

"BEHOLD, I BRING YOU
GOOD TIDINGS OF
GREAT JOY," — LUKE 2:10

JOHN THE BAPTIST

BORN TO HERALD
THE COMING
OF CHRIST

MATT. 3:1-12

MARK 1:4-8

LUKE 3:7-20

JOHN 1:6-8

JESUS
AND HIS
DISCIPLES
GOING TO
JERUSALEM

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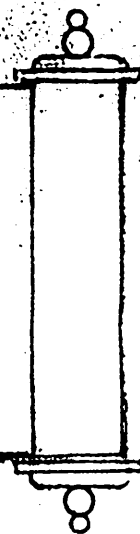
10:32-3

KNOW YOUR BIBLE

RIGHTLY DIVIDED

A BIBLICAL SURVEY
AND TEXTBOOK

by Rev., Dr. Andrew J. Losiér



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Andrew J. Losier

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by Andrew J. Losier

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Christian Literature & Bible Center, Inc.

United States of America

Rev. Andrew Losier worked as a missionary in East and South Africa from 1938 until 1981. He was blessed with a family of nine children and his precious wife Dorothy L. Losier. He is the founder of the Christian Literature & Bible Center, Inc. which is continuing to bear witness around the world through the printed page. Rev. Losier graduated from Wheaton College in 1934 and he earned his THB degree from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1937.

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DEDICATION

As missionaries in Africa since 1938, my wife Dorothy and I are grateful to all of those dear brothers and sisters in the Lord who followed us with their prayers and cares. Whatever has been accomplished during these many years on the mission field was made possible by God's faithful ones in the homeland of U.S.A. The great commission of the Lord Jesus Christ involves all of the believers, both at home and abroad! I have been grateful to the Lord for the wonderful prayer warriors who have sustained us before the Lord with their daily prayer. As the Lord promised to provide our every need in both spiritual and material realms, we know the Lord has used our precious fellow believers to provide.

In appreciation of their sacrificial help in the furthering of the Gospel, I wish to dedicate this Bible Study Text Book to all who have had a part in sending us to Africa and maintaining us these many years. Without them, it would have been impossible for us to send forth the glorious Gospel message to those precious souls in Africa. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Hebrews 2:3).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

At a time of great sorrow, in the loss of our first daughter, Catherine Ann, the Lord was very gracious to us in giving us Rebecca Louise. This has been obvious to us over and over as we have watched her grow in the Lord, physically and spiritually. She has shown discernment as God the Holy Spirit has led her along life's way. Her gifts of leadership have grown in the light of God's Word. From an early age, she expressed herself well and has subsequently demonstrated a gift in the field of writing. She put the finishing touches on the book "Memoirs of Africa," which helped to make it an inspiration to many.

In 1985 I received a commission from Rev. Dr. Ige Olumide, President of the Faith Bible college and Seminary in Marina, Lagos, Nigeria, to write an enlarged Bible Study edition of some of my early booklets. Again, Becky came to my rescue, making possible this Biblical Survey textbook. A special note of thanks to our dear daughter Rebecca Louise Holmes. "And from a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (II Timothy 3:15)

Since there was a need for a chart to illustrate the plan of God, I turned to my beloved brother Raymond William Losier, who had done an excellent job with the drawings in "Memoirs of Africa," and he too accepted the challenge. Without a shadow of doubt, Brother Ray has produced the most excellent drawings on Biblical events that I have ever seen. Scrolls of his drawings for the Master have been prepared to accompany the textbook. Ray, who has completed great artistic commercial displays in his career, admitted to me, "I have never done anything greater in my whole life than this project!" I count it a great privilege to have had my brother take part in portraying God's 'blue print' for all ages. His artistic talents and experiences have culminated in an eternal work for our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (II Corinthians 4:6,7)

SPECIAL NOTE

This Bible Study Text Book is written to help less privileged people throughout the world who desire to study the Bible privately as well as in class rooms. The text book is copyrighted to preserve its entirety preventing any misuse of its contents. The author is always ready to grant permission to translate it into other languages. Being a nonprofit organization, known as Christian Literature & Bible Center, Inc., located at 1006 Oak Cliff Dr., Toccoa, Georgia 30577, U.S.A., gifts are accepted from believers so that further editions might be printed for distribution around the world.

FOREWORD

Andrew J. Losier has earned the right to be heard. He and his dear capable wife have served in Africa since 1938. It was my privilege when ministering in that part of the world a few years ago to see personally the tremendous work that they had accomplished and were still producing. They were highly esteemed of the brethren and full of good works. I saw their ministry at close hand and spent a brief time as a guest in their home.

As to the work that Missionary Losier has prepared, he has always been alert to the importance of the written word in evangelism and in instruction of believers. The present work is a most needful one because it treats the message of the Bible in its proper proportions and will be found helpful to any student of the Word of God, whether young or seasoned.

I recommend the work to the Christian public. It was our privilege to have Brother Losier in our classes years ago at Dallas Seminary. He and his dear wife have adorned the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We trust that this work will have a wide circulation and acceptance.

Charles Lee Feinberg
Talbot Theological Seminary

PREFACE

These Bible study notes were originally intended to help the Christian leaders of Africa, who had not acquired a formal Bible study course, nor attended Bible School. They were printed in a series of booklets, combining many truths scattered throughout the Bible, as simple study methods for believers of all ages to provide better insight to the Word of God and to assist them in their daily walk. The purpose is not to add another book which reflects the author's thoughts and ideas, but to give young believers a clear and simplified system whereby the reader can handle the Word of God more accurately, 'rightly dividing the Word of Truth.' The contents of this book can only be helpful to you as you apply the methods and information to your own personal Bible study.

As you examine the contents of this book, you will find that it does not deal with various view points, but is definite concerning statements in the Bible particularly regarding God's plan for all ages as recorded in Daniel 9:24.

"Seventy Sevens are determined upon thy people (Israel) and upon thy Holy City (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint The Most Holy."

You will note that the Bible quotations are primarily based upon the King James Authorized Version, and I strongly recommend the Scofield Bible with chain references. Always read Scripture in context as you evaluate Biblical interpretations.

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INTRODUCTION

The following Bible instructions and comments begin with the absolute character of God, the author of the Bible. When considering the Bible, it is important to understand that God has never needed to change or alter His original plan in dealing with His creation. There is absolutely no room for a pragmatic outlook in inquiring into God's revelation in the Scriptures. The Word of God in its original language was God-breathed by God the Holy Spirit and is totally without error. The Bible is the Word of God in its entirety and although God used human agents in the writing of His Word, He is the author. The Bible is the vehicle through which God has revealed His supreme plan for all ages. Chosen by God and controlled by the Holy Spirit, human vessels were used, as the Holy Spirit spoke through them, to bring God's knowledge to the human race.

God is absolutely perfect in every aspect. Mankind is totally depraved, helpless and incapable of approaching God's perfect standards. God was aware of our predicament from the beginning. He is allowing the cup of iniquity to be filled, sin to take its course, and permitting man to exercise volition, that the Grace of God through His Eternal Son may be offered to all.

It is the purpose of God to deal with sin once and forever, judging it by way of the cross, thus making possible the annihilation of sin forever. Since the old creation has been contaminated by sin, God is going to provide a new creation in which sin will never be an issue again. As human beings we are caught in the midst of this conflict of the ages and are part of God's great plan to deal with sin and all evil forces. It may look like a physical struggle to us because we are in the physical realm, but on the contrary, it is much more than this. Read Ephesians 6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." There is a Satanic onslaught in all four of these realms and Satan is well equipped to deal with every situation apart from the Sovereign intervention of God.

Satan was created the greatest creature of all time. Here is what God himself says about that Super Angel:

"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyre, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy timbrels and of thy flutes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth, and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

By no stretch of the imagination can this apply strictly to the King of Tyre, regardless of how evil that king happened to be! First of all, he was not present in the Garden of Eden! As the greatest creature God ever created, with tremendous power, and known as the Prince of the power of the air, Satan had great influence and scope in God's creation. Revelation 12:4 gives us great insight to Satan's power among the angels.

"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered, to devour her child as soon as it was born."

Critics maintain that it would be impossible to cluster together the stars upon the earth and they would be right. But in the context it is obvious that God is not referring to literal stars but to the angels. Even Satan is referred to as a star in Revelation 9:1.

In my introduction I want to point out just how powerful the evil forces are, since God allowed the opposite of Himself to be made manifest. However, I also want to point out that God is Absolute and Sovereign. He is and always will be in complete control, and although sentence has been passed on Satan, Satan's forces are still active and will go as far as God permits until the final judgement.

It is also important to note that the Bible cannot be read as a novel. It is like a jig saw puzzle, for although it may seem jumbled up, each piece fits perfectly into place as the plan of God is revealed. God has used over forty writers to bring us God's blue print or plan for the ages. It was given in progressive stages and culminated with the final Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, in which is stated the warning concerning adding or taking away from the book.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18, 19)

Although the Bible was written over a long period of time, salvation is explained throughout. Some phases of revelation were hidden from the Old Testament Saints, such as the 'Mystery Age,' known to us as the Church Age. In the New Testament some revelations were given to the Apostle John, on the Isle of Patmos, of which John was instructed not to write (Revelation 10:4). God has his 'fullness of time,' both to reveal the details of his plan and to accomplish his purpose.

The sequence of events in God's plan are not particularly written in progressive order, but God the Holy Spirit has been given us to lead us and to guide us into all truth, not through visions or dreams, but as we study God's precious Word. We are instructed to study the Bible, and "rightly divide the Word of Truth.

May God grant that, as you read this book, searching the Scriptures, in the light of the Holy Spirit, you will be filled with understanding as your knowledge increases. Confusion and uncertainty are tools of Satan, who tries to divert attention away from God's Word and cause us to dwell on feelings and experiences. Our satisfaction and confidence is in, "Thus saith the Lord!"

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him, For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (I John 3:18-21)

You will note as you read this book that I emphasize plain facts from God's Word, and differentiate between parables illustrating a truth, and true illustrations; between spiritual applications and literal fulfillment of prophetic utterances. An important distinction is made between Israel and the Church. The Bride of Christ, coming out of the Church Age must not be confused with Old Testament or Tribulation saints.

My final admonition is concerned with those who will remain on earth after the rapture takes place. With the imminent return of the Lord for His Bride, true believers may be 'caught up' at any moment, 'in the twinkling of an eye!' Precious souls will be at stake during the tribulation and they will need our counsel in order to orient to God's plan during that one-world government under Satan. Now let's get on with understanding God's Eternal Plan of all ages.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

GOD IS ABSOLUTE

As created human beings, we can only base our beliefs in God upon His personal revelation. The Bible, God's Word, states that "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." (Psalm 19:1) We begin by observing our surroundings. An intelligent person cannot deny the existence of a creative being for there is no other plausible explanation for such a wonderful, systematic universe. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) "It is the fool who saith there is no God!" (Psalm 53:1b) The worship of our Creator begins in the physical realm with the acknowledgment that there is someone – a Creator – that transcends what we can see with our physical eye.

We are told by the One who took upon Himself human flesh, who is very God, that "God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) In order to worship God in spirit we must be spiritually alive! It is here that human beings differ from animals; for we are a special creation. We were not created in the same manner as the animals, birds, fish and other creeping things, but "God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7)

"And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'" (Genesis 1:26)

Since God is Spirit, and we were made in the image of God, God has designed direct communication with human beings which is not possible with animals. However, since Adam sinned and died spiritually, thereby passing on spiritual death to the entire human race, our communication with God can only take place through the regenerative work of God the Holy Spirit which is why Christ said, "We must be born again," referring to being born of God the Holy Spirit. Man's relationship with God will be fully dealt with in this text book and all evidence will be based upon the Bible, the Word of God.

The natural man is a pragmatist; he looks at life as temporal and changeable. But there is more to life than meets the eye. As we behold the skies, we observe a regular pattern of day and night, and the orderly behavior of the stars, the moon and the sun. We become aware of a wonderful systematic creation. The seaman who sails the vast ocean is never without his compass. He checks it for accuracy by the positions of the heavenly lights. The natural man can only face his daily experiences with human viewpoint, continually adjusting his actions to suit the changing circumstances; but the one who has put his trust in Almighty God, the Creator, who is the same yesterday, today and forever, stands firmly upon the Word of God, whose author is Absolute!

God's Word gives to those that believe a guarantee that his plan or purpose will be performed so that we need never question or have doubt about the future. Job chapter 38 verse 4 describes it well as God speaks out, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" In Isaiah chapter 40 beginning with verse 12 we read concerning the capability of our Almighty God, "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His Hand, and measured out heaven with a span, and measured the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" Then God asks the question, "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor has taught Him?" (Isaiah 40:13) Compare God with mere humanity. "Behold, the nations are like a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold He taketh up the coasts as a very little thing." (Isaiah 40:15) God's Word adds to this, "All nations before Him are nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity." (Isaiah 49:17)

Now the question presents itself: What do you make God look like? God the Holy Spirit led Isaiah the prophet to reveal some of the futile attempts by natural man to fashion the image of God. "To whom then, will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare unto Him? The workman melteth and casteth an image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he has no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh for a skillful workman to prepare a carved image, that shall not be moved." (Isaiah 40:18-20)

Man has always desired to worship someone or something greater than himself and will go to great lengths to achieve that worship. It is at this point that man gets into trouble, worshiping creation rather than the Creator as the Bible puts it, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it." (II Timothy 3:5a)

"Because, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed forever, Amen." (Romans 1:21-25)

One may argue that they worship the image rather than the Creator out of ignorance. While this is true in many cases, it is not limited to ignorance. At our highest schools of learning there is a great percentage of learned people who absolutely reject the Creator and His provision, and who set up false gods in His place. Brainwashed by Satan himself, they have rejected the Living God. "In whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them." (II Corinthians 4:4) How sad it is that people of high intelligence should allow themselves to believe a lie rather than the truth.

Those who are enlightened by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ have a different perspective on life. "While we look not at things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (II Corinthians 4:18) This brings up the question: Is there something eternal, something greater that transcends the temporal physical realm?

To understand eternal things, one must understand the God of eternity! To arrive at that understanding requires study in the Word of God. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." (II Timothy 2:15) It is through the eternal Word of God which we call the Bible, that we can learn more about God. We may ask the question, "Is God the final Word of Truth?" The answer to that question is in the Word of God. Let us diligently search the Scriptures and discover the Author of the Bible and His divine attributes. While we are making a study of the attributes of God individually, it is important to note that the various attributes are interwoven and together form a manifestation of His Eternal character.

GOD IS LOVE

Many unbelievers prefer to dwell on the characteristic of love, though for the most part they have little knowledge of God. They quote only a part of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world," to excuse themselves, in hopes of covering up their way of life rather than facing the consequence of their sin; for they reason how could a God of love cast his creatures into eternal damnation? But they stop short of the qualification to become a partaker of that Divine Love for the verse reads on, "that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us; that God sent His only Begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (II John 4:7-10)

Coupled with these strong statements which are concise and to the point, is the claim made by Jesus Christ, Himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) Note also that "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9)

In God's economy there is no accommodation for ignorance, neglect, indifference or even procrastination as God deals with mankind through love. We must meet God's requirements or suffer the consequences! It is important to note that God's complete character, made up of many attributes, cannot be compromised in any way; for example his perfect love must be balanced with his perfect justice, righteousness etc. Our study of the Bible will reveal to us the great cost to bring so great salvation to us.

GOD IS ABSOLUTE RIGHTEOUSNESS

God is always righteous in whatever He does. In fact it is impossible for God to be anything but righteous. It is important to remember this aspect of God as you study the Bible. "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him." (I John 2:29).

In contrast to God's perfect righteousness, Isaiah chapter 64:6 states that man's righteousness, that is man at his ultimate good, is as filthy rags, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

God cannot have fellowship with anything or anyone that does not have His righteousness, so in His love he has provided a perfect solution.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ UNTO ALL AND UPON ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE: for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:21-26)

God's way is always right and perfect and cannot be improved upon in the slightest! That is why when Abraham believed God, it was counted as righteousness. "And he believed in the Lord; and He (God) counted it to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:6) It makes all the difference for our future as to whether God places His righteousness upon us, or we depend upon our own righteousness! The choice is ours. We have nothing to lose except filthy rags, and everything to gain. As for me, I will accept what God has provided through His Son, in Whom He is well pleased. The moment that we believe, Almighty God sees us in His son, "For you are dead, and your life hidden with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:3) What could we ask for that is better than God's absolute and perfect righteousness? "As for God, His way is perfect: the Word of the Lord is tried: He is a buckler to those that trust Him." (Psalm 18:30)

It is so easy for the natural man to blame God for things that go wrong, and take the credit when things go right! It is so easy to excuse ourselves when we fail to meet God's standards. God cannot tolerate anything but perfection and that is why He sent His eternal Son to provide perfect righteousness to those who believe. You and I are not worthy of perfect fellowship with God, no matter how good we may think we are; therefore we must utterly depend upon God to supply His righteousness! It must be 100% God's righteousness for nothing less will satisfy the Godhead! The Grace of God plus nothing, makes possible our eternal habitation with God. Warning - don't settle for anything less than God's righteousness!

GOD IS ABSOLUTE HOLINESS

Moses encountered the Holiness of God in the wilderness, as he was shepherding his father-in-law's sheep. He was attracted to an unusual burning bush that kept on burning yet was not consumed.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said 'I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt,' and when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said 'Moses, Moses,' and he said, 'Here am I.' And He said, 'Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' Moreover He said, 'I am the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God." (Exodus 3:2-6)

This was the beginning of God's revelation to Moses, in preparation for the giving of the law and the ten commandments.

The holiness of God, as an absolute was clearly manifested within the Tabernacle as a place of communication with God. The tribe of Levi was set aside by God to be the medium through which contact was to be made with God. This priestly tribe was to provide spiritual instruction within Israel and to guard against corruption.

Being absolutely holy, God never tolerates any form of sin. Prior to the removing of the penalty of sin at the cross, the priestly office was to meet the demand for holiness by making atonement for themselves and the nation Israel. This atonement for sin, through the various sacrifices of animals could not take away the penalty of sin, but was a temporary covering of sin until God Himself sent forth His eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the supreme sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. This was the greatest sacrifice ever possible! The obstacle of sin was removed at the cross once and forever! The Holy God, who cannot tolerate the wickedness of sin in any form provided a perfect solution. Hell and the lake of fire was never prepared for human beings, but for the devil and his fallen angels called demons. "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with Thee." (Psalm 5:4)

Moses was confronted with the holiness of God, and by grace, God merely required him, by faith, to take off his sandals from his feet as he approached the holy ground, where God was hidden in the burning bush. Isaiah had a similar experience with our Living God. "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, (worship) and with twain he covered his feet, (obedience) and with twain he did fly (service). And one cried to another, and said 'Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts the whole earth is full of his glory.'" (Isaiah 6:1-3)

In our human state we have developed our own standards of goodness based upon comparisons one with another, but when it comes to absolute and perfect holiness from the Divine viewpoint it is beyond our comprehension. Perhaps the best way to represent what God's holiness is, is to view it in the negative. It is total absence of sin. God's holiness is constant and impeccable. As Believers, who

have been born again by God the Holy Spirit, we can understand in part, what it cost our Living God to remove sin once and forever, and establish His holiness. It was not a small act by God the Father to turn away from His Son as He hung on the cross and paid the debt of sin that the righteousness and holiness of God be established.

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, la'ma sabach'thani?' that is to say, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'" (Matthew 27:45,46)

When the eternal Son of God hung on the cross, He was bearing all the sins of mankind, removing the cause of the penalty of sin. The absolute Holiness of God was the issue and Almighty God was the only one who could provide for the removal of sin, judge sin, and make a way for us to be free from sin for Eternity!

When Jesus cried out, "It is finished," as recorded in John 19:30, the task of reconciliation was completed forever! It became possible by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the supreme sacrifice, for us to become partakers of the Holiness of God! No wonder God gives us this warning in the book of Hebrews 2:3,4:

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with many kinds of miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"

That is why, by faith, we look to the Lamb of God for forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to God! "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (II Corinthians 5:19) God will not tolerate any substitute for His absolute holiness!

We who are believers and partakers of the new creation, which is yet to be revealed, need to realize that the Holiness of God dwells within us through God the Holy Spirit as I Corinthians 3:16 clearly states, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Then verse 17 gives us the warning, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is Holy, which temple ye are."

The triune God further manifests Himself to us through the fruit of the Holy Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23) The indwelling Holy Spirit will lead, direct, guide and teach us the marvelous truths found in the Bible about Our Holy God. Down through the years religious minded persons have tried to attain a deep sense of holiness based upon their sacrifices, self denial, torture, isolation and meditation, but all of this is in vain! It takes the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone to provide the absolute Holiness of God.

"That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are you saved

through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God – not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:7–10)

In conclusion of the Absolute Holiness of God, it is necessary to note that we must be Holy in order to come into the presence of God. This holiness is only possible through God the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. God the Holy Spirit, who has made our spirits alive again through the new birth, has given us a Divine identification. Listed below are some of the commitments of God the Holy Spirit:

1. Sent forth (Galatians 4:6; John 14:26; 17:7&13)
2. Gives patience and hope (Galatians 5:5)
3. Protects in our daily walk (Galatians 5:16,25)
4. Is our fruitfulness (Galatians 5:22,23)
5. Seals us for eternity (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)
6. Transforms knowledge into applied wisdom (Ephesians 1:17,18)
7. Provides our vocation from God (Ephesians 4:1–3)
8. Baptizes every believer into the family of God (I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 4:5)
9. Gives gifts as He wills (I Corinthians 12:11–13; Ephesians 4:11–13)
10. Admonishes us not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)
11. Desires to fill your life with His fullness (Ephesians 5:8)
12. Desires to lead you through life (Galatians 5:18)

GOD IS ABSOLUTE JUSTICE

As God's creation, we must never judge or question God's justice; for God is both just and the justifier, manifesting His righteousness to us who believe as he has recorded in Romans 3:26, "To declare, I say at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." This is why God clearly states in Romans 5:1,2 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This statement would not be true were it not possible for God to justify. Absolute justice had to be satisfied in order for us to have fellowship with God. And it took the very God, Himself, to satisfy or fulfill the requirements of the eternal character of God. If there had been any other way to justify His creatures, He certainly would not have sent the Eternal Son of God to the cross. For this reason, the Word of God tells us, a body was prepared for the Son of God before the foundations of the world.

There was more at stake than our salvation, when Christ went to the cross. It involved the removing of sin and evil from God's whole realm. For the time being God is allowing the cup of iniquity, both in the spiritual and material sphere to run its course, but at the appointed time, sin and the very source of evil will be

removed once and forever. That is why all things will become new, where sin will never be present! God did not look for a shortcut, but he faced the issue squarely, nailing the sins of the whole world to His own dear Son on the cross.

Job asked a very important question when he asked, "How should man be just with God?" (Job 9:12) The answer is clearly provided by God in Hebrews 10:38, "The just shall live by FAITH." Continue this same thought as you read I Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened (made alive) by the Spirit." How thankful we should be for God's provision through His Son to provide absolute justification to those who believe. God has placed on record, and it will stand the test of the ages to come, His marvelous provision for mankind to be justified by faith!

The marvel is that we have been justified before God, by God Himself, and we had better believe it! We, who were condemned to eternal death, can accept God's pardon through His Eternal Son and receive eternal life with our sins cast as far as the east is from the west! "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." (Psalm 103:11,12)

God could have made His whole creation with merely instinctive control, or as robots to respond to His will without a choice. But God made us with volition, allowing us to choose God's provision and inherit eternal life with Him; or make our own decision and be separated from God by eternal death! As we think about the justice of God and the blessings of God through our choice for God's provision, we enter into the best that God has to offer and rejoice forevermore. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8)

GOD IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH (VERACITY)

We are all acquainted with what the Lord said to Pilate when asked, "Art Thou A King?" Turn to that portion of Scripture for a moment. John 18:37,38 states, "Pilate therefore said unto Him 'Art thou a King then?' Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the TRUTH. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice.' Pilate saith unto Him, 'WHAT IS TRUTH?' It is recorded in Psalm 116:11, "I said in my haste, all men are liars." It was Dr. H. A. Ironside who added to this as he read it in our classroom so very long ago, "He could have taken his time and said the same thing!" Yes, many are searching and asking the same question today, "What is TRUTH?"

We are living in the age of computers, and these man-made machines do a marvelous job of retrieving information. But if the information that has been entered into the computer is wrong, the answers will also be wrong. God warns us to take a look at our source of information, "Woe unto them who call evil good, and good, evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe unto them who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (Isaiah 50:20,21) We are reminded of what happened when there was only one language among all of the people of the earth. "And they said, Come, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven;

and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4) In this first world conference, where God was left out of the planning, unregenerate mankind demonstrated his propensity to organize his own religion, exchanging the truth of God for a lie.

Since Satan's fall, God has been dealing with Satan's evil forces and will do so until God Himself, in the likeness of His Son Jesus Christ, sets up a righteous and truthful kingdom which He will control with a rod of iron. (Psalm 2:9; Revelation 19:15) The world continues to have false leaders who attempt to bring unification and peace, but their efforts are doomed to failure because they have rejected the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Satan, the master deceiver, will make his last attempt to bring in his false kingdom through a demon possessed world leader, whom the world will accept.

"And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and LYING WONDERS, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the LOVE OF THE TRUTH, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all might be judged who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II Thessalonians 2:8-12)

When the truth of God is rejected, there is only one result and that is **JUDGEMENT!** "But we are sure that the judgement of God is according to truth against them who commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them who do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God?" (Romans 2:2,3) Remember that the "wrath of God shall be revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." (Romans 1:18) Such are those "who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 1:25)

When Christ descended from heaven to earth, He entered into our realm as a man. God united Himself with His creation and became Incarnate, which theologians call "the theanthropic person." God took upon Himself a body like ours, yet without the possibility of sinning since he is absolutely impeccable in his divine nature. The union has taken place, is permanent, and cannot be repeated. It is called the Hypostatic Union.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness overcame it not. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1:1-5, 14)

Christ Himself said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) In John 15:1 we read, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman." The Triune God has set forth the TRUTH in the Bible and it is there that the truth of God is revealed. "But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26)

Since Almighty God is the sum total of truth, and is in the eternal spiritual realm, He must be worshiped in Spirit and Truth.

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24)

Now if we are dead spiritually, we cannot possibly worship God, being dead. That is why the true worshipers must be born again (born of God the Holy Spirit) in order to have the means to communicate with God. In Adam, we all died spiritually and eventually we all die physically, but in Christ, who is the second Adam, sent from the Father, we are made alive! "Because I will publish the Name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgement; A GOD OF TRUTH and without iniquity, just and right is He." (Deuteronomy 32:2-4)

Our freedom begins when we know the truth that comes from God Himself. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) God has made every provision through His word (the Bible) for mankind to be set free from doubt and error. The Godhead has also sent us our spiritual guide, God the Holy Spirit, who not only provides new birth, but also will guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE

The absolute character of God demands that He is the One and Only, whom we call our "All in All!" Young believers are often shocked when I tell them that God does not have life. Then I quickly add GOD IS LIFE. What you are and what you possess are two different things. God is the source of all life, whether it is for a time period or for eternity. We need not probe the universe for the source of life, for this is clearly set forth in the Bible.

During my years of missionary service in Africa I found the heathen tribes to be greatly susceptible to the evil powers of witch doctors, witchcraft and black magic. This is not only true in Africa but in many parts of the world. We know from the Bible that the source of their power is the fallen angels called demons, who are capable of producing signs and wonders which strike fear in the hearts of the masses of people under their domination. But let us examine the numerous man-made gods around the world. We will find that they demand a great deal of personal care from their subjects and worshipers. They require constant cleaning and repair, often a new coat of paint. There are private gods, tribal gods, gods for specific purposes, and national gods. Often the objects of worship are natural formations such as mountains, for example Mt. Kilimanjaro was considered sacred to the Masai tribe of East Africa. There is one thing that all false gods have in common, whether man-made or natural formations, they are all dead! There is only one

Living God, manifested in the three persons of the trinity (Deuteronomy 6:4). Man-made gods have to be cared for and protected, but praise God, our Eternal God is in need of nothing and He holds the whole universe in His hands.

"The Eternal God is our refuge." (Deuteronomy 33:7) Our Living God is willing to share His eternal life with those who are willing to come to the Father through His Eternal Son. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and Eternal Life." (I John 5:20) God, who is the source of life, has made every provision for us to be partakers of His Eternal Life, both during this short span of life on earth and on into eternity, if we will meet His requirements. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36) "Verily, verily I say unto you; he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24) "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." (John 5:26) Christ came into the world, which He created, that each of us may have life more abundantly. However, rejection of God's provision through His Son will result in eternal condemnation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is **THE WAY, THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE**; there is no other way! It is not God's wish that one soul perish but that all come to repentance and he clearly states so in His precious book! "But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His Name." (John 20:31) God the Holy Spirit made the issue of the source of life very clear as Paul the Apostle spoke to the learned men of Athens, from Mars Hill, "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28) Christ is our life and to reject Him is to reject life itself!

Our guarantee of eternal life is God the Holy Spirit, who not only gives us new birth, but also maintains the new life by dwelling within those who have received it.

"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of His, and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also give life to your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:9-11, 14-16)

GOD IS IMMUTABLE (NEVER CHANGES)

Hebrews 13:8 is often quoted, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever," but frequently we fail to realize the significance and depth of such a

statement. Reference to the "status quo" of our Lord Jesus Christ, is usually made with regard to our daily needs and benefits, with little thought given to the immutable character of God. Since the very beginning, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit looking down the corridor of time, clearly saw God's ultimate aim, with no variableness. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17. God is never frustrated nor confused, but is constant in His perfect decisions. There is absolute and perfect harmony in the Godhead!

The Bible is prophetic, telling us of the future so that we might have confidence that God is in complete control. As we study God's Word we find we can depend upon Him; for no man, no matter how clever, could predict as consistently and accurately. The record that God gives us was not revealed in one generation or by one man led of God, but by some forty men over a period of about 1600 years! The events of the ages are clearly and precisely recorded even to the detail of names, places and nations, many of which did not exist at the time of writing, but were fulfilled with absolute accuracy.

God's Word reveals the beginnings of creation and even events that took place in heaven before creation. We are told of millions of angels in outer space. God has alerted us concerning our enemies, the world, the flesh and the Devil. God knows the end from the beginning and never needs to change His course in dealing with time; but has already made His perfect decision. What a wonderful Living God!

"Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isaiah 46:9-10)

God did not create us to respond to His will as puppets; but He gave us freedom to choose, a characteristic called volition . However God, who knows all things, knew before we were born, the choices we would make. How do I conclude this? A good Biblical proof is in God's dealings with Esau. "I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet you say, in what way have you loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the jackals of the wilderness." (Malachi 1:2,3) In Romans 9:8-13 God's word states:

"That is, they who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise, at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father, Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that

calleth), it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated."

God spoke concerning Esau, "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For ye know how afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears." (Hebrews 12:16-17)

Unregenerate men of our age would like to change the Bible to make God pragmatic in His dealings with mankind. Some even try to say that since Israel has refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Messiah, God is through with Israel. This is incorrect; for God has made an unconditional covenant with both Abraham (Genesis 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 17:1-8) and King David (I Chronicles 17:11-13; II Samuel 7:16,24 I Kings 8:23; I Kings 9:5). God's word reminds us that He remains the same. He cannot change or go back on His word. Read carefully Romans chapters 9-11 for further verification that God has not cast Israel away. If that were possible, it would also be possible for the Christian Church to be cast away!

In this present age, God is showing us through signs and wonders, especially concerning Israel, who is returning to their land, that what God said regarding the regathering of Israel as His children, He will do. (Read Deuteronomy 30:3-5; Isaiah 11:11,12; 14:1-3; 27:12,13; 43:1-7; Jeremiah 16:14-16; 23:3-8; Ezekiel 11:17; 20:34; 34:11-13; Hosea 1:10-11; Amos 9:14,15; Micah 4:4-7; Zephaniah 3:18-20; Zechariah 3:18-20; 8:4-8) These scriptures and many more tell of the regathering of Israel, which will be discussed later. The Middle East is now, and will continue to be, a hot bed for wars, terrorism, chaos, and trouble. God's blueprint for all ages has been set before the foundation of the world and there is no need for any alteration to God's program.

The threat of atomic war has struck fear in the hearts of millions who do not know or understand the Word of God, which clearly tells us that God has preserved the world and the heavens for His final destruction, at which time he will make all things new.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love God. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (I Corinthians 2:9-13)

"Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God in which the heavens, being

on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness." (II Peter 3:11-13)

We are wonderfully blessed to be living in the last days with the complete revelation from God. Even though God used the prophets of old to write much of the things to come, the time or details were often a mystery to them. God revealed much to Daniel concerning the four great world powers to come into being, but He kept the time a secret, as He did the gap in Nebuchadnezzar's image. Gabriel, the angelic Bible teacher, told Daniel many things but Daniel was puzzled about the end times and the Lord had to say, "Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." (Daniel 12:9)

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto who it was revealed that, not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." (I Peter 1:10-12)

To accept the fact that God never changes will be invaluable as you systematically study the Bible. God the Holy Spirit will teach you His revelation in His Word as you yield to Him.

GOD IS IMPECCABLE (HE CANNOT SIN)

The one thing that God cannot do is sin. God's plan of salvation is complete deliverance from sin. God has provided this deliverance to all mankind with only one requirement, that His Son, who paid the debt of sin upon the cross, be accepted as personal Saviour. Furthermore, God is determined to remove sin and prevent it from ever showing its ugly head again.

Sin was judged upon the cross in order that the New Creation which God will bring about will never again be threatened with the evil forces. The sum total of sin and its subjects will be separated and sealed off forever and ever! Amen and Amen! The key purpose of God is revealed in Daniel 9:24 and that is to "finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." It tells the whole story in a few words as to our glorious future with Almighty God!

If there were even the smallest possibility of God sinning it would be impossible for Him to overthrow its power and influence. Sin had to be dealt with by God at great cost, the price of His very own sinless Eternal Son. God the Father had to turn His back on His Son as He suffered the penalty for the sins of the whole world on the cross.

Although the penalty for sin has been paid for in full by the shedding of Christ's precious blood, the sentence for the author of sin has not yet been fulfilled. The cup of iniquity is filling rapidly and godless human beings by the help of the world, the flesh and the Devil are plunging headlong into eternal damnation by God, to a punishment prepared for Satan and his angels. They may be unaware, indifferent or even willfully enjoying sin for a season, but the end thereof is everlasting judgement fire, where torment goes on forever!

The sin question has been the conflict of the ages but God's Word clearly teaches that just prior to the final showdown between God and Satan, God will allow sin and all of the evil forces to break loose as never before. However until that time the Holy Spirit is the restraining power working in and through believers waiting for the glorious day when believers will be "caught up" to Heaven away from the wrath to come. (I Thessalonians 1:10) Praise God for His provision of an escape route for those who love Him and are called by His name!

The Old Testament is full of examples, types, and shadows of how God deals with sin. The required sacrifices were only a covering for sin until, "in the fullness of time," God sent forth His Son. The covering was then removed and sin was dealt with once and for all on the cross, casting it as far as the East is from the West!

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."
(Isaiah 53:4-6)

Prior to the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin; for since He is God, He is impeccable. The temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 4; Luke 4; and Mark 1 was the most severe test that could be placed upon the Godhead! God the Father allowed this terrible series of temptations to take place to show to His creatures that it is impossible for God to sin in any way. Some critics might argue, that He did not take upon Himself a true fleshly body. That is an incorrect assumption; for Jesus Christ had a fleshly body conceived by God the Holy Spirit and borne of a woman. Since He had no earthly father, it was impossible for His flesh to inherit the sin nature passed on from Adam. God was true sinless humanity and true God in one person.

Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He would just bow down to him, but there is no shortcut to the throne. The cross was necessary for salvation before Christ would establish His Kingdom. The forty days in the wilderness did not represent the only test to which Christ was subjected, in fact the entire thirty-three years dwelling among men was filled with trials and testing. Take for instance the situation of the woman "taken in adultery." (John 8:1-11) The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus by making him choose between the Law of Moses and the law of Rome so that they could accuse him. Would Jesus prescribe the punishment of stoning as stated in the Mosaic law or would he judge the situation by the Roman law? Only God could solve this dilemma and the Lord Jesus Christ answered correctly, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first

stone." There was a hush over all of them; for no doubt the people were waiting for the priests to cast the first stone. But God had brought conviction upon all and Jesus was left alone with the woman.

Christ asked the woman, "Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said no man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee; Go and sin no more." Christ was the only one in the crowd who had the right to cast the first stone, but He didn't. Why not? John 3:17 tells us that "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

In John 8:45,46 the Lord again faced the religious leaders of the day with the following words, "Because I tell you the truth, you believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do you not believe me?" Christ was well known by this time yet no one could accuse Him of sin. No ordinary man born of Adam would dare to make such a claim! Only God is without sin and cannot sin; He is absolutely impeccable!

GOD IS SOVEREIGN (HE REIGNS OVER ALL)

God is absolutely Sovereign. Although the evil forces are at work with seemingly no restriction, yet they are subject to God's limitation. God is not to blame for the evil which we experience in this world; for Satan has usurped the kingdom of the world for a time and God has permitted him to operate within certain boundaries until his final judgement. The Word describes Satan as "the god of this world" and so he is. Satan knows that he was judged when Christ died physically on the cross. He knows the Word of God well and often quotes it, though out of context.

In his master plan to deceive the world, especially religious people, Satan has attempted to duplicate and counterfeit everything that God has to offer us. He offered the kingdoms of this world to Christ if He would just bow down and worship him. That failed, so now he seeks to set up one evil dictator after another. Why? For the simple reason that he wants to offer to the world a plan of peace, in the hope of bypassing God's perfect plan for peace.

Of course nothing is hidden from God and His plan goes on accordingly. God's Word tells us where the dictator, called the Beast, will come from and that eventually under Satan's power no nation will be able to war against the Beast. This will be discussed in a later chapter of this book. I merely wish to point out that Satan eventually will have a world-wide counterfeit kingdom. Satan knows the weaknesses of man and he will use man's volition to establish this Pseudo-Kingdom. As time goes on Satan is becoming more and more vicious, but he is still restricted by the presence of God the Holy Spirit, who restrains him (II Thessalonians 2).

