips. Bearing that in mind, consider these chilling quotes from Zhirinovsky's book, *The Final Thrust South*:

*"From all points of view the final "thrust" to the south, the expedition of the Russian army to the shore of the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea would mean freedom for 20 million Kurds, hundreds of thousands of Beluchis, Pushtuns, Daris, and other peoples living in the region."*

While he talks about the Indian Ocean a great deal, it is a very disturbing reality to understand that he also blithely includes the Mediterranean Sea, which would include the conquest and subjugation of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Just as an afterthought, of course. And then, I am sure, he would find something to do with that "*troublesome tribe*" that he mentioned earlier. And since this is Russia's final thrust militarily, it would also necessitate a "Final Solution" for the Jews as well. It doesn't take a microscope to see between those lines, does it? And since when is "freedom" defined as trading a Muslim totalitarian state for a communist totalitarian state? Seems to me that is no trade at all, except to trade one set of chains for another.

*"Let Russia make its final "thrust" to the south. I can see the Russian soldiers gathering for the final expedition southward. I can see Russian commanders in Russian division and army headquarters, mapping out the route for the military formations and the endpoints of those routes. I see aircraft gathered in air bases around the southern regions of Russia. I see submarines surfacing near the coastline of the Indian Ocean and amphibious assault ships nearing the shore where Russian soldiers are already marching, armored infantry vehicles are on the move and great masses of tanks are rolling through. Russia will finally make her last military expedition. There will never be another war from the South for*

*Russia and it has long since been impossible for war to come from the North. In the West they understand this, and in the East they will find out."*

Not chilling enough for you? Want it to get a little colder? How about this mind-numbing quote from the Prophet Ezekiel, who saw this coming a long, long time ago:

*"<sup>1</sup> Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, <sup>3</sup> and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. <sup>4</sup> I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. <sup>5</sup> Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; <sup>6</sup> Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you. <sup>7</sup> "Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. <sup>8</sup> After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. <sup>9</sup> You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you." <sup>10</sup> 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: <sup>11</sup> You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'— <sup>12</sup> to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. <sup>13</sup> Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?'"<sup>14</sup> "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know it? <sup>15</sup> Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. <sup>16</sup> You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes." <sup>17</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD: "Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?" – Ezekiel 38:1-17*

While the Book of Ezekiel, and specifically the 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> Chapters, cannot be the subject of this article, it can and will command a series of articles when it is time. I can tell you this with absolute certainty: **Germany, Austria and Russia are in this murderer's row of nations, and Moscow is due north of Israel!** Whether Zhirinovskiy is the Biblical "Gog of Magog" is hard to tell. He isn't a young man anymore. But if one Mad Vlad exists among the Russian military, then surely many others must as well. And if almost 25% of the people of the former USSR could feel comfortable embracing such a man, then they will certainly feel comfortable embracing anyone who will lead them south into their "manifest destiny", and straight into the yawning pits of Hell itself.

And so the first link was successfully established. I now had one major player in Daniel's end-time scenario firmly pinned down. But that left a couple of extra beasts to take care of, and so I determined that if the Bear was Russia, which meant that part of the prophecy pointed to **current** events in the world today, it would be necessary to move **backwards** in time, to see if the previous beast could be successfully and correctly identified in the timeline.

Remember earlier that I said that the Lion with the wings of an Eagle represented an empire and a half? Let me explain how that can be true.

Technically, the beast **before** the Bear is the **Lion**. And the lion has **Eagle's Wings**. Hmmm... Suddenly, it hit me like a flash! Of course! How obvious! What country has been the mortal enemy of Russia, the Bear? **America, the Eagle!** For the last 50 years, America and Russia have waged a war of sorts, with the Russians trying to out-compete, out-produce, out-astronaut, out-everything us. It's been called a **Cold War**, since the two sides have never actually come to blows, **yet**. But, through a variety of

proxy states, we have in fact been waging war. When we went into Afghanistan to fight against the Taliban, whose armament do you think they were using? When we went in to Iraq against Saddam Hussein, where do you think he got his weapons of mass destruction, which, by the way, just **happen** to be conveniently buried in Syria, just across the border from Iraq? When one guerrilla uprising after another threatened to take a country down in South America, Africa or anywhere else in the world, whose military advisors were there helping them every step of the way? And we are not without sin in the matter, either. How many times have we armed the "good guys" who were supposed to be on our side with our weaponry? And how many times have we sent "military advisors" into battle right alongside the troops of another country. There can be no doubt: for the last 50 years, the **Eagle** and the **Bear** have fought for control of the world. Then, in 1991, it finally happened. Unable to rise up on one side, and weakened by its battle with a Big Bird that had more economic, political and spiritual vitality than it did, the Bear did something no other empire in history has ever done: **shatter into pieces and collapse without being conquered or even invaded from the outside.**

There is an amazing story behind the collapse of the U.S.S.R. that very few Protestant Christians are aware of, but they need to be. As a dyed-in-the-wool Protestant, I have always struggled with Catholic doctrine, and always will. There are simply too many errors there for me to ever accept or promote that theology. But God intervenes in our lives not because we are doctrinally sound or morally perfect. No, He intervenes in our lives precisely because we are **not** in order and only His presence and correction can make it otherwise. For years, almost all Protestants believed that all Catholics were headed straight to hell. And pastors didn't help the matter along any. Many preachers told their congregations exactly that. On the other side of the street, the Priest was busy telling his congregants that the Protestants were all going to hell. For several hundred years this warfare went on. Then came the 1950's and TV. Despite all the warnings of the man in the pulpit, be he Priest or Pastor, folks began to get curious about the other side. Little Catholic ladies who spent untold hours praying the Rosary got curious about that good looking young man named Billy Graham. As they watched the firebrand young evangelist proclaiming Christ, they found their own hearts beating in unison with him. And Protestants began watching Cardinal Cushing, and found themselves thinking that this fella was pretty smart, after all. Gradually, over the last 50 years, the two sides have started to make peace. There are still major differences, which may continue to be irreconcilable until Christ returns, but things are certainly better. But in 1917, this wasn't the case. And it was in 1917 in Portugal, in a small mountain community named Fatima that some remarkable apparitions of the Virgin Mary appeared to a few children. The faithful inside the Catholic Church immediately embraced them as a Word from the Lord for them. Three secrets or prophecies were given, the first two of which have already come to pass. And it is the second of these three prophecies which concerns us here.

The second "secret" involved the future of Russia. Lucia, the only one of the three children to survive more than a few years after the event, says Mary revealed that Russia would *"spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars,"* and that *"Various nations will be annihilated."* Many believe this is a direct prophecy of the spread of communism. "I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart," continued the account of Mary's revelation. *"If people attend to My requests, Russia will be converted and the world will have peace."* Some interpret Pope John Paul II's 1984 consecration of Russia as fulfilling the prophecy, and paving the way for the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union as the "conversion" of Russia.

Now, if you're a hard-core Fundamentalist, you're probably losing your mind about now. And for a period in my life, so did I. But then it dawned on me what God had done. Back in 1917, most Protestants were ready to consign all the Communists to Hell. And frankly, the behavior of the Communist regime since then has probably sent a lot of Russians there over the years. So to tell the Protestants to pray for Russia would not have generated much effort. But for Mary to tell the Catholics to pray...

On the flip side, the Catholics were the wrong ones to convert Russia once the hard Russia shell had finally cracked. That job more appropriately belonged to the Protestants, and, ironically, to Billy Graham. In fact, it was Billy Graham who was first invited to the Soviet Union to preach the Gospel. Unlike many of his Protestant brethren, he had started to soften his view of Russia over the years, and had developed long-standing relationships with key individuals inside of the Communist government, just as he developed long-term relationships with many US presidents. I can still remember watching him on TV as

he preached in one Russian city. I was sitting in my living room on the sofa at the time. Billy made his standard presentation of the Gospel and then came to the part where he predictably gave the invitation. But before he asked people to come forward if they wanted to receive Christ, he momentarily paused, looked at the packed auditorium, and added, "Don't run". In my mind, I sneered. After watching Godly men and women plead with hard-hearted and hard-headed Americans who have developed an immunity to the Gospel because of repeated exposure, I had no realistic expectations that much of anything would happen. I could never have been more wrong. The floor of the auditorium was empty except for the raised platform from which Rev. Graham was preaching. Every seat in the auditorium, however, was packed to beyond capacity. While I had been watching the program, I was puzzled as to why they had not placed seating on the stadium floor. I quickly found out why. When Graham resumed his invitation with the words, "Please come", the most amazing thing happened. People began to pour out of their seats toward the platform. Many were running at break-neck speed, weeping as they came. Old women in babushkas came. Young soldiers in uniform came. A tidal wave of humanity rushed to the stage, crying out for the mercy of the Living God and for eternal life, the direct result of 70 years without the Gospel, and 50 years of little old Catholic ladies, cranking out on their Rosary beads, **fervently praying for the conversion of Russia**. I found myself weeping openly, repenting to God for my cynicism and unbelief. God had taken one part of His Body to accomplish one part of the task, and another part of His Body to accomplish the other. That day I learned a great truth about the Lord and Savior that I serve. I discovered that He is far bigger than anything I could possibly hope, imagine or dream. And that His mercies are truly from everlasting to everlasting.

Enough for the Bear, though. Now we must return to the Eagle. In all of the history of our country, we have only had a few symbols which were consistently associated with us. One, of course, is Uncle Sam, the man with the strange white goatee/beard, the funny striped pants and the odd white top hat with the blue star in it. Another is the famous Statue of Liberty, given to the United States by France and designed by the brilliant Frenchmen Frederic Auguste Bartholdi and Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, the designer of the Eiffel Tower. Her actual name, by the way, is *La liberté éclairant le monde*, which means **Liberty Enlightening the World**. In one of my other books, **Biblical Biorhythms and the Coming Crash**, I examine America as the economic, political and military **Alpha Female** of the world. But the symbol which best represents the United States of America is the **Bald Eagle**, a species both bold, majestic and powerful. When America wants to display her strength or resolve, it is not Uncle Sam or the Statue of Liberty which we use. We use the Eagle. It is on our national coat of arms, and graces the President's office, not only on the wall and on his desk, but also carefully woven into the very carpet on which the men who run this country stand.

Now, you may say that many countries in the past have used the eagle as a symbol for their country, including Imperial Rome, and that is true. But the juxtaposition of the Eagle's Wings and the Lion were too impossible to deny. What do I mean?

I want you to think back to the time before America was the dominant power in the world. Prior to America's dominance, what world power controlled 25% of the world's population and land mass? **England!** And the only beastie ever associated with Great Britain is the **Lion!** Now, let's take the analogy a step further. America didn't just appear magically out of nowhere. We were a colony of England. In other words, the Eagle's Wings were **attached** to the Lion and were a part of the Lion's body and furthermore must have grown out of the Lion and **originated from** the Lion. So far, so good. The analogy is holding together. But it gets even better. It seems that the wings of the Eagle were **torn off of the Lion**. Enter the American Revolution. The Eagle's Wings are torn off of Great Britain. Then something even more amazing happens:

*"<sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it."*  
- Daniel 7:4

Prophecy experts tend to gloss right over these two key points when they try to turn the Lion with Eagle's Wings into an ancient empire. The reason that they have to gloss over them is because they really don't have a good explanation for them. But when we cleanly identify the **Bear as Russia**, the **Eagle's Wings as America** and the **Lion as Great Britain**, things begin to make perfect sense. How so? Consider the

following recorded history. America gained its freedom from England in 1776. But prior to that, in 1703, a young lad was born in Epworth, England named **John Wesley**. The son of an English clergyman, Wesley discovered the **New Birth** from a group of Godly Moravians on his way back to England from a very unsuccessful attempt at missionary work. Later on, having returned to England, he pursued the matter and at Aldersgate felt his heart "*strangely warmed*". That massive understatement so transformed Wesley, his life and his ministry that huge numbers of peoples began to receive the New Birth, and lives by the untold thousands were changed, all across England and America. According to Wikipedia, "*Methodists, under Wesley's direction, became leaders in many social justice issues of the day including prison reform and abolitionism movements.*" By the 1740's revival was already under way across England, and by the time that America won its freedom, major changes were already underway in the moral, social and political structure of both countries. After the Eagle's Wings of America were torn off of the Lion of Great Britain, the Lion was **made to stand up like a man** (become accountable for its actions) and **given the heart of a man** (given a moral conscience). The fact that revived, repentant England now had a fresh moral conscience meant that it had to be accountable to both God and fellow man for its actions, producing the very first **child labor laws, prison reform** and movement toward the **abolition of slavery**.

At this point, we have **three clear connecting symbols**, all linking to empires which have existed in our modern era. That's a much better ratio than the standard interpretation, which only has one connecting symbol, the Leopard with four sets of wings and four heads. Speaking of which, it's time to look at that strange creature:

*"<sup>6</sup> After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it." – Daniel 7:6*

Up till this point in the timeline, I am very sure of my interpretation, because it involves empires which have either already existed or exist right now. Hindsight is always 20/20. But with this new creature, I firmly believe that we are moving into **future tense** mode. But not **too** future... I strongly suspect that this **Leopard with Four Wings like a Bird and Four Heads** represents some sort of **Pan-Arabic Union**, which may very well already be in the process of forming. Remember how in an earlier article we talked about the Ten Toes and the Ten Horns, and how five of those toes had to be in the Middle East? I strongly suspect that the **Four Heads** represent **four different heads of state from four different countries**. And since all of them are Arabic, you only have to add one more country, perhaps Libya, to make the Five Toes/Horns of the Middle East. But what about the **Four Wings**? Here's my take on that subject. I would say that the Four Wings have to represent the **Four Air Forces** of the four countries involved. Air superiority is the primary key to military victory today. Witness the pounding we gave Iraq during Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom. We had complete and absolute military superiority in the air. We could fly over Baghdad and bomb them into rubble any ole time we pleased! On rare occasions, they knocked a helicopter or a jet out of the sky, but the ratio was so one-sided that it became a joke. Our smart bombs could pick out a target no bigger than a man and blow that one spot away while not touching anything around it. Air superiority has been a critical issue all the way back to General Allenby of England when he was trying to recapture Jerusalem from the Ottoman Turks. When the RAF airplanes, primitive as they were, flew over the city, the superstitious Turks, believing them to be a direct fulfillment of a prophecy found in Isaiah, surrendered the city. And you know what? It just might have been. In World War II, our ability to out fly and out fight the German Luftwaffe gave us squatters rights over German air space, and we were able to bomb German and its principle cities into piles of rubble. The same was true over Japan when we dropped both Atom Bombs. The Japanese simply could not stop us. In each of the major wars that Israel has had in modern times with its Arab neighbors (and not very friendly ones, either!), Israel's ability to control the sky has been absolutely critical in ensuring her eventual victory. Israel's pre-emptive strike on Egyptian air strips proved vital in the Six Day War. Egypt lost virtually its entire air force and all its landing strips before they could even get a plane off the ground. Even as I write this article, Israel moves closer and closer to yet another seemingly inevitable war with its Arab neighbors. Please do not think that the Arab nations have forgotten the many times they have been humiliated by superior air power from the nation that almost the entire world seems to hate. The Soviets have no compunctions about replacing, reloading and resending yet another arsenal of Soviet fighter jets into the foray. Remember how I said that the Eagle and the Bear are still fighting one another, even though not directly? There is no clearer example of this than Israel versus the Arab world. The US is



bankrolling and supplying Israel, and is virtually the only friend in the world that the state of Israel has. The Russians are bankrolling and supplying the Arab countries surrounding her. Basically, it all boils down to a test, a battle between the two superpowers, and which "puppet" army will win. And what concerns me further is the fact that Daniel says that this four-headed beast will be given **dominion**. If the United States were to bail out on supporting Israel, the Jews would be in a very precarious situation. And it would be possible for an Iran-Iraq-Syria-Saudi Arabia coalition with a common agenda to dictate terms right back at the very countries that have been controlling them all along. Like it or not, both the US and Russia are morbidly dependent on Arab oil. Should a Pan-Arab League decide that no oil will be shipped to countries that support Israel, America's so-called moral resolve would melt like butter on a hot day in the sun. Scary, if you don't know that God is on the throne, and that we will this little battle, no matter what. So far, we've worked our way through two and a half beasts, but we still have a *Lying Leopard* to deal with in our next E-Pistle. Until then, may He cover you with the feathers of His Wings and protect you from all the lions and leopards and bears out there!



# Day 24 - The Lying Leopard



<sup>6</sup> “After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. ~ Daniel 7:6

We have been exploring Daniel’s dream of the Four Beasts, located in Chapter 7. So far, we have decoded the symbols involving the **Lion With Eagle’s Wings**, the **Bear With Three Ribs in It’s Mouth** and the **Leopard With Four Wings and Four Heads**. As we have examined these symbols and the empires or countries they represent, we have discovered that all of these references point not to the past, but to the present. Before we look into the future at the **Fourth Beast**, I want to pause for just a second to show you how incredible and awesome God is and how completely He outlined all recorded human history to Daniel in two tightly coupled dreams. At the end of this mini-series on Daniel, and before we finally wrap up the Episode with the event we have all been eagerly waiting for, the Rapture, I am going to include an article which I call **Daniel’s Master Timeline of Empires**. But for the purposes of helping you understand where we are in this whole process, let me give you just the Summary Page, to illustrate to you what I mean:

- |                                              |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Egyptian Empire                           | - Before Daniel’s time                                |
| A. Assyrian Empire                           | - Before Daniel’s time                                |
| B. Babylonian Empire                         | - The <u>Head of Gold</u> (2:32,37-38)                |
| C. Medo-Persian Empire                       | - The <u>Chest and Arms of Silver</u> (2:32,39)       |
| D. Macedonian Empire                         | - The <u>Belly &amp; Thighs of Bronze</u> (2:32,39)   |
| E. Roman Empire                              | - The <u>Legs of Iron</u> (2:32,39)                   |
| F. The Middle Ages till now                  | - The <u>Feet and Toes of Iron and Clay</u> (2:32,32) |
| G. The British Empire                        | - The <u>Lion with Eagle’s Wings</u> (7:4)            |
| H. America                                   | - The <u>Eagle’s Wings</u> (7:4)                      |
| I. Russia                                    | - The <u>Bear</u> (7:5)                               |
| J. Muslim Coalition                          | - The <u>Leopard with 4 Heads and 4 Wings</u> (7:6)   |
| K. End-Time World Empire                     | - The <u>Dreadful and Terrible Beast</u> (7:7)        |
| L. Millennial Reign of Christ                | - The <u>Rock Not Cut By Hands</u> (2:34-35,44-45)    |
| M. The Great White Throne Bema Seat Judgment |                                                       |
| N. The New Heavens and the New Earth         |                                                       |

It is simply amazing to me to see how God could, in two simple dreams, outline the entire history of Western Civilization. Daniel’s dream in Chapter 2 traces the history of mankind beginning from where he was right then, at the Head of Gold, straight on through the Middle Ages and the Ten Toes of Iron and Clay. Then, after only a brief lull of a few hundred years, while Europe was shaking the sleep of the Dark Ages off of it and standing back up for a new run at civilization during the Renaissance, we pick up the story line again, this time with the dream in Chapter 7. How awesome! How totally cool! How marvelous!

Now you can see the importance of the Dream of the Four Beasts, and how timely its placement is for today. Clearly, we are living in the Last Days, the End of the Age. With the Pan-Arabic League already in

formation in the backrooms of Baghdad, Tehran, Damascus and Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), the next logical step after the Arabs have had their turn at the helm of the ship will be the great and terrible Fourth Beast, the **End-Time World Empire of the Anti-Christ**.

However, before we turn our attention to the Anti-Christ, we must examine the Leopard with four heads and four wings very carefully, because the next world crisis will come and is already shaping up from that direction. Originally, I wasn't going to write an article about the Leopard, but just a few days ago, I had a very disturbing encounter with the Lord. Typically, when the Lord wants to talk with me, He gets me up very early in the morning, sometime between 3:00 AM and 6:00 AM, for a two hour prayer session of great intensity, during which He often spends as much time if not more talking to me than I do talking to Him. What most people don't understand about prayer is that it is not intended to be a **monologue**, it is intended to be a **dialogue**, generally with God doing most of the talking. Don't believe me? Just check the Bible out and carefully examine all the recorded conversations that we have of conversations between God and man. Who knows more? Who has more power? Clearly, one should shut up in the presence of another who clearly has more experience, understanding or ability to affect the outcome of events. One of the major criticisms I have of most Charismaniacs is that they never shut up long enough to hear from God. I had to deal with a lady for many years who never shut up, regardless of whether she was talking to God or man. As a result, she complained constantly (oh, what a surprise!) that she never heard from God. Gosh, I can't understand why, can you??? She had only one goal in any conversation: to express her own opinion, forcefully and repeatedly until you agreed with her or just got tired of listening to her and walked away. She drove her own husband away and into the arms of other women for this very reason. Now, I didn't condone his actions, but I sure can't approve of hers, either.

One morning, the Lord woke me up about 4:00 AM and told me to get a notepad and pen. When He says that to me, I know He's going to be doing most of the talking. I then went and sat in my Lay-Z-Boy (I have physical problems with my knees and can't kneel very well. Plus, David sat before the Lord as he got older, too. And you try and take notes on your knees when you're almost 60! Go ahead! Try!), got my Bible out and opened my notepad, with the pen of a ready writer. What happened next was one of the strangest open visions I have ever had in my life. I took detailed notes on what I saw and what He told me, because I knew I would never be able to remember all of it. I found myself in an underground bunker, shaped like a capital letter "E" lying on its side. There was a trap door and a ladder that led down to the central corridor, which stretched out to my left and right. Out from that central corridor extended three long corridors, one on my far left, one in the center, and one on my far right. The central corridor, which was right in front of me, contained many, many bunk beds, with basic sleeping arrangements, much like a military barracks. On my far right, I could see extensive supplies of such things as food, lanterns, kerosene, bottled water and the like. Clearly, this bunker was intended for long-term occupancy. And on the far left, the final corridor contained a large meeting room, with a long table and many chairs. Clearly, this was a place where plans would be discussed and finalized. The bunker was situated in a large hill, but well disguised so that no one could find it. There were three ventilations shafts which opened covertly above ground. Power came into the bunker complex via a series of solar panels, apparently disguised in some way so as to avoid detection. And the Lord even showed me the names of two streets, Rosebud Lane and Weyer Road. I couldn't tell if it was an intersection of the two, or if the two roads led, one to another and then to the bunker. Doubtless, when the time comes, I will see those road signs again. Clearly, when that happens, the United States will not be in the midst of good times. That is troubling, but not unexpected, given what the Lord has already shown me up to this point.

Having shown me where I will apparently be living, hiding, whatever, the Lord then quickly changed topics and went directly to international politics. Now, too many Christian writers and prophets get themselves involved with politics and dissipate their anointing wrestling with carnal men instead of spending time wrestling with the Lord by the Jordan in fervent, effectual prayer. On the other hand, when God moves in this world, it cannot help to involve the political scene and the nations who play a part in it. Almost all of Daniel's dreams and visions are political in nature, describing the fall and rise of various empires down through time. The vision involved events that will occur in the Middle East, but the single event that will trigger all of this will not come from the Middle East at all, but rather from an unexpected source, North Korea. When the Lord first said this I was astonished. North Korea? And so I asked Him, "*Lord, what on earth does North Korea have to do with the Middle East?*" Even with my own extensive research, I had no indication of any such connection. The Lord didn't answer my question at that point in time, but rather continued showing me things, one after another. The conflict all began when a border incident erupted

between a North Korean guard and someone on the other side of the DMZ that separates the two Koreas. Bullets were fired, and the conflict quickly escalated to the point of no return. There was a quick flurry of political posturing, rapid troop movements, and suddenly it was too late. Several quick nuclear strikes destroyed Seoul, the capital of South Korea, and most of the rest of the country. The attack was merciless and without warning. That may well seem impossible, but only until you begin to understand the warped, twisted, perverted, insane mind of Kim Jong-Il, the absolute dictator of North Korea. His economic policies have brought his entire country into economic ruin. After signing an accord in 1994 to prevent the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons, Kim ordered North Korean scientists back to the drawing board and has since successfully built many working nuclear weapons, claiming they were for "self-defense". This will play into our story in several ways later. "Camp 22", North Korea's most famous detention camp, has over 50,000 political prisoners in it, and anyone disagreeing in even the slightest matter with Kim is removed from office and incarcerated. In his personal life, Kim has gone through one wife and several mistresses already. He has a standing program in effect that gathers up all attractive young girls from the provinces and brings them into various lodges for the pleasure of his guests. Kim is said to be a fan of luxury cars and has been known for racing his cars at his 16 palaces. Kim has also spent \$20,000,000 on importing 200 new Mercedes Benz S500 luxury sedans, adding to North Korea's stock pile of 7,000 Mercedes. Consider that piece of information in the light of the fact that his country is starving to death. Kim is said to be a huge film buff, owning a collection of more than 20,000 video tapes. His reported favorites are the slasher films of the Friday the 13th film series, Rambo, the James Bond and Godzilla series, any movie with Elizabeth Taylor, and Hong Kong action movies. He is also reported to have the largest collection of Daffy Duck cartoons in the world. Now think carefully about the fact that this lunatic, with no morals at all and no connection at all to reality, is the leader of one of the six countries in the world capable of waging nuclear war. The others are the United States, Russia, France, China and, secretly, Israel. Israel has a plan in place called Operation Sampson, designed to be used in the event of a war with the Arab nations in which it is obvious that Israel is going to be overrun. Their theory is that if they are going to go down, they will take the Philistines with them, just as Sampson did when he broke the pillars of the temple, plunging about 8,000 Philistines to their death, 3,000 of them on the roof and another 5,000 or so actually inside the building, based on archeological estimates. By the way, that story is not some Biblical fiction. The ruins of the temple have actually been excavated by archeologists, who discovered, much to their surprise, that all the weight for the entire ceiling and the walls hinged on two center columns, just far enough apart for a man to stand between them, but not far enough apart to let him spread out his arms. And yes, the two columns were broken at about the height of a human shoulder blade. Hmmm...

Let's return to Kim and North Korea for a second. It should come as no surprise, then, that the United States, South Korea, Japan and even China keep a nervous eye on this walking basket case. And it should also come as no surprise to anyone that the impoverished, atheistic North should look with envy and anger upon the prosperous, Christian South and wish nothing more than to punish it and "get even".

That explains North Korea and South Korea, but does nothing to connect them to the Middle East. In fact, when I shared the vision with a friend, I caught quite a bit of flack. They didn't believe that anything that happened in North Korea had anything to do with the explosive powder keg surrounding Israel. After taking a few minutes of grief on the subject, I simply put my hands up in the air and said, *"That's what God told me! It's not my job to explain it. It's just my job to report it."* The connection and confirmation would not come till several days later. Beverly is a news buff, and watches CNN and MSNBC all the time. She is my political watchdog, and keeps me alerted on developing crises and breaking news. I was busy working on the computer when Beverly began shouting from the family room across the house. Now, with the significant hearing loss I experienced when I went through cancer and chemotherapy, I can barely hear her when she's sitting right in front of me. So hearing her from the other side of the house must have meant that she had to be almost roaring. She was saying, *"Oh my gosh! Ray, come quick! It's just like you said! Come quick! Hurry!"* Puzzled, I got out of my chair and walked to the family room to see what on earth was going on. She was practically beside herself, and kept repeating, *"It's just like you said! **North Korea! North Korea! Syria! Nuclear Weapons!"***

Now she had my attention. We have a DVR attached to our cable TV, and it has proven invaluable in replaying and reviewing critical new articles, along with favorite shows, and, yes, the Cubbies! Not everything we do is spiritual, and we don't pray and fast 24 hours a day, although we probably should. Sometimes, most of the time, we are just normal, everyday people who happen to love Jesus with all of

our hearts, just like you do. We just spend a lot more time in the Word and in His presence than most people do. Using the DVR, we "rewound" the news article to its beginning. I was as shocked and stunned as Bev had been. Remember that when the Lord connected North Korea to the Middle East only a few days previously, I had asked Him how in the world they were connected, but He hadn't answered me. Now I knew why. It seems that about two weeks before, the Israeli Air Force had flown a precision, surgical strike mission deep into the heart of Syria, one of it's most hostile neighbors, and a nation which I have said repeatedly would play a major role in the end times, just as it always has in the history of Israel. If you will remember, in previous articles in this book, I have already clearly identified Syria as one of the 5 toes of the Middle Eastern, Byzantine leg of the Roman Empire. Syria also played a huge role in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Anti-Christ-like figure who desecrated the temple and slaughtered a pig in the Holy of Holies. And I had also identified Syria as one of the four heads (leaders, governments) and wings (air forces) attached to the Leopard. Syria has been involved in every modern attack on the nation of Israel. Seven Israeli tanks once held off 1,000 Syrian tanks in a battle in what has become known as the Valley of Tears. Now, suddenly, Israel was breaking an uneasy peace with Syria by sending a squadron of their jets into the middle of the country to bomb something. Consider for just a second what would happen if Russia decided to suddenly bomb Denver, Colorado or Dallas Texas. What would happen next? Yet, after the Israeli surgical strike, Syria said absolutely nothing! Israel acted as if the action had never occurred! And even President Bush, when questioned about the incident, absolutely refused to comment even one single word. Pentagon officials and others leaders on Capitol Hill who had been briefed also refused any comment. What on earth had happened? And then the reports began to pour in, documented by satellite telemetry and photographs taken from space. The Israelis had sent their squadron of jet fighters to a river port inland in Syria, and had blown up a freighter from -- are you ready for this? -- **North Korea!** Then I knew, in a flash, exactly what had happened, just seconds before the news reporter confirmed it for me. The North Koreans had been busy selling their **nuclear weapons technology to Syria**, just for "defensive" purposes, no doubt, and this freighter contained the first complete shipment of nuclear armaments from North Korea to Syria. Now the connection between North Korea and the Middle East suddenly made perfect sense. Israel wanted to make it clear to Syria and all of its "neighbors" that nuclear technology will NOT be tolerated in any country around it, including Iran, who is busy cooking up a nuclear home-brew of its very own. Israel also didn't want to embarrass Syria publicly, ruining what little good will there exists between the two countries, and so a no-comments, it-never-happened, what-do-you-mean-air-strike was the perfect answer. The Israelis had tipped President Bush off regarding what would be happening, so he wasn't caught off guard. Think the president has an easy job? Wanna try it for a day? Nah? Didn't think so. The office of the presidency wears out every man who has aspired to the position. Look at how badly Clinton aged during his terms. But, now, back to the vision.