We can thank the Lord for sending God the Holy Spirit into the world and better still into our very lives! (John 16:7) It was for this reason that the Lord had the disciples tarry in Jerusalem along with Old Testament Jews from many lands. It happened on the day of the first fruits, which became the Day of Pentecost.

"And being assembled together with them; (Christ) commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith He, 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." (Acts 1:4-5)

"And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." (Acts 2:1-2)

They were not only baptized but were also filled by God the Holy Spirit! The very presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling those who believe puts restraint on the evil forces. Here is what Christ says about the Holy Spirit, "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement." (John 16:8) II Thessalonians 2:5-7 also tells us, "Remember ye not that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now we know what restraineth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: Only He who now hindereth will continue to hinder until He be taken out of the way." This, of course, refers to God the Holy Spirit.

When the rapture takes place, God the Holy Spirit will no longer restrain the evil forces, and this will usher in the terrible Tribulation. God's Word tells of fallen angels or demons, who were put into everlasting chains because they attempted to practice evil beyond God's Sovereign restraints (Jude 6). There also exists a whole army of demons led by the general called Destroyer, locked up in the Bottomless Pit (Revelations 9:2-11). In Revelations 16:12-14 there are three terrible demons called Unclean Spirits also called the Spirits of Demons with their divisions of demons. Lastly, we have the Euphrates River mentioned, where there are four terrible demons in prison with their armies, who are to be released by the sixth Angel of God, and they will go forth and slay one-third of all the people of the earth. It is difficult to imagine the terror that will be realized on earth once these demons are given free reign during the time of the Great Tribulation. But this particular demon activity is timed according to the Sovereign plan of Almighty God and will not take place until God allows it. Amen! and Amen!

Satan, himself, is limited to one place, that is, he is not omnipresent; but he has millions of fallen angels doing his evil work at his bidding. At present Satan is busy accusing the Believers day and night before God's heavenly courts, but praise God, we have an advocate, even Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, who stands in our place and justly defends us on the basis of His shed blood at the cross! The Book of Job presents a good example of Satan's activity in this area.

In God's sovereign plan, we read that while the Tribulation takes place upon the earth we who believe, called the Bride of Christ, will be in Heaven to receive our rewards and to take part in the marriage to the Lamb. During three and one-half years of that time there will be a final struggle in Heaven with Satan. God in His sovereignty will give authority and power to Michael the Archangel and his armies to drive Satan and all of his fallen angels out of heaven. "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit." (Revelation 9:1) For a more detailed account of this fallen star, let us read the account in Revelations 12:7-12:

"And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil,

and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death. Therefore rejoice ye heavens; and ye that dwell in them. Woe unto the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he has but a short time."

We need to turn back the pages of history in God's angelic creation to see where the trouble began.

"The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the Prince of Tyre (this can only refer to Satan as the Prince of the Power of the Air, as we will see later), thus saith the Lord God; because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God; ... Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyre, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast BEEN IN THE GARDEN OF GOD; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond ... thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the Holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created, till iniquity was found in thee." (Ezekiel 28:1-2, 12-15)

This portion has a dual application yet it is single in its purpose. The King of Tyre was no doubt demon possessed. God knew Satan was the inspiration and unseen ruler; for the King of Tyre certainly was not in the garden of Eden. Therefore this portion of Scripture must refer to Satan.

It is worthwhile to note here that before his fall Satan was perfect. Up to that point Satan was the greatest and most powerful among all of the angels, and he still is, although he has lost the position of guarding the Holiness of God. God dismissed Satan from his heavenly authority and replaced him with four of His Holy Angels mentioned in Revelations 46:11. Not satisfied with the highest position among all of the angels, Satan desired to be as God. The five "I wills" of Satan are mentioned in Isaiah 14:12-14. This will be dealt with later on. Since God cannot sin as we have already discussed, we cannot place the blame on God for what Satan does or what his millions of fallen angels do.

The power of God is paramount; there is no one greater than the triune God. Our hearts should thrill as we read over and over again in the Bible such phrases as "...God spoke...Thus saith the Lord ... It is written ... So God created ...And God set ... Behold I have given ..." But the most marvelous of them all is, "And God said, Let us make man in our image." (Genesis 1:26) Satan desired to be like God and since he was denied that privilege he has become man's chief enemy, seeking to frustrate the plan of God. Satan began his onslaught with Adam and Eve in the Garden with the words "Hath God said?" And so sin entered into the world. Mankind became involved in the battle between God and Satan. But God was cognizant in eternity past that this would come to pass and he demonstrated his mighty power when he dealt with Satan in the Garden, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed (the unbelievers) and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

To demonstrate His mighty power, God chose the seed of the woman to settle the sin question, once and forever! If the Messiah, the Eternal Son of God, was not born into the human race through the virgin birth, then it would be impossible to provide "So Great Salvation!" The virgin birth of Christ is the manifestation of the power of God to implement the eternal plan of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Through the humble submission of both the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Holy Spirit, sin has been conquered forever, eventually to be annihilated and never to express itself in God's new creation in the future. That is power!

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:1-5)

The power of God is more than a defense against evil forces (God never loses a battle). To those who have put their trust in Him, he is an ever present help, and more than that, He is "Immanuel" God with us! God's power goes to work for us blessing us and empowering us to accomplish His perfect work. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Revelation 21:3)

GOD IS OMNISCIENT (KNOWS EVERYTHING)

Bible prophecies which have already been fulfilled to the minutest detail should provide sufficient evidence that God knows the end from the beginning and nothing is hid from Him. God has not been surprised by events that have occurred. From the time that sin was detected in Satan's thoughts until the time of the final victory over sin, God knows all. He has never had to make a change in His plans and knows the thoughts and intents of all of His creation. As the Master Builder, God has set forth His plans and has given us the 'blue print' in the precious Bible.

God used men of old, usually called prophets, to record His truth. The final revelation from God is through His Eternal Son.

"God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world." (Hebrews 1:1,2)

After Pentecost, when God the Holy Spirit was given to believers to generate new birth, Christ's revelations to the Church (Mystery Age) was committed to writing as the Holy Spirit gave utterance. The Church (Mystery Age) was not revealed until after the giving of God the Holy Spirit.

The prophecy of the Messiah's coming, as Saviour and King (two phases) were a little difficult for the Jews to understand, even though it was clearly set forth in the Old Testament. Suppressed by the Roman Government, the Jews wanted immediate deliverance from the heel of Rome. Even the Disciples, after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, asked, "Lord, will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) A suffering Saviour was not desired by the Jews, but was necessary to vindicate the Character of God. Looking back through Scriptures, "rightly dividing the word of truth," we can better understand what was involved.

God's word foretold that Israel had to be completely scattered before the final gathering. The downfall of Rome had to take place before the revival of the Roman Empire. The Church, which is the Bride of Christ, had to be born and completed, after which the rapture of the Church must take place for the Wedding of the Bride in Heaven. The Great Tribulation is yet to come. All these events have to be completed before the second phase of Messiah's coming as King. God in His Omniscience has a plan which will be carried out completely as He has set forth in His Word.

The revelation to Daniel and other prophets contains much information concerning the future. Christ spoke of "the Abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel, which is to take place sometime after the gathering together of the Body of Christ (Matthew 24:15). This is a future event which will take place on earth in God's appointed time. As recorded, there are but four great world wide empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The last of these will be revived and identified by ten united nations of the old Roman Empire which extended as far as the division of Berlin. We recognize them today as the European Common Market, already united; and whether they realize it or not, they must wait until God's time for the "One World Government." All of this will be dealt with in depth later, but suffice it to say that Christ clearly endorsed the literal fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy.

In Matthew 24, verses 1 and 2 we have recorded the scene in which the disciples wanted to show the temple in Jerusalem to Christ and His response is significant.

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." (Matthew 24:1,2)

Here again, is proof from the Eternal Son of God of His Omniscience; for in 70 A.D. Titus marched upon Jerusalem and the temple was completely destroyed by a great fire, yet the stones remained in place. But because the roof was solid gold and the heat had melted the gold through all the layers of stone, every stone was removed in order to retrieve the gold. How did Christ know that? Our Living God knows everything. Fulfillment of prophecy should encourage us to have confidence that prophecies yet to be fulfilled will likewise be accomplished in His time. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, as seen in the last Book of the Bible, should become a reality to us as we look forward to the literal fulfillment of His Word.

It is a marvelous thing to have a God, whose knowledge extends down the corridors of future time, thousands and thousands of years. Every detail of every event is known to Him. We cannot in our finite minds understand how this can be, but whenever we are in doubt, we should always give God the benefit of the doubt. God is the sum total of all knowledge and wisdom and the knowledge we acquire as human beings stems from God, who created us. Since God knows everything, it follows that He has worked out a perfect kingdom to come, where all sin is removed once and for all (See Daniel 9:24).

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him and to Him are all things: to whom be the glory forever. Amen." (Romans 11:33-36)

GOD IS OMNIPRESENT (EVERYWHERE)

Jonah is perhaps the greatest example and witness to the fact that God is everywhere. God called him for a specific purpose to go and preach to Nineveh, a corrupt Gentile nation, but he refused to go. Thinking that God would forget about him and thereby send someone else, he ran in the opposite direction and bought a ticket for an ocean voyage that would take him far away from Nineveh. He was even willing to die a horrible death when he suggested they throw him into the sea. Probably he thought, when he closed his eyes as he hit the waters, that he was free from the responsibility and would wait for the resurrection of the dead. I am sure that he was very surprised and frightened to open his eyes in the midst of twisted sea weeds and a steaming stench instead of in the 'bosom of Abraham.' No doubt any of us would have been frightened under such circumstances. As a child of God, he did the right thing; he began to pray. Would it be possible for God to hear from the stomach of a great fish? The answer came quickly; for God spoke to him in his darkest hour.

There are many examples in the Bible of people trying to flee either from the presence of God or some difficulty. Adam and Eve tried it, but God found them. Cain, who killed his brother Abel, was not only found by God, but also marked by God. Abraham was found in Ur of the Chaldeans and sent to a land prepared and promised to him. The baby Moses was hidden, found and prepared for great leadership. Moses, the man, ran away into the wilderness, thinking that now as a free man he could remain a shepherd, enjoying the fruit of the fold. God knew

all along where Moses was and merely waited for the fullness of time to bring him back to Egypt to lead 'His sheep' out from bondage and into a land flowing with milk and honey. Elijah fled in fear of Jezebel and waited to die, but God sent the ravens to feed him and commissioned him to return to where God could use him. John 1:47-49 records the story of Nathanael's first meeting with Christ.

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered, and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel."

God met Saul on the road to Damascus in the incident of Saul's dramatic conversion. Psalm 139 explains God's omnipresence:

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought, afar off. Thou compasseth my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?"

As members of the household of faith, we have the assurance of the ever present help from Almighty God. Praise God, Satan can only be in one place at a time but God is everywhere, and more than that God the Holy Spirit dwells within us forever!

In conclusion of this chapter on the Attributes of God, it is important to remember when studying the scriptures that interpretation should be subject to the whole character of God. Additionally make sure that you have the complete picture of the plan of God and the individual truths will fit into the overall plan of God for all ages.

QUESTIONS

1. Give the attributes of God with Scripture references.
2. When was the plan of salvation prepared by the Godhead?
3. Give three Scripture references of the virgin birth of Christ.
4. Which realm is the most important – the physical or the Spiritual? Give reasons with Scripture.
5. Does God limit those who can be saved or is salvation open to all people? Give your reasons.
6. In considering the Triune God, are the members of the Godhead equal or is one member greater than the others? Give your reasons.
7. Why did God create Satan and the fallen angels if He knows all things?
8. Give the supreme purpose of God as revealed in the Book of Daniel.
9. How can we as sinners come into the very presence of God through our prayers?
10. Is God the Holy Spirit just a power in our life, or a person of the Godhead? Give reasons based upon the Scriptures.
11. Job asked the question, "How should man be just with God?" (Job 9:2) How would you answer him from the Word of God?
12. Upon what does God base truth? Give Scripture.
13. Does God need to adjust His plans to meet a changing world?
14. Explain Isaiah 46:9,10.

THE PLAN OF GOD FOR ALL AGES – GOD'S BLUEPRINT

Now that we have studied the characteristics of the Author of the Bible, we are ready to address the revelation of the Word of God. Before doing so, however, it is important to note some aspects of the trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. All three persons possess the characteristics discussed in Chapter 1. They are co-equal and co-existent and co-eternal.

Many cults and 'isms' have been developed by man's attempt to separate the triune Godhead or simply by emphasizing the importance of one member over the other. There are many references in the Word of God to the triune God, for example, in Genesis God said, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness." (Genesis 1:26) Yet God also reveals that there are not three Gods but one. "Hear O Israel, The Lord Our God is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

To comprehend the plan of God for all ages, we should have an understanding of the interaction of the three persons, which make up Almighty God. In God's provision of salvation, the relationship of the members of the Godhead can be understood in this way; God the Father planned it, God the Son provided it, and God the Holy Spirit guarantees it by indwelling us and preparing us for our glorified body in eternity.

THE SON OF GOD REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are a number of references to the Eternal Son of God in the Old Testament. The second person of the trinity is called the "The Angel of The Lord" in Psalm 37:4 and Judges 2:1. In Daniel 5:13-30, the story is recorded of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego being cast into the fire because they would not bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. God's deliverance of these men caused the great king himself to give evidence of the Son of God. "He answered and said, Lo, the form of the fourth is like unto the Son of God." This amazing disclosure cannot be denied. Nothing like this had ever happened in the great empire of Nebuchadnezzar and the news spread throughout his entire kingdom.

Genesis 18:1-33 is another reference to the Son of God in the Old Testament. When God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their terrible sin, God, in the form of three men, approached the tent of Abraham. Abraham saw the three men coming toward him as he sat in the doorway of his tent in the heat of the day.

"And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant."

Abraham would never bow to the ground before ordinary men, nor would he say "My Lord" to anyone but God!

It is important to note that although the virgin Mary was the vessel through whom the Son of God came down to earth to become our Saviour, Christ's body was prepared before the foundation of the world.

"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which Thou has given me; for Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world." (John 17:24)

"Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me; In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do thy will O God." (Hebrews 10:5-7)

"Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12)

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

This confirms the prediction found in Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Emmanuel." God was preparing, in the fullness of time, to present His Eternal Son for that mystery of mysteries when God Himself unites within His creation, referred to as the incarnation and the hypostatic union. All of this was essential to provide salvation for mankind and to judge sin and evil once and forever.

No created being could both judge sin and remove it; it took the Eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, second person of the Godhead, to satisfy the righteousness of the Triune God. The Son of God took upon Himself the perfect nature of man, the second Adam, without the possibility of sinning, to bring about the prophecy of Daniel 9:24.

"Seventy weeks (sevens) are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in Everlasting Righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

God is satisfied with the provision that He has made for you. Are you willing to accept it? "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Isaiah 40:5)

THE SON OF GOD REVEALED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament speaks of the Logos (The Word), the very expression of God through His Eternal Son. God made His manifesto clear, both in writing and in Person! God guarantees His Word, whether in writing, delivered by the very breath of God the Holy Spirit, or in His Eternal Son as sacrifice and Saviour. Hebrews 1:1-2 states:

"God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things by whom also he made the worlds (ages)."

What a privilege it has been for the Apostles and all mankind to have God walk among them.

Perhaps the greatest examples of God walking with His creatures was with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The next best might have been Enoch, who lived to be 365 years and is still living in the presence of God. The Apostle John writes, through the Holy Spirit:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (I John 1:1-3)

"And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

Speaking to His disciples, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, there are some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matthew 16:28) Immediately following this statement, it is recorded, "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain privately, and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine like the sun, and his raiment was as white as the light." (Matthew 17:1-2) Peter was therefore able to join with John and say that he was an eyewitness of this glory.

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the Holy Mount." (II Peter 1:16-18)

The Apostle Paul through the leading of the Holy Spirit wrote of God manifested in the flesh in Romans 9:5 and in I Timothy 3:16. When Philip expressed the desire to see God the Father, the Lord reminded him, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9)

Perhaps the greatest revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man coming into His kingdom was to John on the Isle of Patmos, when the Lord, Himself, gave John a preview of the events to come, from the present time through the Tribulation. He was able to see the Kingdom of Righteousness, the battles to be fought, the White Throne Judgement, the New Heavens and the New Earth, the Holy City, New Jerusalem.

It is clear from the Scriptures that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, left His home in glory to manifest the perfect love of the Godhead toward mankind. Salvation, through the cross, makes us a new creation, bringing us into the Royal Family of God, from total depravity, destined to separation from God, to an inheritance with His righteousness never to be separated from God! What more could God do for us?

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY)

When the Lord Jesus Christ left earth for His home in glory, He made a promise:

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another (of the same kind) comforter, that He may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:16,17)

In God's powerful provision, each person of the Godhead had a part in the 'Master Blue Print' for the building of God's Eternal Kingdom, free from evil forever!

We are totally dependent upon God, the Holy Spirit to teach us from the Word.

"But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, (as the Father did according to Acts 2), He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you." (John 14:26)

This verse of Scripture is one of the greatest proofs of the Triune God, mentioning all three persons in one verse.

It was very important that the Lord Jesus Christ return to His heavenly home, for He was needed there to be our advocate before the Father defending us against Satan's accusations day and night. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." (I Timothy 2:5)

"My little children these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:1,2)

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night." (Revelations 12:10)

The fulfillment of this verse in Revelation 22:10 has not yet taken place, but it points to the necessity of Christ as our Advocate and Defender in heaven.

God always provides for His own, and as Christ returned to heaven, God the Holy Spirit took over the earthly ministry. It is the very presence of God the Holy Spirit indwelling believers that keeps the world from getting out of control with the evil forces.

"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement." (John 16:7,8)

God the Holy Spirit is the guardian over the Body of Christ, which is made up of all races of people, whom we call Christians. God the Holy Spirit is responsible for giving us a new spiritual birth and identifying us within the Body of Christ. "For by one Spirit were we all baptized (placed) into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free; and have been made to drink into one Spirit." (I Corinthians 12:13) Through the work of the Holy Spirit, our lives are changed. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (II Corinthians 3:17,18) God the Holy Spirit is mentioned more than 100 times in the Old Testament and 261 times in the New Testament. Following is a list of some of His important work, with Scripture references:

1. He searches the Scripture for us. (I Corinthians 1:10-11)
2. His is the very wisdom within the Godhead. (Ephesians 1:17)
3. He understands (Isaiah 11:2)
4. He indwells Believers - giving new birth (I Corinthians 12:13) and John 3
5. He is grieved when we disobey and sin (Ephesians 4:30)
6. He gives gifts and special talents as He wills (I Corinthians 12:11)
7. Scripture is 'God-Breathed' through the work of the Holy Spirit. (II Timothy 3:16)
8. He had an important part in creation. (Genesis 1:2)
9. He provides power for God's activity. (Zechariah 4:6)
10. He teaches those who are born again. (John 16:13)
11. He guides and directs Believers, helping them make the right decisions. (Isaiah 48:16; Romans 8:14)

12. He comforts His own. (John 14:26)
13. He prays for Believers. (Romans 8:26)
14. He convicts of sin in righteousness and passes judgements. (John 16:8)
15. He restrains the evil forces. (II Thessalonians 2:7; Isaiah 59:19; Genesis 6:3)
16. He commands and is powerful, being God. (Acts 8:29; Acts 13:2; Acts 16:7)

We possess security in the Triune God. God can be in a specific place and at the same time be aware of all activity throughout the great creation. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have always agreed on everything and always will! The plans for a Utopian Kingdom of Righteousness have been passed by the Godhead long before construction has taken place. Almighty God has allowed sin to express itself so that it might be judged once and forever. Everything that God ever made or will make is perfect. Not wanting a creation of robots, or creatures with instincts and pattern behavior, God made angels and mankind with volition, the ability to choose, and volition is a part of the plan of God for all Ages.

GOD IN CREATION

The Heavens and the Earth

The original creation of God is a mystery to all who study the Bible; we have very little in writing concerning it. Since God always existed, we know that He has always been somewhere. There is no possibility of things just evolving even in our earthly life, so we must begin with God who has revealed himself in the heavens and earth. It would be easier for the blind to lead the blind, than to have a creation without a Creator.

When God created the heavens and the earth they were absolutely perfect, without one flaw. "In the beginning God created (out of nothing) the heaven and the earth." In God's creation, He has given us a sample of what He is capable of making out of nothing. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." (Psalm 19:1) What we behold now is not as it was originally created, but even with the curse which was put upon nature because of sin, we still have to cry out, "How Great Thou art Oh God!"

God has called all things into being with precision and in spite of the curse of sin which is manifested, nature still has much beauty. What will the new creation be like? "But it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (I Corinthians 2:9) This New creation is already prepared for Believers from ages past and ages to come. God has already begun the work of perfection in us by making us new creatures.

"However, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the princes of this age, that come to nothing; But we speak the wisdom of God in mystery even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages unto our glory; which none of the princes of this age knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (I Corinthians 2:6-8)

Through the Holy Spirit, God has revealed to us at least something of His new creation. "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." (I Corinthians 2:10) The study of the Bible is for those who are born again by the Spirit of God. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Corinthians 2:14)

There are many suppositions concerning the creation of heaven and earth, but we must be satisfied with what God has revealed in the Bible. We know that this present earth will be the earth to which the Lord Jesus Christ will return and set up His 1,000 year kingdom of Righteousness according to Revelation 19. God made this earth perfect in its original state, but something happened to it, "And the earth became without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:2) A rebellion somewhere in the creation of God caused a dramatic change to occur on earth. Jeremiah Chapter 4 verse 23 gives a clue. "I beheld the earth and lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light."

A study of Satan, the greatest being created by God, who was set above all the angelic hosts to protect the Holiness of God, gives us some answers. Here is what God, Himself, says about Satan.

"Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth, and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, TILL INIQUITY WAS FOUND IN THEE." (Ezekiel 28:14,15)

Then something happened to Satan.

"By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned, therefore, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and I will destroy thee, O covering Cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; I will cast thee to the ground, I will cast thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy merchandise; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee; It shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be appalled at thee; thou shalt be a terror and never shalt thou be any more." (Ezekiel 28:16-19)

Evidently the planet earth became the base where Satan began to set up his opposition to God. God gave the prophet Isaiah a preview of Satan being finally

cast out of heaven, which is also recorded in Revelation 9:1-2 and Revelation 12:7-17. All of this will be discussed in depth under the subject "The Conflict of the Ages." Isaiah clearly states the five "I wills" of Satan which were the basis of God's condemnation of him.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to Sheol, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man who made the earth to tremble, who did shake kingdoms, WHO MADE THE WORLD LIKE A WILDERNESS, and destroyed its cities, who opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isaiah 14:12-17)

In these passages of Scripture, and especially this last one from Isaiah 14, there are several discoveries concerning Satan:

1. He was the bright morning star among all the angels.
2. He was a covering Cherub of God's Holiness (Cherubs are Angelic guards.)
3. He had exquisite beauty.
4. He had tremendous power upon the earth, causing it to tremble.
5. He held captive human beings. (That is why Christ had to go to the place of the dead to release these souls for whom he died.)
6. He was full of wisdom, which he corrupted.

We could name many attributes of Satan and show his great power, but our main purpose at this point is to show his involvement with the earth that God created. Somehow the earth became void and chaotic. Was it that Satan intended to make the earth his seat of authority? II Corinthians 4:4 tells us that Satan, as the god of this world system, has power to brainwash every human being coming into the world.

THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN

The Bible does not tell us exactly when God created the angels, but we do know that they were created before our forefather Adam. They were the first creatures created by God, perhaps soon after God created the Heavens where He abode.

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, ALL HIS ANGELS; praise ye Him, all the hosts. Praise ye Him, sun, and moon; praise Him all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye

waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the Name of the Lord; FOR HE COMMANDED, AND THEY WERE CREATED." (Psalm 148:1-5)

The Angelic host perhaps numbers in the billions, each with their specified work with a designated sphere of duty. God commands armies of angels with commanders assigned as well as generals. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." (Psalm 68:17) The angels were created as individuals in the spiritual realm, without the ability to reproduce. However, they have the capability of looking like man in order to communicate to man. We also know that fallen angels have the ability to indwell mankind. The giants that were in the earth before the flood, were super charged human beings, both male and female, possessed by demons thus producing a race of people displeasing to God, whom God destroyed by the great flood.

The Bible has many references to angels of various categories and power. There are ordinary angels; there are Cherubim (Satan was in this category); there are Seraphim, which worship and serve Almighty God; then there is Michael the Arch Angel; and Gabriel the Heavenly Bible Teacher. God has arranged for us to have ministering spirits who are by our side to protect us against the onslaught of the evil spirits and other dangers. "But which of the angels said He at any time, sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:13,14)

While Christ was on earth He could have called hundreds of thousands of angels to help Him at any time.

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:52,53)

A legion would amount to any number between 3,000 and 6,000, which would have been very easy for God to send to protect His Eternal Son. God mentions angels one hundred and eight times in the Old Testament and one hundred and sixty-five times in the New Testament. Below is a list of some of the activities of angels mentioned in the Bible:

1. Angels Sing. (Job 38:6,7; Luke 2:14)
2. Angels worship and serve God. (Isaiah 6; Revelation 4:8,9)
3. Angels are present at special times. (Galatians 3:19; Acts 7:53; Hebrews 2:2)
4. Angels were present at the birth of Christ. (Luke 2:13)
5. Angels were present at the resurrection (Matthew 28:2)
6. When Christ ascended, angels were present to instruct the disciples (Acts 1:10)
7. Angels will be present when Christ comes to establish His Kingdom. (Revelation 19; Matthew 25:31; II Thessalonians 1:7)
8. Angels have a capacity to study and learn. (Matthew 24:36)

9. Legions of Angels comprise the armies of God. (Matthew 26:53)
10. Angels will separate the sheep and the goats and gather the elect from the whole world. (Matthew 13:41,49; Matthew 24:30-31; Matthew 25:31-34)
11. Angels carry the souls of the saints who died into the presence of God. (Luke 16:22)
12. Angels are ministering spirits to believers. (Hebrews 1:14)

There are many special assignments that God gives angels such as sending Gabriel to Daniel and Michael to collect the body of Moses.

When Satan, the supreme angel made his choice and fell into sin, there was a division among the angels which caused the 'conflict of the ages'. Billions of angels in heaven witnessed the power of God and were not deceived in the least, but each made an angelic choice; whether they wanted to continue in the righteousness of God, or depart with Satan and his kingdom of darkness.

We have little knowledge from the Word as to how Satan was able to convince one-third of God's angels to follow him; but we know that he did, as is recorded in Revelation 12:3,4.

"And there appeared another wonder IN HEAVEN; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars (angels) of heaven and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered, to devour her child as soon as it was born."

Satan has vast power and influence, given to him by God, yet he is still subject to the sovereignty of God. The WORD OF GOD is available to Satan and he is trying to thwart and frustrate God's plan. The earliest mention of the Messianic promise by God is Genesis 3:15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; He shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Human strength is no match against the power of demons, who work in the spirit realm under Satan's command. Primitive, heathen people submerged in witchcraft, black magic, sorcery and other evil practices have experienced the power, influence, and control of demons. God is allowing this spiritual wickedness to run its course but it will be terminated in the fullness of time.

With the restraining power of God the Holy Spirit, the evil in the world is limited, but when the True Church, made up of Believers around the world, is taken out, all hell will break loose on earth. Contrary to popular opinion, we will not make the world better for the Lord's return and His Kingdom of Righteousness; for God's word records that when He comes He will rule "with a rod of iron," (Psalm 2:9). Revelation 19:15 points out, "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron and He treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." There is certainly no indication that the world is getting better. "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily, nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

Some of the demons were so terrible that God, Himself, had to imprison them and others have been limited. "And the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day." (Jude 6) There is a complete army of fallen angels kept in the bottomless pit until God gives Satan permission to release them for a short time. Read the whole chapter of Revelation 9. There are four terrible angels under the Euphrates river with their armies, numbering two hundred thousand, to be released when the sixth angel of God blows the trumpet.

When God created the angels, they were fully aware of the mighty power of God. Satan, persuaded one-third of the angels to follow him, thus they stood condemned and destined to eternal punishment. There is no redemption for them, whatsoever. We will deal with the conflict that followed and is continuing until God finally casts them into the lake of fire to remain there forever and ever! The angels which were obedient unto God have already past their test and never again will be faced with temptation. They had the most powerful temptation offered to them by the king of the angels and they refused his offer, setting them free forever. Time is running out for the evil forces and the closer the judgement day comes the more vicious the demons will become.

THE CREATION OF MAN

It is important to bear in mind that the creation of angels differed greatly from that of mankind. Angels were created individually and given their responsibilities and place in heaven. They have no means of reproduction. Had God created man in a similar manner, there would not be nor could there be a redemptive plan. Whatever Adam was, would be passed on to the whole human race. Whatever Christ, the second Adam, did toward redemption was made available to the whole human race.

Before God made man, He provided for his needs by creating the environment into which he would place the first man. Let us examine the reconstruction of the earth which took six literal days as recorded in Genesis Chapter 1.

Six Days of Creation

- 1, **The First Day (Genesis 1:3-5) – The division of light and darkness with day and night, making a 24-hour period and the first 24-hour day.**

2. **The Second Day (Genesis 1:6-8) – The division of water from land and atmosphere within the stratosphere, which would provide moisture for things to be created. This creation took place during the evening and the morning which make a 24-hour period and was completed during the second day.**

3. **The Third Day (Genesis 1:9-13) – The separation of the waters upon the earth from solid ground providing dry land upon which His creation could live as well as waters in which amphibious creatures could exist. So God brought about seas, oceans, rivers, lakes and streams. First vegetation was also created: herbs, fruits and grasses.**

4. **The Fourth Day (Genesis 1:14–19) – God lifted the heavy atmosphere, cleared the skies and allowed the sun, moon and stars to shine through preparing the earth for seasons, making growth possible and starting the time periods through the heavenly bodies. All this was done in a 24-hour day.**
5. **The Fifth Day (Genesis 1:20–23; Genesis 2:19) – Creation of animals and fish, that live in the water, and birds. This is the beginning of the living beings, which in their very creation are divided into groups and families. I Corinthians 15:29–41 states, "All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the Celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another in glory."**
6. **The Sixth Day (Genesis 1:24–27) – Living creatures created after their kind: Cattle beasts of the field, creeping things. Then the record of the creation of man, which was different from all other life.**

The Supreme Place of Man (Genesis 1:26–31; 2:7–9, 15–25)

When God created all the living creatures, except man, He spoke and it was so; but then we see a change in pattern. "And God said, LET US make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image; male and female created He them." (Genesis 1:26,27) There is a major difference between ordinary creation in which God put instinct and the creation of man in which God placed the likeness of God! There are other marked distinctions between man and the rest of creation:

1. **Blessing from God placed specifically upon man. (Genesis 1:28)**
2. **Man was to be fruitful and populate the earth. (Genesis 1:28)**
3. **Man was to subdue the whole earth, dominating everything. (Genesis 1:28)**
4. **Man was to enjoy the fruit of the land. (Genesis 1:29)**

A more detailed account of the creation of man and his environment is given in Genesis chapter 2.

1. **Plants were watered by a mist not by rain. (Genesis 2:5,6)**
2. **The body of man was formed from the dust of the earth and God gave that body a kiss or breath of life, giving him a soul that is alive. (Genesis 2:7)**

3. God was the first farmer upon the earth, planting the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:8-14)
 - a. First man (Adam) was placed in the beautiful garden. (Genesis 2:8)
 - b. The garden was well watered by the rivers. (Genesis 2:8)
 - c. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were placed in the garden by God. (Genesis 2:8)
 - d. Adam was to cultivate it and to guard it. (Genesis 2:15)
 - e. A conditional warning was given to man, that he should not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for this would mean death. (Genesis 2:17)
 - f. Adam had the responsibility to name all the animals created by God.
4. God created one wife for Adam from Adam's own flesh and blood. (Genesis 2:18, 21-25)

This account should leave no doubt in anyone's mind that all families and races of people have but one source. The Bible traces the virgin Mary right back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38) giving us assurance that the Lord Jesus Christ who is the second Adam is legally our atonement! "And so it is written: The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven." (I Corinthians 15:45-47 NIV)

INTERFERENCE FROM OUTER SPACE

The garden of Eden for handsome Adam and beautiful Eve, with hundreds of thousands of choices of fruits and vegetables, plenty of water from the rivers, plus the dew at night provided an ideal vacation spot for life: There were no thorns or thistles, no weeds, and absolutely gorgeous surroundings. The only condition placed upon them was, "And the Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; BUT of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:16,17)

There were two things that Adam had never experienced and they were evil and death. I am sure that he asked himself the question, "What are these?" Adam enjoyed the fellowship of his creator as God walked with him in the cool of the evening. Adam had heard the command directly from God and no doubt had explained it well to his wife Eve. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived was in the transgression." (I Timothy 2:13,14) This was a great test of their volition.

Something out of the ordinary occurred. An intruder from the angelic realm indwelt the most beautiful animal in the garden, "The serpent" and deceived Eve. We are constantly reminded of the curse of God upon the serpent as we watch snakes of all sorts slithering along the ground. Satan, the fallen angel, is very subtle and wise. "Yea, HATH GOD SAID, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1b) Satan's argument began very religiously with the very name of God. He quotes God. Satan and his emissaries often quote God from the scripture, but they twist it and use it out of context.

Eve assured the serpent that they could eat of every fruit except "the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, GOD HATH SAID, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Genesis 3:3) But the serpent assured her that she would not die, but become like God. (Genesis 3:4,5) The woman believed his lie; looked at the tree; handled the fruit which looked like good food; and liked the thought of becoming very wise. Evidently Adam was with her or at least nearby since they both were enjoying each other and feasting upon the fruit of the garden. Eve first ate and did not die and then offered some to Adam and both of them lived!

Little did they realize that they had died spiritually the very second they ate, and eventually they died physically just as God had said they would. Now their eyes were opened to their nakedness so they made a covering out of fig leaves. (Genesis 3:7) About this time, Almighty God came to visit them; but they were hiding. So God went to search for them. From the beginning, God seeks man to help him.

Confronted by God, Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent. Evidently the serpent was there to claim his victory, for "The Lord said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:14, 15) This is the first mention of the messianic hope, promised through the seed of the woman, rather than the seed of man.

It was the woman who was deceived and it would be the seed of the woman that would destroy Satan and his evil kingdom. Adam should have known better than to have taken the fruit, so his punishment would be a cursed earth with thorns and thistles to be removed by the sweat of his brow. (Genesis 3:17-19) Adam would continue to rule over his wife and Eve would travail in pain and be subject to Adam. (Genesis 3:16) They were both driven out of the luscious Garden of Eden.

It would be sad indeed if that were the end of the road for mankind; but actually it was the beginning of a better life ahead. God was now free to pour out His marvelous grace upon the earth. The battle between good and evil was now in full swing. The battlefields would be upon the earth as well as in heaven itself. As mentioned before, some of Satan's angels were so wicked that they had to be restrained by God and placed in chains of darkness. A whole army of demons with their "five-star" general are locked up in the bottomless pit until their time of action (Revelations 9); and there are four powerful fallen angels with their armies kept under the Euphrates river. (Revelation 9:13-10). This should be sufficient evidence that God is sovereign and in complete control.

Satan's desire from the beginning has been to frustrate God's Plan by threatening the 'seed of the woman' and by attempting to deceive the human race, and attempting to block the fulfillment of God's promises. Satan can only be in one place at a time so he must depend on his legions of fallen angels to carry out his commands.

From the account in the book of Job, we know that Satan must give account to God for his activities.

"Now there was a day when the sons of God (angels - good and bad) came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, From where comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down it."
(Job 1:6,7)

Satan observed that God had placed a 'hedge' around righteous Job, protecting him as He does His very own. God's Word warns us of the tactics of Satan in I Peter 5:7-9,

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

Revelation 12:10 reveals that Satan goes before God in heaven day and night to accuse believers.

As the greatest most powerful creature that God made, even though he lost his position in heaven, Satan still has his power. He seeks to 'brainwash' every child born into this world. "But if our gospel be hidden it is hidden to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them." (II Corinthians 4:3,4)

Adam and Eve, after their sin of disobedience, were clothed by God through a sacrifice of animals, and driven out of the Garden of Eden. What a different world they had to live in now. They knew both good and evil and had the volition to choose but at a terrible cost. But this did not take God by surprise. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit had already in eternity past worked out a plan to use fallen man to condemn sin and remove it forever. The plan begins with God seeking man not man seeking God.

The words of God, "Thou shalt surely die" in Genesis 2:17 became a reality with the death of Abel after the two brothers presented their offerings to God. Abel's was accepted and Cain's rejected; and because Cain could not get even with God, he took it out on his brother and slew him. (Genesis 4:8) Genesis 4:10 records the evidence that death does not end it all, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." (Genesis 4:10) Abel was a seed of Adam and Eve, but not that "seed of a woman" which would bruise the head of Satan.

To protect Cain, God put a mark upon him. According to the law of God, Cain should have been killed for murdering his brother. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man." (Genesis 9:6) This was another evidence of God's grace, but it was to no avail, for corruption spread and Lamech was seventy-seven times worse than Cain. (Genesis 4:23,24) Eventually the whole civilization became corrupt and there were few men like Enoch, with whom God walked, thus keeping alive the messianic hope. "And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty five years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him." (Genesis 5:23,24) Enoch is safe in the presence of God and still living. He is a wonderful illustration of the Church which will be caught up into the presence of the Lord mentioned in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and John 14. We shall be taken away from the wrath to come just as Enoch was caught up before the flood. (See I Thessalonians 1:10 and Genesis 7.)