In the aftermath of the North Korean destruction of South Korea, all hell broke loose all over the planet. It was as if everything had been waiting, balanced on tiptoes, anticipating the first one to act. A secret four-nation Arab coalition consisting of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria had been waiting for its opportunity. They had formed a *jihad* pact against Israel. Egypt, the Arab Emirates, Libya and Afghanistan had all been asked to join in, but had wisely chosen neutrality. Suddenly, Iran attempted to launch a nuclear attack against Israel, but it was somehow thwarted. Instead, Israel counterattacked, this time with blinding fury, using its secret nuclear arsenal. Tehran, the capital of Iran, was wiped off the map in a matter of seconds. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the equally lunatic leader of Iran, somehow escaped the holocaust and fled temporarily into hiding. The residents of Damascus, the capital of Syria, and Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, were not so fortunate. Both cities and much of the surrounding countryside were reduced to smoldering ashes in a matter of minutes. The world had feared this moment for over 60 years, and had somehow forestalled the madness for a remarkable period of time due to the rational self-restraint of the world's superpowers, but now, when a nuke in a suitcase was a practical reality, the lid had come off the pot, and the inmates really had taken over the asylum.

The violence didn't stop there, however. Emboldened by North Korea's success, and outraged by the Israeli destruction of three major Arab cities, Muslim terrorists decided to launch a three-pronged attack against the United States, using that same nuke-in-a-suitcase technology that I just mentioned. The Lord gave me the names of three cities; Atlanta, Georgia, Washington, D.C. and Portland, Oregon. Those three cities were dealt serious but not fatal blows by small nuclear weapons. The death toll, however, was staggering. And then the Lord added two more places on the map; Dallas, Texas, and the state of

Minnesota, without specifying a city. I still don't know why He added the remaining two locations, but I am sure it won't be long until He lets me know what is going on.

The carnage wasn't completely done yet. Germany was also struck by Arab terrorists, as was France, and, much to everyone's amazement, France declared war on the Arab Four Nation Alliance. It was one of the most bewildering, unexpected political actions in the history of the world. I can only speculate that there has been a growing anger and outrage in France as Muslims pour into the country and become French citizens. At the current rate of emigration, the Muslim population in France will outnumber the non-Muslim population by 2050 or less. As the Muslim presence in France has grown, so have the protests and demands and bullying. Although the Lord did not specify what happened in France, I can easily imagine the entire Muslim population being rounded up and herded into concentration camps, just as we did to the Japanese-Americans and naturalized Germans in our country during World War II.

Even though Germany had been hit, Austria had mysteriously been spared. And it was Austria, headed up by a charismatic leader, perhaps Georg Heider, the highly popular, neo-Nazi political leader forced by the ECU to step down as president of Austria, that engineered peace talks between the various nations.

Back in the United States, additional problems were breaking out. In the aftermath of the terrible bombings in various US cities, civil unrest broke out throughout the country. And this, dear friends, is where the vision became **very** strange, at least to the way of thinking of many people. The homosexual and lesbian coalitions in our country started a wave of political uprisings, demanding full rights and privileges regarding marriage, and all other matters, even to the point of favoritism over heterosexuals. Pastors Rod Parsley, John Hagee and T.D. Jakes were all jailed by the administration of the time for "hate crimes", as America's priorities, instead of returning to sanity, went careening madly off the scale instead. The next thing the Lord showed me made me very unhappy, but I have to report the news as I saw it, so here goes: **President Hillary Clinton** signed a temporary alliance with the charismatic leader from Austria, who now stepped up and assumed control of a three nation alliance consisting of Germany, Austria, and the German-speaking portion of Russia. Suddenly, it was obvious. **The leader from Austria was the Anti-Christ**, and this marked the first step in a series of events which would eventually project him into world leadership and dominion.

Now, I know the very first question on your mind: **when is all this going to happen?** All I can tell you is what I heard in the vision. **All of this will happen 7 years from now.** That would mean that not only is Hillary Clinton elected the first woman president of the United States in 2008, but that she is also reelected to a second term, during which the liberal agenda goes hog wild and rampant carnality and sin go right off the charts. My abject apologies to all my Democrat friends. I didn't make this up. And please, if you must try to kill the messenger because you don't like the message, **aim poorly!** As for the possibility of Hillary being the first woman president of the United States, let me refer you to one of a series of seven prophecies given to William Marion Branham, the great but sometimes misguided Pentecostal prophet and healer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. These prophecies were given back in 1933. Some of them involve World War II, which, of course, hadn't happened yet. But listen to prophecy #6: "*I saw a great woman stand up, beautiful looking, dressed in real highly royals like purple and I got little parenthesis down here, 'She was a great ruler in the United States, perhaps the Catholic church'*" Now, you have to understand where Branham was coming from to properly deal with this prophecy. As a Oneness Pentecostal, he was violently opposed to denominations in general, and the Catholic Church in particular. However, let's look more closely at what the "little parenthesis" said. He said he saw **a picture of a great woman standing up**, beautiful looking, dressed royally in purple. Underneath her picture, in parentheses, was the phrase, "*She was a great ruler in the United States*". The comment about the Catholic Church is his own interpretation. The phrase under her picture was not. Remember that in logic and geometry, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. So, if we make a "straight line" between the phrases "*great woman standing up*" and "*She was a great ruler in the United States*", it only makes sense that we are talking about a female president, possibly the first of her kind. I shudder to think what Hillary would do were she to gain access to the one position she has lusted after for a very long time. Even though she was the *de facto* ruler of the country during her husband's administration, it wasn't enough for her. She wants more. She has been patiently projecting herself as a moderate democrat for quite a while now, but every now and then she lets slip how she really feels. In her first term in office, she would have to walk carefully, but in the second term, with a Democratic majority in the

House and Senate, it would be "Katie bar the door"! Sorry if my politics don't please some of you. If you disagree with me, just skip over this section or this article and go on to the next topic. I don't often bring politics into the arena, but in this case, I didn't have a choice. God brought it up, not me!

Unfortunately, all of this fits perfectly into what the Lord has already shown me about the immediate future. Things are not going to get better. They are going to get worse. A whole lot worse. And this isn't the only thing that's going to happen, either! In my book, **Biblical Biorhythms and the Coming Crash**, I prayerfully project the total collapse of the US economy sometime between 2012 and 2020, based on economic models and indicators that have over 200 years of documentation to back them up. This would mean that **all** of these events would coincide with one another. If you add 7 years to 2007, you get 2014, just slightly off center from 2016, which would be the midpoint between 2012 and 2020. I forgot to mention one additional thing. When all of these things happen, **a national, and then global persecution of Christians will break out because we will be irrationally be blamed for the world's woes**. This global persecution is accurately prophesied by Jesus in Matthew 24:9-13 and Revelation 6:9-11, described there as the **5<sup>th</sup> Seal**, also known as **The Tribulation**.

Dear friends in Christ, there really **isn't** much time left. We have to do all we can. We have to be ready. This time, the time really is short. Be prepared. Sanctify yourselves and purify yourselves and strive for that holiness without which no man shall see God. That's all for today, but we still have one topic left to discuss tomorrow, **The Mad Mahdi**.



# Day 25 – The Mad Mahdi



<sup>11</sup> Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup> And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. <sup>13</sup> He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. <sup>14</sup> And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. – Revelation 13:11-14

Yesterday we look at a very disconcerting vision that the Lord gave me recently, and tied it into current events and Biblical prophecy. Unfortunately, it fits perfectly. If, in fact, it is true, then we only have seven years left before all Gehenna breaks loose on this planet and we see the advent of a limited nuclear war in the Middle East, America, Germany, and Korea. This will in turn produce global economic collapse and the rise of a charismatic leader from Austria who will turn into the Anti-Christ or Beast of Daniel and Revelation. Before we turn to the Beast, we have to take a look at someone who will be his sidekick, the **False Prophet** of Revelation Chapter 13. It seems that every prophecy expert out there is knocking themselves out to try and figure out who the Anti-Christ is. Some of the nominees for the role are almost laughable, particularly as time passes them by and proves them to be wrong without a shadow of a doubt. I've taken a crack at it myself. I am reasonably convinced that of the Anti-Christ's who have appeared on the world scene (and there have been **many** Anti-Christ's, says John in one of his letters), the final or ultimate Anti-Christ may well be Georg Haider, a charismatic leader in Austria. He is known to be extremely Anti-Semitic, and was forced out of his political position by the ECU back in 2000, so he has been quiet for a while. But he is extremely persuasive. Keep an eye on him, and watch for signs of a political resurrection for him during the next several years. He's about my age, but looks to be in his late 40's and is in excellent physical shape. He's still governor of one of the states within Austria, Carpathia, so he's not just sitting on his heels.

However, the Anti-Christ is not on our agenda today. His First Lieutenant, the False Prophet, is. There's an interesting parallel here that I would like to bring out before I discuss the "who" of the False Prophet. If you read all of Revelation Chapter 13, you will notice that the Anti-Christ or Beast, is primarily a **political** figure, whereas the False Prophet is primarily a **religious** figure. If you compare the scenario of Revelation 13 with the Gospels, you will find a disturbing parallel between them. When Jesus arrived on the scene, He already had a forerunner, a kind of marketing manager, if you will, named John the Baptist. John's job was not to promote his own ministry, it was to tell people that somebody far greater than him was coming, someone whose sandals he was not even worthy to untie. When Jesus appeared at the Jordan, John quickly submitted his ministry, saying that **he** needed to be baptized by Jesus, not the other way around. And he clearly advertised Jesus as the coming Messiah, saying, "*Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world*". He would later on say of his own ministry that it was to decrease so that Jesus' ministry could increase. In the same way, the False Prophet will be a cheerleader and marketing director for the Beast, or Anti-Christ. His job will be to promote his boss's well being and popularity, just as John the Baptist's job was to promote Jesus.

Another interesting parallel is the fact that the False Prophet will be able to call fire down from heaven at will. Now, you may say to me that John the Baptist never called fire down from heaven, and I would have to agree with you, to a certain extent. I don't have time to go into this subject in this article, but I can prove conclusively, without a shadow of doubt, directly from Scripture, in context, that John the Baptist

was Elijah the prophet. Shocked? Just remember that in Malachi 4:5-6, the last promise God makes to His people is that He will send Elijah the Prophet back again before that great and terrible Day of the Lord. How could God send Elijah back? Aren't we talking about reincarnation here, Pastor Ray? Yes, in fact, we are. Then do I believe in the doctrine of reincarnation? Absolutely not. How can the two statements exist side by side then? Because **Elijah never experienced physical death**. He was caught up into heaven in a chariot of fire, moving directly **from life to life**. We have Elisha as a witness to the event. In doing so, Elijah joined Enoch as the only persons ever to be **personally raptured**. Not too long from now, they will have a lot of company, but right now they are in very exclusive group. I would never support the doctrine of general reincarnation. Why? Because the Word of God says that it is appointed to a man **once to die, and then the Judgment**. No recycling. No second times around. **Unless... You just happen to be one of the only two men NEVER TO HAVE DIED**. Jesus Himself even said that John the Baptist was **Elijah who is to come**. And as Elijah, he **had** called fire down from heaven, not once, but three times. So, once you combine the lives of Elijah and John the Baptist into one person, the False Prophet emulates exactly what the real Prophet did for his Christ. If you are still uncertain about what I just speed taught you, I promise you faithfully that in a coming Episode, when we finally get to Revelation Chapter 13, I will teach you in great detail about this topic, and show you by multiple in-context Scripture references that I am telling you the truth. There is just so much to teach you, and so very little time left. I agonize about that constantly. Please pray, dear reader, that the Lord will open multiple doors so that I can teach everyone everything they need to know.

Now that we have established that the False Prophet is actually a bogus version of Elijah/John the Baptist, just as the Anti-Christ is actually a bogus version of the true Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, we can now move on to try and figure out just who this mysterious figure might be.

Just as the Anti-Christ is a false Christ, or someone who claims to be Christ but isn't, so the False Prophet is a False Elijah/John the Baptist who claims to be a representative of God but isn't. With that in mind, let me introduce you to the **Mahdi**. According to Wikipedia, the **Mahdi** or "*Guided One*" is the prophesied redeemer of Islam. Just as there are many views in Christianity regarding the return of Jesus Christ, so there are many divergent views among Muslims about their own messiah. However, most Muslims believe that the Mahdi will change the world into a perfect and just Islamic society **alongside Jesus** before **Yaum al-Qiyamah** (literally "*Day of the Resurrection*" or "*Day of the Standing*"). Hmm... Sounds like somebody has been plagiarizing to me. If you research Muslim theology, you will find that much of it is essentially a rewrite of Jewish or Christian history and theology. When Mohammed compiled the Koran, the early part of the book was written with the idea of gaining converts from both Judaism and Christianity, both already in place and with many converts. So Mohammed slanted his writing in that direction. When he was soundly rebuffed by both Christians and Jews and told to mind his own business, he became angry and felt rejected. After a series of experiences that proved to be quite negative, the latter part of the Koran becomes very angry and violently anti-Semitic and anti-Christian. It is from that part of the Koran that most Muslim fundamentalists draw their *Jihad* Scriptures.

Now, all of that is well and good, as far as it goes. But fundamentalist Muslims have become convinced that the Mahdi will not appear until the end of the world is at hand. Therefore, it becomes their religious duty to do whatever they can to **hasten the day of his appearing by doing everything they can to cause Armageddon to actually occur!!!** II Peter talks about "hastening the Day of His appearing", but that is in the context of bringing the full number of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God, not seeing how many Gentiles you can kill! This further means that many fundamentalist Muslims now believe that anything they can do to increase chaos, disorder, war and bloodshed will actually **hasten** the appearing of the Mahdi. All across the Middle East, there is a growing sentiment that the end of the world is at hand. I would not disagree with them, nor would many born-again believers. But we would certainly disagree with them about how to bring the Messiah back, and just who the Messiah might be. How ironic! The Jews are waiting for a Messiah to come for the **first** time, when they missed Him the **last** time. For Christians, we are waiting for Messiah to come the **second** time, having not been here when He came the **first** time. And Muslims are waiting for their messiah to come for the **first** time as well, just as the Jews are. It is an interesting thought to consider that they just might be deceived by the same man, the Anti-Christ, who will appear as a savior of the whole world and will gather acclaim and praise all over the world. Could it be that the Jews and the Muslims will finally be **united together in a lie**, with both groups deceived, thinking that the **Anti-Christ** is really their combined **Christ**? The more I study and research this matter, the more interesting yet troubling all of this becomes.

The next question that has to be asked is one that Christians have been asking for quite some time regarding the Anti-Christ: **is the Mahdi alive right now?** Just as some Christians think that the Anti-Christ is alive and well right now somewhere in the world (I obviously belong to that group!), so an increasing number of Muslims believe that the Mahdi is also alive right now. And an increasing number of Muslims believe they know who the Mahdi is. And **that**, dear readers, is precisely where the problems lies. Let me introduce you to the leading candidate for Mahdi of the Year, **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the current president of Iran!** If you look at his picture, he always looks like he is very tired, and probably had a bad day at the automotive parts wholesaler where he works for just above minimum wage. This, of course, could not be more untrue. During the hostage crisis of 1979, hostages tried to remember who their captors had been, in hopes of bringing them to justice. Several of the former hostages clearly remember Ahmadinejad at one of their captors. Later on, he became a university professor, and, from there, major of Tehran. When he entered the presidential race, he was largely unknown. Frankly, many people can't quite seem to imagine why or how he came to the position of considerable world power that he now holds. He is clearly a skillful manipulator, and has played the United States for the fool on several occasions, including his unbelievable request to visit Ground Zero at the location of the former World Trade Center Towers, and his subsequent visit to Columbia University.

What kind of man is this man? Let's start with his strong points. OK. Done with that. No, seriously, he does have some strong points, but not from the perspective of a Christian. He has displayed an uncanny ability to rally support among fellow Muslims, and has moved from nowhere to national and then international prominence in a very brief period of time. Now we'll look at his weak points, and this time do it seriously.

- (1) He is violently anti-Semitic, and has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map".
- (2) He believes that the Holocaust, the murder of six million innocent Jews by the Nazi, is a fiction, and that it never happened.
- (3) He is the leader of what will soon be the 7<sup>th</sup> country in the history of the world to possess nuclear weapons capability.
- (4) He has been steadily sending arms to Iraq in order to support Muslim insurgents who are fighting against the US.
- (5) He claims that there is not one single political prisoner in Iran, even though his country has been ranked as one of the worst violators of human rights in the world.
- (6) He claims that there is not one single homosexual in Iran. In that respect, he might actually be close to the truth. Muslims are more likely to kill homosexuals rather than try to convert them.
- (7) He has repeatedly used the UN, the world news agencies and even the US to advance his cause and beliefs.

This, then, is the man that many Muslims are referring to as **the Mahdi**. And he may very well be starting to believe his own press. And that is downright frightening. Can this man move from where he is to being the agent of World War III? It is possible. Frighteningly possible. And, as events progress, should he align himself with someone whom he believes is supernaturally endowed to bring about world peace by the eradication of Israel, and that individual turns out to be the real, final Anti-Christ, then he could well become supernaturally, demonically endowed himself, demon-possessed and able to call fire down from heaven.

To the average America Christian, the mindset of the Muslim world seems to make no rational sense. How can they be so filled with hate toward Europe and America and Israel? How can they so willingly embrace evil, calling it good? How can they so willingly deceive others? The sad truth of all of these questions is that **we brought this mess on ourselves**. How can that be, you ask? You don't wish these people any harm, only that we all be left alone to live our lives in peace, and be able to worship, live, speak and think as we feel is appropriate. Maybe you don't. Maybe I don't. But a long time ago, our ancestors did. And they did a whole lot more than think about it.

I remember when I was in school and we studied the period of European history known as the Middle or Dark Ages. There were plagues and knights and ladies and lords and jousts and dragons and, oh yes, something called **the Crusades**. I was taught, along with all my classmates, that the good, noble heroic knights of the Middle Ages went to Jerusalem in the name of Christianity in order to free the Holy City

from the hands of the evil, ungodly infidels of Mohammed. And everything we did was good, and everything that they did was bad. That was the spin. But that wasn't the truth.

To be sure, there were genuine concerns in the Church of that day that the city of Jerusalem should not be in the hands of unbelievers. But those "unbelievers", those "infidels", had a policy of relative religious tolerance during that period of time. Yes, for a long period of time, Islam had been advanced at the point of a sword. Convert or die was the name of the game. And that was cruel, inhumane, ungodly and unjust. No conversion obtained at the point of a sword or a gun is a true conversion. The man or woman converted in such a way has experienced no change of heart, no realignment of priorities. It would drive the Muslim clerics insane to know how many of their "faithful followers" are secretly practicing Christians and Jews. With TBN alone receiving 10,000 emails a day from the Middle East asking how to become a Christian, it is clear that the world of Islam is being cut right out from under the fundamentalists, one born again, Spirit-filled woman and child at a time. But at the time the Crusades began, Islam had slowed down a bit and gotten a bit more rational. Not so the Crusaders. Our good, wonderful, noble, godly, holy heroes managed to pillage and burn their way all the way to the Holy City. And all along the way, led by those noble knights that we have read so much about, they gave everyone the same gracious option: **convert or die**. When they encountered a synagogue, they rounded up all the Jews and placed them inside the synagogue and then boarded it up. The people inside were given two choices: convert or die, no different than the so-called "infidels" that they were on the way to expel from the holy places of Christendom. If they refused to convert, the Crusaders would surround the building, sing hymns and burn the synagogue down around them, praising God all the while. Pretty horrible, huh? Not what you were taught? Me neither. But then, they didn't tell us that Lincoln's wife was a nutcase, either, did they? And they didn't bother to tell us that Benjamin Franklin was such a ladies man that he preferred to stay in France most of the time, or that Thomas Jefferson, after the death of his wife, actually had a Black slave named Sally Helming that was his mistress and common law wife for the rest of his life. History prefers to wipe out the bad things and only focus on the good things, and history is always written by the winners, so what are considered "good things" turns out to be a pretty subjective thing. When our conquering heroes arrived in the Holy Land, it was burn and pillage as usual, only this time instead of burning Jews alive, they began to focus on the only other target available for their bloodlust, the mosques of Islam. And so innocent men and women whose only crime was that they were born into a dominantly Muslim society were given the same wonderful option that their ancestors had given others, convert or die. The cynic would say that they were reaping what they had sown, and that the sins of the fathers were being visited on the sons. But this judgment, even if it was true, should **never** have come at the hands of a believer. This is precisely why we are so strongly admonished not to judge, lest we be judged. This is also why God says to let judgment be His concern, and His only. Had we traveled peacefully to the Holy Lands, and not raped and pillaged our way all the way to Jerusalem, we ourselves would not be reaping what we are reaping now. You see, dear friends in Christ, without the Gospel of Jesus Christ **totally** redefining the personality of a man or a woman, mankind is insane and evil beyond measure. Otherwise, we just end up being nasty, wicked people going to a building to pretend that we are really good inside. We call such people Pharisees. And they have no problems with killing people, even if one of them happens to be the **Only Begotten Son of God!** As a result, in the Middle East, the **worst thing** that one Muslim can call another is a **Crusader**. And then we wonder why there is such an incredible resistance to Christianity in the Middle East, particularly among the men. In so very many ways, the monster we created in the Middle Ages, when the Church was an abomination and a disgrace to God, has now come back to haunt us.

But there is another problem, much, much older than the Middle Ages, that drives the seemingly bottomless rage in all the men in the Middle East. And that problem goes all the way back to Father Abraham. This, we can clearly document from Scripture. When God first came to Abram in Genesis Chapter 15 and promised that that he would have a male heir, He **didn't say** that this child would come from Sarai. So, when in Genesis Chapter 16, Sarai came to Abram with the suggestion that she use her servant Hagar as a substitute wife in order to have children by her, it seemed reasonable to both of them. After all, it was not an uncommon practice in the Middle East and even in other cultures to do so. The servant or slave was actually benefited by the arrangement because she was upgraded to the position of being a wife, even if it was a second-string wife, and the child which was born by her was given full inheritance rights as if the child had actually been birthed by the primary wife. It was a mechanism designed to make sure that each household always had a male heir. Women were not allowed to inherit property in most cultures, and there had to be a son for property and possessions to pass to. The only

thing wrong with the picture was that **at no time did Abram and Sarai ever bother to ask God if that's what He wanted done!** Had they bothered to take the time to ask, I am sure that they would have never involved Hagar in a make-a-baby project. But God knew that they wouldn't ask all along, didn't He? So why didn't He tell Abram **up front** that Sarai would be the bearer of the inheritor of the promise? Did He **want** Hagar to give birth to Ishmael? Did He **want** the Arab world to be created so that the Anti-Christ would have someone to deceive when he finally arrived on the scene? Try not to follow this thread of logic too far. I guarantee you it will make your head hurt. A lot. Trust me. Been there, done that. Bought the T-shirt, sent the post card. God tells us that **His** ways are not **our** ways. Yeah, baby! Literally!

And so, the Hagar Baby Project is initiated, and the result is...**she's pregnant!** Horray! Yippie! Abram is finally going to be a father. And everybody is happy, for a while. But when Hagar finds out she's pregnant, she starts to despise Sarai, and look down on her. Sarai's response? **Blame her husband!** Poor Abram. Can't win for losing. Did what his wife wanted. Now she's mad, 'cause it's backfiring on her, and somehow now **it's all his fault!!!** From the moment that Eve coerced Adam into biting into that forbidden fruit, him knowing it would cost him his life, men have never, ever completely understood the mind of the woman that came out of Adam's side. I will not turn that stone over, for fear of being stoned myself, first by my loving wife, who proof-reads all my articles for me, and then by every female who ever reads this article. Let it suffice to say that Peter says we men are to live considerately with our wives, **lest our own prayers be hindered**, and Peter was a married man. He knew. He understood. Sometimes the ladies require a little more maintenance in order to be happy. Don't ask why. Just take care of the problem, OK, guys? And ladies, just smile and be happy, OK???

Now, the family of Abram ben Terah has a serious problem. Sarah, given permission to get back at her handmaiden, turns on Hagar with a vengeance. Hagar, in turn, is so miserable that she tries to run away. Does that work? Sorry! The Angel of the Lord stops her as she is fleeing and asks her where she is coming from and where she is going. He already knows. He just wants it to come out of her mouth, so that she can clearly define her present condition. And when she does answer, he issues a remarkable prophecy which is still being fulfilled today.

*"<sup>9</sup> The Angel of the LORD said to her, 'Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand.'<sup>10</sup> Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, 'I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude.'<sup>11</sup> And the Angel of the LORD said to her: 'Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your affliction.'<sup>12</sup> He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.' "* – Genesis 16:9-12

Let's do a replay on that, shall we, Bob? What did that guy just say???

- (1) **Return to your mistress.** Gee, thanks a lot! More misery!
- (2) **Submit yourself to her.** Wait a minute! It was **her** idea in the first place!
- (3) **I will multiply your descendants EXCEEDINGLY.** Now you're talking!
- (4) **They will not be able to be counted.** Really??? Go on!
- (5) **You're going to have a son.** And how do you know that, again, please?
- (6) **Call him ISHMAEL. (God hears)** Hmm... OK!
- (7) **HE WILL BE A WILD MAN.** And I gotta RAISE this kid??? Thanks a lot!
- (8) **HIS HAND WILL BE AGAINST EVERY MAN.** Trouble for the rest of my life...
- (9) **AND EVERY MAN'S HAND AGAINST HIM.** No friends, no one to trust?
- (10) **HE WILL LIVE IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS BROTHERS.** Fight, fight, fight!!!

The first six statements are not our concern, but the **final four** are. What did the Angel of the Lord (often considered to be Christ Himself in the Old Testament) say? That Ishmael (and consequently his descendants) will be **wild men!** Does this fit the pattern? Yes? He and all his descendants **will be against every man!** Appropriate? Uh huh? Every man's hand **will be against him!** Now, consider that every Arab, every Muslim of Arabic descent comes from the loins of Ishmael. And study the history of the Middle East. What do we find. War. Savagery. Brutality. One man's hand against another, constantly, eternally. **Almost if God had ordained it to be that way from the very beginning.** Why? Don't know. I have my pet theories about the relationship of free will and predestination, but Biblical

scholars have been arguing that point for as long as there's been a Bible, and we haven't solved the problem yet. Perhaps we are **preordained to freely choose what we choose**. Oh, sorry. Head hurting again? We'll move on.

Hagar returns to the camp and submits to her mistress. Sarai is puzzled by this change in attitude. We never know if Hagar shared the prophecy with her. Probably not. That would have only stirred up things all over again. But she probably shared it with Abram, the father of the child. He would want to know. He deserved a little peace, after all. Having left Haran at the age of 75, and moved to Canaan, and then received his first son when he was 86, Abram was content to let things ride for a while, if only to get a little peace in his household. And for 13 long years, everything seemed to be working out just fine. Little Ishmael was growing up to be a fine young man. Granted, he was a little on the wild side, but, hey, boys will be boys, won't they? But then when Abram was 99 years old, the Lord showed up and messed everything in his household up all over again. Remember, he though he already had his promised male heir in Ishmael, and I am sure that he had already told the boy and his surrogate and legal mothers both just that. But now, here is God messing things up all over again. Now, here He is making an **additional** covenant and an **additional** promise. Now, Abram has to change his name to Abraham, and Sarai has to change her name to Sarah. And here comes the killer: **Ishmael is NOT going to be his rightful heir!!!** Imagine telling this to a 13 year old boy. Imagine the rejection he is going to feel. Remember perhaps in your own household, when you had your own children, was there competition and jealousy and insecurity among the children? Did any of them ever jockey for position or power? Did they argue or squabble with one another over privilege? To Sarah, this is very good news. She is actually going to bear a child of her own? It almost seems ridiculous. Heck. Forget the almost part. It **is** ridiculous. Makes you want to laugh, doesn't it? No, wait, Lord. I didn't mean that **literally**. Oh. You did. OK, then. We'll call the boy **Laughter** or **God laughs (last)** when he comes. Halleluia. I think.

But to Hagar, listening in quietly to this whole conversation, her whole world is about to come to an end. What about all those prophecies that the strange glowing man gave her? How did He know her name? How did He know she was pregnant? How did He know she would have a son??? Now, what becomes of her, and **what becomes of her son???**

What appears to be an imminent crisis lingers on for an entire year, and then, finally, Isaac is born. Hagar dreads the moment, but Sarah is so wrapped up in new little bundle of joy that, at least for the moment, she and Ishmael seem to fade into the background. Good, for the time being at least. At least there seems to be no damage, **yet...**

Several years go by. We don't know for sure just how many. The Bible only says, "*the child grew and was weaned*". But even that seemingly simple statement requires explanation to our American, Western culture. It is common in the 3<sup>rd</sup> World that a mother typically breast feeds her child anywhere from one to five years, based on the culture. To us, it may seem highly abnormal for a five-year-old boy to come up to his mother to nurse, but there is a practical side-effect to breast feeding. As long as a mother's body is producing milk, it continues to transmit certain hormones into her blood stream which in turn signal her ovaries not to resume producing an egg every month. It would be a bad idea to be nursing one child while pregnant with another. One of the unexpected problems with bottle feeding in America is that it allows the mother's child-bearing mechanism to kick back in way too soon, and so we end up with "stair-steps", children often only a year or so apart. Were the mothers breast feeding their children as God intended, it would place a wider gap between children, and a merciful reprieve on the mother's sanity as well. In India, they have what they call a "Food Taste" party when the child is considered old enough to be weaned. It is a grand affair, not unlike the party that Abraham threw for Isaac. How old was he? I would guess about 3 or 4. How old would that have made Ishmael? 16 or 17 years old, right in the middle of the most difficult period of time in a young man's life, when his hormones are all ablaze, his emotions are most out of control and his comments are just as much out of control as his hormones. Ishmael. The teenage boy. Getting himself and his mother in really big trouble with his mouth, just as Joseph would deep six himself many years later when he was about that very same age and brought a bad report against his brothers and told them and his father strange, irritating dreams. Sarah, sitting by the fire, enjoying her son's first major celebration, spying the son of that **other** woman sitting there by the fire, making snide comments about her little darling. Something had to give, and it wouldn't be here or her child!

Sarah rises up suddenly from the campfire, and strides toward Abraham. "Get rid of that slave and her miserable son!", she cries. "That child will NEVER share in your inheritance with my Isaac!" And so the die is cast; the prophecy fulfilled. Now the 40-something mother and her 17-year-old son are cast out of the camp, rejected, and divorced from the very community that could have stabilized them and given them life and maturity and, above all, peace in their hearts. There is a significant difference between divorce in the Middle East and divorce in the Western world. In America, if you divorce your wife, you are still responsible for the welfare and well-being of your children. A huge percentage of the court's time is tied up in custody and support battles between former spouses. But in the Middle East, it is not so. When Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael packing, he was not only divorcing her, **he was also divorcing his son!** Can I prove this? Absolutely! Listen to the conversation between Abraham and God in the very next chapter:

"<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.'<sup>2</sup> Then He said, 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.' "

-- Genesis 22:1-2

Do you see the key phrase? **Your only son Isaac.** As far as God and Abraham were both concerned, Ishmael was no longer the son of Abraham, and Abraham was no longer the father of Ishmael. We concentrate on the crisis of Abraham regarding the potential sacrifice of Isaac. **But what about Ishmael?** How does it feel to be a 17 year old boy and be told that your father doesn't love you anymore, that he doesn't care for you anymore, that he's **not even your father anymore?** The rejection, anger, bitterness and rebellion that the dual divorce caused was fully responsible for the fact that Ishmael and all his descendants would be wild men, with their hands against all men, and all men's hands against them. The Angel of the Lord was correct in his prophecy. But it was the anger of Sarah and the rejection of Hagar and Ishmael that brought it to pass. So deep was the wounding, so terrible the denial, that Muslim clerics teach that it was **Ishmael, not Isaac who was to be sacrificed on the mountains of Moriah!** Ever since then, for untold thousands of years, every man of the lineage of Ishmael has grown up feeling angry, rejected, violent and bitter, without ever knowing why. Once that spirit of rejection had entered into the 17-year-old boy, it somehow propagated itself down through the ages and generations until we have a world at war with itself, all over the right to call Abraham their father. The Jews claim him through Isaac. The Christians claim him as the Father of Faith. But what of the Muslims? Are 1.8 billion people to have no right of inheritance? No one to call daddy? No one to go to, to cling to, to tell them that they are loved, respected and valued, that they are not illegitimate children and have a rightful inheritance in the camp of their father? This is how deep and how pervasive the wound is. It will not be healed with any natural means, because the scar tissue on the soul of Islam runs too deep and is too hard. Islam and the Arab world have become too rigid because of this wounding, and now will eagerly embrace **anyone** who will tell them that they are the rightful inheritors of the land of Abraham. **This** is why the Arab world is so implacable regarding the existence of Israel. It isn't about the land. It's never been about the land. It's about the **right of inheritance, the right to be called a TRUE son of Abraham.** As long as Israel remains in the land of Canaan, Ishmael can **never** feel legitimate.

What, then, is the answer? Is it in guns? No. Is it in negotiation? No. Is it in concessions? No. **The only answer lies in the return of the one true Messiah, who will establish peace forever, and grant unto ALL men the right of TRUE Sonship, not just with Father Abraham, but also with Father God!** And then the tents of Ishmael will finally have peace, and he will no longer be a wild man, and the war will finally cease. Even so, Lord, come! Maranatha!





# Day 26 – Monster on the Loose



<sup>7</sup>“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. – Daniel 7:7

Well, dear readers, we have finally come to the question of all questions. Who or what is the Beast of Revelation? Is he the Anti-Christ? When does he come into power? Are we outta here by then? Sheesh! And I’m gonna answer all these questions in one 15-minute article? Ha! Fat chance! To **really** find all out the good stuff about the ultimate bad guy, you’re going to have to purchase **Episode Five – The Time of the Beast**, which will deal at great length and in great detail with the zillions of questions that have to be answered. However...

Since I brought the subject, I certainly owe you a kind of Reader’s Digest condensed version, so here goes:

We first encounter the Beast (and there are many, many beasts that make their appearance throughout Daniel and Revelation) in Daniel, Chapter 7. As you know from previous articles, this demonically driven individual and the empire that they will preside over follows a series of other world empires. We have already discussed the role that England plays in this prophecy, as well as the America wings which are torn off. After the ascendancy of America, we see the rise of the Russian Bear, frozen on its northern side and busy eating up the nations around it in order to expand its empire. All of these events have already taken place or are in the process of taking place. England’s role in God’s timetable has become a thing of the past. When Great Britain began to move away from God, God began to move away from Great Britain. Although they still hold a seat in the Security Council of the UN and influence world events to some extent, it is largely because of a matter of deference to what they used to be, not what they are now. They really stopped being a world power as America rose to power. America still wields considerable world power, and would still have to be considered the dominant nation in the world today, but our position is untenable and very slippery. We are fighting a losing battle, and we know it. We started losing ground during the “Korean Conflict”. Up until then we had never lost a war. We won the Revolutionary War. We won the War of 1812. We won our own Civil War (if you hail from the North). We won the Spanish-American War. We won World War I. We won World War II. Now, forgive me for just a second, but that’s a heck of a lot of wars to win back to back. It’s kind of like winning six straight World Series pennants, to give you a basis for comparison. As we continued to win war after war, we began to get a little cocky, kind of like Rocky Balboa before Clubber Lane took him down. Didn’t see the movie? Pity. According to Sylvester Stallone, the human face is able to take an infinite number of punches without it causing damage. Unfortunately, many pro boxers, including the great Muhammed Ali, know better. Interestingly enough, Stallone is now a born again believer. Even Rocky, it seems, could run into rocky times, and have the need of a savior to rescue him.

As the US won war after war, we became more self-assured, more confident, and finally, just a little too cocky. Every nation and every successful sports team needs to possess a certain amount of cockiness and confidence in order to be successful. You have to believe that you are going to win and that God is with

you otherwise you're liable to come home licking your wounds and with your tail tucked between your legs. But America became just like the Children of Israel under Joshua after their phenomenal victory over Jericho. They figured that Ai would be a pushover, and didn't prepare, didn't send enough troops, and, above all, didn't pray. Consequently, they took a beating and were humiliated by a little mud hut village that didn't lie down and let them roll over them. When Korea turned up, we calmly assumed that we could whip those dirty Commies just as easily as we had the Japanese and the Germans. Boy, were we in for a surprise! To be fair, we really hadn't so much beaten Japan as crushed their will to fight. America is still the only nation in the history of the world to use a nuclear weapon in actual battle. President Harry Truman was faced with one of the most terrible decisions ever put in front of a man in the history of the world. On one hand, we had driven the Japanese back off of their early conquests and now they were isolated on their island. But that didn't constitute victory. Had we not forced the Japanese to surrender and broken their will to fight, the war in the Pacific would have gone on for many years afterwards. We knew that we had to force a surrender, but the real question was how to do it? Military advisors estimated that an invasion of Japan, a nation steeped in the tradition of *hari-kari*, would cost our own boys at least 250,000 dead and God knows how many injured. The death toll on the Japanese side would have been horrendous. No nation had ever successfully invaded Japan, and the Japanese were absolutely convinced that they were invincible and that their emperor was really a god. The last time that someone had tried to invade that little island, it has been the Chinese. They never set foot on land. A typhoon came up suddenly and unexpectedly and absolutely wrecked the entire Chinese fleet. And if giant China couldn't beat little Japan, then who were these round-eyed foreigners to think that they would fare any better? By all means, America, please come and invade our island! You will pay dearly for your arrogance. We would rather die than surrender. It is conceivable that half the people on the island; men, women and children, would have hurled themselves into the face of our troops, with no thought or regard for their own lives. That was one scenario. On the other hand, we had a remarkable but horrifying new weapon at our disposal. We had already tested it in the desert, with absolutely staggering results. We knew that releasing the power of the atom would be the greatest weapon in the history of the world, but now that we had seen its awful power, could we use it on a civilian population? This was the choice that Harry Truman faced. Think you've got stomach problems? How would you like to be faced with a decision between two evils, one greater, one lesser? And how would you like the **lesser** of the two evils to result in the near-instantaneous deaths of 40,000 innocent men, women and children at Hiroshima, followed by another 70,000 at Nagasaki? The untold story is that after Truman made his fateful decision, he quietly became a closet alcoholic during the remainder of his presidency. He simply could not deal with the consequences of the decision he **had** to make. His choice, to help you see it clearly, was to either kill about 100,000 Japanese, or kill 250,000 Americans and about one million Japanese. What a choice!

When we entered the Korean Conflict, we knew that we could never use the bomb again. World opinion would have crucified us, and we knew that the Russians were busy preparing their own version of ultimate destruction. Using the bomb in Korea would have triggered a nuclear holocaust, and both sides knew it. What we hadn't counted on was the incredible willingness of both Korean and Chinese soldiers to blindly throw themselves into the face of constantly firing machine guns to the point where the barrels of the guns actually melted down under the heat and the guns blew up. Wave after wave of soldiers would come at our boys, and even with the very best equipment, our men were hard pressed to hold their own. We came away licking our wounds, and wondering what had happened to us. And we also encountered an internal problem as well. Truman, sickened of war by his World War II experiences, seemed to be fighting the war **not to lose**, rather than to win. The struggles between he and General Douglas MacArthur were legendary.

Asia has proven to be our Waterloo on two separate occasions. After Korea came Vietnam. America was torn and divided about whether we should be there or not. We were trying to support a corrupt government, and we were put in the unenviable position of re-fighting the Revolutionary War, only this time we were using the military tactics of the British and the Viet Cong were using the tactics that we had used; hit-and-run, guerrilla tactics. Again we came away licking our wounds. We were glad to be rid of Asia for a while. We had not fared well against a people who clearly didn't think like us.

Desert Storm could have been a truly great triumph and put us back on track again as far as confidence is concerned. Saddam Hussein had outraged the entire world by setting fire to the oil fields of Arabia and gassing the Kurds, and we had world opinion clearly behind us, even in the Arab nations. They knew that if unchecked, Hussein would soon be knocking on their doorsteps, and they wanted nothing to do with his

kind of brutal, absolute dictatorship. Our allies were standing with us and providing their own troops in the battle. We had one of the clearest technological advantages that any nation has ever had in the history of warfare. We could surgically strike at Iraq at any time and in any way we chose. Air superiority has long been the key to modern warfare; just as naval superiority was once the key to ancient warfare. Israel proved that conclusively in the several and generally brief attacks that the Arab world have launched against them since 1948. We had Hussein on the ropes. General "Stormin' Norman" Schwarzkopf was 50 miles away from Baghdad when George Bush Sr. lost his nerve and called his best general off. It seems that we never learn from history. It is never enough to contain the enemy. They must be beaten, broken and forced to formally surrender. If not, it is only a matter of time before they will surface again, emboldened by the fact that their foe was not able to subdue them before. After we negotiated an end to Desert Storm, Hussein began to proclaim all throughout the Middle East that we had stopped short of Baghdad because we were afraid of him and the invincibility of the Iraqi troops. Nothing could have been further from the truth, but because we failed to remove all doubt, we left room for the Father of Lies to spin the whole event a different way. Ten years later, Bush Jr. would feel morally obligated to go back to Iraq and finish the job his father started but lacked the courage to complete. Now we find ourselves entangled in two Vietnams at the same time, Afghanistan and Iraq, playing the role of the British in Colonial America in two countries at the same time. Being the Peacekeeper of the Whole World is not an easy task, and it tends to drain the country that performs the task both financially, emotionally and militarily.

Why am I spending so much time on military matters? Because it will be through military means that the Beast of Revelation comes to power, first within his own nation, then a three-nation confederacy, and finally, a ten-nation confederacy which will be able to impose its collective will upon the entire earth. In order to understand what **will** happen, we must first understand what **has** happened. The very things which bring the Anti-Christ to power will also be his undoing, just like America, England and every other world power or empire that has ever existed.

As our power wanes in the world, who will rise up to take dominance? The answer is the Leopard with four wings and four heads. There was a time during the Middle Ages when Muslim dominance almost swept European Christianity away. Today, we are threatened with the same prospect. Right now, France is systematically being taken over by Muslim immigrants who violently demand their own way in all matters. The same is true of England. Rules regarding the separation of church and state in England are enforced on Christians, but not Muslims, for fear of retribution. The same is true in other parts of the world. And heaven help the Christian who lives in a Moslem-dominated society, particularly where *Sharia Law* dominates. Christians in Muslim countries are constantly subject to attack without warning or need of provocation. Iran is busy sending weapons to Iraq to help kill American soldiers and yet we mindlessly allow the President of Iran to come and lie to us about how wonderful everything is and how all they want is peace. How is it that the Arab world can so shamelessly lie to us, and how is it that we can so naively believe everything that they say? Again, there is history behind this deliberate deception, and again, we have sown the seeds of our own disaster. This time, we must go back to World War I. During that conflict, it was England, France and America against Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. For those of you who don't know much about history, the Ottoman Empire was based in Turkey. The Turks were some of the most ruthless, brutal people who have ever ruled others. I have already shared with you in an earlier article what they did to the Christians in Armenia. They were no more kind with their Muslim brethren. The Arab world chafed under Turkish rule and hoped and prayed for the day when they could be free from them and united in a single Muslim nation, stretching from the Straits of Gibraltar all the way to the Far East. The British knew about this desire and, using the unwilling services of the now-famous Lawrence of Arabia, began to saturate the Arab world with flyers promising the Arabs their freedom if they would rise up against the Turks and rebel. This would create a two-front war for the Turks, one on the outside of the empire with the Western powers, and the other on the inside against all of their Arab subjects. Many Muslim Arabs took the Brits at their word and began a systematic campaign of sabotage and surprise attacks against Turkish positions. At first the British kept their word, smuggling arms and munitions to the Arab insurgents. Lawrence himself became well known as a specialist in using explosives. But at the same time that this positive and potentially redemptive action was going on, something that might have restored Muslim faith in so-called Christian Europe; another, very sinister action was taking place. The French ambassador privately came to England with a proposal: **to divide the Middle East between France and England after the war was over and deny the Arabs their right to independence and national sovereignty.** Such duplicity could be expected from the French,

because they had made no promises to the Arab world. But the British, who had already given their word, now secretly entered into a pact with the French. At the end of the war, the Arab world turned to the victors, expecting them to uphold their promise. Instead, the British and the French calmly split the former Ottoman Empire in half, the French taking the northern half and the British the southern half. Small wonder, then, that the inhabitants of the Middle East feel no pangs of conscience when they come to our country and lie to our face, secretly planning to divide us up into pieces after they conquer us, just as we divided them up. And don't expect support from even the Kurds, who hate both the Turks and the Arabs. In Desert Storm, America made "iron-clad" promises to help them and support them in their quest for an independent nation if they would rise up and help us overthrow Saddam Hussein. They believed us, just as the Arab world had believed the British in World War I. And then, with General Schwarzkopf only 50 miles from Baghdad, our country lost its nerve and backed down. After Desert Storm was over, Hussein turned his attention to those who had fought against him, and methodically exterminated untold hundreds of thousands of Kurds. Again, a promise made. And again, a promise broken.

Now, dear reader, can you begin to understand the hatred which the Muslim world has for us? How they can calmly lie to our faces without conscience? How they can call us the Great Satan, and Israel the Little Satan? We have, by word and deed, shown that we cannot be trusted to keep our word. We have shown that we are incapable of keeping our promises. And to the average Muslim in the Middle East, we are the *infidel*, not fit to rule the world, fit only to be given two choices: **convert or die**.

Now you may wonder why I have spent so much time talking about the Leopard when it is the Beast that this article is supposed to be about. All in due season, dear friend, all in due season. I have told you all this to come to a place where I could point out the inherent flaw in the Leopard: it has **four** heads. One of the other things that has kept the Muslim world from regaining the unity which it enjoyed under the Caliphs of old is the divisiveness found in the Muslim world. True, they are united in their hatred of us. True, they were united in wanting Saddam Hussein removed from Iraq. But simply observe the anarchy that Iraq fell into after the fall of the dictator, and you get a pretty good picture of what lies underneath the covers of Islam. On the surface, they look like a seamless, unified whole. Underneath, they are a squabbling, bickering mob, just as capable of killing one another as they are of killing us.

Although the Leopard will be instrumental in causing the collapse of the United States, the very stability inherent in the four heads of the Leopard will cause chaos to follow close on its heels. It is precisely this instability, disorder and chaos that the Anti-Christ will feed on. Dictators never assume power during times of peace and prosperity. Evil cannot flourish during such times. Common sense rules, and people are unwilling to resort to drastic measures to change things, because things are generally good and do not require changing. But when things go wrong, then people cry for stability, and are gladly willing to surrender their freedom and right to self-governance for the sake of order. This is exactly how Hitler came to power. When the economy of the United States collapsed in 1929, it drove us into a Great Depression. In Europe, indexed to our economic cycles, it triggered just the opposite, hyperinflation. The value of the German **mark** spiraled downward, while prices rocketed skyward. It was so bad that I have seen pictures of a German worker standing next to a pile of *millionenmarken* notes. To help you understand what I just said in English, the worker wasn't standing next to a pile of one million one dollar bills. He was standing next to a pile of **one million dollar bills!** That six foot high pile of million dollar bills was enough to buy **one loaf of bread!** Another picture I have seen shows a worker with a wheelbarrow full of *millionenmarken* notes. Again, only enough to buy a loaf of bread. The hyperinflation was so bad that workers began to demand that they be paid daily, because by the end of the week, their wages' value had been cut in half. Then, they began to demand that they be paid at noon and again in the evening, because wages earned in the morning were only worth half what the wages earned in the afternoon were. Insane? Indeed. As I have written in one of my other books, ***Biblical Biorhythms and the Coming Crash***, political stability is only capable when **economic** stability undergirds it. Terrorists all down through history have learned that in order to overthrow a government, you must first create economic chaos. Then you have to deftly blame the chaos on the very people who were trying to prevent it. Once you have reversed the roles of hero and villain, overthrowing the existing government is a relatively easy task. Hitler didn't stand a chance as long as the Weimar Republic was sitting on economic stability. But when America's chaos bled into Germany's economic water, stirring up the water was an easy task. Even Moses needed ten plagues to overthrow the existing political order of an established country like Egypt. With Germany in chaos and disarray, Hitler seized on the opportunity to do two things: (1) Find a convenient scapegoat to blame all the problems on, and (2) Promise that if the people

would make him their leader, he would quickly rid the country of the troublemakers and bring peace, order and security to the nation. Finding a convenient scapegoat was easy: the Jews. The entire German middle class was based on Jewish mercantilism. Without the myriad Jewish shopkeepers, the German economy would have and eventually did grind to a halt. Without all of the Jewish bankers, Germany's strong economic position in the world would have, and quickly did, erode. Yet despite the fact that Germany owed much of its prosperity to its Jewish middle class, the Jews were resented and hated by many. Even the great Martin Luther was strongly anti-Semitic. The church had proclaimed the Jews as Christ-killers for over 1,500 years. Anti-Semitism was rampant all across Europe. Somehow the church had forgotten that God had promised Father Abraham that He would "*bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee*". That promise extended not only to Abraham, but also to his rightful seed, through Isaac, Jacob and the rest of the 13 tribes. Any nation that has ever persecuted the Jews has been destroyed within one generation. Any nation that has provided sanctuary, shelter and peace for the Jews has been blessed with peace and prosperity themselves. Hitler and Germany did not understand this basic Scriptural truth, but they were about to learn.

Once a scapegoat had been assigned and Hitler had assumed power, it was time for him to carry out his dastardly plan. And so the dreaded night of **Krystalnacht** or "*The Night of Breaking Glass*" swept through all of Germany. Jewish shop after Jewish shop was broken into, ransacked and burned to the ground. Jews unfortunate enough to get in the way or foolish enough to resist were either killed or beaten brutally. And this was just the beginning. All of this madness would eventually end in **The Final Solution**, which would kill six million innocent Jews, bring about the destruction of Germany and its allies and the eventual establishment of the modern state of Israel. By the way, the current president of Iran denies that the Holocaust ever happened. There is a frightening linkage between Nazism and Islam: **they both hate the Jews**. And it will be this **shared hatred of Israel** that will allow Islam to accept a German, ostensibly Christian, peacemaker to broker between them and their hated enemy Israel. "*Bring us peace!*", they will cry. And an Aryan Anti-Christ will gladly establish peace for them. But there will be a price. Just as before, in World War II, he will need a scapegoat. Last time, it was the Jews. This time, dear reader, **it will be us!** The Anti-Christ, the Beast, will look at the Christian world, and particularly at America, and gleefully choose **us** as the scapegoat to be sacrificed to the gods this time around.

There is another aspect of the Anti-Christ that most people don't think about. We kind of expect him to emerge instantly on the world scene, full-blown, with horns growing out of his head and fire coming out of his mouth. That is simply not going to happen. All things take time to develop. A child takes nine months to develop in its mother's womb. And then that same child takes about 20 years to develop from the small, helpless, crying thing that is birthed all the way to a fully functional adult. I know, I know. You know a whole lot of non-functional, immature 20-year-olds. No argument there. This is just theory, you know. The Anti-Christ will also have to have time to develop. He will need time to be raised in an environment where love is denied to him as a child. He will have to be raised in an environment where he is surrounded by strong anti-Semitic sentiment. He will need to be well educated, and will have to develop his rhetorical skills. He will need time to move into politics in his own local area, perhaps as a councilman or mayor. From there he will have to begin to dominate his region, then his country. Finally, his leadership skills will be so substantial that he will be able to forge a three-nation confederacy, perhaps in an unlikely situation. That accomplishment will bring him to international prominence. Once that three-nation confederacy has had time to consolidate, stabilize and stretch its political muscles, it will establish itself and him as a force to be reckoned with on the international scene. From there it will only be a matter of time until other nations begin to join the confederacy, until it has finally grown to a ten nation superpower, capable of dictating policy and action to the rest of the world. At this point in time, he will finally be positioned to do what he was born to do, deceive the whole world and lead it to the very edge of destruction.

Now let's compare that timeline to our own Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. After Mary was told that she was going to have a child, but not by normal human means, it still took nine months for her to bring her child to birth. After that, the Bible contains no relevant information on Jesus until he is 12. We know at that point in time that He is far ahead of his peers in intellectual and spiritual development. He astonishes the scribes and Pharisees at the temple with His astounding depth of understanding of the Holy Scriptures. But He is still not ready to be Savior of the world. 18 more years will pass, during which He will grow in wisdom, knowledge, stature and favor with God and man before he is even ready to begin His ministry. Even after the Holy Spirit comes on Him and remains on Him, He is still not ready. The Spirit will drive

Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. But He is still not ready. An additional three and a half years will pass before He will kneel in a garden and surrender His will to the Father in the single most selfless act in the history of the universe. Finally, nailed to a cross, sustaining his life force in His body by a sheer act of will, He will finally say that it is finished, and then release His spirit out of His body and into the hands of His Father. And all of that was just to prepare Him.

Now let's return to the Anti-Christ. The same painstaking process will have to be performed on him as was performed on Christ, only this time it will be the Prince of Darkness who will be doing the molding and shaping. The same parallel processes will have to be endured, only in the negative or reverse. And then, having shaped a personality of both skill and consummate evil, satan will have to build a political infrastructure around him to support him in his bid for world dominance. All of this will take time. Ironically, by the time that most Christians realize that the Anti-Christ **is** the Anti-Christ, it will be too late. It will take even longer than that for the Jews to come to the same conclusion. For them, it will almost be **too** late. Only the arrival of Christ in Revelation Chapter 19 will rescue them from absolute destruction.

Is he here right now? Almost certainly, given what God has already shown me. Has he begun to establish himself on the political scene? Probably so. Has he risen to regional acclaim? Possibly. Is he in control of his own native country yet? As of this writing, probably not. Has he formed his preliminary three-nation confederacy? Not as of this writing, in late 2007. That would then mean that the ten-nation super confederation also does not exist at this point in time. This is why the Bible is not clear about whether the Beast is a man or an empire. In truth, it is both. It is the ultimately evil leader. But it is also the ultimately evil empire (not, not the Communists or the New York Yankees!). When it comes, that confederacy will be a spiritual, political, intellectual and emotional extension of who and what he is.

Once everything is in place, there will remain one final step that has to be taken. Then, just as with Christ, it will be necessary for his lord to enter into him in order to fully control and consume him. Just as the Father entered Christ through the Spirit on the banks of the Jordan River, it will be necessary for satan, the god of this world, to enter into the Anti-Christ and fill him to overflowing with that demonic, evil essence. Then the process will be complete. He will have fully become the Beast, no longer human, except for the physical shell that surrounds him. And he will be the Monster on the loose that the title of this article talks about, terrorizing the world and scaring more than just small children.

Dear friends in Christ do you now see why Jesus told us to pray that we might escape these days? And do you also see why pedestrian Christianity, with a Brylcreem anointing (a little dab will do 'ya!) will not carry you through to the end. I close this article with this grim but essential warning from Christ Himself. ***"He who endures to the end shall be saved"***.

# Day 27 – “Then”



<sup>9</sup> “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many”

– Matthew 24:9-11

At the beginning of this Episode, we began our journey in Matthew, Chapter 24, when the disciples came to Jesus after His angry explosion outside of the temple. At that moment in time, He was in no mood to offer explanations for the disturbing prophecy that He had uttered on the steps of the most sacred building in all of Judea. Meekly, they followed Him back to the Mount of Olives, up the side of the mountain to the Garden of Gethsemane, and quietly arranged themselves around him, waiting for His holy and righteous anger to dissipate. Once they saw that He had calmed down sufficiently, they asked Him three key questions which we used as the starting article for this book.

Now, having traveled all over the Bible on our way to the Rapture, the most desired event of all Christianity, we find ourselves once again looking at the Olivet Discourse, hoping to find the keys to understanding the timing of that most precious of all events. When the Lord instructed me to begin to teach from the Revelation of Jesus Christ, I rebelled, claiming, and rightly so, that the final book of the Bible was used and abused by deviant Christians everywhere to support their bizarre and absurd doctrines. The challenge He laid out to me was to study the Word of God, analyze it, **rightly** divide it and teach it **correctly** to others. That task has been my driving ambition for over fifteen years now. As I have taught others, I have encountered a wide variety of interpretations to both Revelation and the Olivet Discourse. In every case, I was forced to return again to the original Scriptures to re-examine them in the light of this new interpretation. And every single time, I have found that their interpretation was skewing the original intent of the passage, making Jesus say things that He did not say. In every case, I found that my original assessment of what the Master said was correct. How did I do it? Very simply. I decided that I would take His holy, precious Word as **literally true, logically correct, and chronologically correct**. What do I mean by that? That Jesus said **what** He wanted to say, **exactly** as He meant to say it, in the **order** in which He wanted to say it. So many so-called Bible and prophecy experts turn the Bible into a Ronco Vegematic. You remember the old TV commercial, don’t you? Slices. Dices. Blends. Purees. All with the touch of a button. And that is what has happened to the Word of God in the hands of these men. They take what Jesus and the apostles and the prophets say and they slice it, dice it, spin it all around, rearrange it, and come out with some sort of goo that you can pour into a jar, but which in no way marginally resembles the shape, form and texture of the original items which were placed into the device.

Instead, when I began my research, I discarded all previous teachings, all preconceptions, all assumptions and all the teaching of men and determined that, as with Martin Luther in the Reformation, that *so/a scriptura* (solely, only the Scriptures) would be my rallying cry and standard. If Jesus said it, I believed it, straight up with no supplemental opinions from men twisting it any other way. If Jesus did **not** say it, then it had no place in my doctrine, my teaching or my life. Once I had outlined Revelation, I was astonished. The phenomenally accurate and detailed timeline presented there in virtually no way corresponded to what I had been taught from the pulpit and via TV. When I went to Matthew and compared what Jesus said as Son of Man with what He said in Revelation as Son of God, I found that the

two were virtually identical. That settled it for me, forever. The Bible even says that every matter should be established in the mouths of two or three witnesses. I had the witness of Revelation. I had the witness of Matthew. And, just for fun, Mark and Luke happened to agree as well, as did Paul and Peter. At that point, I stopped asking questions. I had my answer.

In this article, I am going to present to you what I discovered as I analyzed what Jesus said on that fateful day just a few miles outside of Jerusalem. I am going to present it to you in outline form, so that it will be easy to understand, to memorize (yes, memorize!) and, consequently, **to teach others!** I cannot teach everyone, as much as I might want to. I am sure that Paul felt it was a tremendous hindrance to his active, ongoing ministry to have to sit in a prison cell and **write letters** to his often rebellious churches when he should have been going there himself to knock their foolish heads together. What he did not know was that he was laying the foundation for the form of Christianity we have today. Perhaps, in a much smaller way, I am doing just that with the Episodes. If you will take this teaching to heart, draw it into you, and then present to others skillfully and passionate what I have presented to you, then perhaps my life will not have been lived in vain. The last three years have not been easy. I pray that these words burn into your heart and mind forever.

Now, on to Olivet! The disciples had gathered around Jesus and asked Him three key questions. They were:

- (1) **When will these things (the prophesied destruction of the Temple) be?**
- (2) **What will be the Sign of Your coming?**
- (3) **What will be end of the age?**

In the next two chapters, Jesus, finally calmed down again, outlined **in great detail** the **exact chronological sequence** in which these events would occur, **up to and including the Rapture**. He then outlined the conditions and prerequisites for participating in these events, and being included in the snatching away of the Bride portion of the church. All of these prerequisites we have already discussed in great detail. But we have not taken a close look at the time line itself. Now is the time to do just that. The timeline discourse is broken into three sections. Let's look at the first one.

### **1. Take heed (make sure) that no one deceives you. [24:4]**

Why would Jesus say that? Because many would come in His name, saying that they were the Christ. They would be successful in deceiving many people.

### **2. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. [24:6]**

This corresponds perfectly with the **First Seal** of Revelation in Chapter 6, verse 2. There, we find a rider on a white horse. He has a **bow**, which is a weapon of war. If the prophecy were being given today, it would be an Uzi or a bazooka. The rider is given a **crown**, which is a symbol of something that would be worn by a **king**, indicating that we are dealing with a **kingdom or nation** here. He goes out **conquering and to conquer**. Individuals don't conquer other individuals. Only **nations** conquer other nations. This couldn't be more clear or logical.

### **3. See that you are not troubled by all these things. All of these things have to happen, but the end will not occur at this time. [24:6]**

Note that Jesus specifically makes the point that even though things are going to get ugly and our natural human desires will want to convince us that we are leaving early, **that is simply not going to happen!** It **will** happen, but **not when we want it to**.

### **4. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom will rise against kingdom [24:7]**

We have discussed, in an earlier article, the mistranslation involved here. The word translated **nation** in English is really the Greek word *ethnos*, from which we get the term **ethnic group**. The word translated **kingdom** in English is really the Greek word *basilica*, which really translated better as **nation**, based on our understanding of the words today. Basically, when Jesus **actually said** in the original Greek is that



**ethnic group would rise against ethnic group and nation would rise against nation.** This corresponds perfectly again with Revelation. We have already shown that the First Seal of Revelation is **war, nation against nation.** And when we check the **Second Seal**, we find that **men will slay one another** (Revelation 6:4). That has nothing to do with nations, as some have carelessly interpreted it. When men slay one another, it is an **individual** act, not a **corporate** one. War always involved a corporate act of aggression. Racial and ethnic hate crimes typically are carried out on an individual level, one man's hand against another.