In light of the conflict between God and Satan's forces, it would seem that Satan had the upper hand when the whole human race except for eight people had been totally corrupted. But God will never be defeated. In Genesis 11, the turning point in the plan of God is seen, when the lineage of Shem is recorded. It was also the time when false religion was introduced, which will be discussed later. Again

there is matching and counterfeiting by Satan who even produced a mother/child religion. (I Kings 16; Jeremiah 44; Ezekiel 8)

UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT

God's plan continued to unfold when Abram was called and God gave the 'Magna-Citation' of Genesis 12. The name 'Hebrew' first appeared in Genesis 14:13; and a new order of both priest and king was set up with the introduction of Melchizedek. (Genesis 14:18-20) Satan increased his attacks, attempting to ruin God's lineage for the messianic hope, by involving Hagar rather than Sarah. Ishmael's family have been an instrument for attack against Israel since Ishmael's birth. Israel suffered over 500 years of slavery both in Egypt and among the Philistines, Moabites and others. There was the seventy years in Babylon; Suffering under the heel of Rome; being scattered around the world and persecuted by many nations. How would it be possible for God to rectify all of this and cause the seed of the woman to bruise the head of Satan?

The seed of the woman was confirmed! "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, the VIRGIN shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with justice and with righteousness, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Abraham was given an unconditional covenant which is recorded in Genesis 12; Genesis 15:1-18; and Genesis 17:1-13. David was promised never to lack a son to occupy his throne. (I Chronicles 17:11-13; II Samuel 7:16,24; I Kings 8:23; 9:5) In every conceivable way, Satan has tried to thwart the purpose of God; but God in His omniscience, was always several steps ahead of the evil forces. "But, when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5) The battle between the evil forces and the Righteousness of God goes on.

Satan's Attempts to prevent the seed of the woman from bruising his head:

1. To have Christ born a cast away. (Matthew 1:18-21)
2. To have the Messiah born in the wrong place. (Luke 2:1-7)
3. The wrong man to herald the setting up of the Kingdom of Christ (Luke 1:5-25; 57-80)

4. Herod was notified that the messiah was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea according to Micah 5:2 and planned to kill Him. (Matthew 2:1-18)
5. To remove the Messiah from the land in the flight to Egypt. (Matthew 2:19)
6. Hundreds of children were killed by the evil one attempting a messianic assassination (Matthew 2:16-18); but fulfilled Jeremiah 31-15
7. Returning to the land of Israel, Joseph settled in the wicked city of Nazareth. (Matthew 2:23; John 1:46)
8. Pressure was placed on Jesus to support the family as Joseph died and left Jesus with the carpenter work.
9. Jesus was heralded as King of Kings by John the Baptist. (Matthew 3:1-17)
10. Satan pressured Jesus in the temptations in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1-11)
11. Beheading of John the Baptist. (Matthew 4:12; 11:1-14; 14:1-14)
12. The Jewish leaders tried to get Christ to break the Jewish law or the Roman law. Tribute to the Roman law and to God. (Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26) The woman taken in adultery. (John 8:1-11) Healing on the Sabbath. (Matthew 12:1-4)
13. The religious leaders tried to say that Christ's power was from the demons. (Matthew 12:24-30)
14. The rulers of the Temple pledged their allegiance to Caesar rather than accept Christ as their King. (John 19:5-15)
15. Satan had his spy within the circle of the 12 disciples. (Matthew 26:14-16; Luke 22:1-6; 22:21-23)
16. Satan tried to destroy Peter. (Luke 22:31-34)

These are just a few of the ways in which Satan tried to stop God's plan, and we will never know the full extent of the battle that took place against the Son of God. Satan thought that he had destroyed the King of Kings and Lord of Lords when Christ was crucified.

God brought Mary to Bethlehem of Judea so the Christ Child would be born as prophesied. God sent John the Baptist to herald the Messiah rather than Elijah, because the kingdom would be postponed. God protected Jesus in the flesh at the time of the Herodian massacre so that he could fulfill his mission as Saviour of the world.

The infiltration of evil into God's world began in the Garden of Eden and it will continue until the final judgement at the Great White Throne. Since the day of Pentecost, when God the Holy Spirit came to earth to indwell every believer, there exists a restraining power and Satan has been limited.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement." (John 16:7,8)

"And now ye know what restraineth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now hindereth will continue to hinder until he be taken out of the way." (II Thessalonians 2:6,7)

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12)

The Lord God Almighty, as the Triune God and Creator of all understands thoroughly what dangers we face as Believers. Nothing has been overlooked by God as Satan himself reviews the case of Job.

"Then Satan answered the Lord and said, Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou has blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." (Job 1:9,10)

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Zechariah 4:6)

With God the Holy Spirit indwelling them forever, Believers have a special advantage over the non believers:

- 1. They cannot be indwelt by evil spirits.**
- 2. They have special discernment from God the Holy Spirit.**
- 3. God always provides an escape route for Believers to keep from yielding to temptation. (I Corinthians 10:11-14)**

QUESTIONS

1. Give some Scriptures from the Old Testament which refer to the existence of the Triune God.
2. Give a Scripture in the Book of Daniel that presents the Eternal plan of God.
3. Why do believers need an Advocate in heaven? Give Scripture.
4. List as many as possible of the works of God the Holy Spirit with Scripture proof.
5. Write concerning the creation of Heaven and Earth and what may have happened to the earth that it became void.
6. Where did sin begin? Give Scripture of the character of Satan and how he sinned.
7. Write concerning the angels of heaven (the fallen angels and the holy angels). Give Scriptures.
8. List some activities of angels.
9. What part do angels play in the Believer's life?
10. What makes mankind different from the animals? Give Scripture.
11. Why did God create the vegetation first? How were the gardens watered?
12. What do we learn from the one forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden?
13. When did the interference from outer space start to bring sin into the world? Give Scripture and explain.
14. Who made the first sacrifice on the earth? Why is it necessary to shed blood for the remission of sins?
15. Give references of the seed of the woman and the virgin birth of our Saviour.
16. Was it ever possible for the Lord Jesus Christ to sin?
17. Name some of the difficulties that God overcame in the birth of the Messiah.
18. Give some advantages that believers have when the demons bother them.

GOD'S NEWS IS ALIVE

Communication is a very essential commodity in any age of the history of man, both for better understanding among the various races of mankind and for making contact with Almighty God. Man has always had some method of signaling from one to the other, whether for sending news, or warning of coming danger, or calling for help.

American Indians used smoke signals and drums. Early American settlers used the pony express and runners to relay messages. African tribes still use various methods to reach the distant corners of their lands. Sometimes they use shrill calls. The Masai, tribe in East Africa with whom I worked for fourteen years, used such calls as "OOOOEEEE" to sound an alarm and in a matter of minutes warriors would gather and go forth to the battle front.

Before the invention of telephone, radio and television, the news, whether good or bad, traveled slowly and misunderstandings often occurred which led to the preparation of war. Now that we have instant news around the world through satellite stations, one would expect a better understanding among the peoples of the world, but actually fast communication has had the opposite effect. There is but one source of news that makes a difference and that is the Bible, God's eternal Word.

In the present age, we are probing outer space to discover what lies beyond. But God has already sent His news reporters with the truth concerning Himself, His code of ethics and the absolute truth. God's news is good news, based upon God's perfect standards. Here are a few things that God has revealed through His reporters:

1. The earth is round. (Isaiah 40:21,22)
2. God always existed. (John 1:1,2)
3. God created all things. (Genesis 1:1; John 1:3)
4. God's policy is always the same. (Malachi 3:6)
5. Revelation of the past, present, and future.
(Deuteronomy 29:29; Daniel 2:19-22; Revelation 1:19)

What then is the good news from God? To arrive at the answer, a little background is required. God created Man in His own image (Genesis 1:27), and that in itself should be good news to all. However, Adam as the head of the human race, fell into sin passing on a sinful nature to all mankind, a condition which we call total depravity. God formed the body of man from the dust of the earth and gave him the breath of life making him a living soul. (Genesis 2:7) Before Adam sinned, perfect communication existed between God and man. God would come down from heaven and walk and talk with Adam in the cool of the day. (Genesis 3:8) This continued UNTIL sin entered and fellowship was broken. Immediately Adam died spiritually. (God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth - John 4:24)

To restore communication, God had to remove the barrier of sin. Left alone, Man is absolutely helpless, chained to his sin. (Galatians 3:23; Romans 3:23) God's perfect character forbids fellowship with mankind as long as the sin barrier exists. In other words we are natural enemies with God. (Romans 5:10) Reconciliation is

necessary to restore that relationship. It took God, Himself, to accomplish this. "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (II Corinthians 5:19)

It is not possible for mankind to achieve recognition by God through any form of human merit, even if he spent the rest of his days torturing himself in repentance. "That no flesh should glory in His presence, But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (I Corinthians 1:29-31)

This gives us the opportunity to thank God for His provision, which not only restores communication with God, but also places us into the very family of God.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers - all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself - by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight..." (Colossians 1:12-22)

Isn't this Good news?

Furthermore, our past records are destroyed. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly triumphing over them in it." (Colossians 2:14,15) The good news from God's universal network is that every provision has been made for the soul that has sinned and there is no need to face eternal death and separation from God. This is why the Bible was written; God has provided a perfect escape route for all mankind through His Eternal Son.

GOD'S NEWS REPORT IS FOR ALL NATIONS OF THE WORLD

God's news (the Bible) has been translated into most of the languages of the world. What a wonder it is that the Bible is so worded by God the Holy Spirit that the translation into all languages of the world is simple and yet precise. God intended that all should hear and understand the good news. Every believer is commissioned by Christ himself.

**"And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age; Amen."
(Matthew 28:18-20)**

Christ the Eternal Son of God always was, and ever will be, the spokesman for God the Father. God's news media throughout all ages has but one message, in spite of the more than forty human writers. There is but one way and one truth, the Eternal Son of God.

"God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the ages; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Hebrews 1:1-3)

Now as Christ is the final work of authority and He has given us the great commission, shall we look for a change of policy? Of course not! Our supreme God has given us the final news cast and it is recorded from Genesis to Revelation. God's 'weather report' is perfect, detailing when certain events will come to pass. Many of these events have already been in essence 'televised,' updating us on events that have already taken place as God predicted and showing us events that are still to come. The Book of Revelation is God's final news release. It will be covered in detail later on. Remember that God's news of all events, past present and future, is given to us to share with all the nations of the world.

GOD'S NEWS CAST TAKES US INTO THE HEAVENLIES

Millions of dollars and rubles are being spent by the earth's most powerful nations to probe outer space in an attempt to discover the source of life. Most of our scientists are unbelievers, belonging to the seed of Satan, and would rather accept the theory of evolution than the truth of creation. They are looking for outer space creatures, but with the natural eye they will never see them.

However, God's report gives us information that today's scientists are so eager to discover through their space probes. Not only does His Word tell of billions

of spiritual beings in outer space, but it also tells of a place that is being prepared for us (believers) in the Mansions of God.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go (and He did go) and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye shall be also. And where I go ye know, and the way ye know." (John 14:2-4)

God has already given us examples of this truth. "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him." (Genesis 5:24) Elijah is another example of God's ability to make us "air borne." "And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and separated them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." (II Kings 2:11) And yet another report of great interest is the retrieving of the body of Moses by Michael the arch angel. "Yet Michael the arch angel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee." (Jude 9)

God has permitted us to understand the reason that these particular prophets of God must be kept in the heavenlies. Elijah and Moses will be God's two witnesses during the great tribulation. (Read Revelation 11:3-14.) Malachi 4:5 tells us, "Behold I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

The great heavenlies became a reality, when the witnesses saw the Lord Jesus Christ being caught up into heaven by way of the clouds.

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11)

The angels confirmed what Jesus had said in John 14, that he would come again and take them to the mansions of God. This same truth is again confirmed in I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, (and we do) even so they also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them who are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch angel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 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 so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Great events will then take place in heaven which will be discussed later. Our destination, all because we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, is in the heavenlies.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from where also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Philippians 3:20-21)

The Apostle Paul had a wonderful testimony before King Agrippa as he related his heavenly vision.

"At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them who journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goads. And I said, who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand up on thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou has seen and of those things in which I will appear unto thee." (Acts 26:13-16)

At that great moment in Paul's life he became a minister of the Gospel of the saving grace of our loving Lord. This was the changing point in the life of Paul, who left a form of religion to enter the reality and heavenlies with Christ. Transformed by the power of God, having seen the Lord face to face, Paul became an apostle, to be used of God. Later in Scripture, Paul testified of another experience that he had with the Lord.

"It is not expedient for me, doubtless, to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) - such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a manhow he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory; yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." (II Corinthians 12:1-5)

Paul became a special news reporter directly from the Lord Jesus Christ, for he had been taken up into the very paradise of God. What could we wish for more than this? It is wonderful how the Lord sends forth his witnesses just at the right time.

Philip was doing a tremendous job of evangelizing the city of Samaria, where many had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, but God the Holy Spirit wanted Philip to witness to a certain man returning to Africa.

"And an angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip, saying, arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose, and went; and behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah, the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran there to him, and heard him read the prophet, Isaiah, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he besought Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth; In his humiliation his judgement was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:26-39)

God scattered His witnesses throughout the lands, establishing the church through the heavenly visions. Christianity spread throughout the world, "For a great door, and effectual, is opened unto me," reported Paul, "and there are many adversaries." (I Corinthians 16:9) God's news reporters must always be aware of the adversaries who try to discredit the news reports from our Heavenly Father. But we praise God for the Holy Spirit who causes us to triumph regardless of the powerful enemy.

The good news has been handed down to us from prophets of old.

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed that, not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into." (I Peter 1:10-12)

With all of the eternal things which God has prepared for those who believe, one would expect every human being to desire the better things in this life and the life to come, but that is not the case. Satan deceives every child born into this world. Only the gospel message can transform the thoughts and intents of the heart. As believers our perspective should be to recognize that we are not long for this present life; God has something much better to come.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." (II Corinthians 5:1-2)

What a glorious guarantee, a promise that Almighty God has kept in store for us! No wonder Paul could say, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." (Ephesians 3:14-15) It is a joy and privilege that we, as believers, have to bow before the Lord Jesus Christ, author and finisher of our faith. Someday every human being that ever lived upon this earth will be forced to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ and whether they like it or not, they will bow their knees before Him.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

As believers, we witness with joy, holding forth the eternal living Word of God, as we wait for the soon return of our Lord. "And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." (I Thessalonians 1:10) Praise the Lord, we have already been delivered out from the wrath to come, fully established upon the solid Rock Christ Jesus.

This whole world is faced with wars, rumors of wars, pestilence, disease, famine, heavenly disturbances, immorality, greed, hatred, lusts of every description, being controlled by the world, the flesh and the devil, but all that this world has seen so far is nothing compared to the wrath to come, during those seven terrible years, when hell itself will break loose upon this earth. As the Bride of Christ, we are looking for the return of the Lord to rapture us from the wrath to come.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him, in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, through which he hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, in which he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, WHO FIRST TRUSTED IN CHRIST; in whom ye also trusted after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."
(Ephesians 1:3-14)

Can you believe this quotation is just one sentence! Some may be puzzled over predestination and election, thereby adapting a fatalistic attitude, but remember, the predestination and election are not in you, the person, but in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whosoever believeth is the way into the security in God.

NEWS FROM GOD OF THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

News from God is never doubtful or surmised. God knows the future from the beginning; nothing is hidden from His all seeing eyes. He is able to plan and to perform accordingly, even with the provision of volition which He has placed in His subjects. It was not necessary for God to reveal the past ages to us, but He did and we thank Him for it. To discover the events of the past we look to the Word of God.

The creation is a stumbling block to most unbelievers, who desire to know who created God. That can be answered quickly; no one created God for He always

existed. If you want to put it in mathematical terms, God is the ultimate denominator of one extreme or the other. "In the beginning God ...," (Genesis 1:1a); "In the beginning was the Word ...," (John 1:1a). It is a secret entirely known by God and we better believe it.

GOD'S WORD RECORDS THE PAST

We have ample proof of the existence of God in creation, but we need not stop there for God has recorded some marvelous events of the past in His Word, the Bible. Almost immediately in God's revelation we are introduced to outer space creatures, as we get a glimpse of a supreme angel called Satan, and the other angels, the first to be recorded of God's creation. This was followed by the creation of the material realm and finally the creation of life upon the earth in all forms, with mankind being the predominant creation.

Satan is seen as the already fallen angel, but a study of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 provides the account of Satan's past, revealing that he is the arch enemy of God. A study of angelology is of great importance. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers - all things were created by him, and for him. (Colossians 1:16)

"Praise ye the Lord, praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights, praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him all his hosts. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them forever and ever; he hath made a decree which shall not pass." (Psalm 148:1-6)

We know from Scripture that there are billions of angels, but their numbers will neither increase nor decrease for, unlike humans, they neither propagate nor do they die. The number of angels are beyond counting. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; for the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the Holy place." (Psalm 68:17) "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." (Revelation 5:11) We can only conclude that the vast heavens above are filled with angelic hosts.

What other news do we have of the past? First of all, we get a wonderful glimpse of God, himself, the Creator of all things. We have already discussed the characteristics of God in the first chapter. The Bible reveals that our salvation was planned before the foundation of the world. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." (Ephesians 1:4a)

If God chose us before the world was created, arrangements would have had to be made for purchasing us out of the slave market of sin at the same time. "Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." (Hebrews 10:5) When God gave the first prediction as to the seed of the woman bruising the head of Satan in Genesis 3:15, plans were already set to send the Eternal Son of God to bruise the head of Satan. Christ, as He went to the cross for our sins, also went to destroy the power of darkness and to remove it from God's creation forever.

GOD'S GOOD NEWS BENEFITS US IN THE PRESENT.

When a promise or a treaty is given between two parties, the value of that promise or treaty is entirely dependent upon the honesty of the parties involved. Faith and trust is exercised on the basis of past records. When God promises us that we will inherit treasures in the heavenlies, what guarantee do we have that it is so? Note what the Lord Jesus Christ says. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37) God always keeps his side of the agreement and is capable of doing exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ask or even think.

You remember the account of Thomas, when he was absent at the appearance of the risen Lord to the other disciples? Thomas said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25b)

"And after eight days, again his disciples were inside, and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said He to Thomas, Reach here thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach here thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered, and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:26-29)

"Now faith is the substance of things not seen. For by it the elders received witness. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Hebrews 11:1-3)

The present good news is based upon the evidence of the past which we accept from the witness of long ago. As you read through the eleventh chapter of Hebrews you will hear the testimonies of saints from years past. The record of God's faithfulness in the past gives us the evidence necessary to trust God's Word for the present and future.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." (Hebrews 2:3-4)

God's records are true and witnessed by countless numbers of believers through the past ages. Have we any reason whatsoever to doubt God's Word?

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and

let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1,2)

What a testimony is set before us in God's Word!

There are many more scriptural references of God's witnesses, but these are sufficient to demonstrate that God is able and performs his Word. All that is required by us is to accept it by faith. What marvelous grace of our loving Lord, who has made it all possible!

By exercising faith in our contract with God, we are given an immediate guarantee. Do you know what that guarantee is? There is a certain old English word used in the English King James version of the Bible which means 'guarantee.' It is the word 'earnest.' The Word of God tells us that creation itself is suffering and waiting for the guarantee that God has given to rid this world of sin, once and forever. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Romans 8:22)

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest (guarantee) expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God " (Romans 8:18-21)

God has guaranteed to His creation that it will be set free from the bondage that sin has caused.

As a part of God's creation and having accepted God's contract of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, what proof do we have, or what guarantee has God given that He will perform his part of the contract?

"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now He who establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath sealed us, and given the earnest (guarantee) of the Spirit in our hearts." (II Corinthians 1:20:22)

God has given us the Holy Spirit, a present possession and a guarantee that we have (present not future) salvation. The new birth is not a future birth, but a present birth, making us new creatures immediately. "Now He that hath wrought us for the very same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest (guarantee) of the Spirit." (II Corinthians 5:5)

God is satisfied with the contract and has placed our names as heirs along with Christ. The Holy Spirit becomes the guarantee of our God-given rights within the family of God. "Who is the earnest (guarantee) of our inheritance until the

redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." (Ephesians 1:14) God has placed His seal upon such an agreement or contract and that seal consists of God, the Holy Spirit, who already dwells within us (believers) making new creatures out of us.

To consider the reliability of God's good news, we must recognize the absoluteness of God in all that He has done in the past and all that He does in the present and all that He will do in the future. The latter consideration of the future will be discussed more thoroughly shortly. God's Word states, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1) This is an absolute statement.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified and whom he justified them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not freely give us all things?"

Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us? What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; We are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:29-39)

Since nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, we know that there will be a 100% roll call when we stand before the throne of God. There is no greater guarantee than God, Himself, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:16) The promises of God are based upon God's Word and God's provision. Fellow Believer, get established in the Word of God, study the Word, let the Word become your very life and defeat the evil forces around you by the power of God. "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (John 3:20-21)

To understand God's Word, is to establish confidence in your daily Christian walk. God has provided for confession of sin on a continual basis. "If we confess

our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9) The more cleansing of our lives on this side of glory, the less will have to be burned, when we stand before the judgement seat of Christ (See I Corinthians 3 and II Corinthians 5:10.)

GOD'S GOOD NEWS BENEFITS HIS CHILDREN IN THE FUTURE

Do not be fooled with the soft words from spiritual wickedness in high places, when they talk of the "Universal Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man." It sounds good, just as Cain's offering of fruits gave a good appearance. But God's Word gives us God's requirements for his family. "Without shedding of blood, is no remission (of Sin)." (Hebrews 9:22) To remove the barrier of sin between God and man, it took God Himself to endure the cross. Sin is no longer the barrier between God and Man. Faith in God's accomplished work is the criterion. God offers us the gift of eternal life, entrance into the family of God to share the inheritance of the Lord Jesus Christ. All that is required is the acceptance of the gift by faith.

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth." (Psalm 8:3-9)

It was never God's intention that mankind be limited to threescore and ten years. If our total reason for existence was simply to enjoy earthly life and pleasures, we would have been created within the animal world with mere instincts, having no soul and spirit. God did not breath upon the animals making them living souls. He created the beasts, the birds and the fish for man.

Although angels were created on a higher plane than mankind, they are incapable of reproduction and new creation. Our destiny is far greater than the angels, who have already been established in the heavenly realm. "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, of which we speak. But one in a certain place (Psalm 8:4-6) testified, saying "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels." The Psalmist goes on to say that Mankind is crowned with glory and honor; Mankind is given the responsibility of God's creation; through the incarnation of the Son of God all things will be subjected to Him.

Because of what the Son of God has done in lowering Himself below the angels and becoming our Saviour, God the Holy Spirit dwells within us forever and we shall become the Bride of Christ.

"But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God, should

taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." (Hebrews 2:9-12)

The future benefits for the believers are beyond what we can comprehend. Following is a list of some of those privileges and benefits of which the Bible tells us:

1. Born of God the Holy Spirit making us new creatures. (I Corinthians 12:13; John 1:13)
2. Born of incorruptible seed. (I Peter 1:23)
3. New Creation in Christ Jesus. (II Corinthians 5:17)
4. Reconciled to God by Christ Jesus. (II Corinthians 5:18-19)
5. Blessed with all spiritual blessings. (Ephesians 1:3)
6. Chosen in Him before we were born. (Ephesians 1:4)
7. Given Gifts from God the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 13)
8. Sealed and secured forever by the Triune God (John 10:27-30 and Ephesians 1:13)
9. Will be like the Eternal Son of God. (I John 3:1-2)
10. Have already passed from death unto life. (I John 3:14)
11. Joint heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:17)
12. Will rule and reign with the Lord as a kingdom of priests. (Revelation 5:10)
13. The Bride of Christ. (Revelation 19:7-8; 21:2-9)

God's news, past, present and future, has a direct bearing on those who believe. The benefits that we are to receive in the future cannot even be calculated with our human intelligence. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (I Corinthians 2:9) The best that life in this world has to offer will not compare with the complete new creation that God will establish in the future.

The Lord has preserved this present creation from man's destruction and will continue to do so until He, himself, removes it from existence. Take note of what God the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are in it, shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, in which the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (II Peter 3:10-14)

Now just look at what is coming with God's completely new creation as revealed to John on the Isle of Patmos and recorded in the Book of Revelation:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4)

This is only the beginning of what God has in store for those who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Just to read Revelation chapter 22 makes one long to see the wonder of wonders which God has promised. No wonder John, after seeing all these future events 'televised,' cried out, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

QUESTIONS

1. Name some known truths from the Bible, giving Scripture.
2. What is the greatest good news for mankind? Give Scripture to support your answer.
3. Why can the Bible be translated into all languages with understanding?
4. What does the Bible teach about the heavenlies?
5. What happens to our souls when we die in Christ?
6. To become an apostle, the early disciples had to have personally seen Jesus Christ. How did Paul qualify as an apostle?
7. When was Africa first reached with the Gospel? (Clue – an event which occurred in the Book of Acts)
8. Why can we say that God always existed? Support your answer with Scripture.
9. In a few brief sentences give some Scripture to support God as creator.
10. Explain Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6–7; Galatians 4:4.
11. Name and explain some of the basic faith principles in light of Hebrews 11:1–3.
12. What guarantee do we have that God the Father has arranged for us a place in the new creation?
13. Upon what does God's contract with us depend? Give Scriptures to support answer.
14. Can you name one chapter in the Book of Romans that reveals where there will be a 100% roll call?
15. What benefits does a believer in Christ possess? Give Scriptures.
16. Give the references in II Peter that reveal the fact that the old heaven and earth will be destroyed.
17. What will be missing in the New Earth that previously divided the lands and nations?
18. Why is it necessary for God to destroy the old heaven and earth?
19. Paradise to come is mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Give some details of this wonder of wonders.
21. Will evil and sin ever appear in the New Heaven and earth? Give one verse of Scripture from Daniel that states God's goal.

GOD'S PLAN FOR ETERNITY

(Understanding God's Plan as Revealed systematically in the Bible)

Before God created anything, his perfect plan was certain and no alterations or changes to that plan were necessary. God's plan for establishing His righteousness forever and ever is assured. When the Bible is carefully analyzed by the Spirit-filled student, God's perfect system becomes evident.

The Old Testament writings point to the Supreme sacrifice of the Eternal son of God upon the cruel cross. The New Testament verifies that sacrifice, which resulted in the removal of the sin barrier making possible the new creation where sin will be removed forever.

God's word begins with, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) Following that point there is a gap in events which gives room for imagination. However, God has given us sufficient information in the Bible with clues which we will study in depth as we consider the conflict of the Ages. The conflict is first revealed with the appearance of Satan in the Garden of Eden, displaying his opposition to God.

God has marvelously scaled down His 'blue print,' as the 'Master Builder' and never covers over the total depravity of man after the fall. As we go step by step through the printed records of God, leading up to the new creation, we will be constantly confronted with the ugliness of sin, even expressed in God's chosen vessels.

We will also discover that God has amply provided the means to restore the faltering and stumbling soul. From the very beginning, God has had a progressive plan, separated into dispensations, according to the light which was given them; but God's plan of salvation never varies. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." (Hebrews 9:22)

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit were absolutely agreed before the foundation of the world, that it would take a Divine sacrifice to remove sin from their vast domain. Nothing was overlooked, and everything had to be accomplished to satisfy the perfect character of the Godhead. The penalty of sin had to be paid; the power of sin had to be destroyed; and the presence of sin had to be removed. It was a work of the triune God: The Father planned it; the Son provided it; and the Holy Spirit proves it.

The turmoil of sin, and the costly plan to redeem mankind could have been avoided if God had made all of his creatures without volition. But God desired a creation that would choose God. By this, God will achieve His greatest plan for all eternity; He will put away sin once and forever. This has been carefully worked out by the Godhead, and is clearly set forth in Daniel 9:24. The important points to note are as follows:

1. Finish all transgressions
2. Make an end of sins.

3. Make reconciliation for iniquity.
4. Bring in everlasting righteousness.
5. Seal or complete all Biblical visions and prophecy.
6. Anoint the Most Holy.

That is a plan that just cannot be improved!

The giving of choice to the angels in Heaven brought about a challenge from the greatest creature ever created by God. His name was Lucifer or, as we know him today, Satan, the serpent, the wicked one, and the devil. It is impossible for God to make anything imperfect so we cannot blame God for the evil that began in Satan. Here is how the Bible describes Satan:

Thus saith the Lord God; thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty, thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy coveringthou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, thou wast perfect in all thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. (Ezekiel 28:12-15)

Also in Isaiah 14:12 Satan was called, "Son of the morning." He was the one who first sinned and we will describe this conflict later.

The Triune God was aware of the confusion that this would cause in heaven, and knew that one-third of the angels would follow Satan as recorded in Revelation 12:4. Satan's rebellion came as no surprise to God for His omniscience revealed it and His sovereignty controlled it. Since volition was given to the angels and to mankind, effecting both the spiritual realm as well as the physical, preparations were made by the Godhead to deal with both.

The angelic host that submitted to evil would face eternal punishment in the lake of fire. They were heavenly creatures, who had seen the glory of God and they were not deceived. They would suffer forever without escape. Sin entered the human race by deception and God provided a means to redeem the souls of those who would accept God's supreme and perfect sacrifice, a plan in which the triune God would deal with sin once and forever.

Although the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world has been accomplished and the judgement passed, the sentence passed on Satan and his angels has been postponed until God's plan is completely fulfilled. God is allowing the evil forces to run their course. When the cup of iniquity is filled, then sin will be put away forever, never to express itself in the new creation of our Almighty God.

God is not frustrated in any way; His plan was established before the foundation of the world and everything is under His control. He is absolutely in touch with His whole creation and not even a sparrow falls without His knowledge of it. His 'blue print' for the ages is without flaw and without need for alteration. In the end God's righteousness will be vindicated and His perfect and Holy character will be established forever!

MILESTONES IN THE PLAN OF GOD

1. Sin first emerged in Heaven Satan, the greatest creature ever created by God – Satan. (See Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28) One-third of God's angelic hosts also fell into sin and since they sinned in the very presence of God, there is no salvation possible for them. (Revelation 12:4)
2. God has imprisoned certain angels temporarily until the final casting into the lake of fire. (Revelation 9 and Jude 6)
3. Sin first entered mankind in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:1-7)
4. Salvation promised. (Genesis 3:15)
5. First Sacrifice was made to cover sin until God's provision of the Divine sacrifice to remove sin (Genesis 3:22)
6. First evidence of demon possession. (Genesis 6:2-4)
7. First 'air-lift' of a human being (Enoch) into the presence of God (Genesis 5:18-24) The oldest human being living, being caught up into the presence of God is evidence of that to come. (John 14, I Thessalonians 4:13-18)
8. First murder occurred. (Genesis 4:6-16)
9. The total covering of the earth by flood with only eight souls surviving. (Genesis 6:1-8:22)
10. The first religion – Tower of Babel – multiple languages given by God. (Genesis 11:1-9, Deuteronomy 32:8)
11. The chosen lineage of Shem selected by God. (Genesis 11:10-32)
12. The first Magna Citation to a man called Abram (Genesis 12:1-9) and the lineage of promise and title deed to the land. (Genesis 15:1-21)
13. The mysterious King/Priest – Melchizedek. (Genesis 14:17-24)
14. Important unconditional covenants made by God:
 - A. Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-18; 15:1-18)
 - B. Palestinian Covenant – Israel's possession of what God promised to Abraham (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Genesis 13:14-18). Confirmed in Isaac (Genesis 25:5, 11) and continued through Jacob who became Israel (Genesis 28:12-16).
 - C. Davidic Covenant (II Samuel 7:4-16; I Kings 2:45; 8:25; 9:5)
 - D. The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-40; Romans 11; Hebrews 8:7; 10:39; Deuteronomy 31:6).These covenants are absolutely based upon God's grace alone, and are guaranteed by God, Himself.
15. Conditional Covenants:
 - A. Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:26-31; 3:16-19).
 - B. Israel possessing the land (Deuteronomy 11:26-28; 15:4-15; 30:11-20).

- C. Israel keeping the Sabbatic years (Leviticus 25:8-24)
 - D. Attitude of the Nations and their actions toward Israel (Genesis 27:29; Numbers 24:5-9).
16. Satan and his fallen angels (demons) are our adversaries both in heaven and earth (Job 1:6-12; I Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10).
 17. Some important Scriptures, revealing the various stages in the plan of God with His ultimate aim. (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 22; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 9:25-26; Galations 4:4; Joel 2:28; Acts 1 & 2; John 11:25-26; John 14:1-6; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Thessalonians 3:13; Revelation 19; 20 & 22; Daniel 9:24).
 18. Some of the final judgements of God (Matthew 24 & 25; Ezekiel 38 & 39; Zechariah 12:2-9; Revelation 9:1-21; Revelation 12:7-17; Revelation 20:11-15).

These are but a few of the important events in God's Plan. Some have already been fulfilled such as sin judged on the cross, the resurrection, the beginning of the regathering of Israel back in her own land, the hostile attacks of the nations around Israel, the beginnings of the revival of the Roman empire, the final stages of the gathering of the Bride of Christ. Others still remain to take place. The great event that Believers are waiting for is the rapture of the true church and the glorious seven years in the mansions on high!

The history of mankind demonstrates complete failure apart from God. Adam and Eve lost their paradise leaving their posterity with Genesis 3:16-19. Throughout history God has manifested Grace in the face of man's total depravity. So great was the wickedness of man that it threatened the very plan of God; but "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," (Genesis 6:8) and with seven other human beings the cleansing began again only to face corruption through every government of man.

When God called Abraham, He knew that the conditional covenants would all fail and His chosen people would be scattered throughout the world BUT God always had His remnant and in the end, victory will be forthcoming based upon God's absolute Word, signed and sealed by Himself. As God the Father gathers the Bride of Christ, Israel is still rejecting the Messiah but Israel's eyes will be opened when they see the Eternal Son of God descending from Heaven in the clouds to gather Christians from all parts of the world. The graves will open and the dead in Christ will arise and take on their glorified bodies and the Believers who are alive will be changed and together we will be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air and go with Him to those places prepared for us in the mansions of God the Father. (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-6).

This great lifting-up will not be done in secret but there will be a great crowd of witnesses standing by to see this marvelous gathering by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."
(Zechariah 12:10)

"And one shall say unto Him, what are these wounds in thine hands? Then He shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." (Zechariah 13:6)

Do you remember what the Bible says concerning the sign that the Lord was and is the Messiah? When Jesus was brought before Caiaphas, the High Priest, and the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53-65; Matthew 26:57-68) he was asked by the high priest,

"I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, AND COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."

This will trigger off one of the most remarkable changes in the history of Israel. Just as the dramatic conversion occurred in the life of Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus, the youth of Israel will rise to the occasion and become the 144,000 missionaries during the most terrible tribulation the earth will ever know. Israel's eyes will be opened and they will recognize their Messiah during that great time of persecution called the Great Tribulation, which Daniel calls the Abomination of Desolation, and confirmed by the Lord Himself in Matthew 24:15, 21.

Constantly remind yourself, as you study the Bible, rightly dividing the truth, that God made promises to Israel and He also made promises to Christians. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we are baptized into this new relationship with God, by God the Holy Spirit. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (I Corinthians 12:13) Until the day of Pentecost this relationship was not available; Old Testament saints merely had their sins covered until the day of Pentecost. New birth started with Pentecost and will continue until the rapture of the Bride of Christ.

However, God has not thrown away Israel as recorded in Romans 9:4-5. "Who are the Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever, Amen." In Romans 11:1-5, we read:

"I say then, hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. Know ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and dug down thine altars; and I am left alone and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of Grace."

This church age is the time when God the Father is gathering the Bride of Christ for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and when the number is reached, then those who were born of God the Holy Spirit, making up the complete Bride of Christ, will be caught up into Heaven, during those seven terrible years on earth which are called the Great Tribulation.

Can we possibly know the plan of God? Of course we can! The Bible clearly sets forth God's plan throughout the ages in no uncertain terms. God intended to reveal His plan to us, otherwise He would not have recorded a Bible, three-fourths of which is prophetic. Genesis 3:15 was the first prophetic utterance from God Himself. The Triune God, before the foundation of the earth, made a decision to combat sin in His creation by taking upon Himself the form of the human creature, which the Theologians term the Hypostatic Union, otherwise known as the incarnation. God stood in the breach to reclaim, redeem, regenerate and make new creatures in Christ Jesus. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (II Corinthians 5:17)

However, the process of 'so great salvation' was revealed gradually down through the ages, from Genesis 3:15, with the selection of the lineage of Shem, then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jacob became Israel, then the tribe of Judah was selected as the royal family, at the anointing of David as heir to the throne, and finally the birth of Christ through the virgin Mary in fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. God is always on time and is in complete command as the Sovereign God over all of His creation. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galations 4:4,5)

It is quite simple to review fulfilled prophecy, but what about the prophecy of the future? I once asked a Rabbi this question, "As a teacher of the law of Moses and the prophets, how do you deal with prophecies not yet fulfilled?" His answer was short and to the point. "We only deal with those prophecies which we determine have been completed." The blindness that has covered Israel will continue until Christ is accepted as their Messiah during the Great Tribulation.

As believers, we base all of our findings in the Bible on the character of God as we have already discussed. This is a simple formula for rightly dividing the Word of truth. It is important to let the Word of God speak through the power of the Holy Spirit who will teach you and guide you into all truth. Frequently man's interpretation and preconceived ideas get in the way and cause confusion. II Peter 1:20 reminds us, "knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation."

In some instances God used existing situations to make future predictions. A good example of this is the reference to the wicked king of Tyre by Ezekiel in Ezekiel 28:1,2. Compare this passage with Isaiah 14. It is quite clear that although God condemned the proud king of Tyre, the indictment was actually upon the devil himself, who used the King of Tyre as his spokesman.

Prophecy is sometimes recorded in the past tense as though the events had already taken place. Time is but a small thing in God's eternal plan. As the prophet looked down the corridor of time, the events appeared as accomplished, such as in Isaiah 14:1, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer." But we know from Revelation 9:1-2 and Revelation 12:7-12 that this event is yet to take place. Satan still has access to heaven, where he continually accuses the brethren before God, as he did with Job. He also has to give an account of himself before our Sovereign God. Because of this God has provided an advocate, who is Jesus Christ the Righteous. "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." (I John 2:1)

According to the plan of God, sin was judged once, for all and forever at the cross, giving mankind the opportunity to accept or reject the Lord Jesus Christ, who paid the debt with His own life. Human beings now have the option of accepting the gift of God by grace and receiving Christ's perfect righteousness, or rejecting the Way, the Truth and the Life and receiving God's judgement of eternal death. From the time of Adam until the present time, God's plan has never changed, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." As believers, our constant prayer should be, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done."

Christ's kingdom on earth will only be accomplished by the Son of God in person, who will maintain His power with a rod of iron. This thousand-year reign of righteousness will present the final opportunity for mankind to accept or reject the righteous rule of God. Conditions will be perfect. Nature will be totally restored. Satan will be in the bottomless pit. No longer will there be hunger, famine or wars. It will be a thousand years of peace and good will. Longevity will be restored. "For the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." (Isaiah 65:20 b) As in the garden of Eden, mankind will exercise his choice of good or evil.

During this final age, Old Testament believers and Christians will have their glorified bodies. They will be the spiritual teachers to natural man. Many will accept the righteousness of God but others will refuse. Then Satan will be released from his prison with his demons and draw a great army of unbelievers to himself that are like the sands of the seas in number.

"And when the thousand years are ended, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the Beloved City (Jerusalem); and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." (Revelation 20:7-9)

The battle will be short lived as God zeros in on the enemies of His Son and brings to a close the power of Satan. The next step in the plan is to cast Satan and his demons into the lake of fire to remain there forever and ever. The sum total of the evil forces will be separated from all the wonders of wonders which God is preparing for His own. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." (Revelation 20:10)

There is one more phase in the final judgements of God and that is the Great White Throne judgement. You remember what the Bible said about "every knee shall bow?" God will gather together all mankind from all the ages, except those who were raised from the dead in the first resurrection. And they will stand before the Great White Throne for this final judgement. The Word of God refers to these in this way, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Revelation 20:5) This multitude of all nations, races and lands will have to stand trial before the Great White Throne, where the Lord Jesus Christ will be seated.

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hades delivered up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:11-15)

The Lord Jesus Christ will be seated upon the White Throne, as God the Father has highly exalted His Eternal Son.

"Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name. That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

Who but Christ is worthy to stand in the judgement seat and pass the final verdict upon those who have rejected Him! This resurrection, the last moments in the history of mankind, is not a separation of the 'sheep and goats,' but final judgement on the 'goats,' those who have rejected the great salvation prepared by God.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" (Hebrews 2:3,4)

Yes, there shall be weeping and wailing as judgement falls upon billions of lost souls. They shall pass into eternity to be separated from God and tormented forever in the lake of fire, where the worm never dies! Praise God, we who have accepted Christ as our personal Savior have passed from death unto life, by the Grace of God! "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24)

After the final judgement of the Great White Throne, the count down for the demolition of the old heavens and the old earth will begin. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works

that are in it shall be burned up." (II Peter 3:10) God is not in the renovation or repair business, but rather in creating all things new.

Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, in which the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness." (II Peter 3:11-13)

John, on the isle of Patmos, had a preview of all these things to come and God the Holy Spirit gave us the record. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea." (Revelation 21:1) All things shall become new and we will devote more time to what the Bible says about this as we progress in our studies. "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (I Corinthians 2:9) You see, my fellow believer, all has been made ready from the very beginning and our Almighty God has left nothing to chance but all has been prepared in advance.

Critics of the Bible attempt to explain away the literal fulfillment of these events by stating that they are allegories or mythology. If we adopt such an interpretation of the Scriptures, we will have many problems, especially in dealing with scripture where a portion of prophecy has been literally fulfilled, with the remaining portion explained away as a spiritual allegory, not expected to be fulfilled literally.

There is no problem with applying a secondary application of God's truths as long as we accept the literal meaning as the primary focus. Merely spiritualizing the truths of scripture and randomly applying allegorical interpretations puts at risk the whole revelation of God. It will lead to every man being right in his own eyes, with no binding interpretations.

God's Word clearly differentiates between revelations and parables. When the Bible says, "Thus saith the Lord," we can rely upon it as God speaking to us in exact literal terms. When we read, "It is likened unto...." we know that God is illustrating one of His truths through a story. In His earthly ministry, Christ gave clear evidence when he spoke in parables, following with an explanation of the truth. In the portions of Scripture where God has specified measurements, numbers, weights, and time, we must accept His Word, rather than rationalize that God didn't mean it that way.

God set forth His plan for all ages in no uncertain terms. There is but one interpretation and that is God's. There are many applications of God's word, but these are all secondary to the one true interpretation. What a marvel that the living word of God, which we call the Bible, consisting of sixty-six books of the revelation and plan, should have but one continual message: looking forward to the cross; looking back to the cross; and looking at the glorious future prepared by God Himself as a result of the cross. Do not be robbed of the realities of the Bible by substituting flimsy applications that explain away what God has really intended for us.

THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES

God in His omniscience does not depend upon time to know what will happen in the millions of years to come. He knows the end from the beginning of every event of all His creation. When Satan was created the most highly exalted creature, the most handsome and the most intelligent, there was no excuse to wish for anything more, "under God" for he had all. But he was not satisfied with his supreme position as a creature and desired to be "like God." Satan was very proud and this desire to be other than what God made him, ushered in the conflict of the ages.

Sin In Heaven

Satan or Lucifer is the most crafty and powerful creature in the universe. He has challenged his Creator and is attempting to plagiarize everything God offers His creatures both in heaven and upon earth. Satan is the father and originator of sin, evil, wickedness and the sum total of rebellion against God. It all started in heaven. We have dealt briefly with this subject, but now let us look at it in depth.

Some critics will say, if God knew so much, why did He create Satan in the first place? Yes, God could have prevented sin from expressing itself, if He had made us all as puppets or robots or even as the animal kingdom, with only instincts. But God did not do it that way. He was not interested in involuntary or enforced behavior among angels or mankind.

It is evident from Genesis 1:1,2 that the earth became chaotic after God created it, for what God creates is always perfect. Isaiah 45:18 gives us some answers.

"For thus saith the Lord who created the heavens, God Himself has formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord and there is none else."

It appears that a very powerful being interfered with God's creation and although we have only a little information, it is sufficient information to place the blame on Satan.

"Moreover, the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of Man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyre, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy timbrels and of thy flutes was prepared in thee in the day that thou was created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth, and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." (Ezekiel 28:11-15)

Let us examine the contents of this revelation:

- a. The creature was angelic (a cherub).
- b. The creature visited the Garden of Eden therefore must be Satan (Genesis 3:1-6)
- c. The creature was full of wisdom and beauty, covered with glistening gems.
- d. The creature was anointed by God as a protecting cherub appointed as a ruler on the mountain of God.
- e. The creature was able to walk in the midst of fire.
- f. The creature was created by God, perfect and without sin, but chose to sin against the Creator.

Further evidence of this exalted Cherub's fall is found in Ezekiel 28:16-19.

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy merchandise; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee; it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All them that know thee among the people shall be appalled at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." (Ezekiel 28:16-19)

- a. His merchandise was for self and with violence he sinned against God.
- b. He lost his position in God's holy mountain of judgement.
- c. He was removed from the stones of fire bordering the holiness of God.
- d. He corrupted the perfect wisdom which God had given to him by his pride of the brightness of his own beauty.
- e. He defiled the sanctuaries with his continual sin.

Further study of the Word of God reveals more information on Satan.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! For thou art cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I WILL ascend unto heaven, I WILL exalt my throne above the stars of God; I WILL sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north, I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds, I WILL be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to sheol, to the sides of the pit. They that

see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man who made the earth to tremble, who did shake kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness, and destroyed the cities, who opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isaiah 14:12-17)

- a. Future prediction that Satan will fall from heaven. (Revelation 9:1-21; 12:7-17)
- b. Satan's five "I WILLS" which reveal his sin against God.
- c. Satan caused the earth to tremble and chaos on the earth.
- d. Satan held mankind as prisoners.
- e. Satan convinced one-third of God's angels to join him in his revolt. (Revelation 12:4)
- f. Satan has the capacity to blind the minds of the human race. (II Corinthians 4:3,4)
- g. God has removed Satan from his position as the guardian of God's privacy and replaced him with four living creatures as mentioned in Revelation 4:6-9.

These are a few obvious revelations concerning Satan, which should sufficiently convince us of the high position that he held and the ultimate end of this powerful creature. This exalted angel was so well respected in heaven that he was able to convince one out of every three angels of God to revolt and follow him. By so doing Lucifer brought chaos into heaven, supposedly disrupting God's plan, but on the contrary, God was prepared for this change and had arranged for it before His creation began.

The angelic hosts which number in the billions were given their choice at that time as to whether to remain loyal to their Creator or to revolt under their new commander. No doubt they thought their revolt to be in secret, but they were badly mistaken for nothing is hidden from Almighty God. God's Word has something to say regarding this.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered, to devour her child as soon as it was born." (Revelation 12:3,4)

If you take careful notice of this revelation you will discover that from the drawing of one-third of the angelic host by Satan, the scene quickly changes and takes us to the birth of Christ through the virgin birth, and then to the revival of the Roman empire which Daniel spoke about in Daniel 7:19-25. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (II Peter 3:8) Nothing is hidden from God and in a flash the past, present and future is at His command! Yes, He holds the heavens and the earth and eternity at His command.

However, at this time we are concerned about the "stars" which are mentioned. Angels are often called stars, even Satan is called a star in Revelation 9:1. It is important to read the Word of God in context. The word 'stars' in the above passage could never refer to literal stars in the heavens, for earth could not contain even one of these. So, the stars mentioned in connection with Satan are angels, which became fallen angels or demons.

God did not reveal much about the sin of the angels, but we do know that some of the fallen angels became so wicked and uncontrollable that they had to be placed in chains. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day." (Jude 6) This was also revealed to Peter by God the Holy Spirit. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, (and he didn't spare them) but cast them down to hell, (Tartarus – unknown number of angels) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement." (II Peter 2:4)

There is also a reference to other angels, a whole army of them locked up in the bottomless pit, awaiting their day of release during the great tribulation and especially the time of the Abomination of Desolation, which Daniel speaks of and confirmed by Christ, Himself in Matthew 24:15. Read Revelation 9:1–12. This is to be literally fulfilled as Satan himself will be given the key to open the bottomless pit to release these imprisoned demons who will perform their wicked work during the last part of the tribulation as they hurt mankind for five months (Revelation 9:10). Their leader, who is called the Destroyer in Revelation 9:11, whom Satan will release from the bottomless pit, will indwell the Dictator of the world, also known as the Beast, and who will be an international figure (Revelation 17:8).

We could also mention that what happened in heaven required immediate action by God to place an army of fallen angels in seclusion, now in captivity under the Euphrates river.

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, loose the four angels who are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them."
(Revelation 9:13–16)

It is obvious that when Satan sinned in heaven that there was quite a division among the angels between those on God's side and those who joined forces with Satan. Details of what transpired will only be available when we get to heaven and have a chance to talk with the faithful angels of God. The evil forces thought they could foil God's plans and establish their own domain. No doubt this is the direct cause of the earth becoming void as Satan sought to set up his kingdom on planet earth.

Make no mistake about the power of Satan, but bear in mind that he is still under the sovereignty of God. Temporarily he may be the most powerful angel, as illustrated in Daniel 9 where it required a combined effort of both Michael, the arch angel, and Gabriel to get through to Daniel.

"Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came

to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia." (Daniel 9:12, 13)

We must not minimize the power of Satan or his evil forces. Remember when Moses died at the age of 120 years on Mt. Nebo in the land of Moab? Michael the archangel came to take his body, but Satan fought him on the issue. "Yet Michael, the archangel when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." (Jude 9) From these few references in the Bible, we can clearly see that the battle and revolt in heaven which activated sin was then carried down to earth.

Sin on the Planet Earth

The Bible begins with, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," but immediately we read, "And the earth became without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." (Genesis 1:2) Further discussion on this is found in the book of Jeremiah.

"I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld and there was no man, and all the birds of heavens were fled." (Jeremiah 4:23-27)

Chaos had struck on earth and without a doubt, it had to have been Satan as he attempted to establish his power in opposition to God. However, in the omniscience of God, his plan for all ages had already been established and settled once and for always.

An unusual creation was about to take place on a little pin point of a planet that we call the earth. Nature was to be restored as we have seen in the Genesis account and a beautiful Garden of Eden planted on the earth by God. Homo-Sapien (man) was formed and God, Himself, gave him the breath of life and Man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). This must have amazed the angels to see the preparation that Almighty God made for a human being. God gave specific and personal attention to the restoration of the planet earth.

Unknown to Satan and his millions of demons, God was about to launch a project that would eliminate sin once and forever. It would be costly to the Triune God, but all three persons of the trinity agreed upon it before the creation. It would involve submitting to their own creation, judging sin, paying the wage of sin, and removing sin once and forever. Daniel speaks of a time yet future when this will be completed.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (Israel) and upon thy holy City (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most High." (Daniel 9:24)

What a tremendous undertaking, an accomplishment only possible through the work of God Himself!

**"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
(Philippians 2:6-8)**

God was prepared to take the penalty of sin upon himself, not only for the sake of those who would believe, but to remove the possibility of sin repeating itself forever!

In order to remove sin forever, it was necessary for God to create a creature, not part of the angelic host, but an earthly creature with a body, soul and spirit, made of flesh and blood. No redemption exists for the angels; they were forced to choose God or Satan at the time of the rebellion and that decision holds. The six-day creation went ahead, according to God's plan while Satan and his fallen angels watched. Satan then developed his master plan to destroy, counterfeit or corrupt God's purpose wherever possible.

When God created Adam and Eve, they were the most supreme of human beings, with an intelligence second to none. The Bible specifically states that Adam named all of the animals, he knew the stars and he walked and talked intelligently with God his creator. The reason for Satan's approach to Eve rather than Adam is not given in Genesis, but we do know that God permitted it to happen. God is always in control, He is not taken by surprise and His master plan never has to be altered.

Eve became the target of Satan's trickery and having succumbed to his temptation, Eve persuaded Adam to participate; thus they both came under the same judgement of God. The serpent must have been the most beautiful animal in the Garden of Eden for Satan personally indwelt it and caused Eve to sin. He was very subtle, not denying the existence of God, but rather the truth of God. Satan still uses the same tactics today as he blinds the minds of many by his suggestions, half truths and denying the Bible to be the whole Word of God. Having succeeded in getting Eve to break the law of God, Satan claimed victory and tried to assume control of the situation. If the super intelligence of Adam and Eve were no match for Satan, it follows that you and I are certainly no match! Do not be guilty of minimizing Satan's power.

According to plan, God was still in control. In Genesis 3:15 He pronounced defeat for Satan through the seed of the woman. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15) This begins to unfold the Messianic hope, later confirmed to Israel in Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6-7. God even selected the lineage through whom the Eternal Son would come: Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, the root of Jesse, and King David right down to the virgin Mary.

Recognizing the importance of the Human race, Satan immediately set about to corrupt it. He convinced Cain to reject the blood sacrifice which God required and this act of unbelief led to the first death upon the earth of man who was made in the image of God. Satan began a program aimed at controlling the seed of the woman so that it would not crush his head. But he made another mistake in thinking that the seed of woman would come from the seed of man. He then took another approach. Perhaps thinking that it had been relatively simple to indwell an animal, why not indwell the human beings? This was a desperate move on Satan's part. His demons were given instructions to infiltrate as many Homo-sapiens as possible. We

have this account in Genesis 6:1-7. But God was always eternally ahead of Satan and had prepared a marvelous man, Enoch, who walked with God, and wrote about God and the ungodly people.

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His Saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Jude 14,15)

Here is evidence again that early man was not a cave dweller, but it was corruption, sin, and depravity that eventually took a heavy toll on fallen man. Enoch lived a protected life and God delivered him out from the flood to come just like God will take us as Believers out from the wrath to come (I Thessalonians 1:10)

We must always remember that Satan is full of wisdom as God created him, and is more subtle than any other creature. Satan is an ardent student of the Bible, and perhaps to our shame, he knows God's prophecy better than we do. Of course, the reason for this is that he desires to out maneuver God by counterfeiting every aspect of God's plan. Part of his strategy was the indwelling of mankind by his demons.

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God (fallen angels) saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all whom they chose. and the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:1-3)

The Bible does not indicate that angels have the ability in their natural state to produce offspring, therefore we must assume that this was an infiltration of demons into mankind, producing giants in the land. In order to reproduce offspring of flesh and blood, demons would have to indwell both the male and the female of the human race. Satan's plan to corrupt the human race would have had tremendous consequence with regard to the Messianic lineage if God had not intervened.

"There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God (fallen angels) came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men who were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:4,5)

Now in order for God to bring an end to this infiltration and to preserve the human line through which the Saviour would be born, he had to destroy the

contaminated race with a universal flood. But God had preserved Noah, "a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Out of Noah's three sons, Shem was selected for the Messianic lineage.

The Biblical account of the encounters and conflicts between God and Satan are well worth serious study. Satan, desiring to corrupt mankind and destroy the messianic lineage, has at his command a host of demons and he effectively uses the world and the flesh. Nevertheless God has always had His faithful witnesses, such as Enoch, Job, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets. During the days of Elijah, God assured his prophet that he had 7,000 faithful who had never bowed the knee to Baal. There are many examples in the Word of God demonstrating Satan's attempt to defeat the plan of God and the remnant of Israel, such as when Israel was threatened with extermination during the time of Esther. But God is never frustrated or confused. He will bring His plan to pass.

Demon possession is one of Satan's most powerful weapons in attempting to destroy God's plan and it has continued down through the ages, in fact we have evidence of it to this very day. We know from the Bible that it will continue to the end of time. One example of this is the Dictator of the world, controlled and indwelt by the demon called Destroyer, who will be released from the bottomless pit by Satan, himself.

And when they (Moses and Elijah) shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit (Revelation 9) shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." (Revelation 11:7)

There are also four fallen angels, at present under the Euphrates river, waiting to be released when the second woe of Revelation 9 is sounded which will result in a great slaughter of men (Revelation 9:13-19). This onslaught by demons during the great tribulation will last one year, one month, one day, and one hour, with two hundred million demons under the control of these four high ranking demons. One-third of all human beings will be killed by them. No wonder the Lord Jesus Christ stated in Matthew 24:21, "For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Then the Lord added, "And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

God has several accounts to settle with the nations of the world and we will discuss this later, when dealing with the nations. To this very day, since Israel rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah, she has been suffering at the hands of other nations and will continue to suffer, as God regathers her back into the land of Israel.

God's Reasons for the Separation of the Nations

As you study the Bible you will note that it was God who separated the nations. But the only nation that has permanent boundaries is the nation of Israel. This was first promised to Abraham (Genesis 13:14-15; 15:18; Deuteronomy 32:8). It was God's way of protecting the lineage of Shem until the Messiah would be born of the seed of the woman. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4)

Because of the fall of man, sin entered into every phase of life upon the planet earth and this included Israel as well. God separated or segregated the nation Israel in order to preserve the messianic lineage. Because of the importance

of the nation Israel in God's eternal plan, Satan has spared no effort in his attempts to hinder the relationship of Almighty God and Israel, hoping by some means to thwart that plan.

To preserve the nation, it has often been necessary for God to take disciplinary measures against Israel causing her to suffer, sometimes within her own land and sometimes as slaves to other nations. No nation has ever had as many warnings from God as Israel. Read the books of the prophets and how God plead with Israel to repent and return, yet Israel went her own way. However, God always maintained a remnant in order to perpetuate the messianic hope and establish the unconditional covenant made with Abraham and King David.

An important factor that must be considered in dealing with this subject is the extent as well as the limitations of Satan's evil power. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12) The Bible tells us that Satan is the god of this present world system (II Corinthians 4:4) and that is why Satan was able to offer all the kingdoms of this world to the Lord Jesus Christ, if He would just bow down and worship him (Matthew 4:1-11).

God also separated Israel from the other nations to preserve the laws of God in writing as well as to be a witness to the rest of the world. It is just as well that we cannot see Satan's great army of demons for it would indeed be very frightening. But God is mindful of His own and always makes a way of escape, if we allow God the Holy Spirit to lead us. In our own strength we are in no way capable of binding Satan and we have the examples of Michael the archangel and Gabriel to illustrate that. The Apostle Paul touches on the power of Satan in I Thessalonians 2:18, where he states, "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once again; BUT SATAN HINDERED us."

It is always up to God to make a way for us as we travel through this life. We cannot expect much from the nations and governments of this world and when there are open doors for the Gospel, it is God alone who makes this possible. Were it not for special protection that God places about our lives, we would be consumed by Satan in an instant, but, praise God, our lives are hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3; Hebrews 1:14) As God separated Israel from the other nations, so has God separated us as believers and made us citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20). Wherever we may find ourselves in this world as believers, may we always remember, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13)

The nations of this world are easy prey to the evil forces led by Satan and it is only by the grace of God that we enjoy some peace upon this earth. God originally gave Satan untold power as the greatest creature of all time, to protect the holiness of His realm, but Satan in his volition chose otherwise and became the father of sin. We often think of Satan as the ugly red dragon (and he is), but he is able to disguise himself, "For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (II Corinthians 11:14)

As we have mentioned before, God the Holy Spirit is the restraining power in this world and Satan's evil power is limited by God, until the time when God the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world, when the believing church is raptured or caught up to meet the Lord in the air (II Thessalonians 1; John 14; I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Until that time, however, many will be led astray by these seducing evil spirits.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter time some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

Satan, the god of this world system, has taken control of the nations of the world. In order for God to judge particular nations, He separated them. Sodom and Gommorah are good examples of this as are Nineveh, Jericho, Babylon and all of the coastal towns which the Lord Himself condemned in Luke 10:12-15. The nations and governments under Satan are subject to God's judgement. Some have been utterly destroyed, but there remains a final judgement before the Great White Throne mentioned in Revelation 20, a judgement of all those who perished without hope and without Christ.

Nations did not exist until after the building of the tower of Babel. It was then that God separated the nations which were born through Shem, Ham and Japheth. The languages were confused and the people of the world were dispersed. Families became nations according to their language. Some of the nations became extremely wicked as was the case of Sodom and Gommorah, which resulted in absolute annihilation by God (Genesis 18,19). Some of these nations, occupying the land which God set aside for Israel, were given more than four hundred years to turn from their idols to the Living God, but they refused and had to be destroyed.

When Israel returned from Egypt, God instructed her to utterly destroy these nations because of their wickedness. Israel failed to do so with the result that Israel adapted many of their heathen customs and their idols. This got Israel into trouble with God as well as with the other nations under Satan. Israel disobeyed God and was scattered, taken into slavery to Assyria, Babylon, Medo Persia, Grecian empire and finally under the Roman Empire, just as God had warned them by the prophets.

The Signs of the Times

Prophetically there are particular events scheduled to take place at the end of our age. The Bible admonishes us to watch for certain signs, such as the re-gathering of Israel, the revival of the Roman Empire, perilous times, earthquakes, famines, wars and rumors of wars, pestilence, the armies of the North, the hordes of the East, the king of the South and the re-instating of the nation Israel. As we search the Scriptures, we will discuss these events leading up to the one world government under Satan which will develop in the last days, before the Lord Jesus Christ comes and sets up His kingdom. God alone is able to predict the events to come, because He is God and knows the end from the beginning. However, God has given us these signs to watch for as we walk by faith in the Light of His Word. Let us briefly look at some of these signs which are mentioned in the Bible.

Israel is Returning to Her Land

The most significant historical event to happen in our time is the rebirth of Israel as a nation in 1948. This caused a stir in the entire Arab world which resulted in an Arab alliance whose purpose was to apply pressure on the Western world through the control of oil. It was Satan's objective to prevent the regathering of Israel into her land and one has only to look at the history of the Jews to recognize the obvious efforts made to either annihilate the Jews (e.g. in Nazi Germany) or to

frustrate their re-entry into Israel. But God is always on time according to His time table and schedule. The 1967 war that Israel fought is evidence of God overruling Satan's attempt to drive the Jews from the land given by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. No nation on earth could have endured a continual fight from 1948 until this present time by all of the surrounding nations, unless God ordained it.

The Hebrew race of people cannot be destroyed, though many nations have tried to wipe them off the face of the earth. "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the nations of the earth be gathered against it." (Zechariah 12:3) God has promised to regather Israel and we see it being fulfilled before our very eyes.

"That when the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations where the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from there will He fetch thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." (Deuteronomy 30:3-5)

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His Hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, who shall be left... and shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." (Isaiah 11:11-12)

"But the Lord liveth, Who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all lands where He had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." (Jeremiah 16:15)

"Thus saith the Lord God; although I have cast them far off among the nations, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." (Ezekiel 11:16,17)

"I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." (Amos 9:15)

"And I will make her that was lame a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever." (Micah 4:7)

"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness." (Zechariah 8:7,8)

Certainly these Scriptures are sufficient to convince anyone that God is still mindful of His people Israel and will give the whole land to them regardless of the opposition. Yes, Israel is returning slowly to her land, she is established as a nation, but God is her ever present help and one day her eyes shall be opened to behold the Messiah whom she crucified.

THE REVIVAL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation must be studied as a unit in order to understand the last of the four great empires in the world, namely the Babylonian, Medo Persian, Greek and Roman empires. Of course there were other powerful empires, but these four stand out because of their relationship to God's people Israel. The image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was a picture of the rise and fall of these four empires until the time that the Lord, himself would crush them and reign for a thousand years and then on to eternity. We will study more of this later on, but at this time we want to look at the last great empire, the Roman Empire.

The image has not yet revealed the complete picture as the stone which will fall upon the feet. "Thou sawest until a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image UPON ITS FEET that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces." (Daniel 2:34) Now when these ten kingdoms emerge in some form or other, we know we are approaching the revelation recorded in the last book of the Bible. The Roman Empire can only be revived where the old Empire literally existed.

Now and then you will hear a European broadcast mention, "according to the Treaty of Rome." This is quite revealing and reminds us of God's predictions of the revival of that great nation. The unification of ten nations in the European Common Market completes the quota of ten. In the days ahead, some may be added and some dropped, but we know that eventually there will be a federation of ten kingdoms. Russia is very fearful of a united Europe and has tried to win nation by nation from the common market of Europe to Russia's side. The Roman Empire shall become powerful and control the whole world for seven years in spite of all efforts from other nations to prevent it. The united front born out of the European Common Market is certainly a strong indication of the revival of the Roman Empire.

The turning point will be the ecumenical religious system that will enable the Dictator of the world to stand firmly. We will enlarge upon this when we deal with the One World Government under Satan. "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." (Revelation 17:3) There is no greater power than religion; the most terrible wars have been fought over religious differences. There is also no greater persuasion in

politics than millions of religious followers. Millions have turned out just to get a glimpse of the Pope and if you couple this with the strength of the ecumenical movement in the World Council of Churches, you have a combined effort of two powerful religious fronts.

POSITIONING OF NATIONS AROUND ISRAEL

A significant factor in the return of Israel to her own land is the positioning of the nations of the world as it were crouching, ready to spring upon Israel. Biblical history is repeating itself with the Syrians and other Moslem nations ready to cut Israel to pieces with their swords. This has all come about from the seed of Ishmael. "And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." (Genesis 16:12)

Israel is completely surrounded by enemies, which makes it easier for Russia to force her foot in the door. Biblically, Israel owns all the land in which Iraq, Iran, and Jordan have established their nations. Someday the land will be returned to Israel. "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the River of Egypt unto the great river, the River Euphrates. (Genesis 15:18) Israel is the only nation that God has given a title deed and although she has spent more time out of her land, either scattered or in captivity, she has gloriously survived and is now returning to her land. The Arab world has no right to her land according to Genesis 25, where Abraham gave all to Isaac and not to Ishmael. As these nations gather around Israel, we are reminded that this too is another sign of the end of the age of Grace, known as the Church Age.

With our focus on the Middle East, it is interesting to note that this is the area in which man first appeared on earth, namely the area of the Garden of Eden. Sinful man was forced to leave God's garden spot and roam throughout the rest of the world. Now the attention of the world is right back on the place it all started as God regathers Israel back to the land of promise. Vast mineral wealth in the Mediterranean Sea is considerable cause for the attraction of the super powers. The Bible has much to say about the future of this area.

RUSSIA'S ADVANCE WITH HER ARMIES OF THE NORTH

Ezekiel 38 and 39 present a clear picture of the armies of the North converging on the Nation Israel. In fact they are even now beginning to gather as we note the activity of Russia in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. This is just the beginning of her invasions which we will discuss later on.

The Bible also speaks of the armies of the Orient, in particular China which has invaded Tibet, northern India and is building roads through Pakistan providing as it were a back door approach to the Middle East. "And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, Euphrates, and its water was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." (Revelation 16:12)

The continent of Africa is mentioned in pertinent revelation. At the present time a strong alliance has been formed, called the Organization of African Unity, under the influence of the Soviet Union and controlled by Marxists. Daniel gives us some information on the role of Africa in the end times.

"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him; and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass through. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown, but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him; therefore, he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to sweep away many." (Daniel 11:40-44)

What could be more devastating than to be surrounded by enemies on the north, east, south and west? Satan is indeed accelerating his efforts to make void all of God's promises.

Under the direction of Satan, who is the Mastermind behind the Middle East Conflict, the enemies of Israel are doing all that they can to take away more of Israel's land and this will continue just as God in His omniscience has foretold.

"That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee; and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." (Deuteronomy 30:3-5)

This is all in God's master plan and no alteration to the plan will be necessary. Russia and all of Israel's enemies will eventually be destroyed in God's time.

In chapters to come we will discuss the various stages of God's plans, such as the Rapture, the Great Tribulation, and the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up His Kingdom, the battles to be fought, the lake of fire, the white throne judgement, and the new heavens and the new earth. God's blue print has never been altered and in the fullness of time all shall be done according to God's will.

QUESTIONS

1. Give one verse of Scripture from the book of Daniel that declares God's ultimate intention for His new creation.
2. Is there any salvation for the angels that sinned? Give reasons for your answer.
3. What is God's purpose in allowing sin to run its course? Explain
4. Name at least ten important issues or events in the plan of God – past and future.
5. According to Zechariah 12:10 and 13:6, at what possible time would Israel see the nail prints and wounds of the Messiah? Would this have a relationship to the 144,000?
6. Explain I Corinthians 12:13.
7. When will the final opportunity exist for human beings to turn to God.
8. Who will be judged at the Great White Throne?
9. Where did sin begin? Explain.
10. Give Scripture verses concerning the fallen angels which are not active at this present time.
11. Why did God separate the nations?
12. Give Scripture support for the fact that Satan is the greatest creature created by God, even greater than Michael the Archangel and Gabriel.
13. Why do we need Christ as our Advocate in heaven?
14. Give Scripture stating that Satan can appear as an angel of light.
15. How could Satan offer the kingdoms of this world to Christ?
16. Give three signs of the times which cause us as Believers to expect a soon return of the Lord.
17. Why is the Middle East so important to the nations?
18. What does the Scripture say about the surrounding of nations around the land of Israel?

THE SCROLL

THE ETERNAL GODHEAD

The Bible does not provide much information about God in the ages past, but we do have manifestation of his capacity as recorded in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." The first account of God's creation is found in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." All material matter which we handle and on which we base so much value is but a by-product of God's creation, created out of nothing. God's Holy Word states, "For by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers - all things were created by Him, and for Him." (Colossians 1:16,17)

God, The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit dwell in an eternal substantial abode. "While we look not at the things which are seen but at things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (II Corinthians 4:18) Many futile attempts have been made to build a place of worship worthy of the Living God, but II Chronicles asks, "Who is able to build God an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him?" We cannot even measure the vastness of the universe and our God is so great that the billions of star cities cannot overwhelm Him!

The Eternal Godhead has revealed His plan for the ages to establish eternal righteousness, where evil shall be removed and outlawed forever. (Refer to Daniel 9:24.) Since God is a Spirit, it follows that He created billions of angels as spirits to serve and worship Him. They were created as eternal beings to occupy the heavens and to do God's command. God's word states that the angels rejoiced at the creation of the heavens and the earth and so we know that they observed the creation of our earth. (Psalm 104:4,5; 148:1-5)

THE ANGELIC HOSTS

God's first creation was spiritual life - angels, whose purpose was to serve and worship God and behold His eternal glory. (For a more detailed description of the categories of angels and their functions see Chapter 2 - Angels of Heaven.) Only two classes of creation were endowed with volition (choice), angels and mankind. It is God's purpose that His everlasting righteousness, promised in Daniel 9:24, should be comprised of subjects who willingly choose God rather than involuntary subjects, functioning as robots. All three persons in the Godhead were aware of the potential rejection by these created beings; so complete plans were drawn up to deal with that eventuality.

We are told in the Bible that the abode of the angels is heaven. Angels are innumerable; they do not reproduce and are eternal (Mark 13:32; Galations 1:8; Matthew 22:28-30). They are the most powerful of created beings. The angelic

rebellion, masterminded by Lucifer, the mightiest of all angels, set in motion the resistance to the Holiness of God. It must have taken some time to set up his opposition because eventually one-third of God's angels rebelled (Rev. 12:3). Lucifer had been entrusted as the guard between the Godhead and the angelic realm. For a description of his personality, read Ezekiel 28:12-15. After Lucifer had mustered together billions of angels on his side, in all probability, he established his kingdom upon the earth, described in Genesis 1:2, Isaiah 14:16,17 and Jeremiah 4:23 as a place of chaos or literally a waste or a dump.

When the separation of God's faithful angels and the fallen angels took place, they were neither deceived nor innocent. They made an immediate choice between the Eternal God and Lucifer. Those who chose God have their destiny sealed and are already perfected for eternity to come. Those who chose to follow the evil power of Lucifer (Satan), are forever sealed in their disobedience and will one day be gathered into a living death, never to be released throughout the rest of eternity.

GOD'S CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

When we look at the magnitude of the heavens within the range of earth, our thoughts turn to Psalm 8:3-4, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" Isaiah 40:13 poses the question, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor, hath taught Him?" No combined effort of the greatest men in all the world could begin to measure all of the water in this world, yet God can measure all in the hollow of His hand (Isaiah 40:12) We attempt to measure the great heavens in light years, yet God measures it with a span. Measure if you can, the sands of the sea on one shore alone, yet God can measure the dust with a measure, the mountains with a scale and the hills in a balance. When God created all things, He performed it alone without the need for counsel.

To those who reject the truth of creation by an everlasting God and accept the myth of billions of years of evolution, God says,

"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none that doeth good. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy. There is none that doeth good, no not one."(Psalm 53:1-3)

Let us look at God's revelation of creation rather than man's imagination.

"All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." (I Corinthians 15:39-41)

God has made all things by His own word with complete agreement between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Father planned it, The Son provided it and the Holy Spirit proved it (John 10:15-18; Hebrews 10:5b; John 10:17; I Corinthians 12:13) The book of Genesis speaks of the restoration of earth in six days (24-hour periods). The account is so clearly and precisely stated and was no problem for God to accomplish, for God's established system was interdependent for survival and would not have worked over thousands of years of evolution.

God created and placed an earthly being (Adam) into a beautiful garden called Eden. It was a special place made for Adam and Eve, where mankind would be put to a tremendous test by the Creator. The Garden of Eden must have been a beautiful paradise, with all that the two could wish for; But there was one restriction. God placed a certain tree, whose fruit they were forbidden to eat.

Lucifer observed the creation of Adam and recognized that man had been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). Lucifer had desired to be like the most High God; but God chose to make mankind in His image (See Isaiah 14:14). Satan immediately set about to frustrate the plan of God. Although Satan had been removed from his original responsibility, he was still the most powerful angel, even in his fallen condition. Disguising himself as a serpent, Satan invaded restored earth, deceived Eve and caused both Adam and Eve to disobey God, thus bringing sin and death to those who had been created in the image of God. Man's volition had been tested; the wrong choice was made and sin invaded restored earth. The Age of Innocence was over, and mankind had the knowledge of good and evil. But God, who is never taken by surprise, had prepared in His omniscience, for such an event and he gave Adam and Eve the hope of victory found in Genesis 3:15.

THE WAY OF ABEL - HEAVENLY LIFE AND THE WAY OF CAIN - ETERNAL LIVING DEATH

Possessing a sin nature with the capacity to choose good or bad, mankind entered a new phase of existence, the age of conscience (Genesis 3:7-21). Adam & Eve were expelled from the garden and man was to work by the sweat of his brow. Two different ways were established with the birth of Cain and Abel. The way of Cain which leads to eternal damnation, and the way of Abel which leads to eternal life. God's Word reveals that not many chose the way of life. Abel was the first martyr and Enoch was the first raptured alive into the realm of God. The antediluvians multiplied not only in numbers but also in sin; and Lamech boasted of his depraved nature. However, in each generation, God had His witnesses and Enoch's outstanding evangelism stands recorded in the writing of Jude verses 14 and 15, written centuries later.

During Enoch's time, the wickedness of man was so terrible that it was recorded that God repented that he had made man. Satan's demons had infiltrated the human race and God took steps to preserve the messianic lineage. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and was obedient as he worked and preached, preparing for the great deliverance of Genesis 6, 7 and 8. Civilization would begin again with only eight people after the total world-wide destruction through the flood.

THE RAINBOW – GOD'S PROMISE

To this very day we are reminded that God will never again judge the whole earth with a flood as he did in the days of Noah, when the earth was totally submerged (Genesis 9:8-19). God made a covenant with Noah and his seed that will continue until the end of time.

"And God spoke to Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." (Genesis 9:8-13)

The rainbow is a reminder of one of God's unconditional covenants to the entire world.

The ark, buried somewhere beneath the ice on Mt. Ararat, has been the object of many expeditions and search parties. Pilots claim to have seen part of it extending from the ice. My own son, Roger Losier, was a member of a climbing team in search of the ark. But to the time of this writing, the exact location of the ark is still God's secret. There is no question that the ark is on Mt. Ararat, but the question is where it is located on Mt. Ararat. In God's time the ark will be revealed to confound His adversaries, but even then they will refuse to believe God's precious Word.