#### **5. There will be famines [24:7]**

This corresponds with the **Third Seal** of Revelation. In it, we find a massive crop failure of **wheat** and **barley**, crops typically found in the Northern Hemisphere of our planet. This is confirmed by a parallel passage found in Zechariah, which matches the horses by color. Revelation tells **what** they are going to do. Zechariah tells **where** they are going to do it. Also notice that **oil** and **wine** are not impacted by this famine. Those are crops typically found in and around the Mediterranean area, the very place where most of the Anti-Christ's 10-nation confederacy will be found. Also notice that it will take an entire **day's wages** to buy enough grain to make a few loaves of bread. This approximates the condition found in Germany just before the rise of Adolph Hitler. Remember what I said in our previous article about **economic** stability being necessary for **political** stability.

#### **6. There will be pestilences [24:7]**

This parallels the **Fourth Seal**, found in Revelation 6:8. In that seal we find **death, Hades, and hunger** sweeping across the planet. Witness the rise of AIDS in the past two decades, and the brand new anti-biotic-resistant superbug, MRSA, which is currently sweeping our nation. This is only the beginning of various diseases and plagues against which all of our medical know-how will be helpless.

#### **7. There will be earthquakes in various places [24:7]**

This corresponds to the **Sixth Seal** of Revelation, where we find a **global earthquake** of unprecedented magnitude. Now, this is one of the few places where the exact sequence of Matthew skews slightly from the exact sequence of Revelation. The global earthquake is found in Revelation 6:12. Please understand the reason for the difference. It is two fold. First, Jesus is speaking **extemporaneously** in Matthew. He is saying things as the Holy Spirit gives them to Him. As such, they are not always sequential in nature. I have found that in ministering in the Spirit, that God may give me several things to say to a particular individual. I then direct my attention to another person and begin ministering to them. In the midst of ministering to them, something may come to me for the **previous** person I had been ministering to. I must then stop momentarily and return to the previous individual I ministered to. Later on, in Revelation, He is dictating the **exact timeline** to John, just as a boss would dictate a letter to his secretary. Secondly, in Matthew Jesus is speaking as the **Son of Man**. As such, He is operating within all the limits proscribed by humanity. He has to rely on the same gifts of the Holy Spirit that we have to. This is a controversial thing to say, because people have this irrational, unrealistic view of Christ before His resurrection. We have no idea how difficult what He did for us was. He did not go to the cross and die as God. He went to the cross and died as a man. A man threw away what we once had in a garden. It would take a man to win it back again, also in a garden. God knows what He is doing, and He knows how it has to be done as well. As a man, He had partial, incomplete revelation. After His resurrection, he was once again in His full divinity, with a resurrection body capable of containing His full glory and power. I can't spend any more time on this subject in this article, or I will get completely off course. I have examined this in great depth elsewhere. Please understand that because there is a difference in the **sequence** events between Revelation and Matthew doesn't mean that there is a difference in **content** between the two.

#### **8. All these things are just the beginning of the sorrows. [24:8]**

Please, all my Pre-Tribulation friends, take close note. Jesus stops in the middle of this narrative to let us know that we are **not out yet**, even through there have been a staggering number of traumatic things that have already occurred. Sorry! This is just the **beginning**.

**9. THEN they will deliver you up to TRIBULATION, and kill you and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. [24:9]**

Now we finally come to the key word that is the title of this article, the word **then**. This should be obvious, but the word **then** implies a logical, chronological order of events. This is going to happen. **Then** the next thing is going to happen. **Then** the next thing is going to happen. The word **then** appears again and again in this narrative. How in the world people can take what Jesus said in chronological order and twist and turn it all around is simply beyond me. It violates both the Spirit and the letter of the law. Oh, well! Let's move on. Also note the other capitalized word in this step, the word **Tribulation**. Congratulations! We have finally arrived at the Tribulation, a global persecution against the church in which many will die for their faith, and an even greater number will fall away. My Pre-Trib friends are going to be totally traumatized at this point. They were not expecting any of this. Remember in our last point, Jesus specifically warned us that this was just the **beginning** of things that were going to go wrong. As an aside, the Greek word that we translate tribulation is *thlipsis*. Remember that word. We will come back to it later. This point parallels the **Fifth Seal** of Revelation, found in Chapter 6, verses 9-11. Jesus reveals all the souls under the altar who have been **slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held**. They cry out for vengeance. He tells them that they have to wait a little longer, **until all the other believers who have to die are killed!** Even though Matthew and Revelation are just a little bit out of sync with one another, notice how perfectly and thoroughly they mesh together in content?

**10. And THEN many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. [24:10]**

Why such a falling away? The answer is simple. The church in America, and now in much of the world evangelized by the America church, has systematically been taught a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, that we are going to be sky lifted before any of these terrible things take place. I taught it myself for 15 years before the Lord came and challenged me to teach His Word accurately and completely. Notice He didn't come right out and tell me the Pre-Trib stance was incorrect. He simply said to read the instruction manual **for myself**, to see if these things were really true. Once I read the Word of God for myself, I realized how terribly wrong I had been. The instruction manual had been there all along. I just was too lazy to sit down and study to show myself approved. Imagine what will happen when a whole segment of the body of Christ who has been taught that they will not have to experience any suffering now suddenly find themselves being persecuted for His name's sake. They will become angry. This is not what they were told to expect. They will become offended. Those charismaniac preachers lied to them! They're not going to trust them anymore. And, if the preachers were wrong, could it be that the whole Bible is wrong, too? Had they been lied to all this time and didn't know it? Suddenly they find themselves doubting even the Lord Himself. The stage is now set for the next terrible phase in this demonic progression.

**11. THEN many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.**

I have been pastoring for 30 years, since near the beginning of the Charismatic Movement. I owe my baptism in the Holy Spirit to that movement. I saw many signs, wonders and miracles occur. I saw many healing occur. I saw tears of gratitude, of regret, of repentance. But I also saw, because of the false doctrine of cheap grace, all grace, one person after another backslide and fall away into deep personal sin. I, myself, was such a person for a period of time. Remember, I said in one of my other books, that I was a person who had been forgiven much. That's why I love the Lord so much. I know how much He has had to forgive me for the many, many mistakes I have made. But that is not the case for many charismatics and former charismatics. Having been steeped in the false doctrine of all grace, they have fallen into personal sin again and again. Let me tell you a true story. At one point in our church, we had led a waitress at a restaurant we frequent to the Lord. He had moved powerfully in her life, and was really starting to clean her up. Her life was coming out of total chaos, and gradually coming into order. For my Pharisee friends, even though the Lord will make some changes instantaneously, other flaws are left for the believer to clean up with His assistance. That process produces Christian character and integrity, things that seem to be hard to come by these days. She had been filled with the Holy Spirit, and loved to worship God. But she had real problems with the details of her life. She was totally disorganized. Her apartment was a disaster. She didn't manage money well. She had been evicted from

several apartments for being so far behind in her rent. All of these areas would have cleaned up, but she ran out of time. She found herself being evicted again. We had no place to put her, but we didn't want her to be out on the street or sleeping in her car. At that point an older man stepped forward and said that he would help her. So we had a meeting late on a Thursday night after our midweek service. I warned both of them about the appearance of evil. He assured me that he would sleep in a building separate from the house, he would give her and her two daughters access to his house and he would only come in to shower. Reluctantly, I agreed to the plan, but I had serious reservations about it. My suspicions proved to be correct. From the very first night, they were all staying in the same house. Within a month, he and she were sleeping together in the same bed. She was 32, he was 67. Needless to say, more than sleep was involved every night. Later on, they came to me and confessed. When they did, I almost fell out of my chair. **"Yes, brother"**, he said, **"every time the flesh was too strong, we would kneel beside the bed and ask the Lord to forgive us. All 117 times"**. It's a good thing I have a strong heart. I almost fell out of my chair. Grace is designed to get you **out** of trouble, not to be used to jump back in to sin again and again. Paul said it best in Romans 6:1-2 – *"Shall we therefore continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!"*

These are the kind of people, steeped in cheap and easy grace, who have led lives of constant chaos and compromise. They say that they love the Lord, yet constantly disobey His Word. Jesus made it clear in the Gospel of John: if you love Me, **obey My commandments**. He also said that there would be all kinds of people who would come to Him at the end of the age, displaying their spiritual credentials before Him, hoping to gain entrance into the kingdom of God. Yet He will say to them, *"Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity, for I never knew ye."* How sad. Baptized in the Spirit. Moving in the Gifts. Yet rejected when it comes to eternal life.

Here's what will happen: Right now there are a tremendous number of individuals in the church who are traipsing along happily, thinking that God loves them enough to overlook their sinfulness and rebellion, thinking that they don't have to live totally sold out for God. They also believe that they are going to be raptured out before they have to endure any suffering for Christ. Suddenly, the Rapture has occurred, and, while others are gone, they are still here. They are shocked. Angry. Rebellious. Wanting something spiritual, but not holy. They want nothing to do with Christianity anymore. They are filled with lawlessness. Suddenly, a whole new group of prophets appear, telling them that it was all a deception. That God has removed the stiff necked legalists, and that those who remain are the true inheritors of the kingdom. And so false Christians now follow the false prophets who have been raised up by satan to lead them toward a new false God, the Anti-Christ. Those false prophets are all coordinated by the satanic equivalent of John the Baptist, who is trumpeting the soon to arrive **true** messiah, who is, of course, the Anti-Christ. Right now, the enemy is raising up a generation of total lawlessness. It's taken some time, but he is succeeding. It will take a generation of lawlessness to follow a man of lawlessness. Are we on track? What do you think?

## **12. But he WHO ENDURES TO THE END shall be saved [24:13]**

I don't know how anything could be clearer. More direct. More obvious. Does this look like a Pre-Tribulation, no suffering, no dying Rapture to you??? Not Pre-. Not Mid-. Not even Post-. **He who endures to the end.**

## **13. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all the world as a witness to all the nations, and THEN the end shall come.**

Even after all of these things have happened, one final task must be accomplished. Everyone will have to have a chance to say "Yes" or "No" to Christ. That will delay the Rapture even more. And there's an interesting segment in Revelation that talks about an eagle proclaiming the Gospel. Seems God keeps telling people what is right even when they no longer want to listen to Him. Hmmm... No wonder He tells us that He is a **Father**.

At this point, Jesus closes the first segment of His discourse. He has outlined, in general terms, what will happen **before** the Rapture occurs. He has not yet described the Rapture event itself. He will get to that later. Now, He will turn His attention to the very first question the disciples asked, **"Tell us, when will**

***these things be?"*** Lord, when will the destruction of the temple and all the buildings around Jerusalem occur? We need to know so that we can get out of town in a hurry!

In our next E-Pistle, we will discuss this second segment, entitled "***Abomination of Desolation***" After that, we will return to Jesus' discussion of the Rapture and the events preceding it, entitled, "***Then – The Sequel***". Until then, may God richly bless you, as you, now fully warned and educated, walk in both **faith and obedience** to Him!

# Day 28 – Abomination of Desolation



“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation’ spoken of by the Prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” – Matthew 24:15-16

In our last E-Pistle, we examined Jesus’ reply to the Big Three Questions, beginning in Matthew 24:4 and running through Matthew 25:46. Remember that **three questions** had been asked. Jesus therefore gave **three answers**. The confusion over all the events of the end time and their respective timing comes largely from not understanding where Jesus stopped answering one question and started answering another. In Matthew 24:3-14, Jesus addresses the final question first, “**What will be the...end of the age?**” Let’s follow His logic for just a second.

- (1) Many will come in my Name, saying they are the Christ [4-5]
- (2) There will be wars, **but the end won’t come just yet** [6]
- (3) Nations (**ethnos**, ethnic groups in our day) will rise against nations [7]
- (4) Kingdom (**basilica**, nations in our day) will rise against kingdom [7]
- (5) There will be famines [7]
- (6) There will be pestilences (plagues) [7]
- (7) There will be earthquakes [7]
- (8) **All these are just the beginning of the bad times** [8]
- (9) The Tribulation will occur and there will be widespread persecution [9]
- (10) There will be a huge **apostocia** or falling away [10]
- (11) False prophets will arise to take advantage of these people [11]
- (12) Lawlessness will increase, love will decrease [12]
- (13) **He who endures to the end shall be saved** [13]
- (14) The Gospel will be preached to all the world [14]
- (15) **And then the end shall come** [14]

Do you see the flow of the logic? What is the subject of verses 4-14? **When will the end come?** In point #2, Jesus warns that the end won’t come right away. In point #8, He reinforces that all of the things that have happened are just the **beginning** of the problems. In point #13, He warns that the only ones who will be saved are those who **endure all the way to the end of the process**. And in point #15, He finally ends the discussion of the third question by saying, “**and then the end shall come**”.

See how logical and concise His reply is? In all of these verses, Jesus is clearly answering the question, “**When will the end come?**”

Having answered the **last** question **first**, Jesus now addresses the **first** question, “**When will these things be (happen)?**” Now, we have to ask ourselves, **what things are Jesus talking about?**

To answer that question, we have to back up just a little bit in the story line, back to Matthew 24:1. Jesus has just finished giving the Pharisees the reaming of their lives, starting in Matthew 23:1 and running through the entire chapter. In it, Jesus issues the famous **Eight Woes**. He finally loses it completely and lets them have it full force:

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" – Matthew 23:37-39*

At that point, Jesus storms out of the temple, angry almost beyond words. But not **totally** beyond words. He has a few choice words left for his semi-worthless disciples, who have been busy sightseeing while Jesus was issuing one of the most important passages in the New Testament. And now, totally out of context, these goofballs come up like the Hicks from the Sticks that they are, and say to Him, *"Master, look at all of them thar tall buildings!"* At this point, Jesus stopped in His tracks in outrage as the Holy, Perfect, Sinless Son of God who has just seen His House trashed, both physically and spiritually, and issues on of the most important prophecies of all time:

*"Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." – Matthew 24:2*

This, then, is the topic that Jesus is now about to address, and His discussion of these matters will run from Verse 15 through Verse 20. Let's follow His logic in topic #2.

*"Therefore (in light of everything that I just told you about when the end will come in the previous verses), when you see the 'abomination of desolation' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."  
-- Matthew 24:15-16*

Now, let's turn on our Common Sense Monitors on for just a second, shall we? Let's take a look at that **"therefore"** that Jesus used. It marks the beginning of the second segment of His discussion of the questions. The first segment dealt in **general** terms with what kinds of things would be happening in what order when the end finally comes. Now, Jesus begins to speak in **specific** terms about what is going to happen to **Jerusalem**. Remember that Jesus' initial prophecy concerned the destruction and dismantling of Jerusalem in general and the temple in specific. The additional two topics came up as a result of the questions of the disciples themselves. Why would the people in Jerusalem want to flee to the mountains? Duh! Because Jerusalem was about to be destroyed. And there was going to be no large window of opportunity for individuals to flee, either. Jesus goes on to warn the disciples that there would be such a sense of urgency that people shouldn't even bother to try and gather up their valuables or get their clothes. He then adds that it would be terrible for those women who are pregnant or nursing babies, because the haste to leave Jerusalem would be so great. He concludes that they should pray that their flight not be in winter or on the Sabbath. Why winter? It's cold then. Back then, it snowed in Judea in the wintertime. We have been through several mini ice ages, where temperatures dropped by several degrees. And even a drop of two or three degrees will cause an ice age. Snow will start falling in places where it has never (or so it seems) fallen before. OK. Then what about the Sabbath? Again, it's obvious. On the Sabbath, you are not supposed to work. And I will guarantee you that fleeing from certain destruction involves work. In addition, the Rabbis of that day taught that traveling any distance greater than 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a mile was work. I can guarantee you that fleeing from Jerusalem would involve traveling more than 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a mile.

Am I talking fact, or am I talking theory here? Well, if my interpretation of this break of Scripture into three components is correct, then there should be corresponding historical evidence to back me up. Guess what? There is. It seems that when Titus and his Roman legions came to destroy Jerusalem in 70 AD, they initially laid siege to the city and then suddenly, seemingly without reason, drew back for a brief period. What had actually happened was that serious problems had erupted in Rome, and Titus had to stop, turn around, and address internal issues before turning his attention to Jerusalem again. It was at that fateful moment that the Christians in Jerusalem, seeing the withdrawal of the Roman legions, realized that this was the moment that Jesus had spoken about. Quickly, every Christian in the city fled to the mountains, far out of harms way. The Jews, convinced that they could ride out the Roman assault, stayed put, much to their sorrow. It is reported that over one million Jews died when Titus resumed his assault, and, of course, everything that Jesus had said regarding the Temple and the city was literally fulfilled. The Roman soldiers, told that the dome on top of the temple was made of pure gold, began to dismantle

the stones of the temple all the way down to the ground, looking for gold which might have melted into the crevices between the cleanly chiseled stones.

If this is true, and history bears it out, then what of the many so-called prophecy experts who take this passage and apply it to the end times? There are several theories here, and several ways of looking at this. The first and most obvious is that Matthew 24:15-20 has already been literally fulfilled and should not be applied to any future time frame prophetically or otherwise. And frankly, the more I look at this, the harder it is to interpret this passage in any other way. I know that many people disagree with me, but the Word of God is without question when it says not to add to or take away from what God has said. And placing this segment of Scripture in the future sure looks like "adding to" to me.

Another school of thought says that this passage must be interpreted in the light of something called "near-far" prophecy. In this viewpoint, they do not argue that this passage wasn't fulfilled back then, but that it has additional, future fulfillments, so that the prophecy could be fulfilled "near", in Jesus' day under Titus, and "far", in some future Anti-Christ. While that might be true, and I'm not saying it couldn't be, I have a tough time with it in that it still puts words into Jesus' mouth that He never said.

Another school of thought says that everything that Jesus says here is totally projected into the future, and that none of it has anything to do with Titus and AD 70. That I can't buy at all. The literal fulfillment of the prophecy stands in mute rebuke of any school of thought that supports that line of thinking.

So, what about the Anti-Christ, then? Is he going to walk into the temple and defile it? Will the Abomination of Desolation or the Abomination That Makes Desolate actually happen in the end times? Will the Jews flee again? Tough question, and one that I'm still mulling over myself. I've swayed one way, then another, as I have pondered this question. It's one of the toughest questions in Scripture, and it has spawned endless debates down through the ages. I guess we'll finally know once the end has finally come. There is also a great debate about the positioning of these events in any end-time scenario. Jesus clearly thought that the Tribulation and the end of the age would follow shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem. And for the Jews, it did. From that day on, the Jews were persecuted relentlessly until this very day. What about the end of the age? Again, for the Jews, it was. It was the end of the age of law and works and the beginning of the age of faith and grace, the age of the Gentiles, something that we are still in today. It was the end of the age of Israel as God's chosen covenant priests and kings and the age of the Gentiles coming into and spreading the kingdom. If you study what Paul had to say, it is clear that he shared Jesus' perspective on this matter. But as Jesus neared the end of His ministry, He suddenly began to talk about the Master of the House being delayed, of it taking a long time. We've talked at great length about this matter, so I won't go into it again in this article. Neither is this the time nor the place for us to speculate about the identity of the Anti-Christ. In all of my personal speculation on this matter, I have chosen to accept the Revelation of Jesus Christ as the final, definitive time line against which all other events and statements must be placed. In my first book, I talk at great length about why I feel that way, and I document it to the hilt. If you haven't read Episode One, you need to spend a few bucks and get it. There is just so much to this topic that I can't give you the full ball of wax in 15 minutes of reading time.

What is Pastor Ray's take, then? That this middle segment of Matthew 24 is time-specific and deals directly with Titus, Roman legions and AD 70. That it totally and accurately answers the first question that the disciples asked him while they sat on the Mount of Olives after that fateful day in the temple. And that it probably should not be projected into the future to try and apply it to the Anti-Christ. Bottom line. Period.

Wait a minute, Pastor Ray! What about Daniel's prophecies regarding the Anti-Christ and the 69 weeks of years and all of that? Oh, brother! You're just going to have to wait until the **next** book, **Episode Five – the Time of the Beast**, when we will dig into this entire mess in such detail that your brain will be swimming by the time we are done. I **guarantee** that we will decode those passages completely and accurately. You may not like our conclusions when we get done, but we will go there and do that. One final topic remains to be discussed before we all leave this mess behind and meet Jesus in the air. Boy, won't that be great? In the meanwhile, we still have one more topic to cover, and that concerns the **second** question, **"what will be the sign of Your coming"**. We will cover **that** topic in our next article, **Then – The Sequel**.

Dear friend, as I complete this article, my heart is heavy for the church and for the generation of young people who populate this country. Will any of them be ready for what is coming? Despite my best efforts, I have serious doubts that they will. I ask you to pray for America, the church and this faithless and perverse generation. Christ **is** coming, very soon. Will you be ready???



# Day 29 ~ “Then” ~ The Sequel



<sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened

~ Matthew 24:21-22

In both E-Pistles 27 and 29, I entitle them as “Then”. There’s a reason for that. In Matthew 24, Jesus uses the word constantly. Basically, what He says is that this event will take place and **then** the next thing will take place and **then** the next thing will take place and **then** the next thing will take place and so on and so on. This makes for a perfect chronology, a way to create a list of events which we can use as a checklist. It allows us to know **exactly** where we are in the timeline. In our previous two articles, we used that verbal guideline to show you the exact order of events for both the end of the age and the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, we are going to use those same cues from Jesus Himself to show you the **Sign of His Coming**.

In Matthew 24:4-14, Jesus addresses the **End of the Age**. In verses 15-20, He then turns His attention to the disciples’ original question, **When Will These Things Happen?** Now, in verses 21-31, He will address the final unanswered question, **What Will Be the Sign of Your Coming?** There is one minor difference in this final dissertation, in that Jesus is picking back up the timeline with events **already in progress**. We know from His first set of statements that wars, rumors of wars, ethnic genocide, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, a global persecution of the church, a massive falling away, the rise of false prophets, a dramatic increase of lawlessness and a hardening of hearts all over the world will occur, **in that order**. The genius of all of this is that it **makes perfect logical sense**. Each event logically cascades into the next event. Event #1 is the causal action for Event #2, and so on. In fact, when you follow the timeline of Revelation, you will find that they are very close in alignment with the Olivet Discourse. And there is a difficult, disturbing but very necessary point that I must dwell on for a few pages. As you know, one of my greatest concerns and biggest gripes is the Fantasyland mindset of the Pre-Trib church. When you look at the timeline of the Olivet Discourse and Revelation, here’s what comes out:

- (1) Seal One -- War (nation rising against nation)
- (2) Seal Two – Ethnic Genocide (men shall slay one another)
- (3) Seal Three – Wheat and Barley Crop failure (famines)
- (4) Seal Four – Plague (pestilence)

At this point, there is a minor divergence between the Olivet Discourse and Revelation. Jesus adds that there will be earthquakes, which don’t show up in Revelation until the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal. But after that, things go back into synchronization.

- (5) Seal Five – The Tribulation (souls beheaded for testimony of Christ)
- (6) Seal Six – The Great Tribulation (global earthquake, blackout, Rapture)

Please notice that the church goes through both the **Tribulation** and the **Great Tribulation**. And this is where we must toggle back and forth between these two great key passages to understand how perfectly

they align with one another. In Matthew 24:9, Jesus says **specifically** that they will deliver you up to **Tribulation**. It is during this persecution-based Tribulation that global martyrdom will become commonplace, often by beheading. How interesting then that beheading seems to be a favorite method of executing criminals and infidels for the Muslim world. As a result of this global persecution, often accompanied by the martyrdom of believers, there will be a great falling away. Many Christians, taught that they were not going to have to endure any of this, will become **apostate** and reject Christ and His church. False prophets will arise to lure these individuals into an "exciting new revelation", led by a charismatic world leader who will turn out to be, surprise!, the Anti-Christ, a wolf in sheep's clothing. Lawlessness will increase dramatically, as a whole generation of children, led by the lawless and uncorrected children of the United States, reject all authority and do whatever they feel like doing, whenever they feel like doing it. It is at this point in the timeline that Jesus resumes the narrative in verse 21.

*"<sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" — Matthew 24:21-22*

After the horrors of the Tribulation, an even greater set of horrors are yet to be endured. All during the traumatic events of Seals One through Four, a great and terrible debt load has been building up inside the planet. The Bible is very clear – **the wages** (or logical consequence or result of) **of sin are death**. Mankind has very been busy building up a terrible amount of unrepented, unconfessed, unforgiven sin all over this planet. That sin has, according to James, been maturing slowly from **thought** to **action** to **lifestyle** to **consequence**. It is this unwillingness to deal with the consequences of one's actions that bothers me most about this generation of young people in America. We have been busy creating a Dr. Spock permissive culture in our country for the last 50 years. After World War II, we simply let ourselves go. I don't know if we thought our children would grow up all right all by themselves or not. I know, regretfully, that there are things that I should have done with my own children that I did not do. Proverbs is clear when it says that you should beat the rebellious child with a rod. Don't worry, Solomon adds, the child will not die. But the rebellious spirit in him will. And he will learn respect for his elders, obedience in all things, and polite conduct with others. I was so amazed when I went to India. All the children in both orphanages were so respectful, so obedient, so eager and willing to work and to help, so very much like we want our children to be. But because we do not discipline our children with adequate severity, they have come to think that there are no consequences for their actions. They have no sense of ownership for their crimes and misdeeds. Our court systems do nothing to discourage that view. Second, third, fourth, fifth and seemingly eternal chances abound, all of which do nothing to discourage the criminal from future crime. Instead, we have taught our children that they can do anything they want, and still live in our homes, eat at our tables, drive our cars, spend our money, and attend school, when and if they please, using our money. Something is dreadfully wrong here. Even worse, they have mastered the art of manipulating the situation in cooperation with Child Protective Services so that the parent who is attempting to restore order comes off as the bad guy, and is ordered by the court not to physically correct the child. Don't misunderstand me. Are there individuals out there who are abusive? Yes, absolutely. Are there evil men and women out there who physically and sexually abuse not only their own children but others as well? Absolutely, without a doubt. But the burden of proof must lie with the accuser, not the accused. And our court systems, in regards to dealing with the most rebellious generation in the history of the world, assume that the parent is guilty and the child is innocent until proven otherwise. I know. I speak from painful personal experience in my own extended family. I have seen grandchildren skillfully and wickedly manipulate the court system, systematically telling lies to the authorities in order to keep their household in a state of chaos, and their parents in a constant state of defense, unable to correct or discipline them for fear of jail time. You know it's true. For many of you who read this, you have suffered through similar situations. After all, the Man of Lawlessness must have a generation of lawless individuals who will feed on his teaching that they don't have to submit to the rules of the church or the society in which they live.

Add to this the staggering blood guilt of 1.7 million abortion murders, more deaths than in all the wars America has ever fought, and it is small wonder that the earth must be near a breaking point where it can stand no more. It is at this point where the **Great Tribulation** begins to occur. Unlike the first five seals, all of which are driven by man's inhumanity to man and the logical consequences of those inhumane actions, this Seal is a reaction of the planet earth itself, and the universe around it, to the unspeakable

conduct which is happening on this planet. In fact, Jesus says that the severity of these events will be so great that if they had not deliberately been cut short, **no flesh** would have been left alive. Now, you can take that phrase in one of two ways. You can say that the term **no flesh** refers to humanity; that no humans would have been left alive. But when you realize that 20 years ago, we had enough nuclear weapons in this world to kill all life on the planet **over 200 times**, it is safe to say that **no flesh** means just that: **no life would have been left on the planet**. Just the events contained in the first Six Seals alone would bring the earth perilously near what scientists call an **E.L.E.**, or **Extinction Level Event**. When you consider that even after the Rapture, at the end of the Sixth Seal, there will still be the deadly and devastating Seventh Seal, the Wrath of God, it is truly a miracle that any life at all will be left on the planet.

Now Jesus begins another chain of events. Let's follow this chain to see where it goes.

- (1) **False christs and prophets will arise** – no small surprise considering that after the Rapture the Holy Spirit will be taken from the Gentile world after the Rapture of the church and placed directly on the Jews, allowing all Israel to be saved. I'll show you where that occurs later on. [24]
- (2) **They will show great signs and wonders in order to deceive the people** – This will be made possible precisely because He who restrains will be taken out of the way. He who restrains has **never** been the Church. The Church is a **she**, not a **He**. And the only time that a personal pronoun is **ever** capitalized in the Bible is because it is referring to **God**, not man. The "**He**" referred to by Paul in I Thessalonians 2:7 is clearly the **Holy Spirit**. As I said in the previous point, as long as He is present and actively involved in the Gentile world through and in cooperation with the Church, the devil, false prophets and false christs are seriously hindered in terms of what they can and cannot do in this planet. Right now, calling fire down from heaven is exclusively a **Divine** prerogative. After His restraining power is focused exclusively on Israel, suddenly all the previous restraints on demonic activity in the Gentile world will be taken off. Please do not believe the fundamentalists who claim that all supernatural activity is demonic in nature. They claim that the Gifts of the Spirit passed away with the apostles. The only problem with that irrational, unscriptural claim is that the devil is still around, active as ever. And as long as satan is still supernaturally active, the church will have to continue to operate in its supernatural God-ordained birthright. She was birthed in supernatural power. How, then, can she come to full maturity without supernatural power? No, in truth, we need to operate as Sons of the Living God now, more than ever, in an increasingly demonic world. Don't believe me? Come with me to India. Watch God enable a 20 year old girl born mute to speak for the first time by literally growing a tongue in her mouth where none existed before. Then watch her astonished mother give her life to Christ as a result of that supernatural miracle. Then watch thousands of people rise and praise God as if they were one individual because **our** God is so much more powerful and glorious than all the other lousy loser demon pretenders who masquerade in India as deities. And watch hundreds more rise to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior because of that testimony. Think we don't need the Gifts of the Spirit? Think again. [24]
- (3) **I have told you all this before it happens**. Self explanatory. Forewarned is forearmed. But in the next point, Jesus is going to give us an astonishing secret, hidden in plain view for all to see if they would just believe that God **literally** means what He says. Are you ready? [25]
- (4) **As the lightning comes from the EAST and flashes to the WEST, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be**. Oh, wow! Remember that the one remaining unanswered question just happens to be **the Sign of Your Coming**. Jesus has just told us a **ton** of information in just a single sentence. Pay close attention, dear friends. You are going to learn some things you never knew before about the Return of Jesus Christ to this earth. [27]

Let's take this sentence apart, and look at exactly what Jesus has said. First of all, He says that He will be coming from the **East** to the **West**. He has already said a mouthful. I want you to think about Jerusalem for just a second. There has been a longstanding prophecy in both Judaism and Christianity that when Messiah comes, He will enter into Jerusalem through the **Eastern Gate** of the city. So fearful was a Muslim Caliph that he ordered the Eastern Gate sealed shut with brick and mortar to prevent the Christian Messiah from ever entering into the city. This means, and listen carefully, **that Jesus will approach this planet coming from the East, with His point of entry into the atmosphere directly above**

**Jerusalem.** How do I know that? We'll talk about that in our next point. But for right now, I want you to think about the Solar System in which our planet is located. At the center is, of course, the sun. Then the "rock" planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, and the shattered remnants of another planet, the Asteroid Belt. Outside of that are the "gas giants", Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Every single one of these planets, as different from one another as night is from day, are lined up on a single plane, almost like a compass, with a north, a south, an **east** and a **west**. North would be pointing "up", above the disc of the planets, and south would be pointing "down", below the disc. Did I miss Pluto in that discussion? Yes, I did, with good cause. Most astrophysicists now agree that Pluto is really a rogue asteroid, and should not be considered a planet at all. In addition, Pluto's orbit is at an angle to the orbit of all the other planets. So assigning a Solar System "North" and a "South" can be done. How, then, do we assign an "East" and a "West"?

- (5) **Where the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.** Say what? I didn't quite get that, Pastor Ray. What did Jesus mean by that statement? It's time for some symbolic decoding. First of all, the word **carcass**. That one is easy. A **carcass** is a **dead body**. We generally use it to refer to an animal, not a human being, but in this case it is referring to a human body, the body of our very own Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His carcass, or dead body, lay in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea for three days, just outside of Jerusalem. So, based on this critical piece of information, that makes **Jerusalem** the focal point to determine where **East** and **West** are, respectfully, inside our planet. In order to enter in through the Eastern Gate, Jesus will need to approach Jerusalem from the East, but within visual sighting of the city. This also applies to the angels who are coming with Christ, first for the Rapture and secondly for His Triumphant Return in Revelation chapter 19. Please remember that Jesus is going to return to this planet **twice**, once in a **Swat Team Rescue Operation** which we refer to as the Rapture, and then a second time in a **Military Invasion From Outer Space** in which the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet are seized and thrown into the Lake of Fire. We'll talk about that Final Eastern Approach in an Episode **much** later in this series, so don't worry about it right now. Right now, we have to worry about **eagles**. What on earth does Jesus mean by eagles? Well, all through church history, eagles have typically been associated with **angels**. And that also would make perfect sense, since Jesus clearly states that it will be the angels who gather up the Bride portion of the Church to be raptured. Let's continue to build the picture of what will happen, shall we? [28]
- (6) **Immediately AFTER the Tribulation of those days, a series of traumatic global events will occur: [29]**
- a. **The sun and moon will somehow stop giving their light.** This will result in a global blackout, throwing the earth into pitch darkness. [29]
  - b. **A meteorite shower of considerable size and intensity will blast through the atmosphere and do severe damage to the surface of the planet.** Jesus refers to this as the stars falling from heaven. And, pray, tell, just exactly what is a falling star? Well, it's a meteorite. [29]
  - c. **The powers of the heavens will be shaken.** That's kind of a toughie, if you only look at the Matthew account all by itself. Revelation does a great job of explaining what actually happens. Hint. It involved severe damage to our atmosphere. [29]
- (7) **THEN the SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN WILL APPEAR IN HEAVEN.** Oh, wow! This is what we have been waiting for! Now we have finally come almost all the way through the process. We have finally reached an answer to the part of the three-point question that the disciples asked. Now it's time for us to put our thinking caps on. At this point, what is the **physical condition of the earth?** The earth is in a condition of **total blackout**. Buildings are being destroyed by the meteorites that are falling, and lives are being lost at a phenomenal rate. In addition, if we cross-foot to the Book of Revelation, we find that prior to all of this, a **massive, global earthquake** has ripped through the planet, triggering volcanic activity on an unprecedented scale. With all of the tectonic plates in a condition of tremendous stress due to the earthquake, every active volcano all over the world, some 300+, plus doubtless untold others thought dormant or dead, will begin to spew huge amounts of pyroclastic ash into the atmosphere. When Krakatoa, a volcanic island in the South Pacific, exploded in the 1800's, the ash and dust cloud was so severe that it caused America and Europe to experience a year without a summer the following year. Snow stayed on the ground as far south as Ohio all year long. Now, if **one** volcano could cause that much trouble, imagine how much trouble **over 300**

would! In a very short period of time, the supermassive discharge of pyroclastic material would quickly cover the earth, fill the atmosphere and cause a global blackout. Now, think back to what Jesus said about **lightning**. I always used to wonder how the lightning would be seen all over the world. At any given point in time, half the world is in the light, and half the world is in darkness. The lightning would be easy to see in that half of the planet that was currently experiencing nighttime, but what about the other half experiencing daytime? The global blackout provides the answer to that question. The earth is totally blacked out, when suddenly, **the sky is filled with light, starting directly above Jerusalem, and moving from Jerusalem from the east heading westward, across Europe and Africa, the Atlantic Ocean, North and South America, the Pacific Ocean, the Far West, India, Russia, and, last of all, the Middle East.** Now, all over the globe, untold millions of points of light are filling the previously blacked out sky, hovering **below** the ash and soot in the atmosphere. What are these points of light? **Millions of believers who have accompanied Christ from Heaven in order to receive their resurrection bodies, along with the Heavenly Host of all the Angels, whose job it is to harvest the earth and remove the half of the Church that is ready.** Can I prove this? Yup! Absolutely! But in order to do so properly, I am going to need **yet another E-Pistle**, since we have run out of room and time for today. So, don't forget to come back tomorrow, when we find out ***When My Change Comes!***



# Day 30 – Till My Change Comes



“<sup>12</sup> So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep. <sup>13</sup> Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that you would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me! <sup>14</sup> If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. <sup>15</sup> You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands. – Job 14:12-15

We are now poised at the very edge of the most exciting event in the history of the world. As the world entered into the violent 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, a massive global earthquake ripped through the planet, triggering worldwide volcanic activity, filling the sky with pyroclastic ash and soot and blacking the planet out. After this series of traumatic events, suddenly the sky is filled with brilliant points of light everywhere. Shocked, the world looks skyward, trying to understand what has happened, and then, suddenly, it dawns on them...Jesus has returned, **just as He said...**

In our last E-Pistle, I said that these untold millions of points of light are made up of two separate groups of individuals. The first group consists of all believers, Jewish and Gentile, from all over the world, down through all history, who have died believing in Christ and eagerly awaiting the resurrection. How do we know that? Let's go first to the Apostle Paul, who wrote about this event in great detail and with great understanding.

" <sup>13</sup> *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.*" – I Thessalonians 4:13-14

Let's look at what Paul just said. In doing so, we will be able to demolish a false doctrine called **soul sleep** at the same time that we document who will return with Christ. Paul begins by telling the Thessalonians that he doesn't want them not to understand the details of the Resurrection and the Rapture. Based on other things which he says in other letters, it is painfully clear that some folks just didn't understand what he was saying, while other individuals were preaching and teaching things that were at clear variance with what Paul had been shown by the Lord.

Our first point of doctrinal contention involves what Paul meant by **those who have fallen asleep**. All through the Bible, this clearly describes only two conditions: **people who are actually asleep and people who have died**. When Lazarus became ill, Jesus delayed His departure from Galilee deliberately until He knew through the Holy Spirit that Lazarus had died. He then informed the disciples that Lazarus had **fallen asleep**. The disciples were initially relieved, thinking that he was now on the mend and would recuperate. Jesus had to correct their natural misunderstanding, and inform them that Lazarus was actually dead, and that it was a good thing that he was. The disciples were astonished by what Jesus said and no doubt deeply disturbed about the events until they arrived at Bethany and Jesus calmly raised Lazarus from the dead.

Calling those who are dead **asleep** is not really a doctrinal problem until we get to the point where we have to determine what happens to someone who is dead. The answer to that question depends on two things: **(1) When the death occurred, and (2) who it occurred to**. What on earth do I mean by that? Let's look at the statement.

It took a long time for the Lord to develop the concept of the Resurrection. Early in the Bible, it was assumed that a person was born, lived his life, and then died and was no more. The idea that a man might die and then live again was not introduced to mankind until Job. It is ironic that the man who suffered more than anyone in history other than Christ Himself was also the man who received more revelation than any other person in history up until that point in time. When most of mankind thought that the earth was a plate riding on the back of a turtle or some similar nonsense, Job was told by the Almighty that the earth was really a globe suspended in nothingness. But his greatest revelation regards the resurrection of the dead. Listen to some of the absolutely outstanding things that Job says during a time when no one had even **thought** of a resurrection:

*"<sup>12</sup> So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep. <sup>13</sup> Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that you would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me! <sup>14</sup> If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. <sup>15</sup> You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands." -- Job 14:12-15*

What did Job just say? Well, he started out by saying that men lie down and do not rise **until** the heavens no longer exist, but that at that point of time **they will be roused from their sleep**. He then asks if a man dies, will he live again? He then **answers** his own question by stating that he will wait **until his change (resurrection / transformation) comes**. He closes by saying that **God will call for him and he will answer**. Kinda hard to answer if you are dead, much less dead as long as he would have been when the resurrection finally comes. But that's not all he says on this subject. Let's see what else he had to say about the matter:

*"<sup>25</sup> For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; <sup>26</sup> and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, <sup>27</sup> whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" – Job 19:25-27*

Oh, wow! For those of you who are musically inclined, I am sure that you recognize Job's first statement as part of Handel's famous work, **The Messiah**. But think for just a second **who** is saying this and **when** in the time stream he is saying it. This is Job, dude! Job wasn't even Jewish! He was Semitic, for sure, but according to all church historians I have ever read, he lived **long** before Abraham was ever born. Job is supposedly the oldest book in the Bible, transmitted in at least oral form long before Moses sat down and compiled the Pentateuch. That means that Job would have had no concept of a Jewish Messiah. He was speaking **prophetically** about something that wouldn't even begin to be defined for perhaps another thousand years. How awesome! And listen carefully to what else he says. He says that his Redeemer will finally stand upon the earth. Gosh, what else did he just prophesy? **The Second Coming of Jesus Christ!** Ah, but it gets better, my friends. He says that **even after his skin is destroyed** (In other words, his body has decayed to such an extent that all of his skin has rotten away. I know, I know. That's gross. But it's accurate, isn't it? Hard to miss the intent of the speaker when he puts it that way) **yet in his flesh he shall see God**. That clearly implies a resurrected body. He closes by saying that he will **see God with his own eyes**.

Eventually, consistent with the Doctrine of Progressive Revelation, this important key to understanding the Scriptures would be established. Without the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead, the Bible simply doesn't make sense. But even in Jesus' day the resurrection was not totally established as a fact. The Sadducees did not believe in angels or the resurrection. Finally, after Christ's **personal** resurrection, it became very hard to argue against the concept of a **general** resurrection which would follow at some future point in time.

Now comes the next question. **What becomes of the believer between the time they die and the time they are resurrected?** In the Old Testament, it was fairly simple. All individuals, good or bad, rested in the ground. When the witch of Endor was permitted to bring Samuel up from the grave, he came up out of the ground. He then told Saul that tomorrow he and his sons would be with him. That poses a little bit of a problem until you understand the subdivisions of Sheol. Please understand, Sheol and Hell are **not** the same place. Sheol, in both ancient Hebrew and other Semitic people's understanding, was simply **the place of the dead**. Different cultures had different names for it, but it was always the same concept. You lived. You died. You went to the place of the dead, and then



**continued to live there in some altered form forever.** Mankind has always suspected that there was an afterlife. I am sure that the teachings of Adam, Noah and the other Antediluvian ancestors were passed in oral form from generation to generation, being modified as they went, but always still retaining the same basic concept: **even after we die, we continue to live on forever.** To the ancient Hebrews, however, there was a zoning issue involved with Sheol. Good, righteous people went into a subdivision called **The Bosom of Abraham.** That's where Lazarus the Beggar went when he died in the parable that Jesus told. But there was also another subdivision, one called **Gehenna.** It was a place of torment and fire, a place that we know today as **Hell.** Today, most Christians assume that when you die you go to heaven if you are saved, good, whatever, and that you go to Hell if you are bad, unsaved, etc, etc. The ancient Hebrews didn't see it that way. **Everybody** ended up in Sheol, the place of the dead. The only difference was that the righteous ended up in a place of peace, rest and comfort, while the unrighteous went to a place of torment. But on the cross, Jesus changed the paradigm. He told the thief who asked that He remember him that he would be with Him in Paradise that very day. Now comes the tricky question associated with that statement: **where did Jesus believe Paradise to be?** Was He really talking about Abraham's Bosom? After all, He did spend 3 days in the tomb, although He was only dead for two of them. What??? Where do you get **that,** Pastor Ray??? Ah, I love the Word of God! You can't go to one Scripture without it cascading into another, then another, then another...

Just as a quick reference, 'cause we don't have time to go into it in this E-Pistle, take a quick look at Hosea 6:2. It is a prophetic Scripture, referring to Christ. Please note that it says, "*After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up". Bible scholars universally agree that this refers directly to Jesus. If this is true, then it means that the Father **revived Jesus on the second day.** In other words, **life came back into Jesus' body sometime during the second day.** But even though His body was alive again, it was massively damaged, pierced, torn to shreds, and still composed of the matter of this time/space continuum, and **not** eternal. It is my own personal theory, and I present it as a theory, not a doctrine, that during that second day the Father began to **transmute** Jesus' body from a **natural** one to a **supernatural** one, and from a **temporal** one to an **eternal** one. By the time that three full days had passed, the **change** that Job talked about had taken place. Paul talks about this process extensively in I Corinthians Chapter 15.*

Now, back to Paradise! Did Jesus believe that Paradise was the same as Abraham's Bosom? Not likely. Why do I say so? Because of another little known fact about the period of time that passed from Jesus saying, "*It is finished*", and "*Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit*" till He strode triumphantly out of the tomb and the centurions fell to the ground as if **they** were dead. If you've ever read I Peter carefully, you know that while Jesus was dead, He went into Hell or Gehenna itself and preached to the captives there. That event is recorded in I Peter 3:19-20. But He did something else at some point in the process. **He went into Heaven itself to offer His own blood in the Temple not made with hands, the Heavenly Master Temple,** from which the Tabernacle in the wilderness was patterned as an exact duplicate. This event is recorded in Hebrews 9:11-14 and 22-28. It is so powerful that a whole series of articles could and should be written on it, but not today. We are already far off course, and we had kind of hoped that we could all get raptured today. Maybe. Let's see how long this conversation takes to wrap up. Here's the problem that I face when I write: in order to properly explain **one** incredible fact in the Bible to you, I have to backtrack and explain about a half dozen **other** incredible facts to you which you need to know and understand before **this** incredible fact makes sense. Most of you know only the most obvious, simplest things about the Word of God. So as to teach you properly, I am forced continually to go back to fundamentals, just as the writer of Hebrews had to do in Chapter Six. See! There's **another** reference that I would have to back up to and explain to about 90% of most Christians, because they have absolutely **no clue** what I am talking about! Sigh...

By the way, in case you picked up on the fact that I talked about a **temple** and then turned around and talked about a **tabernacle**, take heart. No, it's not a typo. If you go to Revelation 15:5, you will find that the **temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.** Good grief! What's **that** all about, for crying out loud? Let me explain. In Heaven, there is a **temple**, a supernatural version of the various temples that have existed in Jerusalem down through history. This temple, however, is perfect in all ways. Within that temple there is a **tabernacle**, which looks **exactly** like the Tabernacle in the Wilderness constructed by the Children of Israel. Moses was warned to make the earthly Tabernacle just like the one he had been shown on Mt. Sinai. He was given exact measurements to ensure that it would be done that way, and was given exact instructions as to what kind of materials were to be used. Now,

inside of that earthly Tabernacle, there were many holy objects, but only **one** object of supreme importance: **the Ark of the Covenant**. It, too, was an **exact** representation of the **Heavenly Ark of the Covenant**. So, inside of the **Temple**, there was a **Tabernacle**. Inside of the **Tabernacle**, there was an **Ark of the Covenant**. And inside of the **Ark of the Covenant**, there was a **Testimony**, or, as we know it, the **Ten Commandments**. Make sense? No? Try reading it again, very slowly. Draw little diagrams if it helps. By the way, there is another reference to this Heavenly Temple in Revelation 11:19, where it says, "*Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple.*"

Why do I tell you all of this? Because Paradise has **never** been located **underground**. It has always been located **in the air**, or, if you prefer, in **outer space**. To the best of my understanding, then, this is what happened that fateful day. Jesus, who has been holding His spirit in His body by a deliberate act of will, now **releases His spirit into the hands of His father**. As He leaves His body, it, of course, dies. He said, after all, that **no man could take His life from Him**. That He **willingly** laid it down, and that He could, and would, willingly **take it back up again**. Ooooh, there is **so** much there! No, no, no! Stay on course, Ray! As He leaves His body, He is no longer bound by the severe constraints of a flesh and blood body, and He immediately comes again into His full Divinity, with so much astronomical power that people who were recently dead in graves all around the vicinity of Golgotha were instantly resurrected from the dead at the same time. Don't believe me? Never heard that one before? Would you believe Matthew if he told you so? Check Matthew 27:50-53. Please notice that these mass resurrections did not occur at the time of Jesus' resurrection. They occurred at the time of his **death**. Now, He hovers above the hilltop for just a few moments, gathering up His blood. That blood will be, according to Hebrews, offered in the Heavenly Temple, in the Heavenly Holy of Holies, before the Heavenly Ark of the Covenant. Having completed that task, He lingers just a little longer, waiting patiently for the thief who had confessed faith in Him to finally die. Eventually, both men's legs are broken, and, in a short period of time, they both die of asphyxiation, as their rib cages collapse into their lungs and they are no longer able to breathe. For both men, it is a terrible moment of torment. And for one man, the torment has just begun. Now, separated from his just-dead body, he plunges into Sheol, into Gehenna, where he will be tormented until Sheol is emptied out at the Great White Throne Judgment. From there he will be cast with Sheol into the Lake of Fire, so it won't exactly be an improvement of circumstances. Ah, but for the man who said yes to Jesus, his spirit will head in a different direction! As his spirit passes out of his body, he looks up and, to his astonishment, sees Jesus hovering just above him, glory streaming from every pore in his spiritual body. Together, they pass through the three heavens, past the atmosphere of this planet, past this physical universe, to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heaven, where the Temple is. There, he is left in the custody of Enoch and Elijah/John the Baptist, the only other two humans occupying Paradise at the time, and told to wait a while, because company would soon be coming. Having dropped the now-repentant thief off in good company, Jesus took care of business, offering His own blood for our atonement in the Tabernacle not made with hands. Having completed that critical task, He once again returned to the earth, and entered into Sheol, the place of the dead. From there he would preach to the prisoners there that in a just a few days, He would rise again and that if they would only believe on Him as the Son of God, that when He rose, so would they. Please notice that He wasn't preaching to the inhabitants of the Bosom of Abraham. They already believed, and had already been justified by faith. Remember also that He had been criticized during His earthly ministry for associating with the tax collectors and the prostitutes. His reply had been that the healthy didn't need a doctor, just those who were sick. And so, in one final act of grace, He preached to the inhabitants of Gehenna, Hell, Tartarus, or whatever you want to call it. He went to the wrong side of town and told them that there was a way out. When He rose again from the dead, there was a collective shout from the Underworld. A cheer went up from Abraham's Bosom, because they knew all along He would do it. For some of the inhabitants of Gehenna, there was great weeping for joy, because those who had believed now knew that He would be back shortly to take them with Him. And for the remainder of those who dwell in that terrible place, there was a great wail and cry of grief, because they realized that they had missed their last great hope and chance of redemption. 40 days later, when He would ascend into Heaven, He would pull with Him everyone who had believed on Him up out of the ground and into Paradise, there to await the Day when He would return, so that they could be resurrected into new eternal bodies, and we could be raptured at the same time. Not sure about the timing on that? Then remember that Scripture says that "*when He ascended on high, He led captivity captive*". It was not at His **resurrection** that those who were among the faithful dead were transferred from the grave into Paradise, it was at His **Ascension**.

Whew! I just gave you a ton of stuff to think about, didn't I? Don't feel bad if you are having trouble digesting it all. Just be like the Bereans in the Book of Acts, and **search the Scriptures to see if these things be so** (Acts 17:10-11).

The bottom line of all of this is that **at the Ascension of Jesus Christ**, forty days after He had risen from the dead, **He took with Him all of the righteous dead who had ever lived, along with a good many unrighteous dead who had repented right there in Sheol, Gehenna subdivision, and believed on Him as Messiah.** That single massive jailbreak left the Bosom of Abraham vacant and empty. The next obvious question would be, "*Has it at any time since been repopulated?*" Good question. **Real** good question. And something that I have not yet found Scripture on to base any kind of valid opinion on. It may still be empty. Or, it may be in the process of being repopulated with the many righteous individuals who never had a chance to hear about the Gospel of Jesus Christ since then, but who have experienced physical death. They will in turn be resurrected at the Great White Throne Judgment and dealt with fairly just as we have discussed earlier in this book. Don't remember? Just turn back and review. You'll find it. But they are not our concern. It is rather the fate of **believers who die in the Lord** that we are concerned with. There are those individuals, who, using Scriptures taken exclusively from the Old Testament, argue that when a Christian dies, he enters into a state of **Soul Sleep**. His body remains in the ground and returns to dust, just as Scripture says. But his soul **sleeps**, not knowing that there is any passage of time, so that when the resurrection finally comes, it will be as if he just died and went to "sleep". Unfortunately, for all of the reasons that we have just listed and many, many more, that is simply **not correct**. Let's look at what the Apostle Paul has to say about the matter again, shall we?

*"<sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus."* – I Thessalonians 4:13-14

Read the passage carefully. Do you see the obvious? **God will bring with Him (Christ) those who sleep in Him.** Please note that any believer who has died believing in Christ is considered to be asleep **in Him**. So, the obvious question is **where is Jesus right now?** Is He still in the depths of the earth? Hardly! Is He in the Bosom of Abraham? Not! Where **is** He??? Gosh, I don't know. Maybe **seated at the right hand of God the Father, from whence He shall come to judge the quick (living) and the dead!** And if **Jesus** is in Heaven, then by simple definition, those who have fallen "asleep" **in Him** must be **with Him!** And if all of the righteous dead, particularly the righteous of Israel **before Him** and all believers in Him **after Him** are there in Heaven **with Him**, then it makes perfect sense that in order for them to receive their resurrection bodies at the same time that we who are alive are raptured, that they must **accompany Him from Heaven to earth in order to do so.**

So now, at long last, we have defined one of the two groups who are coming from Heaven with Christ. That first group is **all of those whom Christ took from the Bosom of Abraham so long ago, plus every Christian who has ever lived and died since then** in the blessed hope of the resurrection. Then who is the second group? Why, dear friends, they are the **angels**, who have come along not simply to watch the show, although I bet it would be loads of fun, but to assist in a very important operation, **the rapture of the prepared portion of the Church on earth.**

What most people don't know, don't think about, and don't understand is that in this **first** return of Christ into **the atmosphere of our planet, two things** are going to happen. **What** those things are and the **order** in which they will happen will be the subject of our next E-Pistle, **Swat Team from Heaven**. I know, I know. You were expecting to get all of this done in this article, weren't you? Sorry. There's just so much you need to know, so much that **must** be told so that you can be ready and waiting when that wonderful moment occurs. Now you can see why the church's battle cry for the first three centuries was **"Maranatha!"** which, when translated, means, **"Even so, Lord, COME!"** Amen and Amen!



# Day 31 ~ Swat Team from Heaven



<sup>30</sup> Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.  
<sup>31</sup> And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” ~ Matthew 24:30-31

In our last **E-Pistle**, we established the two groups of individuals who are returning with Christ from Heaven at the time of the Rapture. The first group consists of **human believers**. That group is in turn divided into two sub-groups. The first sub-group consists of all the Fathers of Faith, beginning with Adam, moving through Abraham and terminating with the final generation prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus like righteous Simeon who believed in a coming Messiah, and who held Him as an infant and prophesied regarding Him. This is the group which Christ took with him from the Bosom of Abraham when He ascended. The second sub-group consists of all Christians who have ever lived and died, waiting for the promise of the resurrection.

The second group of individuals who will be joining Jesus in His return will be **angels**. Now, I don't know for sure if **all** the angels are involved in this project or not, but I do know that their involvement is **critical** for the success of the mission. Remember, we are not involved in a full-scale invasion at this point. Rather, we are attempting a **Swat Team Rescue Operation**, targeting only that portion of the church that is **prepared and ready**, just like the Five Wise Virgins in the parable that Jesus told.

How, then, are the angels involved? I had never really thought about this until I started doing my research to write this part of the book. I was amazed at what I found. It turns out first of all that the believers currently in Heaven do not have the power to return to Earth by themselves. It will require the intervention of angels in order to do so. Let's look closely at what Jesus Himself says regarding the event:

“<sup>31</sup> And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” ~ Matthew 24:31

As this great and awesome event is about to unfold, the very first thing that the angelic hosts do is to sweep over **Heaven itself**, gathering every single believer who has ever gone to be with the Lord and transporting them from Heaven with Christ to the upper atmosphere of this planet. Another group of angels not carrying human souls also accompanies them. Their job will not be to gather up those in Heaven, but rather those who are alive and ready to be raptured on the Earth. How do I know that? By comparing Scripture to Scripture. Always remember that to get the **full** picture of what is about to happen, you must study **all** of the Scriptures that apply to the topic. Matthew provides us with a great deal of information, but Mark adds something very helpful to the mix:

*“And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of heaven”. -- Mark 13:27*

As you can see, one group of angels handles the roundup of souls in heaven, while another group handles the roundup on earth. Yee-Haw! Git along, little doggies! Still, it is a fascinating thing to think about and

realize that when the Rapture comes, you will have your **own personal angel** to lift you skyward and assist you in the transmutation process. Pretty awesome, huh? I would be willing to bet that the angel in question for each person will happen to be the guardian angel assigned to them from childbirth. Where do we get the concept of guardian angels, anyway? From a single comment made by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew:

*"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." -- Matthew 18:10*

That's it! From that single Scripture, the whole concept of Guardian Angels has developed. In addition, it seems that children have constant access to God, while the rest of us have to wait in line. Maybe He really meant that "faith of a child" thing after all. It is also worth noting that just as Heaven assigns a particular angel to help us and to guide us, so Hell also seems to assign an unclean spirit, sometimes referred to in Matthew 13 as the "Strong Man", to try and pull us down and defeat us. The cartoon picture of a tiny angel sitting on one shoulder giving godly counsel and a tiny devil sitting on the other shoulder giving ungodly counsel may be closer to the truth than we think. That is, by the way, how the enemy gets to us. This demon is **familiar** with us, with our weaknesses and our strengths. He knows how to make us stumble and fall. Once he gets a foothold in our lives, he then invites other compatible demons and imps into us, and if the situation gets bad enough, we end up with the madman of Gadara, who had an entire **legion** (perhaps 6,000 or 7,000) of demons in him. Small wonder, then, that when Jesus looked at him through the power of the Holy Spirit and the gift of Discerning of Spirits, he was confused and had to ask who was in charge inside of the man by asking the name of the Strong Man. One additional comment is necessary on this topic. I have heard it preached from many pulpits that "the devil don't know what you are thinking!" Lord have mercy on such stupidity. If you happen to be praying in tongues, then there is a reasonably good chance that the demons assigned to pull you down have no clue or are able to eavesdrop on the conversation, since the conversation really involved God the Holy Spirit talking to God the Father through God the Son. It's kind of a family thing. However, your natural, carnal mind is an open book to a being made of pure energy. What supernatural characteristic is there about your skull that would prevent a being made of energy from passing into your brain to maliciously pull old sins and failures out just as you are starting to move forward with God? How on earth do you think you are tempted, anyway? James makes it very clear that the temptation process **begins** inside your head anyway. Don't tell me you've never been in the middle of earnest prayer, only to find some awful thought barging its way into your head. Where on earth did the thought come from, anyway? Guess! This is why we have to keep both our **mind** and our **spirit** actively involved in prayer at the same time. If we are praying in the Spirit (unknown tongues), our little pea brain is parked in neutral. The enemy sees that and quickly moves to fill it up with every possible manner of filth imaginable. You know what I'm talking about. Christians don't like to admit it, but it's true. And those Christians who trumpet most loudly that a Christian can't have a demon generally exhibit the most demon-possessed behavior. As a pastor, I am constantly ashamed of the conduct of those Christians who call themselves "Spirit-filled", yet act in a more ungodly and carnal fashion than the unbelievers around them. If they were truly filled with the **Holy** Spirit, their conduct would be, first and foremost, **holy**. 'Nuff said on that topic. Just be glad God has somebody there on your side to help you and strengthen you, and, when the adversity and the forces arrayed against you are more than one angel can handle, He is perfectly willing to send a legion or two in order to get the job done and help you make it through. If we only knew and could see the incredible level of angelic assistance that goes on in this planet, we would be amazed. I tell people that it is probably a good thing that they can't generally see what is going on in the Spirit realm. They would be overjoyed at the number of angels they see fighting for them and other believers, but would be terrified by the seemingly equal number of demons and imps arrayed against them. And, above all, they would be horrified if they could see what had attached itself to their flesh and was sticking out of them, just like leeches or parasites on a host. Someday I will deal in depth with that topic, but not today!