It has been estimated that from the time of the first rains until Noah and his family walked out on to dry land, the elapsed time was one year and two months (Genesis 8). Skeptics have said that the supply of food on the ark would have been exhausted long before the earth dried up and was able to produce sufficient food. But God, who was able to restore the earth in six 24-hour days is perfectly able to provide even in those circumstances.

Evidence of the occurrence of a literal flood is provided by the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, who referred to the great flood in Matthew 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26-27. Writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the writer of the Book of Hebrews also mentioned the flood in Hebrews 11:7.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

The Tower of Babel manifests another aspect of man's rebellion against God. Mankind organized and set about to make for a name himself rather than to glorify the name of God. Noah predicted the divisions of nations in Genesis 9:24-29. Because of Ham's sin, the sons of Ham were to become a servant of servants, Japheth was to be blessed through Shem, where the Messianic hope dwells. Deuteronomy 32:8 states, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."

There are two important events that took place as the Tower of Babel was being built. First, God changed their languages; and second, God separated Shem

for the preservation of the Messianic hope. The Tower of Babel was the beginning of man's self-made religion, characterized by the following: no absolute; idolatry; witchcraft; mysticism; humanism; liberalism; and cults.

After the languages were confused, so the religions multiplied, sometimes mixed with a little truth and many times with no truth. Satan was at work counterfeiting and providing a substitute for worship of the true and living God. It was inevitable that the lineage of Shem would be under special attack, since God had separated that family from all other races (Genesis 11:10-32).

AGE OF PROMISE

In God's perfect time, God chose a man from the generations of Shem, who would believe God and unto whom God would establish an unconditional covenant. That man was Abraham (Abram), to whom God said, "Get out...I will make...I will bless... I will give..." (Genesis 12) In Genesis 15, three revelations were given to Abraham: Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness (verse 6); God sealed a special sacrifice prepared by Abraham, confirming the unconditional covenant (verses 7-17) and the prediction of slavery for 400 years in Egypt; and God gave the boundaries of the land belonging to Israel (verse 18). Our attitude toward Israel as a nation is very important because of the promise of cursing or blessing that will result. As Christians we are considered Abraham's spiritual seed.

When Abraham was finally given the son of promise, Isaac, God tested his faith by commanding Abraham to take Isaac to Mt. Moriah and there offer him as a sacrifice (Genesis 22). It was God who withheld Abraham's knife and not only provided the ram, but God himself did not withhold His own hand when His eternal Son became our sacrifice for sin, taking our place as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Isaac became the lineage of the Messianic hope which was passed on to Jacob (Genesis 28:16-22; 32:28). The final naming of the twelve tribes of Israel came through Jacob. The Messianic lineage was then established with the tribe of Judah. The prediction by God that Israel would be slaves for 400 years took place in Egypt after they were cared for by God for 30 years during the famine.

MOSES AND THE LAW OF GOD

There seemed little hope for Israel to return to the promised land, but God, who knows the end from the beginning, prepared a way and He prepared a man by the name of Moses. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy give the account. There are many lessons to be learned from the exodus of Israel out of Egypt through the wilderness or desert. The following are just a few of great importance:

1. Israel's education and preparation in Egypt to become a great nation.
2. The training of a great General by the name of Moses.
3. The institution of the Passover, a forerunner of God's sacrifice of His Son.
4. The Mighty Power of God, regardless of obstacles or needs.
5. The giving of the law, which has set the standards for many courts of Justice.
6. The structure of the tabernacle of God, as a dwelling place for God among His people. It also was a pattern for the Temple of God later built by Solomon. It taught temple worship and the sacredness of the Holy of Holies, where God communicated with his people.

7. The mass entrance into the promised land made it possible for the land to be divided among the tribes of Israel.

The giving of the law was an important factor, not only for Israel but for all the people of the earth. Israel was entrusted with the oracles and the laws of God. A kingly and priestly lineage would be forth coming from Israel in preparation for the coming of the High Priest of the Godhead and the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There were many lessons for Israel to learn and because of her unbelief, the whole nation had to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Finally Israel entered the promised land and established a world-wide powerful kingdom under Solomon, the son of David, to whom God had promised that he (David) would never lack for a son to sit upon his throne. (I Chronicles 17: 11, 12: II Samuel 7:16) So the tribe of Judah was named as the lineage for the Messianic hope. There would be much disobedience with the result that the nation Israel would come under the discipline of God.

Satan's evil forces tried to thwart and even destroy God's plans for Israel and the coming of the Messiah, but God in His omniscience had prepared even before the foundations of the earth to bring glory and honor to His Almighty Name. Satan's counterfeits are always revealed to those who will study the scriptures. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Timothy 2:15)

ELIJAH ASCENDS TO HEAVEN

As mentioned previously, Enoch was the first believer to be taken directly to heaven, never tasting death. As a source of encouragement to Christians, that we too will be able to stand in the presence of God, Enoch was a perfect example of the great event spoken of in I Thessalonians 4:13-18, when believers will one day be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and escorted to those mansions of God (John 14:1-6).

God had another purpose, however, in the ascension of Elijah into heaven on the chariot prepared by God, Himself. It's purpose was both to encourage Elisha, his successor, in his ministry and as an important witness, spoken of in Revelation 11:1-14 to be used of God during the Great Tribulation. Elijah will be sent from heaven to herald the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Lord Jesus Christ, as he sets up His kingdom of Righteousness. He will be one of two witnesses, Moses and Elijah. One will return from the dead (Moses) and one will have never died (Elijah).

THE SCATTERING OF THE TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL & THE PRESERVATION OF JUDAH

God's purpose in the scattering of the ten tribes of Israel lies in the disobedience of Israel and God's desire to preserve the messianic tribe of Judah. Israel failed to keep the Sabbath and had introduced idolatry, beginning with the tribe of Dan. Jeremiah prophesied that Judah and Benjamin would be carried to Babylon and remain there for 70 years.

God's prophets Ezekiel and Daniel were used of God to reveal great future events as well as to minister to God's people serving in the Royal Palace and under enforced slavery throughout the Babylonian Empire. Isaiah also wrote of the fall of Israel. Through Isaiah, God revealed his plan of the great salvation to come (Isaiah 53) as well as the conditions of the Kingdom age. Daniel spoke of the ultimate purpose of God in Daniel 9:24 to establish eternal righteousness and put an end to sin. He gave the exact time when the Messiah would be cut off and crucified

(Daniel 9:25,26). Ezekiel foretells the terrible battles in the 'last days' when Israel will be surrounded (Ezekiel 38 & 39). Zechariah gives the account of how Jerusalem will be attacked, God's delivery of Judah, and the way in which God will destroy the enemy. These prophecies are not typeology or imagined events, but reality. Just as the tribes of Israel were scattered literally, they will be returned literally, a fulfillment of which we are beginning to see at this very time in history.

THE FOUR GREAT WORLD EMPIRES

The nation Israel had plenty of warning from the prophets that they would be scattered. Judah and Benjamin would be separated from the other ten tribes to preserve and prepare for the Messianic prediction. All of Israel was to suffer not just from a limited scattering, but world-wide and for many generations. The return of Judah to Jerusalem was merely a temporary return, as was the temporary building of the temple. This had to take place in order that the City of Jerusalem and Bethlehem would be inhabited by God's people at the first advent of Christ, the Messiah. Following the rejection of the Messiah would be a world-wide scattering of Judah and Benjamin. However, God also revealed through Daniel many important events involving the Gentile nations, which will climax with the revival of the Roman Empire, the final great world empire.

We could spend much time searching out what happened to the ten lost tribes of Israel, but they are not of great importance at this point, otherwise God would have revealed this. God used the important empire of Babylon, under King Nebuchadnezzar, through which to reveal future events that would take place in four world-wide empires. Through Nebuchadnezzar the whole world would hear about the God of Daniel, the only true God. The preservation of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; the miraculous delivery of David in the lions' den; the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar; the handwriting on the wall, and many other miracles sent the message to the whole world that God's mighty power was a force with which to be reckoned.

Jeremiah's prediction in the 25th chapter of his book told of the 70 years of captivity in Babylon. As that time drew to a close, God sent His envoy, Gabriel to enable us to look down the corridors of time to see the ultimate aim of God. In Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1, God revealed how the Kingdom of Babylon would fall. Long before his birth, King Cyrus was mentioned in this passage as the king who would conquer Babylon. Daniel had access to Isaiah's revelations and when the Medes and Persians took the empire, Daniel was well informed.

The empire under Cyrus was important in God's plan. God used Cyrus not only to preserve the Messianic lineage, but also to start the countdown which led to the crucifixion of Christ. (Daniel 9:25,26) Cyrus, being anointed by God, set Judah and Benjamin free to return to Jerusalem to restore the land which was destined to cradle the Eternal Son of God. The story of the re-establishment of Judah in the land is recorded in the minor prophets. Two important aspects were the rebuilding of the wall and the rebuilding of the temple in preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

The image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream mentioned in Daniel 2 is but a fore-revelation of Daniel's dream recorded in Daniel 7 and 8. God's revelation is clear concerning the major events through the next 2,000 years and on down through the tribulation and the setting up of God's Kingdom of Righteousness.

Two nations were yet to be born, which Daniel knew nothing about, and these great nations would not come from the East, but from the West. At the time of

Daniel's dream the nations of the West were barbarians. The four empires mentioned were given symbols: first Babylon the lion; second Medo-Persia the bear; third from the west (Greece) the leopard, because of the swiftness under Alexander the Great and his four generals; and fourth the Roman Empire a peculiar beast with ten horns which later changed to seven horns and a strange little horn.

Daniel was greatly puzzled by these visions so God sent His angelic Bible instructor to Daniel to give him some important clues. The fourth beast described in Daniel 7:7 and onward confused Daniel. It had ten horns which then became only seven horns with a strange little horn. The scene then suddenly changed and there was a strange set up of judgements and a Mighty everlasting throne. (Daniel 7:9-18) Daniel knew that someday the Messiah was going to come and rule and reign, and this phase of the vision didn't bother him as much as that strange fourth beast.

The fourth beast seemed to have a longer period of control with several changes, and this is correct, for the Roman Empire came East with iron clad power and broke to pieces all that challenged its power. If we re-examine Nebuchadnezzar's image, we will notice that the last part of the Roman Empire is pictured as ten toes, thus the ten horns, leading us to believe that it must refer to the final revival of the Roman Empire. The beast mentioned in Revelation takes over the empire and becomes the ruler of the world for a period of seven years, divided into two parts of 3-1/2 years each with the final period mentioned by Daniel and affirmed by Christ as the 'abomination of desolation.' (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15)

From the period of Daniel onward, we have the complete picture of the mighty workings of God. This present time in history is important, because the revelation of the revival of the Roman Empire, which has been asleep, is soon to take place. The age in which we live, the Mystery Age also known as the Church Age, is soon to come to a close. The saints of God are soon to be caught up and carried into the very presence of God to live in mansions, which Christ has spent almost 2,000 years preparing for us. This is why the decree of Cyrus is so crucial as the anointed of God.

THE GREAT DECREE OF CYRUS

"Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince (The Lord Jesus Christ), shall be seven weeks (49 years), and three score and two weeks (434 years); the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after three score and two weeks (making a total of 483 years) shall Messiah be cut off (crucified), but not for Himself" (crucified for the sins of the whole world).

The foregoing passage of Daniel 9:25-26a has to do with the time when God, the Father would send God the Son to die as a sacrifice in our stead. The remainder of the verse along with verse 27 has to do with the last week of Daniel's prophecy, confirmed by Christ in Matthew chapter 24 and in Revelation chapter 12. This short passage tells us exactly when the Messiah would be crucified, but not the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14; Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 9:6,7.

ELIJAH'S SUBSTITUTE REVEALED FOR THE EARTHLY MINISTRY OF CHRIST

The Bible records that a Virgin would bear a Son, who has always existed, but who would subject Himself to human growth, without sin, as the Father's gift to all who would willingly accept the Son as personal Saviour (John 20:31). The place of birth was prophesied in Micah 5:2 and repeated in Matthew 2:5. He was born into the world to become the Saviour (Isaiah 53; Psalm 22; Daniel 9:24-26). He is also the promised King from the root of Jesse and the tribe of Judah and the son of David. (Isaiah 55; II Samuel 7:16,24; I Kings 8:23; 9:5)

Since God in His omniscience knew that Israel would reject their Messiah at the time of His earthly visit, God sent a substitute in Elijah's place. (It will be Elijah who heralds the King of Kings and Lord of Lords foretold in Malachi 4:5 at the second coming.) This is why the Jews asked John the Baptist if he was Elijah in John 1:21. This is proof of the blindness of Israel regarding the facts which were foretold concerning the Messiah. Their prophets had written concerning where the Messiah would be born and of what tribe. It was also recorded that the Messiah would have to suffer. But when He came they refused Him as their Saviour King.

Malachi 13:1 states,

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts."

The account of Zacharias and Elizabeth in Luke chapter 1 tells us who this messenger was. John the Baptist went forth as the spirit of Elijah (Luke 1:17) In Matthew 11:5, the Lord Jesus Christ confirmed the prophecy of Malachi 3:1 when He answered the question that John the Baptist had while in prison. You may ask, if John the Baptist was merely the spirit of Elijah, will Elijah, himself, eventually come? Yes, Elijah will come and that is recorded in Revelation 11:3-6. He will witness together with Moses during the last part of the Tribulation, called the abomination of desolation, just before the one thousand year kingdom is set up.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MINISTRY

The earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ during His first appearance upon the earth is usually well known for it is clearly set forth in the four Gospels. The ultimate purpose of Christ, the Eternal Son of God, coming to earth was to become "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." Romans 5:8-10 tells us that Christ died for us. The Son of God came to do the will of God the Father, providing the forgiveness of sin and making way for a new birth through God the Holy Spirit. He knew the terrible pain and suffering that lay before him at the cross, not merely physical suffering, but much more, for he would bear the sins of the whole world in the presence of all the evil forces that Satan would gather. That is why he prayed three times for the cup to be removed if possible; yet he closed by saying, "Thy will be done." (Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1)

The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled his mission upon earth, doing the signs and wonders that manifested his power and glory of the Son of God. It is worth

mentioning that the Lord fulfilled everything that was prophesied concerning the first appearance of the Messiah, even to the entrance into Jerusalem. God recorded in His Word that the King would pass through the Golden Gate of Jerusalem to publicly offer himself as King, and after that the gate would be sealed. Riding on a colt, in the triumphal entry, Christ fulfilled this prophecy (Zechariah 9:9) and was heralded as King only for a short time (See Matthew 21, Luke 19:28-36). Another fulfillment concerned the shutting of the gate through which the Lord rode.

"Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outer sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said the Lord unto me, this gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore, it shall be shut." (Ezekiel 44:1,2)

It is good to remember that the second advent of the Lord will take place from the air and not through the gates, and so we are reminded that God's Word is absolute truth based upon His eternal character.

The revelation of the cross is clearly set forth as the Lord entered Jerusalem with His disciples crying out,

"Oh Jerusalem Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matthew 23:37,38)

As the Lord was led away to be crucified the women wept on his behalf; but notice what the Lord said.

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts which never nursed. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us; and to the hills, cover us." (Luke 23:28-30)

Christ was foretelling what will happen during the Great Tribulation, which was prophesied in Hosea 10:8 and is also recorded in Revelation 6:16,17; 9:6. What compassion the Lord had for His people, even after they had beaten Him so severely.

"In the cross of Christ I glory; towering o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime." The cross is the pivotal point in the history of mankind, not only in the eyes of Almighty God, but also in our record of time. It portrays the supreme love of the Godhead, with all of its shame and cruelty. Without the Divine sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, the human race would be eternally damned and in the same predicament as the fallen angels.

Six days before the passover feast, Jesus came to Bethany, knowing that His time had come to prepare for the cruel cross. The Passover was a memorial to the great deliverance in Egypt, when the angel of death passed over those who displayed the blood upon their door posts as prescribed by the Lord. This foreshadowed the sacrificial provision of the "Lamb of God" on the cross and it is significant that Christ would be offered up during this Passover memorial. Almighty God the Father laid it upon the heart of Mary to bring the costly ointment of spikenard and anoint Jesus' feet. When Judas Iscariot objected Jesus said, "Let her alone; against the day of my burying hath she kept this." (John 12:7)

It is well to pause at the cross for a moment and listen to the last cries of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Father Forgive Them"

"And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots." (Luke 23:33,34)

The Lord knew that he was facing the greatest gathering of evil forces that Satan could muster. Billions of demons thought they were doing away with the one who was going to crush the head of their leader (Genesis 3:15). The religious leaders seeking His death were merely blind instruments under the control of Satan.

When Christ stood before Pilate, who tried to release Him, Pilate was clearly informed that he had no power over that decision.

"Then saith Pilate unto Jesus, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above; therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." (John 19:10,11)

It was purposed in the Godhead that Christ should die for the sins of the whole world. That is why Christ endured the cross "...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," (Hebrews 12:2) When He cried, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," Christ was aware of everything. As the eternal Son of God, he was fulfilling His mission by removing the sin barrier, paying for it with His own body.

"Today Thou Shalt Be With Me In Paradise" (Luke 23:43)

Both thieves crucified beside the Lord Jesus were guilty and they knew it. Only one cried out, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Jesus answered him emphatically, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." God's salvation is all inclusive to 'whosoever will may come,' even to one unable to make restitution for his evil deeds.

"Woman Behold Thy Son – Behold Thy Mother" (John 19:26,27)

As Christ suffered such terrible pain and agony, He was mindful of every detail and even arranged for the care of the mother of His flesh. What joy is waiting for us in glory, when we are all changed and become like Him, as we see Him face to face (I John 3:1-3).

"My God, My God, Why Hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:45-46)

For the first time in all eternity the Godhead was separated, as the Son of God became the sin bearer for the whole world. "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate." (Hebrews 13:12) The debt of sin has been paid for in full by God, Himself, and all mankind is without excuse. God the Father turned away from His very own Son, our Saviour who became the propitiation for our sins. All of the angelic hosts of heaven could not help but marvel at what was taking place on the cross.

"I Thirst" (John 19:28)

Just before Christ breathed His last breath on the cross, His final request could not even be attended to. Psalm 22, written long before the event took place, foretells the suffering that our Lord underwent on the cross. The One able to give living water was denied even a small drink of water on that crucial day. (He was given vinegar to drink.)

"It Is Finished" (John 19:30)

With these few words, the greatest act of God was completed. Nothing can be added to it or taken away from it. It is the sum total of 'so great salvation' provided by God alone. We must ask ourselves, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3) What marvelous grace of our loving Lord!

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God – Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8,9) We are not justified by the works of the law (See Galatians 2:16). It is God "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (II Timothy 1:9) "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5) "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1) "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1) "...Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Philippians 3:9)

"Father, Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit" (Luke 23:46)

These final words spoken on the cross by our precious Saviour are very important. Some would have us believe that Christ died spiritually on the cross and that is more important than the physical. This is in error for God is spirit and cannot die. He is the source of eternal life. This last cry of the Lord offers great evidence that the eternal spirit of the Son of God was commended to the Father.

It was not until Pentecost that God the Holy Spirit came and gave new birth to those who believe. We, as human beings, because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, died spiritually in Adam and inherited a physical body destined to die. We become new creatures through faith in Christ Jesus, who sent God the Holy Spirit, not only to give us a new birth, but also to dwell within us forever. (See II Corinthians 5:17; John 16:7; John 14:16.) Without the physical death of the Lord Jesus Christ there would be no remission of sins. (Hebrews 9:22)

THE RESURRECTION, APPEARANCE AND ASCENSION OF THE Lord JESUS CHRIST

The resurrection of the Lord occurred at the precise moment that He had said it would. It is recorded as the first day of the week and we refer to that day as the 'Lord's Day.' The important issue to remember is that Christ died and rose again on the third day and is alive forever more. (I Corinthians 5:1) There is much evidence in the Bible of this victory over death.

Christ was seen by more than five hundred brethren at one time; he was seen by James and all of the Apostles; He was also seen by Paul. (See I Corinthians 15:6-8.) Graves were opened and provided a witness to relatives and friends (Matthew 27:52,53). The veil of the Holy of Holies in the temple was torn from top to bottom, eliminating the need, once and for all, for the high priests to mediate (Matthew 27:51). (The eternal King and Priest, Christ Jesus, is now the access for believers before the heavenly throne of the Father.)

The evidence of the resurrection presented thus far should have been enough, but God with His love and compassion allowed His Son to return to earth for forty days to teach His disciples about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:1-3). Christ promised His disciples that they would receive power after the Holy Spirit was given. And this occurred on the day of the first fruits (Numbers 28:26) and became known as the day of Pentecost with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was a fulfillment of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit spoken of by Joel in Joel 2:28. Even during the forty days while Christ taught his disciples, he did not speak of the mystery of the church, but waited until God the Holy Spirit baptized them (I Corinthians 12:13).

The ascension of the Lord (Acts 1:8-11) clearly presented the disciples with the knowledge that Christ would return again, bodily, just as they saw him go up into heaven. He had told them earlier in John 14:1-6 that he must go to prepare a place for them (mansions) and that he would come again and receive them unto Himself.

CHRIST IN GLORY AND THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST (Acts 2)

Prior to the Day of Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit was given to various individuals to fulfill a specific purpose. The Holy Spirit had not come to indwell believers forever at that time, which is why David prayed, "Take not thy Spirit from me." From the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given to indwell all believers forever.

When Peter made the statement to the Lord Jesus Christ, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," the Lord answered with the words, "Thou art Peter (little stone) and upon this rock (large stone) I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18) Christ did not imply that Peter would be the founder of the church, but that the belief, or faith, that Peter exhibited when he made his statement was the foundation for the church. This great church age (Age of Grace) began at Pentecost and will continue until the complete true church is "caught up" to be with the Lord forever.

The Lord has been calling out believers from this age for nearly 2,000 years. During that time there has been persecution, suffering, and scattering of the true church. God is gathering together the 'Bride of Christ' which is made up of believers of every race from the whole world. When the Bride is complete, the Lord, Himself, who is the Bridegroom will come and bring us into His Father's realm.

This new age which we call the church age is very different from all other ages, and was hidden (not revealed) in the Old Testament, because God wanted Israel to be free to accept or reject the Messiah without prejudice. The out-pouring of the Holy Spirit was mentioned in Joel 2:28, but without details. Believers in the Church Age are the recipients of this marvelous gift from the Godhead. God the Holy Spirit gives spiritual birth by identifying Himself with us and living within us. God reveals in John 1:11-13 that we are born again not by flesh and blood but by God the Holy Spirit. The Bride of Christ must be made spiritually alive by the Holy Spirit.

Although new birth was presented to Nicodemus by the Lord, Himself, it only became a reality on the day of Pentecost, where it was witnessed by tens of thousands from many lands. At the start of the Church Age, the Word records three separate occurrences of the 'pouring out' of the Holy Spirit. The first was Pentecost, Acts 2:4; then Cornelius (a gentile) Acts 10; and Old Testament saints who had received the Baptism of John, Acts 19:6. The last two occurrences were necessary because some had not heard of the 'out pouring,' but had believed through John's witness and others were gentile believers. During this age many churches have been formed. We read in Revelation chapter 2 the characteristics of seven types of churches. Today's Churches will fit into one of these seven descriptions. As we draw nearer to the end of the age, Scripture reminds us that the predominant characteristic of the church will be lukewarm as described in the Church of Laodicea. May God help us to be found faithful to Him!

VARIOUS TYPES OF CHURCHES

The building of the Church of Christ began in Jerusalem and the Church at Ephesus was typical of the apostolic church. To study the different kinds of churches we must go to the book of Revelation Chapters 1, 2 and 3. In Chapter 1, The Lord Jesus Christ is revealed as being within six of the seven churches; but in the seventh He is shown standing outside and knocking, hoping to be let in.

Church of Ephesus

This apostolic church was prevalent until about 316 A.D. It emphasized good works, not tolerating heresies. It portrays an example of great patience and good works but it is one which has left the first love.

Church of Smyrna

Many believers in this era were severely persecuted, a trend which continued from the time of Nero until the time of Constantine. The conditions of poverty and persecution are comparable to those encountered by churches in godless nations such as Russia and other communist countries.

Pergamus Church

This church is characterized as deeply religious, stressing religion above a right relationship with God. It was concerned with religious activities and traditions. It is described as being carnal with much fornication. This type of church was predominant until 500 A.D.

Church of Thyatira

This church was predominant from 500 A.D. until 1500 A.D. During this time idol worship was often mingled with true worship. The power of the 'church' was growing; it was well organized with an ecumenical outlook. The church is characterized by good works and patience, but it had allowed idolatry to infiltrate such as in the days of Jezebel.

Church of Sardis

Although this type of church existed in the first century, we must remember that it was a type. This church would make a strong appearance during the Reformation. It would be alive with activity, Biblically persuasive, with good works. But though there would be a believing remnant, the Church would be characterized as dead.

Church of Philadelphia

This is a missionary minded church existing from 90 A.D. through the 19th century. Missionaries were sent around the world especially during the 19th century. It is characterized as a believing church that has kept the Word, and will be taken out of the world before the tribulation. Because of their faithfulness, they are commended by Christ and destined to receive special crowns.

Church of Laodicea

This is the church where the Lord is pictured as standing on the outside knocking. It is a church which has grown strong in the last days preceding the rapture of the church. They are neither "cold nor hot". They are wealthy materially, but poor spiritually. As a lukewarm church, they have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof, and are therefore useless to the Lord. They are best known for their apostasy and higher criticism, denying the virgin birth of the Lord and the authenticity of the Bible.

THE RAPTURE OF THE TRUE CHURCH (John 14:1-6; I Thessalonians 4:13-18)

At the completion of the Body of Christ, which will become the Bride of Christ, an event known as the rapture will take place. For almost 2,000 years our Saviour has been preparing a place for us in the Mansions of His Father. We (believers) will be caught up out from the wrath to come as described in I Thessalonians 1:10. It will not be done in secret, for the trumpet shall sound, but it will take place quickly. "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (I Corinthians 15:51-52)

The Bible teaches that we will be in heaven during the period known as the Great Tribulation, which will have a period of seven years duration. There are several events that will take place during that time:

1. The judgement seat of Christ will take place resulting in the removal of the chaff in our lives and the presenting of rewards and commission (II Corinthians 5:10; I Corinthians 3:12-15)
2. The Bride of Christ will witness the scroll of the great tribulation being handed to the Son of God and the seals activated by the Lord. (Revelation 4 and 5).
3. The marriage of the Lamb to the Bride will take place, prepared and clothed with the marriage garments (Revelation 19:7-10).
4. The communion table will be presided over by the Lord, Himself, taking of the cup and the fruit of the vine for the first time, since He drank it with His disciples in the upper room. (Matthew 26:29).
5. The Bride of Christ will witness the great heavenly battle between Satan and his demons and Michael and his angels, resulting in the casting out of Satan and his demons from heaven forever (Revelation 9:1-12, Revelation 12:7-12).

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The believing Church will not experience the Great Tribulation which will take place on earth during the seven years following the rapture. Details on the Great Tribulation can be studied in the chapter under that name.

THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

At the completion of the seven terrible years of tribulation on earth, preparation will be underway for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, riding on a white horse in battle array. We, His Bride, will follow, also upon white horses but dressed in fine linen, pure and white, which is the righteousness of the saints. The angelic armies will be present as well to behold the great victory of the Eternal Son of God. (Revelation 19:11-20; I Thessalonians 3:13; Revelation 11:15; Isaiah 40:10).

THE MILLENIUM – THE KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Following that great victory, the Kingdom of Righteousness will be established and will continue for the thousand year period and on into Eternity to come. Nature will be restored; there will be no sickness, famine or starvation, and the life span will be hundreds of years. (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:20). The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of God.

At the start of the thousand year reign of Christ, He will separate the goats (unbelievers, who come out of the tribulation) from the sheep (believers, who come out of the tribulation) (Matthew 25:31-46). The 'Sermons on the Mount' and the 'Beatitudes' will become a reality in this wonderful one thousand year reign of Christ on earth.

Satan and his angels will be restrained in the bottomless pit during this time. The earth will be restored under the perfect rule of Christ, but mankind will still possess volition and the totally depraved nature inherited from Adam. Scripture tells us that this Kingdom of Righteousness will be enforced with a rod of iron. (Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15) There will be no justification for rebellion

against Almighty God, as the world will be completely ruled in perfect justice and righteousness. This will be the final test for mankind before the final judgement.

SATAN LOOSED FOR A SEASON (Revelation 20:7-10)

At the close of one thousand years of perfect environment, with justice and plenty for all, Satan and his demons will be released for a short time for the final conflict. Only God knows how long that will be. The rule and reign of the Bride with the Bridegroom will come to a climax at the end of the thousand years. Then with the release of Satan from the bottomless pit, the evil forces and great hordes of earthly people will rebel and march on Jerusalem, the capital of the world. No doubt there will be tense moments as millions of people, led by Satan and His demons approach the headquarters of the King of Kings. Since the Bride will be aware of the Scripture concerning this last stand of Satan, the Bride will 'look up.' God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29) and fire from heaven will bring immediate victory for His reigning Son. (Revelation 20:9)

Since Satan and the demons were already judged at the cross, they will be thrown into the lake of fire without hesitation. The earthly humans who followed Satan will taste of death and immediately be raised to stand and bow before Christ at the Great White Throne. And so the second resurrection will come to pass.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE (Revelation 20:11-15)

The dreaded second resurrection will involve every unbelieving soul that ever lived from Cain throughout the ages. The way of Cain and the death line will face their final judgement at the Great White Throne. As the Word of God has recorded, "That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father." (Philippians 2:10, 11)

At the Great White Throne Judgement, books will be opened: the Book of Life and the Books of Works. All those standing at the Great White Throne will not be found in the Book of Life. They will, therefore, be judged, not for their sin, but for their works, having rejected God's provision of His perfect righteousness. Sin will not be an issue for it was dealt with when the Lamb of God took away the sins of the world. So the self righteousness of every unbeliever, whose works have been written in the Book of Works, will be placed in the balance and will fall short of the glory of God. (All righteousness apart from God's righteousness is as filthy rags.) God, in His absolute justice, will review their good deeds, but they will fall short of the requirement of perfect righteousness. Of necessity, Satan and his millions of demons and all the trillions of unbelievers, standing in opposition to God, will be cast into the lake of fire where they will remain in a living death forever.

OLD CREATION TO BE DESTROYED BY GOD (II Peter 3:7-12)

In preparation for the most glorious creation, where evil and sin will never again be present, all of the old creation will be destroyed by God. Daniel 9:24 describes this creation where sin will be no more and righteousness shall reign forever and ever and ever! "But it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

We joyfully await that future day when all things are made new. However this cannot take place until the Great White Throne judgement and all evil forces are cast forever into the sealed-off lake of fire. Then what the Bible recorded in II Peter 3:7-12 will come to pass. The heavens shall pass away and be thoroughly melted, the whole earth will be burned with all the works. The heavens shall be dissolved and completely melt away. Both heaven and earth were contaminated with sin and therefore God will utterly destroy them, and in His majestic power make out of nothing a new eternal estate.

THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH (Revelation 21)

As the angels beheld the creation of the present heaven and earth, so we (believers) who will be in our glorified bodies will behold the new creation which will surpass anything we have ever known. I cannot imagine what Almighty God has in store for us who love Him! From the new heavens, the Bride of Christ will behold the Holy City coming down from God. It will be a glorious experience to dwell within this Holy City with the Lord Jesus Christ, our Bridegroom.

Life will be entirely new. All tears will be wiped away. We shall never grow old. There will be no more death. All pain and disease will vanish forever. We do not know the size of the new earth, but there will be no oceans to separate one continent from another.

During the Millenium, Temple worship will be restored. However, when the new heavens and the new earth are created there will be no temple. "And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Revelation 21:22) John tells us in Revelation 21:23 that the City will have no need for the sun to brighten it; because the glory of God is sufficient. Also, the gates will never be shut for there will be no more night. (Revelation 21:24-27)

New earth will have perfect righteousness from God. (II Peter 3:13) We have seen the beauty of God's present creation. Even with the entrance of sin, there is still much to be seen of the glory of God, but the new earth will be so magnificent that this present shall be removed entirely from our minds. (Isaiah 65:17)

At the conclusion of this chapter on the scroll, which presents an overview of God's 'blueprint' for the ages, it must be stated that the Godhead in their omniscience have never once had to alter the plan to bring in everlasting righteousness. Through the cross, God has provided mankind with an alternative to the inevitable everlasting judgement of the lake of fire. The important question is, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

"Come now, and let us reason together saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18) "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

QUESTIONS

1. What is the prime purpose of the Triune God in creation?
2. When God created the billions of angels, what choice did they have?
3. What do you think the purpose of God was to mention the creation of the heavens and single out the earth as a separate entity though it be so small in size compared to the vast heavens?
4. Where did the first sin occur? What happened to the earth as a result? Give scriptures to prove your reasons.
5. Give some outstanding events in the life of Enoch. Did he leave any writings? Of what is he an example? Why is he the oldest person still living?
6. Why did God have to destroy all except 8 people with a world wide flood?
7. Where did religion and false teachings about God first begin? How did God finally punish those involved?
8. Why is the lineage of Shem only recorded in the Bible? Explain your reasons?
9. What unconditional covenant did God make with Abraham? How was Abraham tested by God? Why does God mention that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Give a survey of Genesis 12:32.
10. What was the purpose of the Mosaic law? What was the purpose of the wilderness Tabernacle?
12. Why did God separate Judah from the other tribes? What tribe went into captivity with Judah? What chapter in Jeremiah tells of the years of captivity in Babylon?
13. What are the four great empires of the world revealed to Daniel? What scripture in Daniel tells of God's purpose with His creation? Should the leaders of Israel have known when the Messiah would be put to death? Give two scriptures other than Daniel which describe the suffering Saviour.
14. Which of the four great empires was Daniel concerned about? Give scriptures and explain.
15. Why do we consider the ten horns related to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image?
16. What can we learn from Daniel Chapter 7, from a study of the scroll?
17. Why did God send a substitute for Elijah, when He sent John the Baptist? Did God know that the Israelites would reject His Son?
18. What did Christ talk about during His 40 days with His disciples? What great event did Christ promise would take place "not many days" from then?

19. Name seven types of churches today mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3.
20. Why doesn't the true church go through the Tribulation, known as "Jacob's Trouble?" Give reasons and scripture.
21. What is the difference between the Judgement seat of Christ mentioned in II Corinthians 5:10 and the Great White Throne Judgement revealed in Revelation 20:11-15?
22. Name some of the events, with scripture, that will take place when the church is raptured? (Those that take place in heaven and those that take place on earth)
23. Give (briefly) some characteristics of the Thousand Year Kingdom (Millenium) that will take place on earth.
24. Give scripture and explain the last battle to be fought. Briefly state the events that follow.
25. When will Philippians 2:9-11 be fulfilled?
26. Give a 200-word thesis on the New Heavens and the New Earth, with scripture proof.

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The Lord Jesus Christ spent most of His earthly ministry teaching of the coming Kingdom. Even during the forty days after His resurrection Christ's primary teaching emphasis was on the kingdom.

"To Whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen by them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3)

Only once did the Lord speak to his disciples of His coming back to earth to gather His own (the rapture) into His Father's heavenly kingdom.

Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3)

Brought before Caiaphas the high priest and the Sanhedrin for questioning, Jesus was asked by the high priest, "I adjure thee by the Living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." (Matthew 26:63) Jesus' answer was significant. "Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and **COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.**" (Matthew.26:64)

The fulfillment of the first part of His statement was witnessed by Stephen the first martyr of the church. (Acts.7:54-60) The latter part of the verse is a reference to the rapture of the Church — **THE COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN THE CLOUDS.**

Both as a nation and as a race of people, Israel has rejected the Lord Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, as their Messiah. They deliberately delivered Him into the hands of the Roman government to be crucified. For nearly two thousand years they have been 'blinded' because of this rejection and scattered and severely persecuted just as God's Word predicted. Although many individuals have accepted Christ as personal Saviour and become members of the living Church, the vast majority have utterly refused their Messiah, still looking for their own version of a Messiah. God's Word says that they will, in the last days, be deceived through the false prophet and suffer severely under the coming Dictator of the world.

After being scattered around the world for centuries, Israel is finally returning to their own promised land. Since 1948 when they were reinstated as a nation they have experienced continual war and terrorism against their state. The return to their land is still in unbelief, but there will be one sign that will awaken them to the

reality of Christ, their Messiah — the coming of the Lord in the clouds to rapture the saints home to glory. No doubt every television channel will provide coverage and their will be those who will look up and see with their own eyes the Lord Jesus Christ coming for His own on that wonderful day.

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." (Zechariah.12:10;)

144,000 of the youth of Israel will have their eyes opened to the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. There will be a grand awakening of Israel to the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ and from then on they will be the missionaries around the world in the troublesome days that lie ahead. As the youth of Israel become students of prophecy and understand that the Kingdom on earth will not be far off they will be so intent on preaching the Gospel of the kingdom that they will not even care for their own lives, nor will they take time to get married.

Although we have already discussed the rapture in this textbook it is so important an issue that we will devote a special study of this first phase of the coming of the Lord to set up His kingdom upon earth for the thousand year period.

EVENTS PRECEDING THE RAPTURE

1. The Church Age Established

The Lord Jesus Christ only mentioned His church once during His earthly ministry.

"When Jesus came into the borders of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Who do men say that I, the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; Some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon PETER answered and said, THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jo'na; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father, who is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (Petros — a small stone or pebble), and upon, this rock, (Petra or large rock), I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; (upon this statement which you have made) and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in

heaven. Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus, the Messiah." (Matthew 16:13-20)

It was not Peter who was the foundation for the 'mystery' age of the church, but Christ — the foundation in the gathering together of His future Bride-to-be for all eternity! (Please note also Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21; John 6:68-69) It is obvious that God the Holy Spirit revealed this to Peter and it is imperative that we read carefully I Peter 2:1-8. CHRIST is the corner stone in the building of the true church body and is called both STONE and ROCK (Petra).