There are two more issues that we have to deal with in this entire process. We already know who is going to be there. We know how it's going to happen. But we have not clearly established **in what order** it is going to happen. To determine this, we have to again turn our attention to the Apostle Paul:

*"<sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise*

*first.* <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words." -- II Thessalonians 4:15-18

When the church today talks about the Rapture, they do so with a great deal of confusion in their minds. Actually, they may not even know that they are confused, but they are! In the minds of most Christians, all they think about is the fact that **they** will be raptured. That is true, but they don't realize that they will have to **wait in line until it is their turn!** After all, it is just common sense that if someone is in line **before** you that they should be waited on first. That is the case with the Resurrection and the Rapture. It is a single event, but it is composed of several stages. Here they are:

- (1) The decision will be announced in Heaven by the Father that it is time to return. Jesus clearly stated that no man knew the hour or the day, not the angels, nor the Son, but the Father only. He and He alone gets to make the call.
- (2) An archangel will shout out a command to all the other angels for them to assemble for the rescue operation.
- (3) A trumpet, the last trump, will sound to begin the process.
- (4) A group of angels will gather up all the believers currently in Heaven and bring them with Christ to the edge of our atmosphere.
- (5) Assisted by their assigned angel, each believer will enter the atmosphere of our planet and plunge either into the sea or into the earth. Since they are spirit anyway, such an action will not cause them any physical harm. It is likely that they will enter the planet at or near the point where they experienced physical death. There seem to be strong associations in the spirit realm with places of birth and death.
- (6) An incredible transmutation will then occur around the spirit of the individual. In some manner as yet unknown to us, but paralleling the process which happened to Jesus while his body lay in the tomb, a resurrection body will be formed around the person. This resurrection body will bear a clear resemblance to the individual as he or she lived on this earth, but will be quantitatively different from their original body. You will still look like you, but it will be you at a brightest and best that you never attained in your natural life. More on that later.
- (7) Once this new resurrection body has been fully formed around you, you and all your fellow believers will erupt explosively from inside the earth or from under the waves. Your entry into the earth or sea probably did not disrupt the surface, but was most likely visible to normal humans near the scene at the time. Your exit, however, will be not only visible, but dramatic, as ground or water explodes out of your way as you soar skyward. At this point, you will head skyward assisted by your assigned angel. As you do, you will soar back into the atmosphere, positioning yourself intuitively around Christ, awaiting your fellow brethren on earth.
- (8) Once all believers who came from Heaven with Christ have received their resurrection bodies, the second phase of the operation will commence. Now, all the believers who have prepared themselves and are ready for the Bridegroom will also be assisted by angels who will swoop down and enable them to soar skyward. As they do so, the same wonderful transmutation will occur in their bodies as happened around the souls of those who came to earth without bodies. Only instead of **receiving** a resurrection body, their **existing** body will be changed or transmuted into a glorified body during the flight skyward. As we have discussed this matter in our Bible studies, some interesting speculation arose over how long this transmutation would take. One of our members made a very good point. If it took a full day for Jesus' body to move from being barely alive as a human to a fully glorified body incapable of being destroyed, then it might take just as long or longer to form a glorified body around the spirit of a righteous person returning for the resurrection. At the same time, it should take less time for those who are being raptured, since they already possess a living human body, something that those being resurrected do not have. At this point, it is all speculation based on what we know from Scripture, but it does make perfect sense.
- (9) Once this second phase is complete, the SWAT Team Rescue Mission is now finished. All believers qualified to receive resurrection bodies now have them. Those members of the church who were foolish, and failed to have that extra cruse of oil symbolic of being filled with the Holy Spirit will still be standing on the ground, either wondering what the heck just happened, or standing in slack-jawed terror, understanding **exactly** what happened and what they are now about to face.
- (10) Christ, all the attending angels, and all the glorified believers now withdraw from the atmosphere of the planet and return to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heaven to wait out the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, the Wrath of God, until it has

finished. At that point in time, the entire assemblage will return again in Revelation 19, this time as a victorious army.

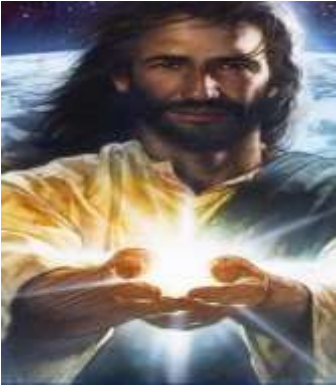
To the very best of my understanding, that is how it going to happen. Since the Bible isn't totally clear on some important details, I have to speculate in those unknown areas, but always within the context of existing Scripture. Even if I have missed a point here and there, nonetheless, it is going to be the most exciting, awesome event in the history of the planet. For believers, it's going to be the thrill ride of their lives. For the rest of the world, it's not going to be quite so pretty. As you can well imagine, an event like this is not going to go unnoticed. How can you go from total blackout to total strobe light in a matter of minutes or even seconds and not notice? Clearly, the whole world will be watching. It's hard to say if Jesus is going to appear first in the procession or last, but if I had to guess, it would be first. Imagine, in a sky totally blacked out, suddenly, directly over Jerusalem, there is one blinding point of light in the sky, pulsing with enormous power. Then, suddenly, there are more points of light, first hundreds, then thousands, then millions, sweeping across the planet in the sky at the speed of lightning, which is estimated at between 60,000 and 90,000 miles per **second**, headed west from Jerusalem until the whole world is literally surrounded by them. You couldn't miss that unless you were dead drunk. And then, when the spirits of the righteous dead come pulsing down like lighting bolts into the ground, I think even our dead drunk friend might be perking up a bit and taking notice. Finally, when glowing, radiant resurrection bodies come exploding out of the ground all around him, our dead drunk friend will be stone cold sober and shivering in fear. Imagine, with untold thousands of years of human history behind us, how many deaths have occurred in any given spot all over the globe. Can you picture in your mind what it will have to look like in Jerusalem, the site of so many bloody battles over the years? If they were freaked out by the number of resurrections associated with Jesus' death, how do you think they'll cope with all the resurrections associated with His return? No place on earth will be spared, not even Antarctica. Despite what our scientists tell us about it being frozen over for thousands of years, we have maps dating from the 1500's showing Antarctica totally ice free, and not as one land mass but rather as two land masses separated by a large channel. Guess what? In recent years, we have done sonar mapping of that frozen continent and it **just** happens to match these strange 500-year-old maps done by unknown European navigators, complete with the two separate land masses.

Without a shadow of a doubt, there will be mass terror all over the world as people who don't believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ or have never heard the Gospel are confronted by untold millions of resurrected believers exploding out of the ground underneath their very feet. And then, to further complicate the matter, additional millions of individuals will suddenly be surrounded by something like a force field, glowing with brilliant light, and then a glowing being will gather them up and pull them skyward. Shock and disaster will sweep the globe. Airplanes being piloted by believers will suddenly be pilotless. Untold millions of cars traveling down the road will suddenly no longer have drivers and will plunge out of control across medians and into oncoming traffic, or veer madly off the road and into ravines, hills and walls, engines still running full scale. My '94 green and white Town Car will become a deadly missile, headed straight for some unbeliever's Yugo or Scion. It won't be a pretty thing to see. Everywhere across the planet there will be complete disaster. I know that some folks teach something called a **secret rapture**. Dear friends, how can any of this be classified as secret? It will be the greatest supernatural and natural event ever witnessed by mankind since the Flood. No secret there. None at all.

There is one final topic which we must deal with before leaving the Resurrection and this Episode, and that is the Resurrection Body itself. But the topic is far too extensive for us to address properly in this article, and so we will have to wait until tomorrow to find out why our Resurrection Bodies look **Just Like Jesus!** Until then, may God richly bless you as you walk in faith and obedience to Him!



# Day 32 ~ Just Like Jesus!



<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

– 1 John 3:2-3

Before we leave this Episode, there are some exciting positive things that we need to take a look at, particularly regarding the **nature** of the resurrection body. Frankly, it's cool enough that we finally get to go and be with Jesus, but the bonus in this round is the **resurrection body**. Let's listen to Paul's description of it:

" <sup>35</sup> But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" <sup>36</sup> Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. <sup>37</sup> And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. <sup>39</sup> All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. <sup>40</sup> There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. <sup>41</sup> There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. <sup>42</sup> So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man."

– I Corinthians 15:35-49

Whew! That's a lot of Scripture! Fortunately, Paul is so logical in his writing that we can break all of this down into a checklist. Of all the early Apostles, Paul was clearly a genius. Peter was a fisherman and not too bad of a writer when God got done with him. Same with John, although some people think he had some formal education. We know that Matthew had some education as well. But nobody in the early church could hold a candle to Paul. His revelations, insight and iron-clad logic have formed the framework of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and our church world today. The letter to the church at Rome stands as one of the greatest theological treatises of all history, Christian or non-Christian. Let's break down what Paul says. It will make a ton of sense.

- (1) What you put **into** the ground doesn't come back in the same form when it comes **out of** the ground. We take that for granted, because we see it in nature constantly. An apple seed doesn't look anything like an apple tree. An acorn certainly doesn't look like a mighty oak tree. Kernels of corn don't look like corn stalks. But it isn't that way just for plants. Consider, now that we know and understand the various stages of the human birth process, does the fertilized egg traveling down the mother's fallopian tube bear any resemblance at all to the child which is born nine months later? Although Paul analyzes the fact that the form used to **carry** life in seed form is never the same as the form which is used to **express** life in its fully developed maturity, he never talks about **why** the two forms are **always** different. The **why** is always centered around the **best approach for**

**the purpose.** It would be wildly impractical for a tiny, fully formed human being to try and travel down a fallopian tube. The potential for damage to both the embryo and the tube itself would be enormous. Similarly, the best form for a plant to enter into the ground and be protected until it could germinate would never be the fully formed shape of the plant, complete with branches and leaves. Rather, it would be a round, hard casement, capable of protecting the precious life within it. The same would be true of eggs. But for mammals, the highest form of life on Earth, it is necessary to encase the developing baby in the body of the mother for full protection of a highly developed offspring. That raises an interesting question that I have never heard anyone bring up: **is our Resurrection Body going to be in the same form as our mortal body?** Now, I've had people ask me many times, *"Will I be able to recognize my loved ones in the resurrection?"* And I've always answered in the affirmative. But it does tend to make you stop and think. The best way to answer this question and answer it accurately is with a resounding *"Yes!"* Why do I say that? Because Paul's analogy kind of breaks down in dealing with the resurrection. Here's why: when Jesus was conceived in His mother's womb, he was just like every other human being at that stage of development. That was the whole point of the experiment, after all. God was **becoming flesh and dwelling amongst us.** So it was absolutely necessary the He go through every process that any other human being had to in order to become fully human. Why? Because unless He was fully human He could never become the **Second Adam.** The First Adam had thrown away our right to Paradise. A **man** had made the mistake. Only **another man** could correct the mistake, and return our legal right to the planet and to eternal life to us. So the steps of transitioning from fetus to baby to child to adult all had to follow the conventional human development process. However, when Jesus transitioned from **mortal to immortal**, very few outward, visible changes took place. At the tomb, Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus at first. I've heard it preached that it was because He appeared to her in the form of a plant. How bizarre! Where do they get **that** from? From a twisted interpretation of Isaiah 53:2, which says, *"For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground".* I know, I know, it takes some real strange thinking to go from that passage to some kind of Divine "Night of the Pod People". It does, however, raise an interesting point, and one which I think we need to explore. Was it possible for Jesus to change **His physical appearance as a man in His Resurrection body?** Mary didn't recognize Him at first. Was she just crying so hard that she didn't see clearly? **Or could Jesus alter His appearance at will to fit the specific situation?** When you realize that He traveled a great distance with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus talking constantly about Himself in the Scriptures and yet the disciples didn't recognize Him until He broke bread and blessed it that evening, it makes you stop and wonder. Clearly, they knew Him before His death and resurrection. Why could they not immediately recognize Him afterwards? And then, what about all of His **theophanies**, or guest appearances in the Old Testament? He was, according to Hebrews, Melchizedek, Prince of Salem, after that the 4<sup>th</sup> Man in the fiery furnace, then the Man who wrestled with Jacob by the Jordan, the Commander in Chief of the Lord's Armies for Joshua and finally God of Very God when He knelt by the super-river in the Garden in Eden and fashioned unfeeling clay into living flesh by breathing His Spirit into the lifeless form. Did He look the same in every instance? It makes you wonder. When Abram saw Him suddenly appear out of nowhere with two angels by the trees at Mamre, did He look the same as He had when He met Abram after the Battle of Sodom as Melchizedek and offered him bread and wine? Hmm... We may never get to know, but it's fun to speculate a little and ask, **"Why not?"** We know clearly from Scripture that His resurrection body still looked like a human body, but with some notable differences:

- (a) **His resurrection body could now hold the fully power of His Divinity.** This concept is sometimes difficult for people to wrap their heads around. Because Jesus' mortal body was just that, mortal, it could only contain or absorb so much power without disintegrating. Let me give you an example: At Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the only two documented events where atomic power was brought into play with human bodies present, a terrifying yet amazing thing happened. While those who were distant from the explosion suffered from radiation poisoning and severe radiation burns, those who were closer to the event literally had their eyes melt out of their sockets, just as described in Zechariah 14:12, where it says, *"...Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet. Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths".* Pretty grisly, huh? Yet that is **exactly what happened** at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In fact, for those closest to ground zero when the bomb went off, they didn't even dissolve, they simply **ceased to exist.** The ravaging power of the atomic

explosion tore through them so quickly that their bodies were dispersed into energy **instantly**. We even found bizarre **shadows burned into the wall behind them** where individuals were instantly vaporized. If Jesus had tried to wedge His full divinity into His mortal body, it would have instantly vaporized, just like theirs. That's why the Bible says in Philippians 2:8 that he humbled or (correct translation), **emptied Himself** and **took on the form** of a servant. Now, the word which the KJV and NKJV translate as "humbled" is the Greek word "*kenoo*", which, according to Strong's Concordance, actually means "*to empty, make empty, to make void or deprive of force*". So a better translation of that passage would read, paraphrasing it, as "*And being encased in the body of a man, it was necessary for Him to empty Himself of His divinity, being obedient to the point of dying on a cross*". To further support that interpretation, we only have to back up to verse 7, where it says that He "*took on*" the form of a bondservant or slave. The word translated "took on" is the Greek word "*morphe*", from which we get our English word **morph**, meaning **to change from one form into another**. When did this transition from Divine to mortal take place? Just before He entered into Mary's womb through the Holy Spirit and indwelt that freshly fertilized egg, imparting a soul to go with the body being formed there. Otherwise, if He had attempted to enter into her with all of the glorious power that is His still intact, it would have caused her mortal, barely teenage body to simply cease to exist, vaporizing in the wake of the terrible power contained inside of Him.

- (b) **There was no blood in His body.** Why do I say that? First of all, because His blood was shed on Calvary for our redemption. But even then, considering all of the blood that was spilled through the time of torture, when He was beaten, had His hair pulled out, was struck with fists, and then had his back laid open like so much hamburger by the vicious cat-o-nine-tails, a multi-thonged whip with either bone or metal teeth at the end of each thong, and then following the trail of blood through the Via Delarosa up to Golgotha, then spikes driven through His hands and feet, and finally, when He died, to have the soldier pierce His side and blood and water come pouring out, still, after all of that, there would have been some blood left in His body under normal circumstances. But these were not normal circumstances. Immediately upon His death, it was necessary for Him to gather up all of His blood and place it into a divine laver or bowl, in order for Him to take it with Him into heaven to be offered in that Holy Tabernacle not made with human hands. Here's what the writer of the book of Hebrews has to say about that event:

*"<sup>11</sup> But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. <sup>12</sup> Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."* – Hebrews 9:11-12

Why was **His** blood necessary? Why was it so much more powerful than the blood of goats, calves, turtledoves, rams and the like? Dear reader, I will share a little secret with you that most Christians don't know, and have never even thought about. We Christians are accused by other religions of being a bloody faith. Why is the shedding of blood necessary for the remission or removal of sin? Here's why: When people sin on this earth, they release an active **death force** into the atmosphere surrounding our planet. The Bible clearly says that **the wages (or logical consequence) of sin is death**. Once this active death force has had time to come to full maturity, it strikes out, both at the individual who sinned, and also at any and all others around it. This is why innocent people die far too often. The sinful actions of ungodly men release volumes of sickness, disease and, finally, death. This negative life force (call it **anti-life**, just like anti-matter is the opposite of matter) then consumes the life around it until it is fully spent. This is **exactly** the same way that matter and anti-matter react to one another. If a small globe of anti-matter only a few inches across were to suddenly appear inside the core of our planet, it would trigger a colossal explosion which would probably destroy the entire planet, and consume an equal amount of matter. So it is with the law of sin and death. Sin, once released into the atmosphere, now consumed its polar opposite until it is fully spent. What is its polar opposite? **Life**. Now, here comes the problem presented by the Old Testament system of sacrifice. Because pigeons, turtledoves, goats, rams and even bulls only have a limited amount of life force in them, it was necessary to **constantly** shed the blood of these animals. Why was it necessary to shed their blood? Because according to Leviticus

17:11 and Deuteronomy 12:23, the **life force of all animals in contained in their blood!** When the blood is shed, the life force in that animal is released into the atmosphere, where it cancels or absorbs the active death force, or anti-life, that is there because of the sins of men. But because men sin constantly, it was also necessary in the Old Testament to shed blood constantly, in order to counteract the death being released constantly by the people through their sins. Get the picture? All of that continued in place for a very long time, until the time of Christ Himself. When He gathered up His own blood and when into the Heavenly Holy of Holies to offer it up, He did something that no other thing or being in Heaven or earth could have done. Yes, He was fully man. But He was also fully God, and, as such, had the **zoe** life force of God Himself encapsulated in the blood flowing through His veins. When **that** blood was shed, it released an **inexhaustible supply of life force for all eternity**. In so doing, there was now **no further need for any additional sacrifices to be made**. With an infinite supply of life force pouring out from the Throne of God, it made it possible for **any and all death** ever generated on earth to be counteracted, provided that the individual struggling against that anti-life death force **called on the Name of Jesus, thus releasing the appropriate amount of supernatural, divine life force required to "put the fire out", if you will**. Amazing? Yup! Cool? You betcha! Dear friend in Christ, there is so much deep teaching that I want to give to you, but it takes time to roll it all out. It may very well take the rest of my life to put this all down in print, and then hope and pray that there are those out there who hunger and thirst after righteousness and want to know the deep things of the Word of God and of God Himself.

**(c) His resurrection body is not made of elements found in this space/time continuum.**

How was this possible? Remember that in an earlier article, I directed your attention to Hosea 6:2, where the prophet says, "After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight." Almost all Bible scholars agree that this passage refers directly to Jesus Himself. If that is true, then although Jesus was in the tomb for three days, He was not **dead** for three days, only two days. If you had been inside the sepulcher during that momentous time, here's what you would have witnessed: During the first day, Jesus' body would have lain in state, wrapped in burial cloths and anointed for burial hastily by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea before they placed him in the tomb. Unlike a conventional human corpse, there would have been **absolutely no decay of the body**. The reason that they surrounded the body of the deceased with various oils was to mask the awful stench of decaying flesh. If you've ever been near an animal that has only been dead a few days, you know what I am talking about. They did not have an active embalming industry in ancient Judea, despite the Egyptian's earlier success in such matters. As such, they attempted to cover the smell of death by packing the body with sweet smelling compounds. Why do I say that Jesus' body did not decay during that first day? **Because it had been prophesied of Him by David that such a thing would never happen!** Remember that David was not only a king, a warrior and a lover. He was also a **prophet**. Psalm 22 is a blow-by-blow account of both the crucifixion **and** resurrection. Take time to read it. You will be amazed at how many exact details of the crucifixion are outlined by David, during a time when such actions were **never** taken in executing men. But it is not the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm that we are concerned with here. It is the 16<sup>th</sup>:

*"<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope. <sup>10</sup> For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. <sup>11</sup> You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."* -- Psalm 16:9-11

In this Psalm, David addresses two individuals, **himself** and a person called **Your Holy One**. Who could that possibly be? Hmmm... Aha! Jesus! In fact, twice in the Book of Acts, this very passage is quoted, both times referring directly to Christ. David makes several awesome statements. The first is that he knows that God will **not leave his soul in Sheol, the place of the dead**. We know from the parable that Jesus told in the New Testament that Sheol is subdivided into two areas; the Bosom of Abraham for the righteous dead and Gehenna or Hell, for the unrighteous dead. But David knew through the Holy Spirit that he would not permanently be forced to stay in Sheol. When Christ ascended, we know that He "*led captivity captive*", and emptied the Bosom of Abraham of its occupants. But David also prophesied

something even more awesome than that. He said that You (referring to the Father), would not let **His Holy One (Jesus) to see corruption.** How did that work? The only way that the law of sin and death can operate on a human body is if there is sin somewhere in the past or the present of that human. Unfortunately, since we all sin and fall short of the glory of God, we are all victims of this law. That's why we have funeral homes and cemeteries. Things would get pretty messy without them. But in the case of Christ, He had absolutely no sin in His life. Therefore, death, decay, destruction and the grave could not **operate on his mortal body,** even though there was no more life in it! If Christ had not reentered His body on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day and reanimated it, it would have remained lifeless and incorruptible for all eternity. I remember once many years ago remarking to an elderly mainline pastor about this event and he being shocked that I could make such a claim. He had never read or understood that powerful passage or realized what a remarkable statement it made for our own resurrections. Now, let's move on to day two of this incredible process. Sometime during the 2<sup>nd</sup> day, the spirit of Christ reentered his mortal but lifeless body. Had you been in the tomb at that point of time, there might have been a bright flash of light, followed by an intense burst of radiation that probably would have killed you outright, if you weren't immortal yourself. Once the light had faded, you would have seen that Jesus' mortal body was once again breathing, but was still covered with all the damage and scars of the brutality of men. The first order would have been to repair the major internal organs and put them into working condition. Special modifications would have had to have been made for them to operate in the absence of blood, as we discussed earlier. This body would have to be able to draw energy directly from the spirit that dwelt in it, no longer dependent on the need to eat or drink. Jesus had intimated that very thing when He had talked about living water after which you would never thirst. It would still be possible to eat and enjoy food, but food would not be necessary for the body to operate. No conversion process would be necessary, so food ingested would be immediately converted into energy, with 100% efficiency, leaving no waste material to eliminate. This creates some very interesting issues regarding how His internal organs were arranged, if they were present at all. Clearly, He ate after His resurrection, proving the disciples that He was no ghost, but flesh and blood. And that flesh and blood needed fixing, badly. During that second day, at least two critical things happened behind the stone rolled in front of the entrance. First, all internal organs had to be repaired, as we have already discussed. Second, all external wounds had to be healed and sealed as well, with three notable exceptions, His hands, feet and side. Why did He choose not to repair those three? You could argue that it was because Scripture prophesied those wounds in Psalm 22. But that begs the question. He was wounded in his mortal body. Why carry them forward into His immortal body? Alas and alack, Scripture simply does not say. Perhaps He wanted to make a point for all eternity about the price He paid for our salvation. The massive injuries done to His back were probably repaired. The parts of His beard that had been ripped out must have been re-grown, and the massive bruising that His face received was definitely healed. Once His mortal body had been restored to reasonable normalcy, a change began that would make Him unique in all the universe. Up until that moment in time, His body had been constructed of the same stuff that makes up everything in the cosmos. Atoms, neutrons, protons, all the basic elements and all their molecular combinations that normally appear in a human body were present in His earthly, human, Adamic body. He had been born, lived and died as a human being, yet without sinning. When He had cried, "*It is finished!*" on the cross, it really **was** finished, as far as the redemption part was concerned. But He had to establish a link for the transition from **this** universe to the **next**, from the old Heavens and the Earth to the new Heavens and the Earth down the road a little bit. The first body He had occupied was limited, frail and temporary, just like the universe it existed in. We have no concept of how much He had to leave behind in Heaven in order to come here as a man. Even completely repaired, His earthly body would still have presented a serious hindrance to Him, particularly regarding the restoration of His full divinity. A **new** body was in order here, one that would be **indestructible**, capable of housing the enormous power of His Majestic Being. Imagine taking all the power of all the stars in the universe. Now multiply that by a factor of 100. Now condense all of that down into the dimensions occupied by a human body. You still haven't understood how much power and glory He has. And whatever shell we make for Him, it must be capable of carrying all of that without a moment's strain. Clearly, there is not an element or compound in this universe capable of such a task. What we will need is a **totally new periodic table, a brand new set of atomic structures.**

The current periodic table goes all the way from element #1, Hydrogen, the most plentiful element in all of creation; all the way to #118, Ununoctium, of which only three atoms have ever been known to exist. As a rule, the higher the element # is, the more complex the atomic structure. But what we need has to be so complex, so strong that this set of atomic structures will be able to withstand the complete destruction of the physical universe. It will have to be so super-dense that a complete new heavens and earth can easily be extracted from it after the Great White Throne Judgment. It will have to be **totally independent** of any association with the elemental structure of this universe, because Christ will use it to travel back in time to a **time before time**, to **create** this physical universe. Confused? Good! We'll fix that nasty problem in a future E-Pistle, entitled ***Time Traveler***. As usual, what I thought would be a single article or two articles, at best, is turning into a mini-series of its own. But there is so much you need to know and to understand. So, put a bookmark at this page, close the book, and we will see you again tomorrow, same time, same place, same station, when we take a good look at ***Old Body, New Body!***

# Day 33 - Old Body, New Body



<sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man."

- I Corinthians 15:48-49

Yesterday, we began to examine Jesus' resurrection body in detail, using Scripture, a little scientific investigation and some common sense. We used Paul's detailed description of the resurrection body in I Corinthians as our starting point. Take just a moment and turn back to yesterday's E-Pistle and re-read the passage. Since Paul is such a logical thinker, many of his writings almost look like an outline, with one key point after another. This one certainly is. So let's turn this passage into an outline.

1. **What you put into the ground doesn't look like what comes out of the ground.** We discussed this point yesterday. No need to add to it.
2. **What you sow is not made alive unless it dies.** I know, I know. This point should be #1 and #1 should be #2. I'll fix it in the second edition. Truthfully, it didn't dawn on me until I had written the entire previous article. No way am I changing it at this point in time. Now, seriously, what Paul has just said here is mega deep. When you plant a seed, it looks for all the world like something that is dead, hard, shriveled and dry. It seems irrational to the natural mind to take something that looks like that and stick it in the ground hoping for something living to come back up. Embedded in this simple act of putting a seed into the ground are two universal principles governing this universe and the next:
  - a. **Any life form must die in its current form in order to be reborn into a new one.** This is not only true of seeds. Consider the butterfly coming out of its chrysalis. Nothing can simultaneously exist in two separate forms at the same time.
  - b. **Any rebirth process for a life-form must involve re-entering the ground from which it came.** Remember what Jesus said about the Son of Man being in the belly of the earth for three days? Also think about what He said when a group of Gentiles came to see Him and were turned away. He said, "<sup>24</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." - John 12:24. I realize that Jesus was referring to His **own** body in this case, but He is the prototype for the resurrection, so it still applies. This also helps to explain why the resurrection involves entering the earth again, while the accompanying rapture doesn't. From a scientific standpoint, perhaps it has to do with re-linking the spirit with the earth in a new fusion of spirit and matter. No matter what the reason, it appears that this is mandatory.
3. **There are different kinds of "flesh".** In trying to explain this concept to the carnal Corinthian church, Paul had to "baby pat" this concept when he introduced it to them. He has to explain it to them in terms of fish, animals, birds, the sun, the moon and stars. But in doing so, he lets us know about something that Daniel had hinted at many years before. Paul says that **one star differs from another star in glory.** He then adds, **so (in the same fashion) is the resurrection of the dead.** For years when I read that passage, I linked that last statement with the comparative list which

follows. We'll deal with the list in just a little bit. But as I examined the passage, it dawned on me that Paul might have intended for the **one star** statement to be linked with the **so is** statement. You might argue that the verse number breaks the two apart. But remember that in the original **Koine Greek** that verse number isn't there. Chapters and verses for the New Testament were not added until the Middle Ages by a dedicated monk. As such, they cannot be considered as divinely inspired. There are many places where the chapter and verse breaks are clearly not appropriate, ironically as close as Chapters 12-14 in the same letter. While the original Greek in which the Scripture is written is divinely inspired and literally accurate, subsequent translations and additions, such as chapter and verse numbers, must be considered as human, not divine. Admittedly, there are some phenomenal linkages (Zechariah 5:1 and Revelation 5:1, Zechariah 6:1-8 and Revelation 6:1-8, among others), but they are not of the same level of inspiration as the original **textus receptus** (received text). What does Paul mean when he says that **one star differs from another in glory**? If we go to the science books again, we will find that astronomers classify stars into binary stars, protostars, dwarf stars (of which our own sun is one), supergiants, pulsars and a wide variety of other types. There are stars over 1,000 times brighter than ours, and over 200 times bigger. No two stars are alike. They each have a unique size, brightness and even frequency or tone. Essentially, each star in the universe is a glowing, brilliantly colored note. Now, all of that is nice, but what does that have to do with the resurrection? In order to understand that, we must travel to the Old Testament, to the final chapter of the writings of the prophet Daniel, specifically verses 2 and 3:

*"<sup>2</sup> And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup> Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."*  
 – Daniel 12:2-3

I was reading the passage one day when the Lord spoke to me. *"I mean that passage literally, you know"*, He said. I had always interpreted it symbolically, so I asked Him what He meant. *"Remember the description of my Son in the Book of Revelation?"* He asked. *"His face shines like the sun in all its strength. He has a resurrection body. When you get yours, it will look the same way"*. I was astonished. I knew the two passages very well, but had never really made the connection between the two. Now I began to meditate on what He had just told me. If Jesus' resurrection body is so filled with the indescribable power and glory of God that *"His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength"*, that **literally** meant that it had the same luminosity as our own sun, a yellow dwarf star. Just stop for a second and imagine meeting Him face to face and gazing upon His Majestic Glory. He would be marvelous to behold! But soon it won't be just Him that looks that way. We already know that we will be **like** Him, for we shall **see Him as He is**. (I John 3:2) The only way for a human being to stand in the direct presence of another being with the power of a full star inside of their body would be for that human being to **also** possess a body and energy level like that other individual. Got that? Look again at what Daniel said. **Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the firmament (the stars)**. Those who turn many to righteousness **like the stars forever**. Now, if Jesus shines like a star, which the sun is, and we will be just like Him, because we will see Him in His full glory, as He is, then it only stands to reason that **we, too, will shine in our resurrection bodies just like Jesus in Revelation Chapter 1**. All of that is cool, but Paul gave us another little insight. Remember that he said that **one star differs in glory (brightness) from another**. Now, apply that statement to the resurrection bodies of all the believers down through the ages. Ask yourself if all of those believers have been **equal and uniform** in their obedience, holiness, sanctification, evangelism efforts, and so on. Clearly, the answer is no. We already know that our **reward** in the resurrection is predicated on how we conduct our lives here. It is now also established that the **level of glory and power** that we carry in the resurrection on a **permanent basis** will also be indexed to our righteousness and fervor. None of us will be as bright as Jesus. He is the perfect, sinless Son of God. No light will shine in the Eternal City brighter than His own. But because **every** believer in the New Jerusalem will shine with some level of stellar energy themselves it will be **impossible to ever have night again!** Listen to what John the Revelator says about that place:

*"<sup>23</sup> The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light."* – Revelation 21:23



" <sup>4</sup> They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever." -- Revelation 22:4-5

Now, picture this place in your mind. It is a city of metals and precious stones of breathtaking beauty. Gold can be processed so thin that it is transparent, yet it is indestructible. That's another compelling argument for the thought that the atomic structure of the New Heavens and the New Earth is totally different than the current structure of our universe. The city itself is a marvel, unimaginable even with descriptions provided. But inside the city is a greater marvel. Every inhabitant of the city is a glowing, super-energized super being of incomprehensible power. Each face and body shines like the sun in all of its glory. At the center of the city is the spotless Lamb of God, whose glory surpasses the glory of all the other inhabitants put together. As we return to the street and walk down it, we notice that although each individual glows with stellar glory, **the degree of that glory varies from person to person.** Folks have speculated about what our rewards will be when we get to Heaven. No doubt crowns and hidden names are all part of it. But for me, the only reward I cherish and covet is that **I might be filled with as much of the glory of God as possible for all eternity.** I have stood in His Presence and felt His power spread inside my chest until people were dropping spontaneously under the power of God 55 feet away. I could feel the power emanating from inside my chest, arcing up inside my arms and radiating outwards toward the people of the congregation. One by one, without a word being said, they began dropping quietly to the carpet, in one case, three at a time fell backwards on top of another like dominoes. I didn't know how much more power my mortal body could withstand, but I didn't really care. If it killed me in the process, so be it. It would have been worth it to take it all the way up the scale. This is why Jesus told Mary Magdalene not to touch him when He encountered her outside the tomb on Easter morning. The glory of God was coursing through His veins with such intensity that it would have damaged her mortal body if she had embraced Him at that point in time. He needed time to dial it back down a little bit so that doubting Thomas could later put his hand in His side, and so that the others could embrace Him in love and joy over His resurrection. After the service, curiosity prompted me to measure, so I do know the distance and am not simply estimating. But I am a piker compared to people like Benny Hinn and the late, great Kathryn Kuhlman, who would send massive waves of power sweeping through the entire coliseum. There is nothing, dear friends, that can compare with it in all the universe. I would gladly give up everything I have to walk in it continually. And, once having been "infected" by that Presence, there is **nothing** in this universe that is worth having except it. This is why Paul said that he counted everything as off-scouring or manure, compared to the **surpassing glory of knowing Him and the power of His resurrection.** When dear brother Paul was caught up into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heaven, he got to witness this glory. He wasn't allowed to talk about what he had seen and experienced right away, but he made it clear that there was nothing else in all of existence that he wanted except to go there again and be a part of that existence. This is why the First Century saints were so willing to go to their deaths. They had been show by God, at least in part, some of what they were walking into. This is our inheritance, and we will walk in it very soon. I cannot wait. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

4. Having said all of that, Paul now launches into a list comparing what the new body will be like in contrast to the old body. We are going to take that list and rework it a little bit.