Since Israel rejected Christ as Messiah at His first advent, the kingdom was postponed. The church age was born at Pentecost. This was all accomplished according to the plan and foreknowledge of God. Anxious for the Lord to establish the kingdom, the disciples were confused when the Lord said that the temple would be destroyed and every stone removed (Matthew 1-3; Mark 13:1-2; Luke 21:5-6) All this was fulfilled when Titus destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple. As the gold roof melted and ran down between the stones and the Roman soldiers removed each stone to retrieve the gold. The only reason that the Lord could predict such things is the fact that He is God!

"When they, therefore; were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts.1:6-8)

The Disciples were to wait in Galilee until God the Holy Spirit came, on the day of Pentecost, to give them the new birth and God's power to fulfill the great commission. (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:46-48; John 17:18; 20:21; I Corinthians 15:6) This marked the beginning of the Church age which has continued for almost 2,000 years. God is still calling out Believers from every land and nation to complete the Bride His Eternal Son. When the Bride of Christ is complete, the Lord will return in the clouds to gather together His True Church and rapture them to Glory along with the Old Testament saints. So the Disciples were told by the Lord in Acts.1:8, "But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the beginning of a new era — the mystery age. As the Lord ascended up into heaven the disciples were told how the Church age would end — with His return in the clouds.

"And while they looked steadfast toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, Who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:10-11)

Ten days after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ the Church age was established and Scripture gives us three verifications of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. It included believing Jews, believing Gentiles and disciples of John the Baptist.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterances."
(Acts.2:1-4)

This was in fulfillment of Joel 2:28. Now there were no Gentiles present, as far as we know, neither were there disciples of John the Baptist other than those few that followed Jesus. Read carefully Acts. 10:1-48; Cornelius and his family and perhaps friends were to be included in the church as Gentiles, baptized by the Holy Spirit. "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on them who heard the Word." (Acts. 10:44)

In Acts 19:1-7 we have verification that John the Baptist was not preparing the Old Testament Saints, who repented and were baptized, for the out-pouring of God the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was only for repentance and his followers did not even know of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as indicated in this passage. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied." (Acts.19:6;) So we have the Disciples, the Gentiles and the Old Testament saints all represented in the Body of Christ.

2. Israel's Return to The Promised Land

Israel's return to the Promised Land has great significance in light of prophecy.

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all nations, to which the Lord thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, That when the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations where the Lord thy God hath scattered thee." (Deuteronomy 30:1-3)

(For additional information refer to the following Scriptures: Isa.11:11,12; 14:1-3; 27:12-13; 43:1-7; Jer.16:14-16; 23:3-8; 29:14; 30:10-11; 31:8-10; 32:37-38; Ezek. 11:17; 20:34,41-42; 34:11-12; 36:24,28,33-38; 37:1-14,21-22; 39:25-29; Hosea 1:10-11; Amos 9:14-15; Micah 4:4-7; Zeph.3:18-20; Zech. 8:4-8.

Since 1948, we have witnessed a world wide regathering of Israel. This is one more indication of the soon coming of the Lord to rapture His Bride. Once again, Israel is reinstated as a nation with her own government. But the Jews still reject the Eternal Son of God as their Messiah. Someday they will be given the sign in the sky; then they will see Jesus Christ, their Messiah (Zechariah. 12:10-14). The dry bones mentioned in Ezekiel 37; will be revived and the land of Israel will flourish. Israel is about to establish temple worship with the offering of sacrifices as before.

The rapture of the True Church and Old Testament Saints will be a world wide revelation. Many were amazed when the Lord came forth from the tomb and many graves were opened.

"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many. Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD."(Matthew 27: 52-54)

At the rapture Israel will witness the opening of many graves in the Promised Land as all of the secret Believers among the nation Israel will be caught up; and their eyes will be opened regarding the identity of Jesus Christ. For Christians this will be the greatest day in our lives, as we behold the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenly clouds! It will mean goodbye to this old sinful life; our bodies will be changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body, and we shall see Him face to face. (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 13:12) This event is known as the COMING OF THE LORD FOR HIS SAINTS and will precede the coming of the Lord WITH His Saints to set up the Kingdom of Righteousness.

The rapture will have great impact in Israel and far reaching consequences. This rapture will include the Saints of God from all ages; even those who have died before calvary trusting God to provide The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. They offered their sacrifices, realizing that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. The rapture will also include those who are alive at His coming. Not only Israel, but the whole world will be aware of this air lift into heaven. There will be many activities at the time of the trumpet blowing and as living Believers leave their places of employment, there will be many accidents. Believing Pilots will leave in the twinkling of an eye and planes will crash, cars will ram into each other and there will be thousands of accidents which will fill all of the hospitals.

Israel will be a major participant in the conflict immediately following the rapture. Israel must be back in the Promised Land at the time of the rapture for the following reasons.

1. A covenant must be made with the coming Dictator of the world, who is to be the first Beast, establishing a one-world government.

"And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and sanctuary, and the end of it shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. AND HE SHALL CONFIRM THE COVENANT WITH MANY FOR ONE WEEK; and in the midst of the week he shall cause sacrifices and the

oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Dan.9:26b-27)

2. The temple must be made ready for the reinstallation of sacrifices. (Dan.9:26b-27; 11:36-38;)
3. The second beast which comes up from the land (Israel) must be born in order that the covenant can be made.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke like a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them who dwell on it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." (Rev.13:11-12)

As Israel returns to the Promised Land, we should be reminded that God always keeps His promises. Study carefully Romans 9 and Romans 11 in connection with Israel. It is clear that God has not cast away Israel for they are His people — through whom God sent His Eternal Son to become the Saviour of the world. They are returning to their land in unbelief and God will have to chasten them for their disobedience, but they are still God's chosen race of people.

TROUBLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

We are definitely coming close to the rapture as we see the turmoil of the East, all the way to the Persian Gulf. There are at least two reasons for this turmoil.

1. The necessity of oil and minerals for our machine age.
2. Israel's struggle to reclaim the Promised land from her half brothers, the Arabic nations.

Israel is surrounded with enemies; even Russia has been drawn into the field of conflict. This is in accordance with the revelation of God's Word, found in Ezekiel 38 & 39. The stage is being set with Syria's ambition to take over Lebanon and the Russian troops in Afghanistan. God's Word tells us that the initial attack will occur when Israel is enjoying some sort of safety. (Note Ezekiel 38:8,11,14; 39:26.) The Middle East is the focal point of Satan's attack as he attempts to discredit God and establish his domain.

Throughout the history of man, Almighty God has had to choose men to protect and fulfill His promises. The Messianic lineage had to be protected until the fullness of time according to Galatians 4:4,5. Now with Israel back in the promised land, the evil forces are again attempting to foil God's plan, but God in His sovereignty and omniscience is always there to protect His own. Satan has usurped God's earth; no one can dispute that Satan is the god of this world system. (Note II Cor.4:3-4; Mark 4:15; Lk. 22:31; Acts 5:3; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:14; 1 Thess. 2:18; 1 Tim. 5:15; Rev.2:9; 2 Tim. 2:26; Heb.2:14; 1 Pet.5:8; Rev.2:10) As you read these Scriptures you will recognize that Satan still possesses some of the power that God gave to him when God created him. However, Satan is always subject to his Creator and can only go as far as God will allow.

"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (1 Peter 5:8,9)

JACOB'S TROUBLE

The trouble that Israel has already experienced is but the beginning of what the Bible calls, "Jacob's Trouble" These days will be so terrible that the Lord Himself has said, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matthew 14:21,22) God is gathering Israel back in her land, BUT the enemy is also there to destroy Israel if it were possible. Here is what Jeremiah records.

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of JACOB'S TROUBLE, but he shall be saved out of it, For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more enslave them." (Jeremiah 30:7,8)

Israel's trouble in the Middle East will continue and AFTER the True Church is raptured, Israel will suffer more than ever because of their disobedience to God.

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My Holy Mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is near at hand; A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, like the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations." (Joel 2:1-2)

The Book of Revelation confirms the disastrous conditions during this next period as does our Lord's words during His earthly ministry. Trouble in the Middle East will escalate, but praise God we, the future Bride of Christ, will be caught up, out from the wrath to come. (1 Thessalonians 1:10) The Bride of Christ will not experience Jacob's trouble.

THE STAGE SET FOR ONE WORLD GOVERNMENT

The whole world is geared for socialism and humanism with the hope that world peace may be achieved. The nations of the world believe that they can accomplish this ideal apart from God, exactly like the builders of the Tower of Babel, who said, "LET US MAKE A NAME FOR OURSELVES!" Satan offers the world a 'short cut' to a united world. But except for God's intervention, man would be defeated by satan's deception.

This so called 'One World Government' will come to pass during the great tribulation, but it is doomed to fail and chaos will be the result. Communication, transport, computers, television and the like are bringing the world closer together yet the results are still far from peaceful. Eventually a World Dictator will arise, just as the Bible predicts, but the world will be left in shambles during that seven year reign. The revival of the Roman empire, the trouble in the Middle East, Israel's return to their land, all signal the imminent return of the Lord to rapture His Saints out from the wrath to come and to establish us in the Mansions of His Father.

THE RAPTURE IS FOR BELIEVERS ONLY

For almost 2,000 years the Lord has been gathering His Bride from among all nations. It is not for us to know the exact time of Christ's return in the heavenly clouds, but we can see the signs of the time. Think of that great event of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ amidst the heavenly clouds to meet all Believers of all ages in the air. Preparations are being made in heaven for our seven year stay before the Kingdom of Christ is established upon the earth. Revelation 6-18 describes the evil forces being unleashed upon the whole world during our seven years in heaven. God's anger and wrath against all ungodly people will be poured out as He allows Satan's agents to do the job. In God's grace, He does not rule out the propagating of the Gospel of the kingdom during those terrible days. We who have accepted Christ as our personal Saviour have much to be thankful for; may we devote our time and energy to sharing this hope with others, while we still have time.

Revelation 22:12 tells us that the Lord will come quickly. Titus 2:13 says, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." The rapture will be the greatest event in the history of mankind since the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Although Christ will come quickly, at a time only known to the Father, we are told that every eye shall see Him.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds AND EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM, and they also who pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so Amen. I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:7-8)

Many will be taken by surprise when the Lord comes for His own, and unless they have accepted Christ as their personal Saviour BEFORE He comes in the clouds, it will be too late to do so and be included in the rapture; for the rapture will occur as fast as a twinkling of an eye! "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:52)

There is such limited Gospel outreach today. The so-called social' gospel is most commonly taught — a gospel which emphasizes good works and de-emphasizes Christ as the Son of God, and redeemer of mankind. The mission enterprise is not as simple and far reaching as it once was. It is costly to send missionaries around the world today. The methods for the outreach of the Gospel may change, but our message should never change!

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it; from such turn away." (II Timothy 3:1-5)

To be included in the Bride of Christ we must accept Him as mentioned in John 20:31; not depending upon church membership, water baptism, good works, high positions; but wholly based upon the finished work of Calvary, which made possible the forgiveness of sins through the shedding of blood by the Eternal Son of God. There is a great warning recorded in the Word of God for those who just want to taste the by products of the Gospel while pretending faith. God knows your mind and will not let you slip through that judgement day.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." (Hebrews 6:4-6)

Let us take heed to these warnings and settle the question once and for ever! Let us watch and be ready for His coming in the clouds! Our hope is not in this present corrupt system, but in Eternity to come. Paul said by the power of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 15:19, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." We needn't fear the perilous times that are coming to this world, for the best is yet to come, when we see our Lord and Saviour face to face, made in His glorious likeness!

Our God is not the God of the dead but of the living to whom He gives life everlasting. Note what Christ said in Matthew 22:31,32, "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The glorified bodies that both the dead and those who are alive will receive at the coming of the Lord in the clouds will be for eternity. We are already citizens of heaven. (Philippians 3:20-21)

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE RAPTURE

Nothing is revealed as to the manner of our ascent into heaven with Christ, but we have on record some of the events which will take place in heaven during our seven year stay in the Mansions of the Father. In I Corinthians 11:31-32, we are told to exercise self judgement while we wait for the return of the Lord. The truth of I John 1:9 should be used to maintain sweet fellowship with God and with each other. If we fail to keep short accounts with God, our human works will be as wood hay and stubble and will be removed in heaven.

1. The Judgement Seat of Christ

This is mentioned in II Corinthians 5:10 and I Corinthians 3:9-20. It is only for Believers and does not deal with sin but with our works whether they will stand the test of fire. Revelation 22:12 states that the Lord will be coming quickly and His reward is with Him so perhaps the Judgement Seat of Christ will be one of the first events that takes place when we arrive in heaven. We will receive our rewards for faithfulness and the lack of rewards for unfaithfulness as the fire passes over the wood hay and stubble. May we be found faithful to the Lord and receive His "WELL DONE."

2. The Marriage of the Lamb

After the Bride and the Old Testament Saints have received their rewards and have been given fine white robes of linen, they are made ready for the marriage. The great heavenly Hallelujah chorus will break forth from the portals of Heaven.

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent (all powerful) reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of Saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God." (Revelation 19:6-9)

The guests at the marriage will be the Old Testament saints as well as the angels of God. The Old Testament Saints are referred to as the friends of the Bridegroom. A supper will be prepared for all and perhaps will either be preceded by the Lord's breaking of bread or followed by the feast of reality, as we will then be in the presence of the Lord.

3. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's supper will have great significance to both the Bride and the Friends of the Bridegroom. Old Testament Saints will remember the Passover as a foreshadow of the Lord's Supper. It will be glorious to see our Lord, face to face, as He serves the elements. It will be marvelous to see the Lord take the fruit of the vine for the first time after some 2,000 years.

"And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I WILL NOT ANY MORE EAT THEREOF, UNTIL IT BE FULFILLED IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I WILL NOT DRINK OF THE FRUIT OF THE VINE, UNTIL THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL COME." (Luke 22:15-18; Read also Matthew 26:29)

4. The Defeat of Satan and His Angels in Heaven

This battle is recorded in Revelation 9:1-12 and Revelation 12:7-12. It will take place in the middle of the seven years and as Satan and his demons are cast out of heaven, they will usher in the "ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION" upon the earth, which will cause hell to break loose on earth under full demon control (See the chapter on the Tribulation). Heaven will be cleared of all evil forces for the last half of the seven years and perhaps it will be then that we are given our final instructions as a Kingdom of priests for the Kingdom of Righteousness which follows. "Even so come Lord Jesus!"

QUESTIONS

1. Where in the New Testament did Christ speak of the church?
2. What is the purpose of the True Church and it's destination?
3. What is meant by the Rapture?
4. Name seven events that will take place before the rapture.
5. Why do we believe the rapture must take place before the Tribulation?
6. Why did Jesus Christ enter Jerusalem through the golden gate when heralded as King of Israel? Give reasons and Scripture.
7. Why was the church not prophesied in the Old Testament?
8. Who will be raised from the dead when the rapture takes place?
9. Why must the Saints be in heaven before the tribulation begins?
10. Why must the saints be in heaven before the Kingdom begins?
11. Will all or part of the True Church be caught up to heaven? Give Scripture.
12. Where will the marriage of the Bride of Christ take place? Give Scriptures.
13. Name four events that will take place in heaven, after the rapture of the church? Give Scripture.
14. What did Christ say before He ascended to heaven after being with His Disciples for 40 days?
15. Is Israel returning to her Promised Land in belief?
16. Name three Old Testament references of God's promise to regather Israel.
17. How long are we commissioned to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
18. Give a short essay in your own words as to the importance of the rapture and why it is necessary before the Kingdom of Righteousness begins.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

There is a great deal of speculation concerning the future of this world. If it were not for God's revelation through His Word, your guess would be as good as mine. But, strangely enough, much that is happening around the world today, especially in the Middle East, is recorded in the Bible and we can depend upon this revelation from God to be true.

A one world Government, under Satan has been predicted. This will be the culmination of Satan's efforts to block the Kingdom on earth, promised by God. The Book of Daniel is unlocked by the Revelation of Jesus Christ which took place on the Isle of Patmos. There, John was able to see future events as though they were televised, and these events have been recorded for all believers, especially for believers at the end of the age. In His sovereignty and omniscience, God is fully in control in spite of all attempts by the evil powers to foil God's plans. The closer we get to the end of Satan's reign of terror, the more vicious he will become. Let us take a look at what God has revealed through His prophet Daniel.

The image of Nebuchadnezzar sets forth four great empires: Babylon; Medo-Persia; Greece; and Rome. Through the revival of the Roman Empire, which will probably be a natural progression from the European Common Market, Satan will establish his One World Government. Daniel explains the Roman empire, "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it the strength of the iron...." (Daniel 2:41)

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible and exceedingly strong..... and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." (Daniel 7:7-8)

For an explanation of this, turn to Daniel 7:19-25. The revived Roman Empire will be extraordinarily powerful for the last three and one-half years of the seven year reign. Most of the tribulation saints will be destroyed during this period, referred to as "The Abomination of Desolation." For an account of this refer to Daniel 9:26b-27. The Prince or Dictator of this empire will make a covenant with Israel for seven years but he will break it in the middle of that period. He will personally enter into Israel with great power (Daniel 11:36-45). This revelation would not be very clear to us without a systematic study of other portions of Scripture, especially the Book of Revelation.

WHAT ABOUT RUSSIA & CHINA?

When you consider Russia and China's threat to conquer the world, you could easily be misled. But we know from Zechariah 12:4 that these powerful countries, which are Satan's tools, are doomed to destruction by God, "In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness." This will be a turning point in Satan's strategy. Satan will then turn to the Dictator of the Revived Roman Empire, who will be in position to rule the whole world.

THE RISE OF THE DICTATOR (FIRST BEAST)

It would be impossible to understand the revelation in Daniel without the detail from the Book of Revelation. The rise of the Dictator and the false prophet are shown in Revelation 13. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea (international) having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns and upon his heads THE NAME OF BLASPHEMY." This correlates with Daniel's account of the seven and ten, and the feet of the image of Nebuchadnezzar. Reading further in the chapter we see that the dictator is so strong that no one can make war against him (Revelation 13:4) A crucial statement is made in Revelation 13:2b, "...And the Dragon (Satan) gave him his power and his seat and great authority."

Satan has not lost his power, for we read in Revelation 13:4, "And they worshiped the Dragon which gave power unto the Beast..." The Beast (Dictator), with the NAME OF BLASPHEMY, will have tremendous power. In the same chapter of Revelation we see the length of time that he will rule. "And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, and His Tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven." (Revelation 13:5,6)

Satan's one world government, will be his last formal kingdom. During that time the kingdom of hell will break loose on earth as never before. It will be the most devastating reign of terror ever to face this world. In Matthew 24:15 & 21, the Lord Jesus makes reference to this time. "When ye therefore shall see the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet ...for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

It would be safe to say that the flood was the most catastrophic event ever to have taken place on earth, but when the evil forces make their last stand against God and the tribulation saints, both Satan and the elements will erupt into global disaster which will bring about the greatest death toll this world has ever known.

And it was given unto him (Satan's Dictator) to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:7,8)

Why does God allow Satan and this world Dictator to have such power? In the absence of the true believing church (having been raptured), the earth's population will consist, primarily, of those who rejected God's Son. God will allow them to believe a lie and He will lift His restraint from Satan until the final judgement is determined.

"And now ye know what restraineth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now hindereth will continue to hinder until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming, Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie. That they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II Thessalonians 2:6-12)

DICTATOR EMPOWERED BY THE DESTROYER

It will require a powerful dictator with strong control to manage the chaotic conditions of the world. Satan will provide the source of supernatural strength for this leader. It is evident from scripture that the Dictator (Beast) will be indwelt by the demon, called Destroyer. This demon, who is locked up in the bottomless pit, will be released by Satan after Satan is cast out of Heaven forever. (Revelation 9:1-11) This will occur after the war between Satan and his Demons and Michael and his Angels (Revelation 12:7-12).

"And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels (demons), and prevailed not, neither was there place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

God's Word tells us that an angel of God will give Satan the key to the bottomless pit, and a 'five star general' (Destroyer) with his army will be released. At this time Satan will be cast out of heaven forever, never again to accuse the brethren before the courts of God. Satan will gather his army of demons and godless men together on the earth under the banner of "The seven Heads and Ten Horns." (Revelation 12:3) "And there appeared another wonder in Heaven; and behold a great red Dragon, having seven heads (empires) and ten horns (powers), and seven crowns upon His heads (unified and complete authority)."

Revelation 13:13 tells us that the Dictator will receive a deadly wound, inflicted by a sword, from which he will recover and as a result the whole world will worship him. We know that he will be indwelt and empowered by the demon, 'Destroyer' from the following passage:

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was and is not, and yet is." (Revelation 17:8)

Furthermore this powerful Dictator will be able to perform miracles which will enable him to deceive the world (Revelation 13:14). Possessing the power of the demon world, he will have complete control over all commodities and every person so that no one will be able to buy or sell, without the mark of the Beast as recorded in Revelation 13:11-18. The Beast's number, we are told, is 666.

THE BEAST THAT COMES FORTH FROM THE LAND

God's Word describes a second beast, one that comes up from the land. This second beast, probably from the tribe of Dan, will exert great influence over the religious people of Jerusalem. Also known as the false prophet, he will convince the Jewish religious leaders to trust the Dictator of Rome and persuade Israel to make a covenant with the first beast for one 'week' (seven years). As a result of that covenant, Israel will be promised continued temple worship without interference. (But in the middle of the seven year period the covenant will be broken and the first beast will invade Israel - Daniel 9:26b-27.)

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; (not an international figure but a local and very subtle person), and he had two horns like a lamb (meek but powerful front) and he spoke like a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast: before him, **AND CAUSETH THE EARTH AND ALL WHO DWELL ON IT TO WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST**, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the (first) beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast that had the wound by a sword and did live" (Revelation 13:11-14)

There is no doubt that this second beast, with the ability to bring down fire from heavens, will enjoy tremendous influence and power among the people. His purpose will not be to exalt himself, but rather to persuade the people to worship the first beast and to set up idols in the likeness of the dictator. This second beast will be a forerunner of the first beast, heralding the world wide kingdom of the Dictator under the power of Satan. Revelation 13 describes the miracles that will be performed by this second beast.

"And he (the second beast) hath power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and enslaved, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, except he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." (Revelation 13:15-17)

The Word states that it will be the second beast who will persuade and then force the people to worship the image of the beast and to receive the mark of the beast, thereby creating a religious and economic power base for the Dictator. But the second beast will also have great power as described in Daniel 11:36-39.

"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honor the god of fortresses; and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."

THE GREAT HARLOT

Ecumenical religion will play a great part in the formation of the World government under the Dictator. Even today we can see the apostate church well established in politics and the coming Dictator will recognize the necessity of its support. The apostate religious organization is portrayed in Revelation 17:1-7 as the "Great harlot, arrayed in purple, who sits upon the beast." Satan will skillfully use religion to control the nations. The Great City of Rome, "amidst the seven mountains," will be the seat of authority for the Beast or Dictator (Revelation 17:9 & 18). Ultimately the Dictator's control of world commodities will bring the religious leaders under subjection to himself. But the alliance between the Dictator and the Harlot will come to end as ecumenical religion, with all its wealth and influence, is overthrown never to rise again. (Revelation 17 & 18).

"And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit,

and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." (Revelation 18:2,3)

This passage can only apply to the present mystery Babylon of Rome which has taken the place of the original Babylon of long ago. The judgement upon this world religious system will come directly from God.

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in ONE DAY, death and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord who judgeth her." (Revelation 18:7,8)

EVIL INTENSIFIES DURING LAST HALF OF TRIBULATION

In fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, the Satanic Kingdom will continue for the space of seven years, completing the 490 years of Gentile rule (Seventy times seven). Terror will intensify during the last half of the seven years. The Dictator of the Revised Roman Empire will break his covenant with Israel and enter the Holy Land. There he will set up idols, desecrating the temple in Jerusalem.

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Daniel 9:27).

At this time many of the people of Israel will flee to the hills of Ammon, and perhaps to the old city of Petra. The Lord Jesus Christ warned of such a time in Matthew 24:15-22.

GOD'S WITNESSES

Through the evangelical effort of the 144,000 Jews from the twelve tribes of Israel, mentioned in Revelation 7 and 14, there will be many tribulation believers. Other witnesses include the angels from Heaven, Gentiles and Moses and Elijah. Tribulation believers will not be part of the Bride of Christ, nevertheless they will be saints most of whom will be martyred and this will conclude the first resurrection. (The Bride of Christ will not be present in the tribulation, but will be in heaven, having been raptured as God promised in John 14 and I Thessalonians 4:13-18.)

THE KINGDOM OF HELL BREAKS LOOSE ON EARTH

The warning by the Lord Jesus Christ that the tribulation will be the worst disaster to hit the world should not be taken lightly (Matthew 24:21,22). Conditions will become so catastrophic that the Lord, himself, will shorten the length of daylight to prevent total devastation. Revelation chapter 6 gives a summary of the events that will take place.

White Horse

"And I saw and, behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." Revelation 6:2

The appearance of the white horse represents Satan's counterfeit of the white horse in Revelation 19. The Dictator Beast, under Satan will go forth to conquer. No details are given here of the extent of his destruction, but as the remainder of the seals are opened, we can only shudder at what is expected during the tribulation.

Red Horse

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come. And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword." (Revelation 6:3,4).

At this point the war will begin in earnest and all peace will be taken from the world as "...they kill one another."

Black Horse

"And When he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, come. And I beheld and, lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, A measure of wheat for a denarius, and three measures of barley for a denarius, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." (Revelation 6:5-6)

Famine always follows war and a terrible shortage of food will be felt around the world (Revelation 6:5,6)

Pale Horse

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come. And I looked and, behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat

on him was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." Revelation 6:7-8)

The sign of death will be everywhere; over a billion people will be killed, by sword, hunger and wild beasts.

Tribulation Saints Martyred

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellow servants and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (Revelation 6:9-11)

No doubt the number will include most of the 144,000 virgin Jews who will evangelize during the Great Tribulation, sealing their testimony with their lives (Revelation 6:9-11)

Earthquakes and Outer Space Disturbances

These earthquakes are described as the "Great Earthquakes." The sun will become black and the moon will turn to blood. The stars will fall from the heavens causing great damage to the earth; mountains and islands will disappear. This will be God's great day of wrath and men will know it. Mankind will cry out, "For the Great Day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:12-17)

Seventh Seal

The seventh seal will usher in the seven trumpets and eventually the seven bowls of the wrath of God. Conditions will deteriorate even further:

1. Hail and Fire Mingled with Blood (Revelation 8:7)
 Result – one-third of all the trees upon the earth will be burned.
 – all the grass will be burned.
2. A Great Mountain Cast into the Sea (Revelation 8:8,9)
 Result – one-third of the sea will be turned to blood
 – one-third of all creatures in the sea will die
 – one third of the ships at sea will be destroyed
3. A Great Star Falls From Heaven upon the Earth (Revelation 8:10,11)
 Result – one-third of the rivers and springs will become bitter as wormwood.
 – Many will die because of the waters

4. The Sun, Moon and Stars are Darkened (Revelation 8:12)
Result – The sun, the moon and one-third of the stars will be darkened which will greatly affect visibility and make travel very difficult.
4. Three Great Woes (Revelation 9–15)
- Result – Battle in Heaven between Satan and Michael. Satan will be cast out of Heaven forever (Rev. 9:1; 12:7–17)
- Satan unlocks the bottomless pit and will release the Destroyer with his army of demons. (Rev. 9:1–2)
 - Four demons loosed from Euphrates River (Rev. 16:12–16)
These four will have the power to destroy one-third of the world's population in one year, one month, one day and one hour. Their army of demons will be 200,000,000 strong. They will be destroyed by fire, smoke and brimstone (Rev. 9:13–21)
 - One-tenth of Jerusalem falls As a result of a great earthquake seven thousand men will be killed.
 - The Abomination of Desolation In the last three and one-half years, Israel, God's chosen race, will be the target of Satan's attack. See Revelation 12:11–17. During that time Israel will flee to the hills. (Matthew 14:15–22)
 - Dictator empowered by the Destroyer From Revelation 17:8 we conclude that the world dictator will be indwelt by the demon released from the bottomless pit. Through the Dictator, Satan's forces will mount a terrible power struggle against the forces of the Eternal God.
 - False Prophet Just as Christ had Judas in His earthly ministry, so Israel will have the false prophet who will deceive many into following the first beast. (Revelation 13:11–18).

THE POURING OUT OF THE WRATH OF GOD

The Seven Last Plagues (Revelation 15–16)

1. All who receive the mark of the beast will receive terrible sores (Revelation 16:3)
2. The second angel of God will pour out his bowl upon the sea and it will become as blood so that all living creatures within the sea will die. (Revelation 16:3)
3. The third angel will pour out his bowl of wrath upon the rivers, which will turn to blood. (Revelation 16:4–7)
4. The fourth angel will pour out his bowl of wrath and the sun will move closer to the earth to scorch all with great heat. (Revelation 16:8,9)

5. The fifth angel will pour out his bowl upon the ruling seat of the beast and his kingdom (Roman Empire) and there will be total darkness with pain. (Revelation 16:10-11)
6. The sixth angel will pour out God's wrath upon the River Euphrates, which will dry up to make way for the hordes of the East to march across into the Middle East for their final destruction. (Revelation 16:12-16)
7. The seventh angel will pour out his bowl and a great voice will be heard from heaven and from the Throne of God, saying, "It is done." (Revelation 16-17-21. The completion of God's wrath will be poured out upon the earth at this time. There will be thunder, lightning, great earth quakes that surpass any of the past. Jerusalem will be divided into three parts; the great cities of the nations will fall, especially Great Babylon (Rome); every island will disappear; and the mountains will fall. Great hail stones will fall from the sky weighing approximately 100 pounds each.

It is hard to believe that anything would survive all of that. But evidently there will still be life, for before the end of the outpouring of God's wrath, there will be a final blow to the apostate ecumenical religion of the world. (Revelation 17 & 18).

You would expect mankind to turn to God for mercy, but instead they will not repent, preferring to join forces with Satan, the demons and all the evil forces under the Dictator of the world in an attempt to prevent the Lord Jesus Christ from coming to earth for His thousand year reign of Righteousness. Of Course, this attempt will fail.

God has warned of these terrible things to come in His Word. The Lord Jesus Christ, himself, says, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be ." (Matthew 24:21. It is important that this warning be heard by all mankind. Satan's one world government is already beginning to form. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Hebrews 2:3)

The terrible days ahead should bring mankind to repentance, but will it? Listen to these words from God.

"And He saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still, and behold, I COME QUICKLY; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am ALPHA and OMEGA, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:10-14)

QUESTIONS:

1. Explain Deuteronomy 32:8 in the light of Genesis Chapter 11.
2. Why was it necessary for God to set apart and preserve one special lineage from Adam's children?
3. Why is a one world government necessary?
4. Who is influencing the world leaders to control the whole world?
5. Why does mankind desire to rule himself apart from God?
6. Name two ways that Satan counterfeits what God has promised? Give reasons.
7. Will Satan's false kingdom be world wide? How long will it last? How will it be controled. Will there be much suffering and death?
8. Explain the last part (the feet) of the the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and how it will be destroyed? (Daniel 2)
9. Will the dictator of the world be able to perform miracles? How will this be possible?
10. Will God have any witnesses during Satan's one world government?
11. Explain Revelation chapter 6 – what does each color of horse represent?
12. Will there be any change in the heavens during Satan's kingdom? Give evidence of these changes from Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation.
13. What will happen in heaven in the middle of the Great Tribulation? (Revelation 9 & 12:7-17)
14. Name two places where God has imprisoned armies of demons, who are waiting to be released so they can bring destruction upon earth? Give scriptures.
15. What are the last seven plagues that take place during Satan's reign on earth? Give scriptures.

THE KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

God's perfect righteousness will be established on earth during the second advent, when Christ will rule with a "rod of iron" for a period of one thousand years. This will take place immediately following the Great Tribulation and will end with the Great White Throne Judgement. It will be the stage for God's final test. Under perfect conditions, man will be given one last opportunity to choose God's righteousness or Satan's godlessness.

THE ROYAL LINEAGE

Let us look at some of the prophetic references in the Bible which point to the coming of the King and the kingdom. It is important to note that a real King must have royalty and title to a piece of land. All of this has been provided by God. The Messianic lineage was to come through Abraham, whom God had given land from the Euphrates River all the way to the River Egypt. God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." (Genesis 15:18b) The Messianic line continued through Isaac who inherited all that Abraham had (Genesis 25:5 & Hebrews 1:3). God's covenant is clearly set forth in Genesis 12. The land was not given for a limited time, but "forever." (Genesis 13:14,15) In order to protect the royal lineage, God narrowed the lineage to a specific tribe, the tribe of Judah. This was narrowed further to the "Root of Jesse." (I Samuel 16:12,13)

The royal line was established not merely for David, but as a dynasty that would be forever. (II Samuel 7:16) Isaiah 11:1 states "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Revelation 5:5 also states, "Behold, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the root of David..." God never promised David that he or his sons would continue to reign over the land, but that he (David) would never lack for a son to rule. This was a reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Davidic line.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time will I cause the Branch of Righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgement and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name by which she shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness. For thus saith the Lord; **DAVID SHALL NEVER LACK A MAN TO SIT UPON THE THRONE OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL**; neither shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meal offerings, and to do sacrifice continually." (Jeremiah 33:14-18)

The Lord Jesus Christ fulfills all of this prophecy as both King and Priest, after the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 7:1-7) Further evidence is given in Jeremiah 23:5,6.

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch and a KING shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Scripture is clear regarding the King and His Kingdom.

"Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looked toward the east; and it was shut. Then said the Lord unto me; This gate shall be shut, and it was shut. Then said the Lord unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut." Jeremiah 23:5,6)

In complete fulfillment of Scripture, The Lord Jesus Christ, presenting himself as King, and riding upon the colt of an ass as foretold in Zechariah 9:9, entered Jerusalem through the Golden Gate. And from that time to this day, the eastern gate remains closed.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO THE KINGDOM

The earliest scripture reference to this Kingdom occurs in Genesis 3:15. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: IT SHALL BRUISE THY HEAD, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Enoch, that great saint who walked with God, was privileged to know of the great coming event, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14-15)

Then God gave the unconditional covenant to both Abraham and David. Much later God revealed to Isaiah signs of the virgin birth as well as the restoration of nature.

"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His Name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of

Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Read Isaiah 11 and Micah 4:1-5 for a good picture of what is to be expected in the Kingdom of Righteousness. Daniel also had a clear picture of the coming King.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool; His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him; thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the judgement was set, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:9-10)

During the Lord's earthly ministry, Christ also taught much about the kingdom, especially through parables, and this continued during the forty days following his resurrection. (Acts 1:1-3) The Disciples and Israel were anxious for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6-7), but God's plans include the restoration of the whole universe.

THE TIME OF HIS APPEARANCE

God is always on time just as he was for the first advent, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4,5) God admonished his disciples, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." (Acts 1:7) However, there are signs and events recorded in God's Word which point to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Kingdom of Righteousness.

Some of the events which must take place are: the regathering of Israel into her land; the revival of the Roman Empire (possibly through the European Common Market); Russia's presence in the Middle East; the formation of the third and fourth world orders; and many others. Christ warned of what can be expected in Matthew 24; Mark 13; and Luke 21. Daniel spoke of the "Abomination of Desolations" which must occur before the Lord's return for His Kingdom of Righteousness. The Lord made reference to this in Matthew 24:15-31, and it concerns the breaking of a covenant made between the Dictator of the Revived Roman Empire and Israel; for the Dictator will invade Jerusalem, destroy it, and set himself up as God. (Daniel 9:26B-27; II Thessalonians 2:3-12)

The time of the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom of Righteousness is solely in the hands of God the Father. As we study the Bible and recognize certain things coming to pass, we can only say, "Look up, for your redemption (deliverance) draws near." (Luke 21:28) Scripture reminds us, "to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us (out) from the wrath to come." (I Thessalonians 1:10)

AIRLIFT FOR KINGDOM ADMINISTRATORS

We have discussed some of the events which must take place before the Kingdom of Righteousness takes place, but we should note that an administration will be established for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords during His reign. The Bible mentions specific groups. Since the Kingdom was promised to Old Testament Saints, they must be included in the administration. The Bride of Christ, made up of believers in this Church Age, will be married to Christ the Bridegroom, and we are told, will ever be with the Lord. (See I Thessalonians 4:13-18.)

Completion of the Members of the Body of Christ

For almost 2,000 years, during this Age of Grace, there has been a great gathering of precious souls. The great commission is still in effect and will continue until the last member of the Body of Christ is formed. Only God the Father will determine the completion of the Body, for whom Christ gave His life on Calvary.

God the Holy Spirit Will Lift His Restraining Power

When the Body is complete, God the Holy Spirit, who was sent from the Father by the Lord Jesus Christ, will have completed His mission in restraining the world and indwelling believers. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me." (John 15:26) "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement." (John 16:7,8) Our world is sinful and we often think it cannot get worse. But Scripture reminds us that it will get worse and eventually the kingdom of hell will break loose on earth and wickedness will prevail like no other time in the history of creation.

"Let no man deceive you by any means; for THAT DAY shall not come, except there come a FALLING AWAY FIRST, and THAT MAN OF SIN be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. And now ye know WHAT WITHHOLDETH that he might be revealed in his time." (II Thessalonians 2:3,4,6)

Israel Regathered Back in Her Land

From all over the world the Children of Israel are moving back into the land of Israel, in spite of terrible opposition, persecution, restrictions and difficulties. After the Church is taken out (raptured), Israel will become the seat of witness during the Great Tribulation starting with a number of 144,000 from various tribes (except for the tribe of Dan, who was replaced by Manassah).

The scene is also being set for the rise of the Roman Empire, the defeat of Russia, the Orient and Africa. The Revived Roman Empire will take over the world governments with little or no opposition.

The Greatest Airlift of All Times

According to the Biblical timetable, this great airlift could take place at any time. But again, the final hour is in the hands of God the Father as Christ reminds us, "And He said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." (Acts 1:7) When the airlift takes place, the whole world will be aware of it.