## Old Body / New Body

-----  
**- Body that is sown -**

1. **Natural** Body
2. Sown in **corruption**
3. Sown in **dishonor**
4. Sown in **weakness**
5. Sown a **natural** body
6. First Adam a **living being**
7. First Man of the **earth**

**- Body that is reaped -**

- Spiritual** Body
- Raised in **incorruption**
- Raised in **glory**
- Raised in **power**
- Raised a **spiritual body**
- Last Adam a **life-giving spirit**
- Second Man the **Lord of Heaven**

That makes it a lot easier to compare the two lists. Now, let's go down those lists and compare each of the sets of points:

- a. **Conversion from a natural body into a spiritual body.** Immediately we have some explaining to do. When people read the term **spiritual body**, they tend to visualize some wispy, ethereal, ghost-like creature you can see through. Nothing could be further from the truth. When Jesus appeared out of nowhere inside a sealed Upper Room, they were afraid that it was His ghost. He had to reassure them of the contrary and even eat some fish and honeycomb as proof. He specifically showed them His hands and feet as proof that it was Him, and added that *"...a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have"* ( Luke 24:39). Now, let's come and reason together for just a second. Jesus has the **first** and **only** resurrection or **spiritual** body in existence. He is the "first fruits", or prototype model after which all of our resurrection bodies will be patterned after. So, when we think of the term **spiritual body**, all we have to do is **look at Jesus**. His body was real, tangible, physical and capable of astonishing feats, violating all the known laws of science and all the so-called immutable laws of the physical universe. He could eat, sit, talk, be touched and do all the other things normally associated with a conventional human body. At the same time, His body was capable of dialing up to full power and looking like the center of the sun itself. Perhaps a better way to understand what Paul is saying here is that the Old Body is **based in or powered by the natural world**, and the New Body is **based in or powered by the Spirit**. The natural body is limited to the rules of the physical universe. It is capable of becoming tired, getting sick, dying, hungering and all the other problems that we mortals have to deal with. On the other hand, the **Spirit-powered or Spirit-based body** has none of those limitations. And it is also incapable of being killed or destroyed.
- b. **Sown in corruption and raised in incorruption.** This one is easy. When Paul uses the word **corruption**, he is not referring to moral or political corruption. Rather, he is using the word in the context of **subject to death and decay**. When a mortal body is buried, it begins to decompose. We don't need to discuss the details. Suffice it to say that the body becomes **corrupted**, or **flawed and damaged from the original model**. That degradation of quality continues until nothing is left but dust. When the new body is raised up, it will be of a composition atomically that will make it **impossible to die or decay in any way**. Your resurrection body will be eternal. That's a good thing. Unfortunately, in the General Bema White Throne Resurrection at the end of the Millennial Reign, the myriad bodies raised up and judged according to their works who don't make the "cut" will find themselves in the Lake of Fire, also with bodies incapable of dying or being destroyed, yet perfectly capable of suffering and experiencing pain, this time for all eternity. Imagine experiencing the pain, agony and horror of dying, **yet without being able to die**. Imagine being on fire and burning up, yet without ever burning up? And imagine that this experience will go on **forever and ever and ever and ever...** If that doesn't run cold chills up and down your un-resurrected spine, I don't know what will. Brrr!!!
- c. **Sown in dishonor and raised in glory.** When a person dies, it is rarely a joyous occasion, even if the person was clearly a child of God. The grief and sense of loss overrides what should be a time of celebration for the person's home-going. I do remember one notable exception. I knew a gentleman who was the president of the Evansville, IN chapter of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, Intl. He was a big man, full of joy. He attended an Assembly of God church in Evansville, and played shortstop on their softball team. During a game, he went down to pick up a grounder, clutched at his chest and dropped dead right on the playing field. Members of the church rushed to try and resuscitate him. As they were trying, the pastor of the church had an open vision. He saw the man in heaven in a white robe, filled with joy, glory and power. Beside him stood the Lord. The Lord looked at the pastor and said, *"Do you really want to take him away from all of this?"* The pastor admitted that he would not dare do that, and attempts to revive the man were stopped. At his funeral, the story was repeated, and a massive celebration broke out at the funeral, resulting in many unsaved family members and visitors being saved that day. That's how it should be. Unfortunately, that's not generally how it is. But when we are raised from the dead or raptured, it will be in full glory and joy and power. There will be no more remarkable event in all history.

- d. **Sown in weakness and raised in power.** Another obvious one. Our human bodies are weak. Pound for pound, we are one of the most physically weak creatures on our planet. Even animals much smaller than us are generally much stronger. And when facing sickness, disease or death, we find out how truly weak we really are. I played college football, and at one point in my life, could quarter squat with 800 pounds. I was fairly strong. Compared to current college players, I would probably be a weakling. There is one college quarterback playing right now who can bench press 400 pounds. But even the strongest of us run out of steam in a hurry when we are sick. When I suffered a heart attack followed 30 days later by a diagnosis of inoperable, malignant cancer, it didn't take long for the disease and the treatments to reduce me to a shadow of my former self. In a matter of only three months, I lost 80 pounds, had my throat badly scarred, and the nerves in my hands and feet severely damaged. How quickly I moved from strength to weakness! Not so our resurrection bodies! We cannot imagine how much physical and spiritual power will course through them. The level of energy and well-being will be beyond our ability to visualize.
- e. **Sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body.** Even though we have discussed this, there are a few more thoughts I want to present to you regarding the atomic makeup of the resurrection body. If you remember from our last E-Pistle, I speculated that the atomic structure of the resurrection body must be totally different and vastly superior to that of our current universe. Why must that be so? In order to explain, I must take you beyond the Resurrection / Rapture, past the Millennial 1,000 Year Reign to the Great White Throne or Bema Seat Judgment. That event begins in Revelation, Chapter 20:

*"<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them." – Revelation 20:11*

This can get a little complicated, so bear with me. Please trust me on the details here. I will explain them in Episode Seven when we get to the events themselves. Suffice it to say that after the successful invasion of planet earth by the armies of heaven, the incarceration of the devil in the Abyss, the judgment of the Beast/Anti-Christ and the False Prophet and casting of them into the Lake of Fire there will come 1,000 years of complete peace, where Jesus rules and reigns on the throne of His father David, completing a second day of **Shabbat** or Sabbath when the Son rests. At the end of that period of time, there is no further need for the current heavens and earth, and it is finally time to judge the remainder of mankind based on their works. Resurrected believers, having been justified by faith, only have their works judged, not themselves. Everyone else has to approach God through the original works and law covenant established under Moses before Christ. When the Great White Throne appears, the power of the divinity of God must be so incredible that it literally causes the old universe to tear apart at the seams and disintegrate back into pure energy. This is why John says that the earth and the heaven **fled away** and that there was found **no place for them**. Peter actually describes the event in greater detail. Here's what he has to say about the event:

*"<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,<sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." – II Peter 3:10-13*

Every time I read this passage, I stop and marvel. Peter was an uneducated fisherman who certainly didn't know anything about quantum physics or subatomic structures. In a day when the "elements" were things like earth, wind and fire, how could Peter have known that if all the matter in the universe were to be de-resolved back into pure energy, there would be a massive trans-galactic thermonuclear explosion of epic proportions and volume? How could he understand that the elements would "melt"? Peter has just described a nuclear explosion, only this time it is **all matter** that is being resolved back into energy. And that includes the **heavens**, all three of them, including the current place where our dearly beloved departed

saints currently reside. You see, dear friends, the **heavens** and the earth are slated for destruction once God is done with them. Why? Because **in order for something new to be created or born, the old thing must be buried and die**. When this happens, all conventional matter will be de-resolved back into energy. If our resurrection bodies were made of the atomic structures of this universe, they would also be destroyed in the cataclysm. So in order for the Throne, Jesus' resurrection body and our resurrection bodies to survive, they must be made of a different kind of "flesh", as Paul puts it. Since we know that we will be "solar-powered" in our new bodies, it is likely that they will also be radioactive off the scale. That leads me to believe that the atomic structure of Jesus' body is incredibly super-dense, with each atom consisting of untold protons, neutron and electrons. Almost all the elements at the upper end of the Periodic Table are highly radioactive. The major difference would be that these atomic structures would be indestructible instead of unstable. And perhaps my own understanding doesn't even go far enough. I wish I knew more about something called **String Theory**, which speculates on what is going on at a subatomic level. Perhaps the resurrection body is even more awe-inspiring than even I can imagine. That would be just fine with me!

- f. **The first Adam was a living being and the last Adam is a live-giving Spirit.** I really don't see much to say on this point that hasn't already been said. Let it stand right where it is. It says enough. Christ, the last or Second Adam, is the source of eternal life for us all. That should be sufficient, don't you think?
- g. **The First Man was of the earth and the Second Man is the Lord of Heaven.** Oh, wow! What a difference! All we could ever have as children of Adam was our earthly inheritance. Even though we were intended to live forever, it became painfully clear that without the Tree of Life, sickness, disease and death could quickly cut our potentially eternal life span down to 1,000 years or less. That was a terrible tragedy. Then, after the flood, we were shortened to a mere 120 years. How awful! Then the Bible stated that we could count on only 70 years, stretching it to 80 if we had the strength. Because we are all children of the First Man, Adam, we all suffer from those increasing limitations. But in the Resurrection, through the Shed Blood of Jesus Christ, we become adopted children of God. Our older brother, the Second Man, the one who retook our covenant right to this planet and restored us into right relationship with God, is the Lord of Heaven. And in the Resurrection, we are no longer merely adopted. As our bodies transmute into the same stuff as His Glorious Body, we become of the same "flesh" as Him, and one eternally with Him, the Father and the Spirit. How wonderful! How glorious! How well worth waiting and living for! Beloved, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that we shall **be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!**

As we close this Episode, the Bride is gone, taken to Heaven to be with her Beloved. While they enjoy their honeymoon period, the heavy guns are being brought up to begin the final assault of the planet in the terrible 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, the Wrath of God. She will know nothing of this terrible time. All she will know is joy unspeakable, full of glory. At the end of the preliminary shelling, she will return with the Lord of Glory on white horses for a full scale invasion of the planet. But that event will have to wait for another Episode.

One final note: In reading the Matthew 24 Olivet Discourse, Jesus stops the narrative at the point where the Rapture occurs, in Matthew 24:30-31, and with good cause: **that satisfied the three questions they had asked Him**. We will end this Episode with the Big Three Questions that we began with:

- (1) When will these things happen?**
- (2) What will be the sign of Your coming?**
- (3) What will be the end of the age?**

This is the most comprehensive Episode I have ever written. Perhaps later Episodes will eclipse it. Only time will tell. My earnest prayer is that you, the serious-minded believer, hungry and thirsting after righteousness and suspicious that you are not being told the whole truth, have been taught, convicted and convinced that you **must** make yourself read in order to be a part of the half of the church that will become the Bride. We pray without ceasing that you will commit these facts to

heart and then pray for opportunities to teach others the truth. We love you with all of our hearts, and pray that we will see you as we both hurtle up into space toward our Sovereign Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God and Savior of the World. May God richly bless you as you walk in faith and obedience to Him! **Amen and Amen!**





# Day 34 --Daniel's Master Timeline of Empires (Bonus Feature)

## Summary Outline of Empires

1. Egyptian Empire – Before Daniel's time
2. Assyrian Empire – Before Daniel's time
3. Babylonian Empire – The Head of Gold (2:32,37-38)
4. Medo-Persian Empire – The Chest and Arms of Silver (2:32,39)
5. Macedonian Empire – The Belly & Thighs of Bronze (2:32,39)
6. Roman Empire – The Legs of Iron (2:32,39)
7. The Middle Ages to the Present – The Feet and Toes of Iron and Clay (2:32,32)
8. The British Empire – The Lion with Eagle's Wings (7:4)
9. America – The Eagles Wings (7:4)
10. Russia – The Bear (7:5)
11. 4 Nation Islamic Coalition – The Leopard with 4 Heads and 4 Wings (7:6)
12. End-Time World Empire – The Dreadful and Terrible Beast (7:7)
13. The Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ – The Rock Not Cut By Hands (2:34-35,44-45)
14. The Great White Throne Bema Seat Judgment
15. The New Heavens and the New Earth

# Detail Outline of Empires

## I. Egyptian Empire – Before Daniel’s time

- A. Joseph bring Hebrews into land (Genesis 45:17-46:34)
- B. Nation grows from 70 to 3 million plus in 430 years (Exodus 12:40-41)
- C. Moses leads nation out of captivity (Exodus 13:17-22)
- D. Israel wanders in wilderness for 40 years (Numbers 14:34)
- E. Joshua leads nation into Canaan (Joshua 3:1-17)
- F. Time of the Judges / political chaos (Judges 21:25)
- G. Saul anointed by Samuel as 1<sup>st</sup> King of Israel (I Samuel 12:1-10)
- H. David replaces Saul and expands kingdom (II Samuel 5:1-4)
- I. Solomon consolidates kingdom / great material prosperity (I Kings 10:14-29)
- J. Rehoboam destroys kingdom in 3 days (I Kings 12:1-19)
- K. Israel Splits Into Northern Kingdom & Southern Kingdom (I Kings 12:20-24)

## II. Assyrian Empire – Before Daniel’s time

- A. Northern 10 Tribes become increasingly corrupt (II Kings 15:8-17:5)
- B. Assyria carries Israel into captivity (II Kings 17:1-6)
- C. 10 Lost Tribes dispersed across Assyrian Empire (II Kings 17:7-18)
- D. Other nations brought into area, become Samaritans (II Kings 17:24-41)
- E. Judah begins moral slide under Manasseh (II Kings 21:1-18)

## III. Babylonian Empire – The Head of Gold (2:32,37-38)

- A. Judah taken into captivity by Babylon in multiple waves (1:1-2)
- B. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah put into training program (1:3-16)
- C. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah appointed advisors to King Nebuchadnezzar (1:17-20)
- D. Nebuchadnezzar has dream that troubles him (2:1-49)
  - 1. Daniel able to tell and interpret dream (2:16-47)
  - 2. Great Statue
    - a. Head of Gold – Babylonian Empire (2:32,37-38)
    - b. Chest and Arms of Silver – Medo-Persian Empire (2:32,39)
    - c. Belly and Thighs of Bronze – Macedonian Empire (2:32,39)
    - d. Legs of Iron – Roman Empire (2:32,40)
    - e. Feet of Clay and Iron – Europe during Middle Ages (2:32,41-43)
  - 3. Stone Not Cut Out By Human Hands – Millennial Reign (2:32,44-45)
- E. Nebuchadnezzar builds 90’ tall golden statue of himself (3:1-30)
  - 1. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego in fiery furnace (3:17-27)
  - 2. 4<sup>th</sup> Man (Christ) in furnace with them (3:25)
  - 3. King issues edict & promotes men (3:29-30)
- F. Nebuchadnezzar has dream about tree being cut down (4:1-37)
  - 1. Daniel interprets dream – warning to king about arrogance (4:19-27)
  - 2. King ignores warning, loses mind (4:28-33)
  - 3. King comes to his senses, is restored (4:34-37)
- G. Daniel has dream about Four Beasts (7:1-28)
  - 1. Occurs during 1<sup>st</sup> year of Belshazzar’s reign
  - 2. Four winds of heaven stirring up Mediterranean Sea (7:3)
  - 3. 1<sup>st</sup> Beast – Lion with Eagles Wings – England/America (7:4)
  - 4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Beast – Bear with three ribs in teeth – Russia (7:5)
  - 5. 3<sup>rd</sup> Beast – Leopard with 4 Wings & 4 Heads – 4 Nation Muslim / Arab League (7:6)
  - 6. 4<sup>th</sup> Beast – Dreadful, Terrible, Very Strong – Anti-Christ Empire (7:7)
    - a. Huge Teeth of Iron -- Iron/Roman Empire (7:7,19)
    - b. Nails of Bronze – Bronze/Macedonian Empire (7:19)
    - c. Devouring , breaking in pieces other nations (7:7)



- d. Trampling other nations with it's feet (7:7)
- e. 10 Horns – 10 Nation Confederacy / 10 Leaders (7:7,20,24)
- f. Different from all other kingdoms (7:23-24)
- g. Devout the whole earth – 1<sup>st</sup> World Empire (7:23)
- h. Little Horn arises in the midst of them -- Anti-Christ (7:8,20-21)
  - (1) Three Horns plucked out by roots – Three Nations/Leaders overthrown (7:8,20,24)
  - (2) Eyes like the eyes of a man – Hypnotic gaze (7:8)
  - (3) Mouth speaking pompous words – Great orator speaking against God (7:8,20,25)
  - (4) Making war against the saints (Israel) and prevailing against them (7:21)
  - (5) Persecute the saints (7:25)
  - (6) Try to change times and law – Commandments of God (7:25)
  - (7) Saints given into his hands for 3 ½ years (7:25)
  - (8) 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 7-Year Period (NOT Tribulation!)
- 7. Thrones are put in place – Great White Throne Judgment (7:9-12,22,26-27)
  - a. Ancient of Days (The Father) was seated (7:9,22,26)
    - (1) Garment white as snow (7:9)
    - (2) Hair of head like pure wool (7:9)
    - (3) Throne is fiery flame (7:9)
    - (4) Wheels burning fire (7:9)
    - (5) River of Fire comes from Him (7:10)
    - (6) 1,000 x 1,000 minister to Him (7:10)
    - (7) 10,000 x 10,000 stand before Him to be judged (7:10)
    - (8) Court is seated (7:10)
    - (9) Books are opened (7:10)
  - b. Anti-Christ Empire slain, body destroyed, give to flames (7:11)
  - c. Rest of beast nations have dominion taken away (7:12)
  - d. Lives prolonged for a season and a time -- 4 years? (7:12)
- 8. One like the Son of Man (Jesus) comes with the clouds of heaven (7:13)
  - a. Comes before The Ancient of Days (7:13)
  - b. Dominion, glory & Kingdom given to Him (7:14)
  - c. All peoples, languages & nations will serve Him (7:14)
  - d. His Dominion is an everlasting dominion (7:14)
  - e. Will not pass away or be destroyed (7:14)
  - f. Saints possess the Kingdom (7:22)
- H. Daniel has vision about Ram, Goat, Four Horns, Little Horn (8:1-27)
  - 1. 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Belshazzar's reign
  - 2. Ram with two horns – Medo-Persian Empire (8:3)
    - a. One Horn higher than the other – Persians stronger than the Medes, eventually become dominant (8:3)
    - b. Pushes West, North and South, no animal could withstand it – Empire expanded at will without opposition (8:4)
  - 3. Male Goat comes from the West – Alexander the Great / Macedonian Empire (8:5)
    - a. Came across surface of whole earth without touching it – ancient version of *Blitzkrieg*, Lightning War (8:5)
    - b. Notable Horn between his eyes – Alexander the Great (8:5)
    - c. Attacked Ram, broke his horns, trampled him – Macedonian Empire conquers Medo-Persian Empire (8:6-7)
    - d. Male Goat grew very great – Alexander expands Empire all the way to India, largest empire ever (8:8)
    - e. Large Horn broken – Alexander dies just shy of his 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday (8:8)
    - f. Four Notable Horns rise up – Empire divided between Alexander's four main Generals (8:8)
    - g. Out of one of them comes a Little Horn (8:9)
      - (1) Is this same Little Horn as in Dream of Four Beasts? (7:8,20-21)
      - (2) Or is this Antiochus Epiphanes, historical figure
      - (3) Or does it refer to both / dual fulfillment
      - (4) Major source of controversy in prophetic interpretation

- (5) Grew exceedingly toward the South (Egypt), toward the East (Syria and Persia) and toward the Glorious Land (Israel) (8:9)
  - (6) Grew up to the Host of Heaven and cast some of them down –Antiochus claims to be a god (8:10)
  - (7) Exalted himself as Prince of the Host (8:11)
  - (8) Daily Sacrifice taken away – by royal edict, to destroy religion of Jews (8:11)
  - (9) Place of Sanctuary taken away (8:11)
  - (10) Angel asks another angel how long will Abomination of Desolation / Transgression of Desolation last (8:13)
  - (11) Answer is – 2,300 days
- I. Belshazzar gives great feast for 1,000 nobles (5:1-30)
1. Babylon is under siege by Medo-Persian army at same time
  2. Took sacred vessels from Temple in Jerusalem and used them as drinking cups, toasting various gods (5:3-4)
  3. Hand writes on wall (5:5)
  4. King becomes extremely frightened (5:6)
  5. King asks **Magi** to interpret writing, promises rewards (5:7)
  6. No one able to interpret writing (5:8)
  7. Queen Mother recommends Daniel (5:10-12)
  8. Daniel brought before King (5:13-17)
  9. Daniel rebukes Belshazzar (5:18-23)
  10. Daniel interprets writing (5:24-28)
    - a. **Mene, Mene** – God has numbered your kingdom and finished it
    - b. **Tekel** – You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting
    - c. **Upharsin / Peres** – Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and the Persians
  11. Belshazzar rewards Daniel (5:30)
  12. Babylon conquered, Belshazzar killed that very night (5:31)

#### IV. Medo-Persian Empire – The Chest and Arms of Silver (2:32,39)

- A. Darius establishes 127 Satraps to rule over Provinces (6:1)
1. Three Governors then rule over them (6:2)
  2. Daniel named as one of three Governors (6:2)
  3. Daniel excels so much that King considers making Daniel ruler over whole realm (6:3)
  4. Governors jealous, plan attack against Daniel because of religion (6:4-5)
  5. Convince Darius to issue edict that everyone must worship him for 30 days (6:6-7)
  6. Violators to be cast into Lion's Den (6:7)
  7. King signs edict into law (6:8-9)
  8. Daniel, aware of law, continues to worship God and pray three times a day (6:10)
  9. Men spy on Daniel, report his actions to King (6:11-13)
  10. King now realizes what he has done, but cannot change edict (6:14-15)
  11. Daniel thrown into Lion's Den (6:16)
  12. King expresses faith in Daniel's God, fasts all night (6:17-18)
  13. King hurries to Lion's Den next morning (6:19-21)
  14. Daniel lets King know that God has protected him (6:22)
  15. Daniel pulled out of Lion's Den (6:23)
  16. Accusers and their families thrown into Lion's Den and killed (6:23-24)
  17. King makes 2<sup>nd</sup> Decree that everyone should worship Daniel's God
- B. Daniel visited by Angel Gabriel (9:1-27)
1. 1<sup>st</sup> year of reign of Darius, **just after Lion's Den trial!** (9:1)
  2. Daniel reading Jeremiah, discovers prophecy about Israel returning to homeland after 70 years (9:2) [Jeremiah 25:11-12,29:10]
  3. Prays with fasting, sackcloth and ashes (9:3)
  4. Confesses personal sins, sins of Israel, asks for forgiveness (9:4-19)
  5. Angel Gabriel visits Daniel (9:20-21)
  6. Prophecy given to Daniel concerning 70 Weeks (9:24-27)
    - a. 70 Weeks of Years (490 years) are determined (9:24)

- b. Will accomplish the following things: (9:24)
    - (1) Finish the transgression
    - (2) Make an end of sins
    - (3) Make reconciliation for iniquity
    - (4) Bring in everlasting righteousness
    - (5) Seal up vision and prophecy
    - (6) Anoint the Most Holy (Place? One?)
  - c. From going forth of command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there shall be 7 Weeks of Years and 62 Weeks of Year (483 Years) (9:25)
  - d. Street, wall shall be built again, even in troublesome time – Nehemiah (9:25)
  - e. After 62 Weeks of Years, Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself – Christ crucified (9:26)
  - f. People of Prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary – Titus/ Rome in AD 70 (?) (9:26)
  - g. The end of it will be with a flood (?) (9:27)
  - h. He shall confirm a covenant with many for One Week of Years (7 years) (9:27)
    - (1) DID NOT HAPPEN UNDER TITUS!
    - (2) Future Anti-Christ?
  - i. In the middle of the Week (3 ½ years) he will bring an end to sacrifice and offering (9:27)
  - j. On the wing of Abominations shall be one who makes desolate
    - (1) Antiochus Epiphanes?
    - (2) Titus?
    - (3) Anti-Christ?
- C. Daniel visited by Angel Gabriel again (10:1-12:13)
1. Daniel in mourning for three full weeks – 21 days (10:2-3)
    - a. Eats no “pleasant food”
    - b. No meat or wine
    - c. Did not anoint himself with oil
  2. Daniel by the Tigris River (10:4)
  3. Daniel sees Gabriel, others do not and flee (10:5-7)
  4. Daniel passes out, Gabriel revives him (10:8-10)
  5. Gabriel tells Daniel he is greatly beloved (10:11)
  6. Explains that he was delayed by demonic Prince of Persia for 21 days (10:12-13)
  7. Michael, Prince Angel over Israel, fought for him (10:13)
  8. Gabriel encourages, strengthens Daniel (10:13-19)
  9. Gabriel relates prophecy to Daniel (11:2-12:4)
    - a. Three more kings will arise in Persia (11:2)
    - b. Fourth will be far richer than them all (11:2)
    - c. He will attack Greece (11:2)
    - d. Mighty King will arise – Alexander the Great (11:3)
    - e. Kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven (4 Generals) (11:4)
    - f. Not among his posterity – sons did not rule (11:4)
    - g. King of the South shall become strong – Ptolemy (11:5)
    - h. Extensive political and military maneuvering (11:6-45)
    - i. Michael will stand up for Israel (12:1)
    - j. Time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation (12:1)
    - k. Israel shall be delivered (12:1)
    - l. Everyone found written in the Book (12:1)
    - m. Many who sleep in the dust shall awaken – resurrection (12:2)
      - (1) Some to everlasting life (12:2)
      - (2) Some to shame and everlasting contempt (12:2)
      - (3) Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the firmament (12:3)
      - (4) Those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever (12:3)
  10. Daniel instructed to shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end (12:4)
    - a. Many will run to and fro (12:4)
    - b. Knowledge will increase (12:4)

- c. Two other angels appear (12:5)
- d. One angel asks Gabriel how long it will take to fulfill the prophecy (12:6)
- e. Gabriel swears that it will be for a time, times and half a time (3 ½ years) (12:7)
- f. Daniel asks what will be the end of these things (12:8)
- g. He is instructed to go his way because the words are sealed up until the time of the end – his job is done (12:9)
- h. Many shall be purified, made white and refined (12:10)
- i. Wicked will continue to be wicked (12:10)
- j. None of the wicked will understand (12:10)
- k. From the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days (12:11)
- l. Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1,335 days (12:12)
- m. Go your way till the end (12:13)
- n. You will rest (die) (12:13)
- o. Will rise to your inheritance at the end of the days (12:13)

#### **V. Macedonian Empire – The Belly & Thighs of Bronze (2:32,39)**

- A. Alexander the Great
- B. Empire divided between his 4 Generals at his death

#### **VI. Roman Empire – The Legs of Iron (2:32,39)**

- A. Western, Catholic leg located in Rome
- B. Eastern, Orthodox leg located in Constantinople/Byzantium/Istanbul

#### **VII. The Middle Ages to the Present – The Feet and Toes of Iron and Clay (2:32,32)**

#### **VIII. The British Empire – The Lion with Eagle's Wings (7:4)**

- A. Wings are plucked off – American Revolution – loss of 13 colonies
- B. Lion made to stand on two feet like a man – Wesley revival causes drastic change of heart in empire, made to stand up and be accountable for slave trade, immorality, etc.
- C. Man's heart given to it – Great moral change in British Empire

#### **IX. America – The Eagle's Wings (7:4)**

- A. America is really an extension of the British Empire
- B. We consider England to be our homeland
- C. We still defer to the British on a one to one basis

#### **X. Russia – The Bear (7:5)**

- A. Raised up on one side – Arctic northern/right side is frozen and cannot be raised up. Russia can only "raise up" on her southern/left side
- B. Bear is facing west toward Europe, tail in East facing Alaska
- C. Three ribs in its mouth – grew by "eating" other countries

#### **XI. 4 Nation Islamic Coalition – The Leopard with 4 Heads and 4 Wings (7:6)**

- A. 5<sup>th</sup> Seal of Global Persecution / Tribulation occurs during this Empire
- B. Muslims lead the world in persecution
- C. 4 Heads indicate 4 different leaders/countries
- D. 4 Wings indicate 4 supporting air forces

**XII. End-Time World Empire – The Dreadful and Terrible Beast (7:7)**

- A. Huge Iron Teeth – Strength of old Roman Empire (7:7,19)
- B. Nails of Bronze – Speed of old Macedonian Empire (7:7.19)
- C. Devouring, breaking in pieces, trampling other nations (7:7)
- D. Different from all other world empires (7:7)
- E. 10 Nation Confederacy – 10 Horns (7:7)
- F. Shall devour (conquer) the whole earth (7:23)

**XIII. The Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ – The Rock Not Cut By Hands (2:34-35,44-45)**

- A. Becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth (2:35)
- B. Kingdom shall never be destroyed (2:44)

**XIV. Destruction of the Current Heavens and the Current Earth (Rev. 20:11)**

**XIV. The Great White Throne Bema Seat Judgment (Dan 7:9-14, 12:1-13, Rev. 20:11-15)**

**XV. The New Heavens and the New Earth (Rev. 21:1-22:21)**



# Unrolling the Scroll

## Revelation Master Timeline

### I. Introduction

- A. Blessed is he who reads, hears and keeps (1:3)
- B. Who is and who was and who is to come (1:4)
- C. Firstborn from the dead (1:5)
- D. Kings and Priests (1:6)
- E. Coming with clouds (1:7)
- F. Alpha and Omega (1:8)

### II. John in the Spirit on the Lord's Day (1:9-10)

- A. Write what you see in a book and send it to the Seven Churches (1:11)
- B. Seven Gold Lampstands (1:12)
- C. Christ appears & His appearance (1:13-18)

### III. The "Hinge on the Door" (1:19) -- divides Revelation into two sections

- A. The Things Which ARE (Current Events)
- B. The Things Which WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THIS (Future Events)

### IV. The THINGS WHICH ARE – Seven Letters to Seven Churches

- A. Ephesus – Repent and do the first works (2:1-7)
- B. Smyrna – You will have tribulation (2:8-11)
- C. Pergamos -- The Doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans 2:12-17)
- D. Thyatira -- The False Prophetess Jezebel (18-29)
- E. Sardis -- Hold fast and repent (3:1-6)
- F. Philadelphia -- I have set before you an open door (3:7-13)
- G. Laodicea -- Neither hot nor cold, spew you out of my mouth (3:14-22)

### V. The THINGS WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THIS – The Scroll with 7 Seals

- A. A door standing open in heaven (4:1) [II Corin 12:1-4]
  - 1. Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this
  - 2. John alone caught up in heaven
  - 3. Christ appears on Throne (4:2-3)
  - 4. 24 Elders (4:4)
  - 5. 7 Lamps of Fire / 7 Spirits of God / Cherubim (4:5) [Zech 4:2]
  - 6. Sea of Glass, like Crystal (4:6)
  - 7. 4 Living Creatures / Seraphim (4:6-9)
    - a. Full of eyes in front and in back – Living Sentries [Ezek 1:10]
    - b. 1<sup>st</sup> Creature like a Lion
    - c. 2<sup>nd</sup> Creature like a Calf
    - d. 3<sup>rd</sup> Creature like a Man
    - e. 4<sup>th</sup> Creature like a Flying Eagle
- B. Scroll written on both sides with 7 Seals (5:1-14) [Zech 5:1-4, Ezek 2:9-10]
  - 1. 1<sup>st</sup> Seal – White Horse -- WAR IN NORTHERN HEMISPHERE (6:1-2) [Matt 24:6-7]
    - a. Bow -- Instrument of War
    - b. Crown -- Ruler of Nation
    - c. Conquering and to conquer – War
    - d. [Zechariah 6:1-6] -- Northern Hemisphere
  - 2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Seal – Red Horse – ETHNIC GENOCIDE IN 10/40 WINDOW (6:3-4) [Matt 24:6-7]
    - a. Take peace from the earth
    - b. That men should SLAY ONE ANOTHER
    - c. A great sword (beheading)
  - 3. 3<sup>rd</sup> Seal – Black Horse – CROP FAILURE IN NORTHERN HEMIPHERE (6:5-6)

- a. Pair of Scales – Symbol of trade, commerce in John’s day
  - b. Quart of wheat for a denarius (one day’s pay)
  - c. 3 quarts of barley for a denarius
  - d. Collapse of wheat and barley crops
  - e. Do not harm the oil and the wine – principal crops in the Mediterranean
  - f. Area out of which will probably come the Anti-Christ
4. 4<sup>th</sup> Seal – Pale Horse – PLAGUE/FAMINE IN SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE (6:7-8)  
[Matt 24:7]
- a. Death, followed by Hades (Hell)
  - b. Power given to them over ¼ of the earth
  - c. Kill with sword, hunger, death & beasts of the earth
  - d. Sick, hungry, weak humanity can’t fight off hungry predators (8:7)
    - (1) Destruction of all green grass causes massive death of herbivores
    - (2) Carnivores come after humanity as major food supply
5. 5<sup>th</sup> Seal – Global Persecution –Tribulation (6:9-11) [Matt 24:9-13]
- a. World blames Christians for all their problems
  - b. Church delivered up to tribulation / Greek *thlipsis* (Matt 24:9)
  - c. Global execution of Christians (Matt 24:9)
  - d. Hated by all nations for Christ’s sake (Matt 24:9)
  - e. Pre-Trib church becomes offended and falls away (Matt 24:10) [II Thes. 2:1-3]
  - f. Betray one another, hate one another (Matt 24:10)
  - g. Many false prophets arise and deceive many (Matt 24:11)
  - h. Lawlessness abounds (Matt 24:12) [II Thes 2:6-8]
  - i. Love of many grows cold (Matt 24:12)
  - j. Those slain for the Word of God and their testimony (6:9)
  - k. How long till they are avenged? (6:10)
  - l. Wait until REMAINDER OF FELLOW SERVANTS ARE KILLED (6:11)
6. 6<sup>th</sup> Seal – Great Tribulation / Greek *megas thlipsis* (6:12-17)
- a. Global Earthquake (6:12) [Matt 24:7]
  - b. Sun black as sackcloth (6:12) [Matt 24:29]
  - c. Moon like blood (6:12) [Matt 24:29]
  - d. Stars of heaven fall to earth (6:13) [Matt 24:29]
  - e. Atmospheric blow-off (6:14)
  - f. Tectonic plates disrupted – islands and mountains moved (6:14)
  - g. Mankind panics (6:15-16)
  - h. Announcement of upcoming Wrath of God /7<sup>th</sup> Seal (6:16-17)
  - i. Wind held back globally (7:1)
  - j. Sealing of the 144,000 (7:2-8)
    - (1) Joseph = Ephraim
    - (2) Dan excluded for sin of Golden Calf (I Kings 12:26-30)
  - k. Rapture of First Portion of the Bride / Prepared / Enough Oil (7:9-17)
    - (1) Matt 24:29-31 – Wise and Foolish Virgins, half go in, half left out
    - (2) I Thes. 4:13-18 – We who are alive and remain shall be caught up in the clouds
7. 7<sup>th</sup> Seal – The Wrath of God (8:1-19:21)
- a. ½ hour of silence in Heaven / 20 years of peace on Earth (8:1) [II Peter 3:8]
  - b. Announcement of the 7 Trumpets (8:2-6)
  - c. 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet (8:7)
    - (1) Hail, fire and blood (8:7)
    - (2) 1/3 of all trees burned up (8:7)
    - (3) All green grass burned up (8:7)
  - d. 2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet (8:8-9)
    - (1) Great mountain thrown into sea (8:8)
      - (a) Possibly meteor/asteroid
      - (b) Possibly Mt. Tabor [Matt 17:1-21, Mark 11:11-26]
    - (2) 1/3 of sea becomes blood (8:8) – Possibly Atlantic Ocean, 1/3 of all water there



- (3) 1/3 of all creatures in sea die (8:9)
- (4) 1/3 of ships destroyed (8:9)
- e. 3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet (8:10)
  - (1) Great star burning like torch – probably comet (8:10)
  - (2) 1/3 of all fresh water becomes poisonous (8:11)
- f. 4<sup>th</sup> Trumpet (8:12-13)
  - (1) 1/3 of sun struck (8:12)
  - (2) 1/3 of moon struck (8:12)
  - (3) 1/3 of stars struck (8:12)
  - (4) Announcement of the Three Woes (8:13)
- g. 5<sup>th</sup> Trumpet / 1<sup>st</sup> Woe (9:1-11)
  - (1) Abyss / Bottomless Pit opened (9:1-2)
    - (a) Holding Cell for angels that married human women
    - (b) Genesis 6:1-4 -- Sons of God married daughters of men
    - (c) Jude 4-6 – Everlasting chains under darkness for judgment
  - (2) Demons in form of locusts released (9:3-10)
  - (3) Led by Abbadon/Apollyon/Destroyer (9:11)
- h. 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet / 3<sup>rd</sup> Woe (9:12-11:13)
  - (1) 4 demons bound at Euphrates (9:13-15)
  - (2) 1/3 of mankind to be killed (9:15)
  - (3) 200 million man army on demonic horseback (9:16-19)
  - (4) No further repentance by mankind / no further Gentile salvations (9:20-21)
  - (5) Angel with little book (10:1-2)
  - (6) 7 Thunders (10:3-4) – Contents unknown
  - (7) Angel swears that with 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet, Wrath of God will be done (10:5-7)
  - (8) John takes little book from angel (10:8-11)
  - (9) Holy City trodden underfoot for 3 ½ years (11:1-2) -- 1<sup>st</sup> 3 ½ years of 7
  - (10) Two Witnesses (11:3-6) [Zech 4:1-5,11-14]
    - (a) Prophecy 1,260 days / 3 ½ years (11:3)
    - (b) Two olive trees and two lampstands of Zechariah
    - (c) Fire comes out of their mouths
    - (d) Power to shut heavens so no rain falls
    - (e) Power to turn waters to blood
    - (f) Power to strike the earth with all kinds of plagues
    - (g) Killed by Abbadon from Abyss
    - (h) Bodies lay on streets of Jerusalem for 3 ½ days
    - (i) People send one another presents, just like Christmas
    - (j) Resurrected by voice from heaven as world watches
    - (k) Ascend into heaven with everyone watching
    - (l) Great earthquake in Jerusalem
    - (m) 7,000 people die
- i. 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet / 3<sup>rd</sup> Woe (11:14-19:21)
  - (1) 24 Elders announce what will happen (11:15-18)
  - (2) Temple of God opened in Heaven (11:19)
  - (3) Woman clothed with the sun (12:1-6)
  - (4) Dragon cast out of heaven (12:7-13)
  - (5) Woman flees into wilderness (12:14-17)
  - (6) Beast out of the SEA / Anti-Christ (13:1-10) [II Thes 2:3-7, Daniel 7:1-28]
    - (a) 7 Heads (13:1)
    - (b) 10 Horns (13:1)
    - (c) 10 Crowns (13:1)
    - (d) Blasphemous name on heads (13:1)
    - (e) Like a Leopard / Pan-Arabic Union (13:2) [Daniel 7:6]
    - (f) Feet like a Bear / Russia (13:2) [Daniel 7:5]
    - (g) Mouth of a Lion / England (13:2) [Daniel 7:4]
    - (h) Given power by dragon (13:2)
    - (i) Mortal wounding of one head (13:3)

- (j) Given authority to continue for 3 ½ years (13:4-5) -- 2<sup>nd</sup> 3 ½ years of 7
- (k) Granted power to overcome the saints (13:7)
- (l) Authority given over whole world (13:7-10)
- (7) Beast coming out of the EARTH / False Prophet (13:11-18)
  - (a) Causes everyone to worship the Anti-Christ (13:11-12)
  - (b) Performs great signs and wonders (13:13)
  - (c) Makes fire come down on earth like Two Witnesses (13:13)
  - (d) Animates / demon possesses images of Anti-Christ all over world (13:14-15)
  - (e) Mark of the Beast (13:16-18)
- (8) Rapture of the 144,000 (14:1-5)
  - (a) Male, virgin Jews
- (9) Angel preaching everlasting Gospel (14:6-7)
- (10) 2<sup>nd</sup> Angel announcing Babylon has fallen (14:8)
- (11) Final warning about taking Mark of the Beast (14:9-13)
- (12) Reaping of the earth (14:14-20)
- (13) 7 Plagues / Bowls (15:1-18:24)
  - (a) 1<sup>st</sup> Bowl/Plague – Sores on people (16:2)
  - (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> Bowl/Plague – Sea dies/becomes like blood of dead man (16:3)
  - (c) 3<sup>rd</sup> Bowl/Plague – Rivers & Streams become like blood (16:4-7)
  - (d) 4<sup>th</sup> Bowl/Plague – Sun scorches earth (16:8-9)
  - (e) 5<sup>th</sup> Bowl/Plague – Beast’s kingdom blacked out (16:10-11) [Exodus 10:21-23]
  - (f) 6<sup>th</sup> Bowl/Plague – Stage set for Armageddon (16:12-16)
    - [1] Euphrates dries up (16:12)
    - [2] 3 unclean spirits like frogs performing signs (16:13)
    - [3] 1 from satan, 1 from Anti-Christ, 1 from False Prophet (16:13)
    - [4] Paves way for kings of the East (China, Far East) (16:12)
    - [5] Gather kings of the whole world for Armageddon (16:14)
  - (g) 7<sup>th</sup> Bowl/Plague – Final devastation of the earth (16:17-19:21)
    - [1] Global earthquake of epic proportions (16:18)
    - [2] Rome broken into three parts (16:19)
    - [3] Cities of the world fall/collapse (16:19)
    - [4] All mountains, islands disappear (16:20)
    - [5] 100 lb hailstones fall (16:21)
    - [6] Great Whore of Babylon / Rome judged (17:1-18)
- C. Invasion from Heaven (19:1-21)
  1. Bride has made herself ready / Now complete (19:1-10)
  2. Rider on White Horse / Christ (19:11-13)
  3. Armies of Heaven follow (19:14)
  4. Christ destroys enemy armies (19:15-21)
  5. Anti-Christ, False Prophet captured (19 :20)
  6. Cast into Lake of Fire (19:20)
  7. Satan cast into Abyss / Bottomless Pit for 1,000 years (20:1-3)
  8. Completed Bride rules over earth with Christ for 1,000 years (20:4-6)
  9. Satan released from Abyss (20:7)
  10. Deceives the nations (20:8)
  11. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Armageddon -- Gog and Magog (20:9) [Ezekiel 38]
  12. Satan thrown into Lake of Fire (20:10)
- D. Destruction of Heavens and Earth (20:11) [II Peter 3:10]
- E. Great White Throne / Bema Seat Judgment (20:11-15)
  1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Resurrection – General Resurrection
  2. Books were opened / Record of works of all men (20:12)
  3. Book of Life opened (20:12)
  4. Sea, death and Hades give up dead that are in them (20:12-13)
  5. Dead judged according to their works (20:12-13)
    - a. Matthew 25:31-46 -- Sheep and Goats

- b. Romans 2:11-16 – The consciences now accusing, now excusing them
- c. Daniel 12:2-3 – Some to everlasting life, some to everlasting shame & contempt
- d. I Corinthians 3:9-15 – The Day will reveal it, but only as through fire
- e. II Corinthians 5:10 – We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ
- f. Death and Hades thrown into the Lake of Fire (20:14)

(1) The Second Death – eternal

**F. New Heavens and New Earth (21:1-22:21)**

1. New Heavens and New Earth (21:1)
2. New Jerusalem descends from Heaven (21:2-4)
3. I make all things new (21:5-7)
4. Lake of Fire in existence eternally (21:8)
5. John shown New Jerusalem (21:9-22:2)
  - a. Great wall with 12 gates (21:12)
  - b. Twelve angels at the gates (21:12)
  - c. Names of the tribes of Israel written on gates (21:12)
  - d. Three gates on north, south, east & west (21:13)
  - e. 12 foundations with names of the 12 Apostles (21:14)
  - f. Dimensions of the city – cube @ 1,500 miles in height, width and depth (21:16)
  - g. Wall made of jasper (21:18)
  - h. City is pure gold, like clear glass (21:18)
  - i. Foundations of city adorned with precious stones (21:19)
    - (1) 1<sup>st</sup> – Jasper (21:19)
    - (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> -- Sapphire (21:19)
    - (3) 3<sup>rd</sup> – Chalcedony (21:19)
    - (4) 4<sup>th</sup> – Emerald (21:19)
    - (5) 5<sup>th</sup> – Sardonyx (21:20)
    - (6) 6<sup>th</sup> – Sardius (21:20)
    - (7) 7<sup>th</sup> – Chrysolite (21:20)
    - (8) 8<sup>th</sup> – Beryl (21:20)
    - (9) 9<sup>th</sup> – Topaz (21:20)
    - (10) 10<sup>th</sup> – Chrysoprase (21:20)
    - (11) 11<sup>th</sup> – Jacinth (21:20)
    - (12) 12<sup>th</sup> – Amethyst (21:20)
  - j. 12 Gates are 12 Pearls, each gate a single pearl (21:21)
  - k. Street of the city is pure gold, like transparent glass (21:21)
  - l. No temple in the city (21:22)
    - (1) The Lord and the Lamb are its temple
    - (2) No need of sun or moon, glory of God illuminates it (21:23)
  - m. Nations will bring their glory and honor into it (21:24-27)
  - n. Pure river of water of life (living water) flowing from the Throne (22:1)
  - o. Tree of Life (22:2)
    - (1) In the middle of its street
    - (2) On either side of the River of Life
    - (3) Bears 12 fruits
    - (4) Each tree bearing fruit every month
    - (5) Leaves are for the healing of the nations
6. No more curse (22:3)
7. They shall see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads (22:4)

**VI. Closing Statements (22:7-21)**

- A. Warning – Behold, I am coming quickly (22:7)
- B. John confirms that he saw and heard these things (22:8)
- C. Do not seal the words of this prophecy, for the time is at hand (22:10)
- D. Too late to change (22:11)
- E. Blessed are those who do His commandments (22:14)
  1. They may have right to the Tree of Life
  2. They may enter through the gates into the city

- 3. Outside (in the Lake of Fire), are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral, etc. (22:15)**
- F. I, Jesus have sent my angel to testify (22:16)**
  - G. The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (22:17)**
  - H. If anyone adds to the words of this Book, God will add the plagues in this Book (22:18)**
  - I. If anyone takes away from the words of this Book, God will take away his part from the Book of Life, from the Holy City, and from the things in this Book (22:19)**
  - J. Surely I am coming quickly (22:20)**
  - K. Amen! (22:21)**

**Thank you for your interest in Unrolling the Scroll  
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# Episode Master Outline

## Day Title

## Scripture

### **Episode One – The Revelation of Jesus Christ (20 Days)**

1. Pre-, Mid-, Post-, Pan-, What?	Revelation 5:1-5
2. Rightly Dividing the Word	II Timothy 2:15
3. Getting the BIG Picture	Revelation 1:19
4. New Business	Revelation 4:1
5. Many Will Become Offended	Matthew 24:10
6. <u>The</u> Revelation Of Jesus Christ	Revelation 1:1
7. Things Which Must Take Place Shortly	Revelation 1:1
8. Blessed Is He Who Keeps	Revelation 1:3
9. Who Is, Who Was, and Who Is To Come	Revelation 1:4
10. Firstborn From the Dead	Revelation 1:4-5
11. First In Everything	Revelation 1:4-5
12. Upholding All Things	Hebrews 1:3
13. Kings and Priests	Revelation 1:4-6
14. Coming With Clouds	Revelation 1:7
15. Jesus In the Cloud	Revelation 1:7
16. Meeting On the Mountain	Revelation 1:7
17. Every Eye Will See Him	Revelation 1:7
18. Even They Who Pierced Him	Revelation 1:7
19. They Cast Lots For My Garments	Psalms 22:18
20. Alpha and Omega	Revelation 1:8

### **Episode Two – Things That Are (15 Days)**

1. Tribulation, Kingdom and Patience	Revelation 1:9
2. In The Spirit	Revelation 1:10
3. Write In A Book	Revelation 1:11
4. Seven Golden Lampstands	Revelation 1:12
5. One Like the Son of Man	Revelation 1:13-15
6. I Have the Keys	Revelation 1:18
7. The Hinge On the Door	Revelation 1:19
8. The Seven Churches	Revelation 1:20
9. Ephesus – Leaving Your First Love	Revelation 2:1-7
10. Smyrna – Don't Be Afraid Of Suffering	Revelation 2:8-11
11. Pergamos – Beware Of Balaam	Revelation 2:12-17
12. Thyatira – Tolerating Jezebel	Revelation 2:18-29
13. Sardis – Hold Fast And Repent	Revelation 3:1-6
14. Philadelphia – An Open Door	Revelation 3:7-13
15. Laodicea – Because You Are Lukewarm	Revelation 3:14-21

### **Episode Three – The Things That Shall Be (31 Days)**

1. After These Things	Revelation 4:1
2. In the Spirit	Revelation 4:2
3. Twenty-Four Fine Fellers!	Revelation 4:3-5
4. The Throneroom of Heaven	Revelation 4:3-5
5. Cross in the Desert	Revelation 4:7-8
6. It's About Time	Ecclesiastes 1:9-11

**Day Title****Scripture**

7. Time Traveler	Hebrews 7:1-3
8. The Order of Melchizedek	Hebrews 7:1-3
9. The Man from Eternity	Hebrews 7:3
10. Who Is Worthy?	Revelation 5:1-4
11. The Scroll	Revelation 5:1-2
12. The Four Horsemen	Revelation 6:1-2
13. The White Horse of War	Revelation 6:1-2
14. The Red Horse of Ethnic Genocide	Revelation 6:3-4
15. The Black Horse of Crop Failure	Revelation 6:5-6
16. The Pale Horse of Plague & Famine	Revelation 6:7-8
17. The Tribulation	Revelation 6:9-11
18. Decoding the Discourse	Matthew 24:3
19. The Sign of Your Coming	Matthew 24:3
20. Tectonic Boogie	Revelation 6:12-14
21. Smoke Gets In Your Eyes	Revelation 6:12-14
22. Planetary Heart Attack	Revelation 6:12-14
23. Catch Your Breath Before It Runs Away	Revelation 6:12-14
24. The 144,000	Revelation 6:12-14
25. Sitting on the Bench	Revelation 7:3-4
26. Three Strikes, You're Out!!!	Revelation 7:5-8
27. But Wait, There's More!!!	Judges 18:30-31
28. No Private Interpretation	II Peter 1:20-21
29. Every Nation, Kindred, Tribe and Tongue	Revelation 7:9-10
30. Who Are Those Guys, and Why Do They Keep Following Us?	Revelation 7:13-15
31. Who Are Those Guys, Really?	Revelation 7:13-15

**Episode Four – The Crucified Bride (34 Days)**

1. When Will These Things Be?	Matthew 24:3
2. One Question, Three Answers	Matthew 24:3
3. The Times of the Gentiles	Luke 21:24
4. The Blinding of Israel	Romans 11:25
5. The Fullness of the Gentiles	Romans 11:25
6. The Restoration of Israel	Romans 11:25
7. They Never Knew What Hit 'Em!	Matthew 24:36-39
8. Five Wise, Five Foolish	Matthew 25:1-4
9. The Door Is Shut	Matthew 25:6-10
10. Good and Faithful Servant	Matthew 25:20-21
11. You Did It Unto Me	Matthew 25:37-40
12. The First Shall Be Last	Matthew 20:8-16
13. Many Are Called, Few Are Chosen	Matthew 20:13-16
14. As Through Fire	I Corinthians 3:12-15
15. MEGA Tribulation	Matthew 24:21-22
16. The Dilemma of Daniel	Matthew 24:15-20
17. A Pig In A Poke!	Matthew 24:15-20
18. Head of Gold, Feet of Clay	Daniel 2:31-35
19. Writing on the Wall	Daniel 5:3-6
20. He Is My Shepherd	Isaiah 44:26-28
21. Ten Toes to Go, Please!	Daniel 2:41-43
22. Lions and Leopards and Bears, O My!	Daniel 7:2-5
23. Beware the Bear	Daniel 7:2-5
24. The Lying Leopard	Daniel 7:6
25. The Mad Mahdi	Revelation 13:11-14
26. Monster on the Loose	Daniel 7:7

<u>Day</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
27.	"Then"	Matthew 24:9-11
28.	Abomination of Desolation	Matthew 24:15-16
29.	"Then" – The Sequel	Matthew 24:21-22
30.	Till My Change Comes	Job 14:12-15
31.	Swat Team from Heaven	Matthew 24:30-31
32.	Just Like Jesus!	I John 3:2-3
33.	Old Body, New Body	I Corinthians 15:48-49
34.	Daniel's Master Timeline of Empires	-----

### **Episode Five – The Time of the Beast (30 Days)**

1.	The Worst Is Yet to Come	Revelation 8:8-9
2.	7-7-7, not 6-6-6	Revelation 1:12-16
3.	Woe, Woe and...Whoa!	Revelation 15:1-4
4.	Silence in Heaven	II Peter 3:3-4, 7-8
5.	The Prayers of the Saints	Revelation 8:2-5
6.	Hail, Fire and ...Blood???	Revelation 8:7
7.	Oxygen Shortage!	Revelation 8:7
8.	Mountain from the Sky	Revelation 8:8-9
9.	Splitting Mountains in Two	Luke 24:59-51
10.	Bitter Waters	Revelation 8:10-11
11.	Smoke Gets in Your Eyes	Revelation 8:12-13
12.	Locusts from Hell	Revelation 9:1-2,4
13.	The Mutant Menace	Revelation 9:1-2,4
14.	Float Like a Locust, Sting Like a Scorpion	Revelation 9:3-6
15.	Math Whiz!	Revelation 9:13-15
16.	200 Million Man Army	Revelation 9:16-19
17.	The Seven Thunders	Revelation 10:1-4
18.	The Little Book	Revelation 10:8-10
19.	Don't Bug Agabus	Acts 21:10-11
20.	Blueprints from the Future	Revelation 11:1-2
21.	Elijah Who Is to Come	Matthew 11:10-14
22.	My Two Witnesses	Revelation 11:3-5a
23.	A Woman Clothed With the Son	Revelation 12:1-5
24.	Disgruntled Employee	Revelation 12:3-4
25.	Cast Out of Heaven	Revelation 12:7-9
26.	The Beast from the Sea	Revelation 13:1-2
27.	Strange Critter, Strange Bedfellows	Revelation 13:1-2
28.	Cheap Imitations	Revelation 13:3-4
29.	Fire from Heaven	Revelation 13:11-13
30.	Mark of the Beast	Revelation 13:16-18

### **Episode Six – Invasion from Outer Space (14 Days)**

1.	The Whore Of Babylon	Revelation 17:1-6
2.	7 Heads	Revelation 17:7-11
3.	10 Horns	Revelation 17:12-18
4.	Demon Prison	Revelation 18:1-2
5.	Come Out Of Her	Revelation 18:4
6.	In One Hour	Revelation 18:5-19
7.	The Marriage Of the Lamb	Revelation 19:7
8.	Getting Ready For the Wedding	Revelation 19:8
9.	The Spirit Of Prophecy	Revelation 19:10
10.	I Have Horses, Don't I?	Revelation 19:11
11.	The Word Of God	Revelation 19:12-13

**Day Title****Scripture**

- |                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 12. The Armies Of Heaven | Revelation 19:14  |
| 13. The Wrath Of God     | Revelation 19:15  |
| 14. Thrown In Jail       | Revelation 20:1-3 |

**Episode Seven – All Things New (23 Days)**

- |                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Rule and Reign               | Revelation 20:4     |
| 2. The First Resurrection       | Revelation 20:5-6   |
| 3. The Millennial Reign         | Revelation 20:6     |
| 4. The Final Temple             | Ezekiel 40 – 46     |
| 5. The River Of Life            | Ezekiel 47          |
| 6. The Lake Of Fire             | Revelation 20:14-15 |
| 7. The New Israel               | Ezekiel 48          |
| 8. Rebuilding the Planet        | Matthew 24:22       |
| 9. Shock Probation              | Revelation 20:7-10  |
| 10. The Great White Throne      | Revelation 20:11-25 |
| 11. The Gentile Escape Clause   | Romans 2:12-16      |
| 12. The Second Death            | Revelation 20:14-15 |
| 13. The New Universe            | Revelation 21:1     |
| 14. The New Earth               | Revelation 21:1     |
| 15. The New Jerusalem           | Revelation 21:2     |
| 16. The 12 Foundations          | Revelation 21:14-21 |
| 17. The Lamb Is It's Light      | Revelation 21:22-23 |
| 18. The Tree Of Life            | Revelation 22:2     |
| 19. No More Curse!              | Revelation 22:3     |
| 20. "Come!"                     | Revelation 22:17    |
| 21. Breach Of Contract          | Revelation 22:18-19 |
| 22. I Am Coming Quickly         | Revelation 22:20    |
| 23. Epilogue – Where From Here? | Revelation 1:1-3    |

NOTE: As I have written this series of books, a strange, wonderful and frustrating thing has occurred. When I first began this project, I walked systematically through the Revelation of Jesus Christ and outlined what I thought would be an iron-clad list of articles which would make up each of the episodes. I couldn't have been more wrong. Once I began a series of articles for a given episode, I found that the articles took on a life of their own, and literally began writing themselves. I now understand what the Psalmist said when he proclaimed that he was the "pen of a ready writer". As the Holy Spirit has taken over this project, the articles have grown longer, more detailed, and have taken directions which I would never have anticipated. In doing so, I have been the beneficiary of fresh revelation from God as I wrote. Time and time again, the Holy Spirit would quicken my understanding of the topic I was writing about, and I would begin to add additional materials which I had never understood or even thought of before that very moment. For that reason, this list of articles may or may not end up being an exact match for another episode which has yet to be written. For example, I have already written Episode One, so that list is pretty well carved in stone. The same thing would be true for Episode Four, which is almost complete. But for the other episodes, your guess is as good as mine as to whether or not this list of articles will match the finished product. I do know this: the general topic and time frame for each of the episodes is pretty well defined, and not likely to change (famous last words!). So please don't be surprised if, when you purchase the NEXT episode, the article titles don't always agree. I can guarantee you another thing: you will be getting MORE for your money, because the Lord will have given me deeper insight into His precious, Holy Word, and I will be sharing it with you in longer, more complex and more numerous articles. Thanks in advance for your patience in this matter. I hope and pray that you will enjoy the entire series and learn much about the End of Days in doing so.

Dr. Ray Young



# Meet Dr. Young



Dr. Ray Young has been studying the **Revelation of Jesus Christ** for over 15 years. He has been in the ministry for over 30 years, and is a **teacher, prophet** and **apostle** in the body of Christ. Dr. Young is also a professional educator, and taught at a university level for 18 years. He is the president and founder of **Final Great Awakening Ministries** and **Revival Nation Movement**. He has also published the following books:

**How to Survive the Coming Crash**

**Unrolling the Scroll Series:**

**Episode One – The Revelation of Jesus Christ**

**Episode Three – The Things That Shall Be**

**Episode Four – The Crucified Bride**

**Episode Five – The Time of the Beast**

**Making Sense of the End Times**

He is currently working on completing the full **Unrolling the Scroll** series of seven devotional study guides to the Revelation of Jesus Christ. He can be reached at any of the phone numbers, email address or web site URL's listed below.

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