Think of the reality of what the Lord promised! Christ put it very beautifully, during the upper room discourse. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3) Those to whom Christ spoke have died and their bodies have seen corruption. (Note Acts 1:10.)

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Certainly that was the "Blessed Hope" which Titus wrote about in Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

There are some who reject the validity of the rapture and some who combine the rapture with the second advent of the Lord for His Kingdom. The latter argue that we are making two returns of the lord Jesus Christ, but this is not so. The rapture is phase one of the second advent of the Lord and its purpose is manifold: 1) For believers to enjoy a place in the mansions of the Father as promised; 2) For the judgement seat of Christ which prepares us and commissions us for the Kingdom. (I Corinthians 3:9-15; II Corinthians 5:10); 3) For the marriage of the Bride; 4) For the breaking of bread (communion) with the Lord in the Father's Kingdom (Matthew 26:29. These are only a few reasons why the rapture must be considered a separate event from the second advent of the Lord.

Old Testament Saints looked forward to the resurrection and Christ taught the disciples of this great airlift, Himself. Then God the Holy Spirit revealed a few more details to Paul, which he describes in I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

"But I would not have you ignorant, BRETHREN, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep IN JESUS will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise FIRST; then we which are alive and remain shall be CAUGHT UP

TOGETHER with them IN THE CLOUDS, TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

If believers were to go immediately into the earthly kingdom, there would be no need to be "caught up." Therefore the destination is Heaven, as promised by the Lord and confirmed by Scripture.

WHY THE BELIEVING CHURCH DOES NOT GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION

The tribulation is a judgement of God, predicted long before the church was born, and is the final seven years of the seventy times seven spoken of by Daniel. The church was born on the day of Pentecost and Daniel knew nothing about this mystery age in which we are living. Some of the vital reasons why the church does not go through the tribulation follow:

1. The tribulation is the completion of the seventy times seven of Daniel, whereas the church began at Pentecost.
2. The tribulation is "Jacob's Trouble" and not a judgement for the church. (Jeremiah 30:7)
3. The Lord's Judgement upon the Church of Thyatira was that unless they repent, the Thyatira Church would be cast into the Great Tribulation (Revelation 2:22). If all believers at the start of the tribulation must go through the tribulation, why would God's Word record a special judgement on this one church?
4. Acts 1:6,7 states that only the Father knows the correct time of Christ's coming for His Bride (the Church). To position this at the middle or the end of the tribulation would be to set a time on that event.
5. The Church (Bride) will be kept from the wrath to come. (I Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Revelation 3:10; Luke 21:36)
6. With the exception of chapters 1 through 3, the Book of Revelation does not mention the church anywhere throughout the tribulation, except in the heavenly scene in chapters 4 and 5, where all of the church is in heaven. Then in chapter 19:11-16 it is recorded that all the church will come down to earth with the Lord as He sets up His kingdom for 1,000 years. (Read also I Thessalonians 3:13).
7. The tribulation cannot begin until the whole church is in heaven so that we can witness the opening of the sealed scroll, with the seven seals (Revelation 4 & 5).
8. The redeemed will sing a song in heaven (Revelation 5:9,10) and this will take place before the coming of the saints with the Lord to establish His kingdom on earth. The important phrase is "a kingdom of priests and WE SHALL reign on earth."

9. All believers must come from heaven WITH the Lord, when Christ sets up His kingdom on earth for the 1000 year reign. Enoch prophesied of a great number that would come with the Lord (Jude 14, 15). Note that it says WITH the saints and not FOR the saints. I Thessalonians 3:13 clarifies this by stating that it is "ALL of the saints."
10. Zechariah 14:5b also mentions the coming of the Lord with ALL of His saints, "the Lord My God will come with ALL the saints."
11. If the rapture does not take place before the Lord comes for His kingdom with all the saints, then how will those who are alive reach heaven first and then come back with the Lord?
12. The Lord has been preparing a place for His bride in the mansions of the Father for almost 2,000 years, as stated in John 14. If we who are alive as believers must go through the tribulation, then we will never get to enjoy that prepared place for us in the mansions of God the father. Immediately after the tribulation, the Lord himself will descend to destroy the beast dictator of the world; cast Satan into the bottomless pit; and then establish his 1,000 year kingdom. There would be no time for the mansions in heaven. Revelation 19 gives the details of the events for ALL the saints which will take place in heaven.
13. The Lord Himself, also said, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29) There is no reference here to Christ's earthly kingdom as promised to David. Therefore ALL believers must arrive in heaven before the fruit of the vine will be taken by the lord. This will be the heavenly communion with the Lord as a feast of reality.
14. John 14 definitely tells us that the Lord is coming for "ALL THE DEAD IN CHRIST" and "ALL THE LIVING IN CHRIST" to enjoy the mansions of the Father for the complete seven year tribulation period.
15. II Corinthians 5:10 states that believers have an appointment with the Lord to be at the judgement seat of Christ and receive rewards along with the Apostle Paul and ALL believers of all ages. The wood, hay and stubble of our works must be burned; and the gold silver and precious stones must be polished. (I Corinthians 3:9-17) The judgement seat of Christ is for the distribution of rewards and position in the coming kingdom of Christ on earth, as well as for the purification of the Bride of Christ for the marriage (Revelation 19:7-10). The marriage supper will follow as God the Father honors His eternal Son and His bride. The bride will also be introduced to the friends of the bridegroom (Old Testament Saints).

Note: Believers will NOT stand before the Great White Throne to be judged. That judgement will be for the unbelievers of all ages (Revelation 20:11-15) The White throne judgement has to do with the SECOND RESURRECTION (Revelation 20:5,6; 12-15)

16. Apart from the above reasons, it is inconceivable that either God the Father or the Son (the Bridegroom) would force the Bride to go through the most terrible judgement this earth will ever face. (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 6-18) The tribulation is the culmination of judgement upon the gentile nations of the world; and Israel for her disobedience to the Lord. It is not judgement for the Bride.
- Note: the Apostate Church (unbelieving church) DOES go through the tribulation.
17. Perhaps the greatest error of those who think that the true church will go through the Great Tribulation is that **THEY DO NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH**. Such error supposes that Israel has been absorbed into the church and that Israel's blessings and judgements will fall upon the church. (Read Romans 9 and 10 for clarification.)
18. If Israel is absorbed into the church, then who are the saints in the tribulation? Other questions need to be answered such as what is the reason for the 144,000 (12,000 from each of the tribes of Israel)? Why will Moses and Elijah be witnesses during the tribulation? Why will the song of Moses be sung instead of Christian songs? Revelation 15:3 and 5:9-10 mention the Christian song, but it is to be sung in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenly home.
19. Scripture is clear that the religious ecumenical group will be active in the tribulation and will help lead the one world dictator into his international power. This group is not the believing church. (Revelation 13:1-10; 17:1-18)

PREPARATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION DURING THE KINGDOM AGE

During this present age, believers are in "boot training," and are made ready for the Kingdom of Righteousness which will continue for 1,000 years and on into the final everlasting kingdom following the Great White Throne Judgement.

God's word admonishes believers to keep short accounts with God making use of I John 1:9. No believer is without "wood, hay and stubble," mentioned in I Corinthians 3:12, which are destined to be burned before the Judgement Seat of Christ. God knows our weakness, shortcomings, our sins and has provided a way for us to confess them to Him immediately. The process of cleansing on this side of glory is confession. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

As the Bride of Christ, believers are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, which include being sealed by God the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:3-14). There are times in the Christian life when we grieve God the Holy Spirit by submitting to the World, the flesh and the Devil, and that comes about when we willfully go our own way. But God has promised us, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; **BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL**, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Corinthians 10:13) Our bodies being the temple of the Living God, we ought to seek to please Him, and

depend upon God the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. This is part of the preparation for the Kingdom of Righteousness under God.

As there are different classifications of the Angelic host, so there will be different positions for the Bride of Christ as a kingdom of Priests in the new order which Christ will establish upon the earth. The "wood, hay and stubble" will be gone from our lives, but what about the "gold, silver and precious stones?" Will we be found without any good works which will stand the test of God's purifying fire? Read carefully I Corinthians 3:9-17. God's judgement upon our works is absolutely just and is based upon FAITHFULNESS, which is our motive in doing a job He has given us to do. (Sin will not be an issue before the Judgement Seat of Christ for it was dealt with at the cross.) However, the responsibility which will be given to us in Christ's Kingdom, will be based upon the responsibility we take toward God's work on this side of glory. You cannot take anything with you when you leave this realm of life, but you can send God's good works on ahead as "gold, silver and precious stones."

Another important phase of our preparation is our attitude in studying the Word of God. God's Word instructs, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." (II Timothy 2:15) This will prepare us for greater achievements for eternity, and in particular the Kingdom of Righteousness. It will establish confidence, faithfulness and responsibility toward God.

SIDE ATTRACTIONS FOR THE BRIDE

When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to rapture the Bride home to His Father's Mansions, believers will thrill to behold the wonders of heaven with billions of angels surrounding the throne of God. This will be just a first of many thrills to come in God's eternal paradise.

There will be no housing shortage in the mansions of God. We will have the opportunity to share Biblical truths with the angels, and become acquainted with the ministering spirits who were assigned to us during our earthly life (Hebrews 1:14). Our glorified bodies will thrill at the sound of heavenly music. We will receive new names, based upon our faithfulness during our earthly outreach for the Lord. Of course, the greatest joy of all will be to see the Lord Jesus Christ face to face! What added joy if we have produced works worthy of reward to cast our crowns before the Lord, who alone is worthy of all honor and glory and praise! (See Revelation 4:10,11)

The highlight of events will be the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-10). The Bride of Christ will be presented, pure and clean and righteous, arrayed in the fine linen of heaven. Old Testament saints from Adam and Eve to John the Baptist will be in attendance as "Friends of the Bridegroom." The marriage supper will be the greatest banquet ever prepared, with the seat of honor given to the Bridegroom. Perhaps the angels will serve tables! Who knows?

Another great event in heaven will be the opening of the scrolls. Revelation 5:1 tells us that no one was found to be able to open the scroll, but the ETERNAL SON OF GOD (Revelation 5:2-7). This will be another great moment for all believers as they behold the 'Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David' reach forth and take the sealed scroll from the Eternal Father. Representatives of the Old Testament Saints and the Bride of Christ will then burst out in singing, never before heard in heaven.

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood our of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God a Kingdom of priests; and we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:9-10)

From this point forward will be seven years of the greatest tribulation that the world has ever known (Matthew 24:21).

At the start of the tribulation, there will also be a tremendous stir in heaven, as Michael the Arch Angel summons God's armies of angels to make ready for war in heaven, which we will witness. God the Holy Spirit allowed Isaiah to look down the corridors of time and he recorded this event as though it were already completed, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" (Isaiah 14:12) This event will only take place after the Bride of Christ arrives safely in the mansions of heaven. It may seem strange that Satan still appears in heaven, but if you read the Book of Job, you will discover that Satan has continually accused believers of all ages, including our age; but praise God, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." (1 John 2:1) At this very moment we are being accused of imperfection by Satan, but Christ is interceding for us.

Michael the Arch Angel will be endowed with special power from God to be able to defeat Satan and his millions of demons, who will then be cast down to earth as recorded in Revelation 12:7-12. However, we must go back to Revelation 9:1-12 to note that after Satan's defeat he will be given the key to the bottomless pit, which will bring in the "Abomination of Desolation" spoken of by Daniel in Daniel 9:27 and confirmed by Christ in Matthew 24:15. For the remainder of the Bride's stay in heaven, there will be no accuser of the brethren, but the wrath of Satan will be poured out upon the dwellers on the earth for the duration of the tribulation. This brings us to the point in time when the Bride will receive beautiful white horses to carry us through space, back to earth, led by **THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS!**

SECOND ADVENT

"The Son of God goes to war!" This will be our battle cry as we leave the mansions of God and return to the realm of earth. It will be in fulfillment of what Enoch predicted thousands of years ago.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh WITH ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude 14,15)

Enoch mentioned ten thousand saints coming with the Lord, but we must turn to I Thessalonians 3:13 to discover that we all must come for that great battle. "To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ WITH ALL His saints." This will be a truly great moment!

ONE-PERSON BATTLE

It is an amazing battle which will be fought with the Eternal Son of God, who gave His all to redeem us. The Lord Jesus Christ will take on Satan and his hordes, single handed. As the Bride of Christ, we will go forth with the Lord in all of the fineries of a Bride, to BEHOLD the power of the Lord's Word.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set my King upon My holy hill of Zion."
(Psalm 2:1-6)

God will allow the cup of iniquity to fill before He takes the necessary measures to put down sin once and for all, and thus end the conflict of the ages, as recorded in Daniel 9:24. God gave Daniel further revelation:

And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Daniel 2:44)

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."
(Daniel 7:13,14)

The Lord taught the disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9) Also for forty days the Lord spoke about the coming Kingdom before He ascended to heaven. Then we have those marvelous words from the two men in white apparel, "Which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

"And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns: and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His name

is called the Word of God, and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, and clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:11-15)

The battle begins and finishes; Our Lord smites the nations with His very words! It reminds us of the time when the Lord was with His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane and a group of six hundred soldiers came to take Him. "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I AM HE, and they went backward and fell to the ground." The Lord Jesus Christ is THE GREAT I AM, who ever was and always will be. During the Lord's earthly ministry, He manifested His mighty power to all. It will not be necessary for Him to call the armies of heaven to defeat the enemy. We have an outstanding example of Christ's power when he confronted the money changers and merchants in the Temple of God. The Lord spoke and single handedly, the temple was cleansed by the LIVING WORD OF GOD!

THE ENEMY DEFEATED AND DETAINED

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven. Come and gather yourselves together unto the SUPPER OF THE GREAT GOD; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and and the flesh of all men, both free and bound, both small and great. And I saw the BEAST, and the kings of the earth and their armies, gather together to make war against HIM THAT SAT ON THE HORSE, and against His army. And the BEAST was taken, and with him THE FALSE PROPHET that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received THE MARK OF THE BEAST, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And theremnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of His mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." (Revelation 19:17-21)

When this great battle is fought and won by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Dictator of the world and his false prophet will be immediately thrown into the lake of fire and there will be no more judgement for them. However the slain, both small and great will have to appear before the Great White Throne Judgement seat when the second resurrection takes place. We would rejoice greatly if we could say

at that time praise God the battles are over! But this is not so; for the enemy will not accept defeat and will appear once again in an attempt to take control from God.

**"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the Dragon, that Old Serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, TILL THE THOUSAND YEARS SHOULD BE FULFILLED; and after that he must be loosed a little season."
(Revelation 20:1-2)**

Never make light of the power of Satan, although God is still on the throne! To understand more about Satan, read Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:12-19. Satan is behind the scenes working against God in every way permitted, using his many fallen angels to carry out his plans for overthrow! He has millions of such demons under his command and only Almighty God will be able to bring him to nothing. Satan was sentenced at the cross, but the judgement has been postponed until after the Kingdom rule of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CLEANSING OF THE WORLD ORDER

In Daniel 12:6-12, God gave Daniel some information regarding time, which Daniel recorded even though he could not understand what he wrote.

**"And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, HOW LONG SHALL IT BE TO THE END OF THESE WONDERS? And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that liveth forever, THAT IT SHALL BE FOR TIME, TIMES AND AN HALF; and he shall have accomplished the breaking up of the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, BUT I UNDERSTOOD NOT, Then said I, Oh my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, go thy way Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed TILL THE TIME OF THE END. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tested, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand and three hundred and five and thirty days."
(Daniel 12:6-12)**

One can easily see how Daniel was confused with two added sets of figures to the original 'one week' or seven years. He was told of half of that time, 'time, times and half time' (Daniel 12:7) then 'two thousand and three hundred days' (Daniel 8:14). We know from the Scripture that the Great Tribulation will be the final seven years of the 'seventy times seven' of Daniel, but what about these added days? During the Great Tribulation there will be a covenant made with Israel for seven years, by the Dictator of the Revived Roman Empire and it shall be broken in the middle of the time (three and a half years). This is found in Daniel 9:27. One important clue is found in Daniel 8:13,14.

"Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint who spoke, HOW LONG shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under feet? And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; THEN shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

One can only conclude with these various figures that the idols of the beast, and the cleansing of the temple will take time and all of the items within the temple will have to be purified and rededicated to God. The blessing comes when this is all completed and the thousand, three hundred and thirty five days are reached for the temple worship to be reinstated. This leaves the third set of figures of two thousand and three hundred days. We could brush this aside by saying it belonged to Antiochus Epiphanes, but it has to do with the prophecy of the end times as it mentions 'Little Horn.' If it does refer to the end times, then it has to do with the cleansing of the temple and making the temple officially opened to the worshipers.

Before the Lord Jesus Christ can establish the Kingdom of Righteousness there will have to be a thorough renovation of the whole world order. To understand how the Lord will bring it to pass, we must refer to the parables on the Kingdom of God as the Lord Himself explained. There are several phases in this preparation:

1. The cleansing of the Temple – the temple in Jerusalem must be thoroughly cleansed from the desecration of the beast and the idols as well as the misuse of the temple vessels. All of this will take time. Sacrifices and oblations will be activated once more, not for the covering of sin as in the Old Testament, but rather as as a symbolical remembrance.
2. The Baptism of Fire – For a Scriptural understanding of this we must turn to the parables, taught by the Lord Jesus Christ. John the Baptist, who heralded the King and prepared the way said:

"I indeed baptize you with water, unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear (unlace); He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with FIRE; whose fan is in His Hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner; but will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:11,12)

Now turn to Matthew 25:31-41. Here are a few statements taken from this important passage.

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right Hand, but the goats on the left....Then shall He say unto them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angelsand these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

At first analysis, one would suppose that this passage concerns the Great White Throne Judgement. But if that were the case there should only be goats (unbelievers) before the Great White Throne. Since the passage mentions sheep and goats it must have to do with the cleansing of the earth in preparation for the Kingdom of Righteousness. Those on the right hand (believers) will take part in the one thousand year Kingdom.

When Christ presented Himself to Israel as their Messiah and King, he purged the temple at least twice (John 2:13-17). They questioned His authority to do so (Matthew 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8). It is amazing as Christ cleansed the Temple that He remembered the Gentiles and attempted to restore their part of the temple to other nations than Israel. Christ had the authority to do this as both King and High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:5-10; 7:103).

Just as Christ will have complete authority to cleanse the temple, he will cleanse the nations in preparation for His kingdom. Following are some of the Kingdom parables relating to the cleansing by fire baptism which must take place prior to the reign of righteousness:

- a. Parable of the talents - Matthew 25:14-30, "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
- b. Separation of sheep and goats - Matthew 25:31-46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."
- c. The parable of the sower - Mark 4:1-25, "For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away."
- d. The tares among the wheat - Matthew 13:24-30, "Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them."

- e. The drag net cast into the sea – Matthew 13:47–50, "But cast the bad away."

"So shall it be at the end of the world (age); the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them INTO THE FURNACE OF FIRE; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

We often hear those who are preaching a false Gospel (called social Gospel) mention in their prayers the phrase, "bringing in the Kingdom," or "the furthering of the kingdom." None of us can either bring in the Kingdom or further it; our job is to prepare precious souls for whom Christ died, for the great 'air lift' when Christ comes for His own. The church will be made up of those who are 'called out' to be 'caught up.' Many who are left behind, will have their eyes opened in time to get the name of Jehovah written on their foreheads, but too late for the 'air lift.' Many tribulational saints will be saved out of the final judgement of God, but 'caught' in the Abomination of Desolation. However, in our discussion, we are more concerned with the baptism of fire which will be made manifest when Christ returns to set up His Kingdom of Righteousness.

CHANGE OF CONDITIONS IN THE WORLD ORDER

1. Satan will be bound.
2. Nature will be restored
3. Disease and sickness will be done away with.
4. Nations will be ruled in perfect righteousness.
5. There will be no poverty.
6. There will be no wars.
7. There will be full knowledge of the Lord.
8. Life span will be increased.
9. There will be temple worship.
10. There will be a universal kingdom.
11. The Lord shall reign
12. The saints shall rule and reign with the Lord.

1. Satan will be bound – Satan has already been judged at the cross, but his sentence has been postponed. He is still very active in heavenly affairs as well as earthly affairs, as permitted by the sovereignty of God. Revelation 12:10 calls him the accuser of the brethren. He tried to make Job curse God, but failed, and will fail every time because the Lord undertakes for His own, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." (I John 2:1) But the time is coming when Satan will be bound. God's word is very specific about this. It will happen when Christ comes to establish His Kingdom of Righteousness on earth.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled after that he must be loosed for a season." (Revelation 20:1–3)

Until that time arrives, Satan is loose and alive and very active. But during the Kingdom of Righteousness, Satan will not be free to influence the nations of the world; what they do will be of their own free choice.

2. Nature will be restored – Nature has been cursed as a result of sin. Thorns and thistles, pests, lack of rain, too much rain, erratic weather and many other difficulties have plagued our earth. But when the Lord of Lords takes over, He will restore nature. Old Testament Saints were promised this restoration with their Messiah who would establish His Kingdom. Isaiah 11 gives some characteristics of the Kingdom. Here are but a few:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb."

"The leopards shall lie down with the kid."

"The calf with the young lion, and a little child shall lead them."

"The lion shall eat straw like the ox."

It is obvious that nature will be significantly changed from present conditions.

3. Disease and sickness will be done away with – Christians and non-Christians alike are troubled with many infirmities in this age. Although Christ dealt with sin on the cross, the results of sin, which include sickness, will remain until nature is restored and the Lord, Himself, rules upon this earth.

4. Nations will be ruled in perfect righteousness – With a "rod of iron" Christ will rule the nations (Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 19:15; 12:5). "With Righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." (Isaiah 11:4a) "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins." (Isaiah 11:5a)

5. There will be no poverty – With the earth producing to it's fullest capacity under perfect conditions, poverty will be eliminated. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (Isaiah 55:13) Poverty always brings hunger and the Lord tells us that they shall never hunger again (Revelation 7:16). In the Kingdom of Righteousness, with no fear of injustice or war, men will naturally "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" (Micah 4:3) for the land will produce so abundantly that plowshares will be in great demand and the vine will grow so rapidly that pruning hooks will also be greatly needed. There will be no shortage of food.

6. There will be no wars – "Neither shall they learn war anymore" (Micah 4:3). This would be an unbelievable statement were it not made by the King of Kings, Himself, in God's Word. "And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever." (Micah 4:7)

7. Earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord – "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:9) What can you add to this?

8. Life span will be increased – With disease under control, nature restored and God, Himself, upon the face of the earth, it would seem logical that the life span would increase. Isaiah 65:20 provides the scripture reference, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old." The latter part of the same verse gives further insight, "but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed," which indicates that the sin nature will still be present.

9. Temple worship will be restored – We are told that in the new heavens and earth, there will be no need for a temple of God. "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Revelation 21:22) However, during the Kingdom of Righteousness established upon this old earth for one-thousand years, there will be a temple. Refer to Zechariah 6:12,13. "Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, behold the Man whose name is THE BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the TEMPLE of the Lord; even He shall build the Temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." This remarkable revelation shows Christ in His Priest/King position, after the order of Melchizedek. During the Kingdom reign, Christ will be the High priest in the Temple as well as King over all of the world. Worshipers will come from all around the world to attend the temple worship and hear the Lord Jesus Christ personally. His reign of absolute righteousness will be an astonishment to many.

10. There will be a universal kingdom – In the past, there have been rulers over vast empires of the world, but these rulers were always plagued with the great expense of maintaining large armies as well as the problems of corruption among officers and the greed for power. When the Lord Jesus Christ sets up His Kingdom of Righteousness, it will be supreme and absolute. Every officer within His kingdom will maintain God's standards. "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Micah 4:2) Nations shall have their opportunity to learn of God, if they wish, and will not be hindered by Satan, who will spend the entire time of the Kingdom in the bottomless pit.

11. The Lord shall reign – Both Old Testament and New Testament Saints of all ages have been looking forward to the time when God, Himself, will rule upon the earth among men. When this happens, the world system will change. The present "god" of this world system is none other than Satan, who has "blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:4) This will demand a complete change in policy from unrighteousness to God's righteousness; and Christ will rule with a "rod of iron." (Refer to Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15.) "But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; And He shall smite the earth with the Rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." (Isaiah 11:4,5)

When we look at the affairs of men in our own generation and time, we can readily cry the very words of Pilate, "What is truth?" It will take God, Himself, to straighten out the affairs of this world. Even God's creation will be amazed at the great changes to take place upon the earth. "Then the Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." (Isaiah 24:23) God the Holy Spirit again revealed to Isaiah the astounding statement, "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in Judgement." (Isaiah 32:1) Jeremiah was also told of that blessed day, when the Lord shall reign.

"Behold the days come, saith the lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Jeremiah 23:5,6)

During the kingdom reign of the thousand years, men will be without excuse when they desire evil rather than good, for they will no longer be able to blame Satan, who will be locked up in the bottomless pit.

12. The saints shall rule and reign with the Lord – the closing phrase of that marvelous song of the saints in heaven should thrill a believer through and through. "And we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10). Let us go back into Daniel's prophecy for a moment, "Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." (Daniel 7:22) How can this possibly be? We as saints in this present moment are not equipped to rule and reign with Christ in righteousness. What is lacking? We can mention several things which are lacking for such a commission from Almighty God. Here are but a few:

- a. We must have our glorified bodies. Christ reminds us of this positional truth in His statement, "I am glorified in them." (John 17:10) Again in Romans 8:30 we read, "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified and whom He justified, them He also glorified." This is wonderful positional truth, but when will this take place? The process of receiving these glorified bodies is God's secret, but we know as an absolute fact that it will take place. "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (I Corinthians 15:51,52) Also in I Thessalonians 4:16, 17:

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

- b. We must stand before the judgement seat of Christ – God's own believing family have a special place in the economy of God, who being just, desires to have all the wood, hay and stubble (works of the flesh) destroyed; and the gold, silver and precious stones (works of the Holy Spirit) recognized by special rewards. We read about this process in II Corinthians 5:10. This process enables us to be assigned our particular job for the Kingdom as well as our positions of honor as members of the Bride of Christ.
- c. We must take our place in the mansions of God the Father – Being of the royal family of God, we have to come under instruction in preparation for the royal priesthood; and so must spend time in the mansions of God, which Christ is preparing for us (John 14:1-3). On this side of glory, we have the privilege to learn much about the characteristics of God as we study the Word of God. However, when we are taken up to heaven, we will face the reality, meeting fellow believers of all ages. During the one thousand year reign we will be sent out to reach the remaining earthly people as a kingdom of priests. "And hast made us unto our God, kings (Kingdom) and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:10)

What a tremendous privilege we have as Christians, with a blessed hope, joint heirs with the Lord, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (I Peter 2:9,10)

These are but a few of the many provisions which we have and will have, when the time comes for the Kingdom of Righteousness. This is what gives us confidence in the Lord. "To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." (I Thessalonians 3:13)

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them and judgement was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4)

EARTH'S FINAL BATTLE

Seasonal Preparation for the Final Battle

For one thousand years this earth will be ruled by Almighty God in perfect righteousness. During that time Satan will be bound, and nature will be restored to provide perfect environment. Believers in their glorified bodies will have a world-wide teaching ministry. But at the completion of the thousand years Satan will be loosed 'for a little season' (Revelation 20:3) and he will set out to deceive the nations once more.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city (Jerusalem)." (Revelation 20:7-9)

It is difficult to comprehend how the people of the earth could turn their backs on God in rebellion after experiencing His perfect rule under perfect environment. The only conclusion is that mankind is totally depraved and apart from God's grace and the power of regeneration, it is impossible to please God. Our attention goes back to the Psalmist who wrote,

"Why do the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure." (Psalm 2:1-5)

The Middle East Battle Field

The Middle East has been and will be the great battle ground for the final control of the world. The four great world empires of Babylon, the Medes, Persia, Greece and Rome, all used the Middle East as the bastion for control of the world. Today the oil and minerals of the Middle East have intensified its importance. We know from God's Word that there are yet to be fought three great battles in this area in particular in the valley of Meggidon. In the first great battle, Russia, China and the African armies will be defeated to make room for the revival of the Roman Empire. Following that the Lord, Himself, will defeat the Dictator of the world, known as the Beast. This will usher in the thousand year reign of Christ which will be followed by the final and last battle, the end of which is described in Revelation 20:9b, "And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." It is at this time that the great armies gathered by Satan in rebellion against God will make one final attempt to remove God as Sovereign of both heaven and earth. But God

will be victorious. "And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Revelation 20:10)

The Destruction of the Enemy by Outer Space Power

God has recorded the events of the future for our encouragement. That we may know that God Almighty is Sovereign and Eternal. We are not told how long Satan will be allowed to gather his rebellion against God. The Word simply states that it will be a "little season." (Revelation 20:3) But it will be long enough to muster together armies that number "as the sand of the sea." (Revelation 20:8) It would be no problem for Christ to leave His throne in Jerusalem and with a single word destroy the combined forces of demons and men; but this will not be His battle. It will be God the Father who will go into action from His throne in Heaven, "and Fire came down out of heaven and devoured them." (Revelation 20:9) Just like that the enemies will be destroyed by God the Father from outer space.

The Final Judgement of God's Paramount Enemy

It is difficult to believe that God's arch enemy, who desired to be like the Most High God will become a continual burning ember, forever and ever. Satan made his five "I wills" as recorded in Isaiah 14:13-14; but note God's response:

"Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying is this the man who made the earth to tremble, who did shake kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness, and destroyed its cities, who opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isaiah 14:15-17)

It is significant that God responded to Satan's five "I wills" with His five "I wills."

"By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou has sinned; therefore I WILL cast thee as profane out of the mountains of God, and I WILL destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; I WILL cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before the kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy merchandise; therefore WILL I bring forth fire from the midst of thee; it shall devour thee, and I WILL bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be appalled at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." (Ezekiel 28:16-19)

In the end God dismisses Satan with but a short statement. "And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." (Revelation 10:10)

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

The Second Resurrection

It is noteworthy that Scripture does not teach one general resurrection, such as is commonly heard from various religious organizations. God's Word tells of the First Resurrection which is the resurrection for believers. There are three occurrences of this resurrection. Christ was the first fruit of the first resurrection and at that time other graves were opened and Old Testament Saints were seen in Jerusalem. "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." (I Corinthians 15:20)

The rapture is another phase of the first resurrection and will occur at the time when the "dead in Christ" shall be raised to meet Him (Christ) in the air. It will immediately precede the Great Tribulation. Following the Tribulation another occurrence of the First Resurrection will take place, when those who become believers during the tribulation will be resurrected at the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 20:6 states, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first Resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

The second resurrection will involve a different group of human beings. Those who take part in the second resurrection will be condemned to an eternal second death. Unbelievers of all ages from Cain right on through to the last human being who rejects God and His plan of salvation will be raised from the dead to face their final judgement. Gods records are accurate and his decisions are absolute. "The rest of the dead" will be resurrected for several reasons:

1. God is just and will judge their works individually (since they have elected not to accept Christ's work on their behalf).
2. Every knee will bow before the creator, whether they want to or not.
3. Every unbeliever must stand before the Great White Throne and hear the verdict pronounced in his or her individual case.
4. Every unbeliever will continue to exist on into eternity fully aware of his or her separation from God, forever experiencing the wrath of God.

The Records Revealed

God has been keeping a complete record of the good works of every person, born into this world. Believers records will be revealed at the Judgement seat of Christ for the purpose of rewards (II Corinthians 5:10), and not at the Great White Throne. The records that are opened at the Great White Throne are those of unbelievers and will be the basis for everlasting punishment. Having rejected Christ's atonement for sin and His imputed absolute righteousness, every unbeliever will stand on his or her own merit. God's standard demands absolute righteousness, therefore, the result will be eternal damnation.

"And the dead were judged out of these things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it and death and hades delivered up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." (Revelation 20:12-13)

It is amazing to think of unbelievers, who are willing to take their chances on personal merit, rather than accept God's provision for the forgiveness of sin through His Son, who took our judgement on the Cross of Calvary that we might be made righteous in Him!

The Book of Life and The Books Works

"And I saw a Great White Throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life and the dead were judged out of these things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Revelation 20:11-13)

God will bring out the Book of Life at the Great White Throne, despite the fact that all whose names are written in the Book of Life will not be standing before Him, having already taken part in the first resurrection. A possible explanation for this is that God is demonstrating that hell was never prepared for human beings, but as a result of rejection of Christ's salvation, the names of unbelievers were blotted out of the book. Do you remember when Moses pled for Israel, when they had sinned?

"And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, BLOT me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, Him will I BLOT out of my book." (Exodus 32:31-33)

Again we read, "The Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." (Deuteronomy 29:20) Note what the Lord Jesus Christ says concerning this Book of Life. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels." (Revelation 3:5) So evidently the Book of Life is brought before the White Throne Judgement as evidence that the accused must now stand upon their own records rather than upon the saving grace of our Loving Lord Jesus Christ. Through the sacrificial death of the Lord, our names remain in the Book of Life, because He blotted out our transgressions. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." (Colossians 2:14)

It will be a dreadful day when the billions of dead stand before the White Throne to await their eternal sentence. What will these books reveal? Christ paid the debt of the sins of the whole world so these books cannot contain a record of their sin, but rather their good works. Figuratively speaking, their good deeds are placed on one side of God's scale and weighed against the perfect righteousness of God. No creature in heaven or earth can measure up to God's standard of absolute righteousness and the result will be "weighed and found wanting."

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not be the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Galations 2:16)

How shall anyone escape if they neglect so great a salvation?

The Final Judgement Upon Mankind

The Great White Throne Judgement will end the era of the old creation with the second resurrection and the eternal second death. Listen to what the Bible says.

"And I saw a Great White Throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades delivered up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And whoso was not found written in the book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire." (Revelation 20:11-15)

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36)

THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ ushers in Christ's kingdom for the thousand years. But it is just a 'count down' for the time when "the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." (Revelation 11:15) Let us consider this eternal kingdom in three sections:

1. The sovereignty of God vindicated
2. All things made new
3. The eternal great divide.

The Sovereignty of God Vindicated

When Satan defied Almighty God, he set off a chain reaction involving billions of angels. God could have blotted them out of existence at that very moment, but He chose otherwise. The revolt did not come as a surprise, for God is omniscient. Although Satan still has tremendous power, God has placed boundaries on him as can be noted in the Book of Job. The angels which followed Satan became fallen angels or demons. Their doom is set, along with Satan as they were judged at the cross. Their sentence will be meted out to them when Satan is cast forever into the lake of fire.

God is allowing sin to run its course, both in the angelic realm and in the human realm. The final results must be to vindicate God's marvelous character. It would have been a simple matter for God to have put down sin and evil forever by creating puppets and robots; but the sin issue would never have been resolved.

As human beings we often get the idea that Christ died on the cross of Calvary only to redeem mankind. This is far from the truth. The death of God's beloved Son involves the judging of sin, once and forever. This is the truth revealed to Daniel in Chapter 9:24, "...to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation, for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." As the angels have been sealed by their decision, so mankind will eventually be separated and sealed by their decision. God's character will be vindicated and everlasting righteousness will be established.

All Things Made New

The Triune God is preparing to "Make all things new." It is no problem for God to create; He has endless ideas. Scripture reminds us, "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (I Corinthians 2:9) With the splendor of the new creation, the old creation will soon be forgotten.

Believers in Christ Jesus have the promise of a new and glorified body in preparation for God's new and eternal order. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (II Corinthians 5:17) We have not attained our glorified bodies at this stage, but have God's promise. "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (II Corinthians 7:1)

God's eternal Kingdom of Righteousness will not be a renovation of the old heavens and earth as some think.

"But the heavens and the earth which are new, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. (II Peter 3:7-10)

God's Word tells of His mighty power. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and measured out heaven with a span, and measured the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" (Isaiah 40:12) Is anything too hard for our Living God? The Lord is omnipotent in all of His ways. "It is He who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are like grasshoppers; Who stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain and spreadeth them out like a tent to dwell in." (Isaiah 40:22) We can certainly look forward to the new creation with eager anticipation, knowing that God does all things to perfection.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea." (Revelation 21:1) God gives some information about this new earth. We know that it will not be separated by seas. Reading on in the same passage we see that there will be a great city from God between heaven and earth, the city which Abraham looked for (Hebrews 11:10). "And I, John, saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:2) The angel of God carried John away to behold that great city, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God. For a description of this city turn to Revelation 21:10-27.

We are told that the city will measure four square, over one thousand miles in all directions. We cannot begin to imaging the magnitude of such a city, glistening with gems, with gates of pearl and built with solid gold, clear as crystal. There will be no night there and the gates of the city shall never be closed.

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW. And He said unto me, write; for these words are true and faithful." (Revelation 21:4-5)

John described enough of what he saw to give us just a glimpse of what is to come.

"And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve kinds of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him; And they shall see His face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads, and there shall be no night there; and they need no lamp, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever." (Revelation 22:1-5)

No wonder John cried out, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14) It will be a glorious eternity for all those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, and we will be with Almighty God forever, and sin will be forever banished into the lake of fire! A great gulf will be fixed by God and sin will never again contaminate God's new heavens and new earth. There will be an eternal great divide!

The Eternal Great Divide

To insure that the Kingdom of Righteousness will endure throughout eternity, all evil must be forever separated from the good. God will establish a great divide. "For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (Revelation 22:15) In Galatians 5:17-21 we have a list of the evil works of the flesh, which Scripture tells us, "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." We are also told that the unbeliever, though he be a son of the kingdom, "shall be cast out into outer darkness." (Matthew 8:12) In the parable of the talents we also read, "And cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 25:30)

The Bible does not reveal much of what lies beyond for those who will be cast into the lake of fire, but we do have a good illustration in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The story is found in Luke 16:19-31. Note in particular this passage. "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from here to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from there." (vs. 26)

Much of mankind will gamble life away, utterly refusing God's wonderful provision for time and eternity, through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; but their end is eternal separation. It is not God's desire that one soul should perish but that all should come to a saving knowledge of His Son, Jesus Christ.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." (I John 3:1-3)

QUESTIONS

1. Name one major difference between mankind and birds, fish and animals.
2. Why was the promise of a kingdom made specifically to Abraham and to David?
3. Give the boundaries of the land promised to Abraham and his seed. Quote Scripture.
4. Give an explanation of Genesis 3:15.
5. At Present, who is the god of this world system? Give Scripture.
6. Does God have to change His time schedule because of the evil forces? Explain.
7. If according to the Scripture, Elijah must first appear before the kingdom, why did God send John the Baptist in his place? Explain and give Scriptures.
8. Before God's kingdom is established, will world governments become more evil?
9. At present who is the restraining power in the world to prevent evil from becoming too terrible? When will this power be removed from the earth? Can you support this with scripture?
10. When will the world experience the greatest air lift of all time? Give Scripture.
11. Why must the true church and the friends of the Bridegroom be present in Heaven before the Great Tribulation? Give some events which will take place in Heaven during the seven years of tribulation. Support your answers with Scriptures.
12. Since believers are to be a kingdom of priests during the 1,000 year kingdom on earth according to Revelation 5:9,10, what kind of a body will we have? Give Scripture.
13. How will the Lord Jesus Christ take over the kingdoms of the world? Give Scripture.
14. Tell us at least nine changes that will take place in the world when Christ reigns. Give Scriptures.
15. Explain Matthew 3:11,12 and Matthew 25:31-41; Matthew 25:14-30; Mark 4:1-25; Matthew 13:24-30; Matthew 13:47-50.
16. What happens after 1,000 years of Christ reigning in perfect righteousness? Give the events that follow and how the enemy is destroyed. Use Scripture please.
17. What do you understand about the Great White Throne? Will Philippians 2:10,11 be fulfilled at the White Throne Judgement? Give reasons.

18. Revelation 11:15b tells us that Christ shall reign forever, so explain the thousand year reign and the eternal reign.
19. Explain the eternal kingdom's accomplishments:
 - A. The Sovereignty of God vindicated.
 - B. All things made new.
 - C. The eternal great divide.

TRUE CHRISTIANITY OR RELIGION

It is my purpose in this chapter to trace the oldest religion on record, using Ancient history and the Bible, the latter being the most dependable source, since it is the Eternal Word of God. However, before we proceed we should clarify what is meant by the word 'religion.'

Religion is a form of worship, holding in reverence someone or something. The object of this worship may vary according to custom, nationalism, individual desire for holiness, fear and superstition, or simply out of a search for the truth. In his natural state, mankind has always had the desire to worship something, whether it be the creature or the creator. Those who believe in the existence of a supreme being will seek some means to worship that being. While the atheist does not believe in God, his worship of the material can be considered a type of religion in itself.

In Acts 17:15-28, Paul addressed a group of very religious people in Athens, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." He had noticed that they worshiped many gods and to be on the safe side they had even erected a shrine to an "Unknown God." It is important to note that Religion is not necessarily a worship of Almighty God.

Through various means such as hypnotic rhythms, it is relatively easy to incite people to perform certain religious rites, while under an emotional trance. But man was not created to be a mere religious puppet; he was created to be a companion of God, his Creator. God's purpose was a relationship with his creature who would willingly commune with, and worship God on a family basis.

The rebellion of the angels, led by the Prince of the power of the air, also known as Satan and the Devil, set into motion the great conflict of the ages. It influences both the spiritual and physical nature of mankind, thus effecting man's relationship with God. Man became the victim and the target of Satan's attack in this warfare against God. Genesis 3:15 provides the reason for this:

"I will put enmity between thee (Satan) and The Woman, and between thy seed (unregenerate man) and Her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15)

Part of Satan's strategy has been to counterfeit God's system of the God-Man relationship. It is important to recognize that Satan is at the apex of created wisdom. He is both the Prince of the Power of the Air and the god of this world system. He stakes prior claim on all of mankind, since the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden, and seeks to blind the mind of every unbelieving soul in this world (II Corinthians 4:3,4). Of course, the sacrificial death of the Eternal Son of God on the cross has broken this Satan's claim to mankind, but the Satanic control of the kingdoms of this world continues on. (Satan offered the kingdoms of this world to Jesus Christ if He would bow down and worship him in Matthew 4:8,9.) Satan seeks to maintain control in his battle against God through religious systems and world governments.

In accordance with His plan, God chose a people to work through – a people through whom the promised Deliverer would come – 'THE SEED OF THE WOMAN.' It was necessary that in this chosen race of people (Israel), there should be a priestly order and a kingly order and that both would be kept separate until the 'fullness of time.' The tribe of Judah was to be the kingly order and the tribe of Levi was to be the priestly order. The Messiah would be of both orders, as King and High Priest. (This was typified by Melchizedek in Psalm 110:4: Hebrews 5, 6, 7.) Aware of this, Satan has been striving since the beginning to integrate religion and government in direct opposition to God's established order. Matthew 22:21 clearly states, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's"

The enmity between Satan and the seed of the Woman began immediately with the first born to Eve, whose name was Cain. Cain offered a lovely sacrifice to God, but it was bloodless and not in accordance with God's requirement. It ended in the tragic death of Cain's brother Abel. Cain's lineage became corrupt, culminating in God's judgement upon all mankind in the form of a world wide flood. Noah was given a fresh start after the flood, but was immediately attacked and degraded by one of his sons, Ham; and apostasy began (Genesis 10:6).

Ham's son, Cush, became more wicked and then his son Nimrod even more wicked. (Genesis 10:8) Nimrod was chosen by Satan to degrade mankind through a Satanic religion whose central power would be on earth rather than in the God of Heaven. A study of the Bible and ancient history, especially of the Phoenicians, reveals that the first religious system came through the wife of Nimrod. Nimrod became a mighty one in the earth (Genesis 10:8) The Kingdom of Babel in Genesis 10:10 became the 'Gate of God' with the first church 'The Tower of Babel,' where man first desired to make a name for himself, rather than glorify the Name of God. BABEL is of utmost importance to us if we are to understand the conflict of the ages and the final judgements. Namely:

1. Babel is identical to the great city of Babylon.
2. The Queen of Heaven religion had its origin in Babel.
3. The Mother/Child religion had its origin in Babel.
4. The final judgement of this religion which is known as 'Mystery Babylon' is prophesied in Revelation 17, 18.

Nimrod moved out from under the rule of God and followed the father of lies who promised, "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5) His 'Tower of Babel' which was to be the 'gate of God' became instead the 'place of confusion.'

The Tower of Babel became the first religious establishment in the year 2247 B.C. The religions of the world may have the appearance of moving toward God, but they are cleverly designed by Satan to move people away from God and into his clutches. Nimrod's wife Semiramis claimed that she was the woman of promise spoken of in Genesis 3:15 and that her son, Tammuz was 'the seed of the woman' that would bruise the head of Satan. Semiramis set herself up as a 'goddess' and high-priestess of the Babylonian religion. She became the false mediator between God and man and established a MOTHER/CHILD religion. In an attempt to counterfeit God's great plan of salvation, Satan set her up as the medium for the redemption of mankind.

Tammuz, according to Babylonian legend was a hunter like his father Nimrod, but was killed while hunting wild boar. This was a great shock to his mother, the self-made goddess and self-proclaimed Queen of Heaven. Semiramis then called the religious virgins together for forty days of prayer and fasting for Tammuz. Tammuz was then supposed to have risen from the dead and a feast was prepared for all to celebrate. The egg was chosen as the symbol of the feast, suggesting new life. This became the annual feast day throughout Babylon. The birthday of Tammuz was also celebrated with the symbol of the evergreen tree. Thus the Mother/Child religion became secure with the Queen of Heaven as the mediator.

Babylon became great both politically and religiously and its mighty power spread throughout the world. In all of Phoenicia the Mother/Child religion was known as Ashtoroth/Tammuz, changing Ashtoroth to Ishtar, from which we get the name Easter. In Egypt the names became known as Isis or Horus. (Our word 'Horoscope' comes from Horus.) In Greece this religion was known as Aphrodite/Eros. In Rome they were known as Venus/Cupid. In the 'Christian' world the forty days of prayer and fasting became lent; then Easter and the egg; and the birthday became Christmas with the tree symbol.

Satan's power is well established under the cloak of religion throughout the world. From Nimrod in Babel it spread to all of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Even today religions of the world are looking to Rome for that new form of 'Integrated Religion,' with 'The Queen of Heaven' as supreme and 'Mother/child' as the symbol, backed with the power of wealth and the state.

In order to understand the full impact of this religious order under the control of Satan, we must study both ancient history and Bible history. God's Word contains only brief statements on heathen religion as it conflicts with God's chosen people. Religious infiltration among the chosen people was a constant problem. During the 400 years of captivity in Egypt, Israel was confronted with the worship of the Egyptian gods, which led them at Mt. Sinai to demand that Aaron, the high priest, make a golden calf to worship.

As Israel entered the promised land of Palestine, she was again confronted with many forms of this Satanic religion. God had given the order to utterly destroy the wicked people and their gods, and to make no covenant with them. (Exodus 23:32) The groves of trees where the heathen worshipped were to be cut down. (Deuteronomy 7:1-5) Worshipers of Tammuz used the groves of trees. But Israel allowed these gods to remain; the Mother/Child religion corrupted her and Israel was finally carried into the Babylonian captivity, taking her back to the source of this Satanic religion.

The wicked King Ahab, who married Jezebel, brought the Mother/Child religion of the groves right into Israel, planting groves of trees for her and her prophets. (I Kings 16)31-33) The prophets of God warned Israel of their wicked associations. Elijah challenged the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel in I Kings 18. He had both the priests and the groves of trees destroyed. Jezebel was furious and would have killed Elijah but for God's deliverance.

God revealed to Jeremiah the reason for the suffering of the Children of Israel and for the desolation of their cities. When Jeremiah told the people to put away their abominations, they answered him, "We will NOT hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN and to pour out drink offerings unto her." (Jeremiah 44:16-19; Judges 2:13; I Samuel 7:3)

God also sent Ezekiel to warn His people of the great abomination which was taking place within the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The people were worshipping every form creeping thing, beasts and idols. Then God directed Ezekiel's attention to greater abominations which were at the gates of the Lord's House and there he saw women sitting and "WEEPING FOR TAMMUZ." The Word of God speaks of such idolatry as the "Image of Imagination." The women were observing Lent prior to the feast of ISHTAR. The image of jealousy in Ezekiel 8:5 is the MOTHER/CHILD image set along side the altar where the women were giving their worship to THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN. Scripture reveals that Israel was observing both the holy days of God and the holy days of Babylon, which was an abomination to God. And God punished His people by sending them as slaves to wicked Babylon.

Following the destruction of Babylon, Satan's seat of religion moved to Asia Minor (Revelations 2:13) and from there it moved on to Rome where the rulers used religion as a cloak to control the people. The Caesars of Rome became both Emperor and High Priest, unifying church and state in another form of the Mother/Child religion of Babylon. The religion of the Phoenician goddess, where both Baal and Ashtoroth were worshipped moved all the way to Rome. This is significant since the final judgement of this first religion will be meted out against "Mystery Babylon" as she appears in Rome as the "Mother of Harlots." (Revelation 17,18)

Under Constantine, who was supposed to have seen a vision of the cross, Christianity was claimed as the state religion. The pagan priests of the Mother/Child religion of Babylon were not done away with but rather integrated with the Christian religion. This unholy alliance soon absorbed Pauline Christianity and the paganism of Rome. It is confirmation of the transfer of Satan's seat of religion from Babylon to Rome. There is significance in this historical event. The theologian Augustine, who declared Rome as "The City of God," set aside the teaching that Christ Himself would come and reign upon the earth as "The King of kings and Lord of lords."

Satan has maintained a seat of religion from the Tower of Babel, Babylon, Pergamus, and finally to Rome where God's judgement will fall upon religion, as the seven headed beast with the ten horns turns upon its rider who is arrayed with purple and scarlet. Religion will play a key role in the formation of a world society capable of controlling every phase of life in this world after the True Church of Christ is raptured.

Today's 'integrated religion,' more commonly known as the Ecumenical movement, is attempting to take the best out of all religions with a view to maintaining peace on earth. It is attractive to the unregenerate, a seemingly plausible solution to the terrible unrest that exists in our world today. Ecumenicism is growing strong as the so called 'prodigal sons' return to Rome one by one, welcomed back into the family by the ring of forgiveness. The wealth of the world is falling into the hands of this political/religious system and the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns will be forced to carry "The Mother of Harlots" as she continues to drink the cup of abominations, becoming drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Revelation 17:1-6) According to Revelation 2:18-22, this apostate church will be cast into the Great Tribulation, but praise God, His True Church will be delivered "out from" the wrath to come. (Revelation 2:24-26; 3:10; 4,5; I Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9, Romans 5:9. The fate of the "Mother of Harlots" will be left to the seven headed beast with ten horns who will turn upon its rider and utterly destroy her."

With the world in confusion and mankind craving more and more for material advantage, 'right or wrong' is no longer an issue, but 'might and power.' A world dictator will be sought regardless of the consequences. Satan will again deceive the people through religion. The Babylonian religion is not dead but well established in Rome as "Mystery Babylon" with "THE WOMAN" arrayed in purple (royalty) and scarlet (priestly). (Revelation 17:1-4)

Regardless of man's speculations, God's Word will be fulfilled down to the last promise. The book of Revelation is not a fairy story. There is a real message in the seven headed Beast with the ten horns. The seven heads of the beast represent the seven great empires of the past, namely Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecian-Macedonia, Rome of the past; and Rome of the future. The ten horns will be the ten nations of the revived Roman Empire which already has its beginning in the European common market.

After the Beast is established within his power block of nations, he will turn on his rider (the woman of that Great City called Rome) and utterly destroy her power. The Mystery City of Babylon will also fall and both "The Queen" (Revelation 18:7) and the religious City of Satan shall come to an end. The wealth and power of this mighty religion which had its origin at the time of Nimrod, with the Mother/Child symbol shall be brought down forever. From the Tower of Babel until the destruction of that great city of Rome, thousands of years will have passed, yet in a moment that mother of all religions shall be brought down in judgement during the Great Tribulation. "Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into GREAT TRIBULATION." (Revelation 2:22)

The true test to place on any religious cult is what do they believe regarding the Lord Jesus Christ and the trinity. "But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, THE SON OF GOD; and that believing ye might have life through His Name." (John 20:31) The Lord Jesus Christ must be acknowledged as one hundred percent God and one hundred percent man, through incarnation.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And that light shineth in darkness; and the darkness overcame it not." (John 1:1-5)

These are strong statements from the Word of God. The Father also testified from heaven, "And, lo a voice from heaven, saying 'This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:17) The Lord Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Trinity and has always existed with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and the three are one. The human body which the Eternal Son took upon himself was prepared before the foundations of the world. "Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." (Hebrews 10:5) And again we turn to the Scripture, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands." (Hebrews 1:10)

Many cults will even go so far as to use Scriptures to build their religious system, but the references are always taken out of context. Those that deny the Trinity often emphasize only one member of the Godhead. Others will even consider Christ a great prophet, but deny that He is the Eternal Son of God. There are religious groups that worship the spirit world; some teaching that the soul travels from one to another in a system called reincarnation, and that eventually after attaining a high standard of good works the individual's soul will become a part of God. Religion always has a code of good works, which are designed to merit God's favor, whether as part of salvation or simply to ward off punishment. Many mix God's grace with human works as a prerequisite for eternal life. Yet the Word of God clearly states, "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God - Not of works lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Another important aspect of false systems of worship is the emphasis placed upon tradition rather than the Bible. Tradition is made up of special laws, tying the worshipers to their organization. Portions of the Bible are taken out of context and adapted to the community in the form of laws, which automatically bind the children to the false 'faith' for generations to come.

Today God is calling to all believers to come out from this wicked 'integrated religion' before judgement falls. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4)

The Lord has promised to take the True Church of Christ out from the wrath to come. We who have put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour are members of this True Heavenly Church and Jesus Christ is the Head. He is both King and Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Christ is the One God and One Mediator between God and Man. (1 Timothy 2:5) We need not worry about the Babylonian religion with her Queen of Heaven and Mother/Child worship for we look for the "New Jerusalem," that Holy City which will come down from God. We look for the new heavens and the new earth where death shall be no more, where God shall wipe away all tears, no more sorrow, nor crying and no more pain as the present things shall pass away and all things shall be made new.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain where religion first began and give Scripture.
2. Why is there enmity on Satan's part toward the seed of the Woman?
3. Where do you first find "The Queen of Heaven" mentioned?
4. Who were Semiramis and Tammuz?
5. Explain what is meant by 'integrated religion.'
6. Which system of authority should be adopted; Biblical teachings or tradition? Explain.
7. Write a brief account explaining why Christianity can be relied upon above all religions. (bout 200 words)

GLOSSARY – BIBLICAL SURVEY

ADVOCATE AND MEDIATOR — Believers are constantly being accused before God by Satan, the accuser of the Brethren.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night." (Rev. 12:10.)

Satan still has access to heaven. The story of Job is sufficient to remind us of this fact (Job 1:6–12). If the accuser of the brethren were already cast out of heaven, there would be no need of an advocate or mediator in Heaven to protect us. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Advocate.

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." I John 2:1–2)

How beautiful the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ was, before he left this earth for Glory! "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given me; for they are thine. (John 17:9) Religion tries to control its followers by demanding dependence upon the leaders to mediate with God. However, God records, "For there is one God, and One Mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus." (I Tim. 2:5) The Lord knows those who have been justified by faith, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1) There will be 100% roll call in heaven based upon Christ's finished work. (See also Rom. 8; Heb. 9:11–14, 24; 10:10; 7:23–27; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24)

ANGELIC BEINGS — God and His angels dwell in outer space in an eternal abode. God's Word reveals that Angelic Beings were created as perfect creatures with volition. They were given different positions and responsibilities. The highest position was held by one called "Lucifer". You may read about him in the following passages: Ezek. 28; Isa. 14; the Book of Job; Gen. 3:1–15; Matt. 4:1–11; Mk. 1:12–13; Lu. 4:1–13; Rev. 9:1–12; Rev. 12:7–17. The word angel is found 273 times in the Bible. There are at least ten different classes of angels. Since Satan's rebellion, there are also two divisions of angels, known as good and bad angels or obedient angels and fallen angels (or demons) (Mark. 8:38; and Matt. 25:41). Some angels were so terrible that they have been imprisoned until the final judgement (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6). Some fallen angels are held powerless until a later time (Rev. 9:1–21).

Lucifer was the greatest angel that God created with the greatest power. He was able to draw one third of all of God's angels to side with him against God, preferring evil rather than God's righteousness. (Rev.12:3,4) This set in motion the conflict of the ages, starting in heaven and then on the earth. (Mark 5:1-16; Matt. 12:22-30; John 8:44; II Pet. 2:4; Matt.25:41; 12:43-45; Mark 5:12; Matt.8:16; 9:32,37; Acts.8:6; James 2:19)

Angels can only be in one place at a time, which makes their sphere of influence limited. However, Lucifer, also known as Satan, and the Devil, has billions of fallen angels at his command. Satan still operates in both heaven and upon the earth, and is a constant accuser of the brethren.

Angels are innumerable and are hosts of Heaven, but are also present in the earthly realm (Heb.12:22; Luke 2:13). The conflict of the ages between God and the evil forces will be dealt with upon this small planet called earth. The fallen angels are doing all they can to defeat God's purpose. The good angels are actively doing God's will, serving in some of the following ways:

1. They serve Christians — Heb. 1:14.
2. They deliver those who fear God — Psa. 34:7.
3. They keep our ways — Psa. 91:11.
4. They fulfill God's Word — Psa.103:20.
5. They are watching — Dan. 4:13.
6. They make known the Most High God — Dan. 4:17.
7. They set forth God's commands — Dan. 4:23.
8. They protect the Saints — Dan. 6:22.
9. They minister to Christ — Matt. 4:11.
10. They open the prison doors — Acts 5:19.
11. They speak to men when necessary — Acts. 10:3.
12. They worship God — Col. 2:18.
13. They are fellow servants — Rev.22:9.
14. They have the capacity to destroy when necessary — Gen.19:13; II Sam. 24:16.
15. They will separate men in judgement — Matt. 13:41,49.
16. They transport souls at death — Luke 16:22.

God's angels are capable of fulfilling God's wishes at any time and will eventually overcome all opposition to God when God commands. They are great and powerful and mighty to do God's will.

ATONEMENT — Christ, the Eternal Son of God took upon Himself a perfect Human body (impeccable), Who was crucified and died, and was buried, arose from the dead and was seen to be alive for forty days, and ascended to Heaven. He is now seated at the right Hand of God the Father, possessing two eternal and inseparable natures in one person. He is absolute and has fully paid the debt of sin for the whole world through His sacrificial death upon the cross, by shedding His blood, making available the only ground of atonement for sins, whereby man by personal faith is redeemed from the guilt, penalty and power of sin and brought into a perfect sinless relationship with God for eternity. (Rom. 3:24-25; 5:6-11; I Cor. 15:3-4; Heb. 9:14;)

BAPTISM — In the Scriptures this term refers to identification in the Believer's life. There are actually two forms of believer baptism; real baptism and ritual baptism. Real baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which occurs when we are born again. The Holy Spirit gives us new birth which is the process of making us new creatures for eternity. (Eph. 4:5; I Cor. 12:13). Ritual baptism is performed by the use of water, and is as a testimony to the world that the believer has been identified with the Lord Jesus Christ. It does not guarantee that we have been baptized by God the Holy Spirit, therefore it should always be performed after true belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

BIBLE — The Scripture both Old Testament and New Testament are verbally inspired by God and God breathed by the Holy Spirit. The Bible is inerrant in the original writings and is the supreme and final authority in all matters of life, faith and practice (II Tim. 3:16–17). The Bible is God's direct communication with mankind and He used more than forty select men to reveal His message, completing His written message with the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. (See Rev. 22:18–19. Matt. 24:35; Psalm 119; I Pet. 1:23–25.)

BLOOD — The life is in the blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. God made the first sacrifice when He made clothing for Adam and Eve. God heard the voice of Abel's blood crying out to Him (Gen. 3:21; Gen. 4:10). The Old Testament is filled with blood sacrifices, teaching the necessity of blood to cover sins, until the blood of Jesus Christ was shed to take away sins (Rom. 5:8; I John 1:7–9; Heb. 9:23; 10:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; II Cor. 1:22; Heb. 9:22; II Cor. 5:14–21; I Pet. 1:18–19; 2:24).

DEATH — There are three forms of death recorded in the Word of God: (1) **SPIRITUAL DEATH**; (2) **PHYSICAL DEATH**; and (3) **THE SECOND DEATH**. God warned Adam that he would surely die if he ate of the tree of life (Gen. 2:16,17). Adam and Eve died spiritually the instant that they ate the forbidden fruit; but Adam did not die physically until he was 930 years old (Gen. 5:5). Therefore, in Adam as father of all mankind, we are spiritually dead, making it imperative that we be made alive again by God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:12).

Christ came to put away all of His enemies and the last enemy is death itself (I Cor. 15:25–26). Because of sin physical death has a sting, but since Christ died for our sins, He has removed the sting of death (I Cor. 15:54–57).

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23)

"But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:9,10)

Note also the following Scriptures: Job 5:20; 24:17; Psa. 23:4; 33:19; Isa. 25:8; John 5:24; Romans chapter 5.

The second death is described in Rev. 21:8 as being cast into the lake of fire, a place of darkness (Jude 13); it is the most terrible death. It is a living death which lasts forever and ever! Those that are not written in the Lamb's book of life are cast into this death (Rev. 21:27). This is so terrible and everlasting that the Bible records, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power," Rev. 20:6. (Read also Rev. 20:13-15.)

DISPENSATIONS — We study the Bible so that we might rightly divide the Word of truth. This does not mean that we only apply what we like and discard the rest.

1. The Age of Innocence (Gen 1:28-3:21) The length of time that this age was in effect is not known, but we know that it terminated when Adam and Eve sinned, and were no longer innocent of their nakedness, knowing good and evil. (I Tim. 2:14; I Cor.10:13)

(2) The Age of Conscience (Gen. 3:22-8:19) This age began when man was driven out of the Garden of Eden and ends with the flood, which ushered in a new era. The first recorded evil in this period was the murder of Abel by Cain. Lamech boasted of his wickedness and evil became the way of life, with the infiltration of the demons.

(3) The Age of Human Government (Gen. 8:20-11:32) The flood left only eight human beings plus God's selection of animals (with all the Dinosaurs being destroyed). Human government began. Noah's family increased and began to make a name for himself, which culminated in the building of the Tower of Babel. God gave man the right to judge and the commandment to put to death anyone who purposely killed his fellow man (Gen. 9:6). To insure that mankind populate the whole earth, God changed the languages. The language confusion stopped the building of the Tower of Babel. The great trek began as families separated. God remembered the Messianic promise of Gen.3:15 and separated unto Himself the family of Shem.

(4) The Age of Promise (Gen. 12:1 - Exod. 19:7) God called Abram from the family of Shem to preserve the promise of the Messiah (Heb. 11:8-22). The nation Israel was born and the twelve Tribes established. It was God who first separated the nations (Deut. 32:8) Two unconditional covenants were established by God: one with Abraham (Gen. 15:1-18; Heb. 6:16,17; Gen. 17:1-13); and one with David (I Chron. 17:11-13; II Sam. 7:16,24; I Ki. 8:23; I Ki. 9:5).

(5) The Age of the Mosaic Law (Exod. 19: - Matt.27:35) This age extends from Mt Sinai when the law was given until Christ's death on the cross fulfilling the law. Israel failed to perform all of the law as she said she would in Exodus 19:8, just as the whole human race has failed (Rom.10:4; James 2:10). The law was given that men might know God's requirement for righteousness (Rom.3:10); and to show that only Christ could fulfill the law (Matt. 5:7; John 1:17; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:6-29).

(6) The Age of Grace — This age extends from Calvary and Pentecost until the return of the Lord to rapture the church, where the Lord is preparing a place for His Bride in the Mansions of His Father (Acts. 2). It is often referred to as the Church Age. During Christ's earthly ministry He referred only once to the Church (Matt. 16:13–20; Mk. 8:27–30; Lk. 9:18–21). Even after the resurrection when Christ was with His disciples 40 days, He did not mention the Church but taught them Kingdom truth. Christ did not wish to confuse the disciples and waited until the day of Pentecost, when God the Holy Spirit would come down from Heaven to give birth to the church (I Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit then identified Himself with three groups as in Acts.2:1–47; Acts 10:44; and Acts 19:1–6. The commission was given in Matt. 28:16–20; Eph. 4:7–16. From the day of Pentecost until the rapture we are to declare the Gospel, waiting for the air lift to Heaven (John 14:1–6; I Thess. 4:13–18; I Thess. 1:10).

(7) The Kingdom Age — At the end of the Great Tribulation, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth, destroy the Beast and the False prophet of the Tribulation, and cast Satan into the bottomless pit for the duration of the thousand years of righteousness (Rev. 20:4–6; Eph. 1:10; Zech. 14:4; Rev. 19:11–16; Matt. 25:31; I Thess. 3:13). The Lord Jesus Christ will have to rule with a Rod of Iron, forcing righteousness upon all nations (Psalm 2; Rev. 19:11–21; Rev. 2:27). For details of the Kingdom read the following Scriptures:

Rev. 20:1–3; Joel 2:28; Isa. 65:19; Zech. 14:16–17; Isa. 35:3–10; Isa. 65:19; Zech. 8:20–27; Isa. 2:4; Psa. 72:7,16; Isa. 65, Zech. 14:9; Isa. 11:1–9; Rom. 8:19–22; Isa. 35:1–2; Isa. 65:20; Matt. 25)

FAITH — The basis of Christianity has often been referred to as "The Faith" (Jude 3; Acts. 6:7; 24:24). The Gospel of John states it well, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (John 20:31.) One cannot be physically born into Christianity, but Christ said we must be born again (spiritual birth – John 3:1–18). See the following Scriptures for the results of faith: Rom. 3:25; Gal. 3:8,14; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 3:9; II Tim. 3:5; I Pet. 1:5; Heb. 12:2; 11:6; James 1:7; Rom. 14:23; Gal. 5:22. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1) Hebrews 11 give great examples of men and women of faith. Following is a summary of the different aspects of personal faith:

(1) Saving Faith is the first step of faith to become a Christian. This faith is a gift from God (Heb. 12:2). We accept God at His Word, believing that Christ is the Eternal Son of God who died for our sins.

(2) Serving Faith — There is nothing we can do for the Lord to gain His approval unless it is done by faith, believing. God waits for us not only to present our bodies a living faith but to be conformed to His Son, so that we may know His perfect will for our lives (Rom. 12:1–8; II Cor. 8:7).

(3) Sanctifying Faith or Walking Faith (Rom. 6:4; I Cor. 15:31; Heb. 11:40) We are to realize that we are new creatures in Christ Jesus, and allow ourselves to be led by God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14).

(4) Sustaining Faith (Phil. 4:19; John 15:7; 7:16; 14:13; John 10:4) As believers we are to "cast our every care upon Him, for He careth for you." (1 Pet.5:7.)

GOD (TRIUNE) — To explain God is a task a human being cannot attempt without direct revelation from God. We are all aware of the marvels of creation of both the Heavens and the Earth, which reveal a definite order and pattern. However, without direct revelation from God Himself, there would be a multitude of conclusions. "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth." (Gen.1:1) God graciously gave us His Word in writing which we know as the Bible.

God has expressed Himself to us in language which we understand "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." (John 1:1,2) Now the important discovery is, "All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3) As we study God's Word we realize the presence of God the Father and God the Son with God the Spirit. One of the most significant Scriptures on the Trinity is John 14:26. "But the Comforter, Who is the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Following are important Scriptures regarding the triune God:

Deut. 6:4; Isa. 40; Isa. 44:6; Exod. 20:3; Gen. 1:26;
3:22; 11:7; Isa. 7:14; 9:6,7; Psa. 2:7; Matt. 28:19;
John 14:9-16; John 10:30; II Cor.5:19; Col. 1:15;
2:9; John 16:7; John 17:18

Another important issue is the Lord Jesus Christ's place of importance in the Godhead. There is no other Name given among men to bring us favor before God the Father. Read the following:

John 5:43; Acts 4:12; Phil. 2:9; Eph. 1:21;
John 4:24; Jer. 10:10; Exod. 3:14; Psa. 145:3;
James 1:17; John 17:3; I John 4:8; Psa. 90:2;
I John 1:5; I Pet. 1:16; Psa. 139:8-47:4,5;
Matt. 19:26; Gal. 3:16; John 1:12; Tit. 3:4-6;
Rom. 8; John 20:17; I Cor. 15:24; Eph. 4:6;
I Pet.1:3; I John 1:3; 3:1; Col. 1:16; John 8:58; 17:5;
13:3; Phil. 2:6

Each member of the Godhead is important in the new life of the Believer. The Holy Spirit is the main source of comfort, as He indwells us, having given us new birth. God the Holy Spirit makes possible our regeneration. He is our ever present help in this wicked world. Read carefully the following Scriptures:

I John 2:1,2; John 14:16,17,26; 16:7; I John 3:24;
5:8; John 6:63; Rom. 8:16; John 14:26; 16:13-15; I
John 2:27; Gal.4:6; Rom. 8:26; Gal.5:18; Rom. 8:14;
Acts.13:2; John 3:6; Eph. 4:30; I Cor.12:13;
Eph..5:18; Eph .4:3

HEAVEN — the only sure information about Heaven is found in the Bible. There are three classifications of heaven mentioned in God's Word.

- (1) The lower heavens, or the region of the clouds.
- (2) The second heavens, or the place of the sun, the moon and the stars.
- (3) The Heaven of Heavens, or the place where God dwells.

We are naturally interested in the place of God as we wish to know our final destination after death or when the rapture takes place. One may ask, "How can we be sure that there is a Heaven?" or "Are there any witnesses who have been there?" Yes, there are witnesses who have actually been there and others who have seen heaven:

(1) The Lord Jesus Christ Came Down From Heaven - He left His home in glory and came down to earth, taking on Himself a form of man. (John 14:1-3; 6:38; Lu. 20:34-38; 22:28-30; Mk 13:24:-27; 10:35:-40; Acts 7:54-60).

(2) Paul the Apostle Saw Heaven (II Cor. 12:1-6;)

(3) Stephen Witnessed Christ in Heaven (Acts 7:54-60)

(4) John on the Isle of Patmos had the most extraordinary view of Heaven, in fact he was in the spirit and caught up to heaven and he saw the heavenly temple, the throne of God, the angelic hosts. And God opened up his understanding to see things that are yet to come. The whole book of Revelation is what God the Holy Spirit had him remember and write. See also John 1:51; Rev. 1:9-20; 4:1-2; 8:2; 10:1; 14:6; 15:1-5; 18:1; 19:11; 20:1.

(5) Peter saw a great sheet come down from heaven and he also saw Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration of the Lord of Glory (Acts. 10:11; Matt. 17:2; Mk 9:2).

Heaven is the Throne of God (Acts 7:49; Isa. 66:1. It is impossible to measure heaven (Jer. 31:37). There are great armies in Heaven (Matt. 26:52-53). There is no shortage of mansions in heaven — a place is being prepared for billions of Believers (John 14:1-6; I Thess 4:13-18; John 17:24; Lu. 22:14-18; 21:27). Preparations will be made for a greater Heaven when God makes everything new (Rev 21:1-6; 21:9-27; 22:1-14).

HOLY SPIRIT — We believe in the deity and personality of God the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. His work in this world is to regenerate, indwell, enlighten, and empower the truly saved. He has also been sent into this world to restrain the evil forces from doing their extreme wickedness. He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgement (John 16:8; I Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Eph. 1:13; I John 2:27).

JUDGEMENTS OF GOD — "God shall bring every work into judgement." (Eccl. 12:14) Enoch the seventh generation from Adam had this to say:

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, To execute judgement upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude 14,15)

(1) The Judgement upon the Cross (I Pet. 2:21–25; I Pet. 1:18–19; Gen. 3:15; Col. 2:14–15)

(2) Self Judgement (I John 1:9.)

(3) Judgement Seat of Christ – Rewards for believers (II Cor. 5:10; I Cor. 3:11–21; Rom. 6:1–23; John 15:2; I John 5:16; I Cor. 11:30; Rom. 14:10; Eph. 6:8; II Tim. 4:8).

(4) Judgement of Satan at the cross & finally the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).

(5) Judgement of the Fallen Angels (Rev. 12:9; Matt. 25:41).

(6) Judgement of all Unbelievers (Rev. 20:15; 21:8; John 3:18,36).

(7) Judgement of Death and Hell (Rev. 20:11–15).

LORD'S DAY — The Lord's day is often confused with the Sabbath day or the seventh day of the week. It was established as a special day for the Christians for the following reasons:

(1) The Lord arose from the grave on the first day of the week. (Matt. 28:1)

(2) The Lord met with His Disciples, after the resurrection on the first day of the week. (John 20:19)

(3) Instructions were given to the Disciples by the Lord on the first day of the week. (Luke 24:13–49)

(4) On that day Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on His Disciples for added protection until Pentecost. (John 20:19–22)

(5) On the first day of the week, God the Holy Spirit descended from Heaven. (Acts 2:1–4)

(6) On the first day of the week the Disciples gathered together for fellowship and the breaking of bread (The Lord's Supper). (Acts 20:6–7)

(7) Believers gathered together to worship and bring their offerings, as God prospered them. (I Cor. 16:2)

(8) It was on the first day of the week that the Lord appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos and gave John a preview of things to come through the Revelation of the final Book of the Bible. (Rev. 1:10)

Under the Jewish law the Sabbath was given by God for a special day of rest. Under Grace the first day of the week is a special day of remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. It is a day for the Christians to observe as a special day of worship, joy and service to the Lord.

LORD'S SUPPER (COMMUNION TABLE) — The institution of the Lord's Supper is a very solemn and precious event to those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. It should never be taken lightly for it involves either blessings or judgements, according to one's relationship with the Lord (I Cor. 11:17-34). It is symbolical — a remembrance of the Lord's death as the Passover Lamb of God. (I Cor. 11:26) As Believers, we partake of both the bread and the fruit of the vine, remembering that His Body was broken for us and His blood was shed to provide the remission of our sins. The emblems are symbols, not His actual body and blood. The Lord's table is to be a sweet Christian fellowship with other Believers and is a good time to apply the cleansing of I John 1:9 to our lives. See also Lu. 22:19-20; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:18-21; John 13:18-30; I Cor. 11:17-34; Acts 20:7)

MAN (TOTALLY DEPRAVED) — Whatever God creates is perfect; man was made perfect in all his ways, until by his own choice, he disobeyed God and allowed sin to dominate in his life. This choice has affected all phases of habitation upon the earth; "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," (Rom.3:23). "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Rom.8:22). Sin has left it's terrible stain in both Heaven and Earth. Only God Himself can remove sin and its consequences and that is His purpose in providing salvation.

"The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Psalm 14:2,3)

No wonder we read in Psalm 8:4, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that Thou visitest him?"

MARRIAGE — From the very day that God created man and gave him one wife, God placed His seal upon this Holy matrimony until death parts them. (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18-24;). Do not take marriage lightly as it was instituted by God to keep the relationship between man and wife clean. (Heb. 13:3-4) Our choice as Believers should always be one of being equally yoked in obedience to God's Word. (Gal. 6:14-18; I Cor. 6:9-20; Eph. 5:21-33; Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13; 9:11; Deut. 11:19; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; I Tim. 5:4; Tit. 2:5; I Tim. 5:14; 3:1-7) Note also: Matt. 19:3-9; 5:31-32; Mk. 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; I Cor. 7:10-15.

PRAYER — The supreme headquarters of the believer is Heaven. It is imperative that we communicate with Almighty God, Who has made possible our newness of life. Our citizenship is in Heaven. We are of the royal family of God (Phil. 3:20-21). The Lord Jesus Christ taught the disciples to pray (Matt. 6:9-15; Lu. 11:1-4). If one feels unable to pray, especially in a group, you should not fear this very wonderful means of communication with God, but ask God the Holy Spirit to help, as He is our ever present help. Believers pray directly to God the Father, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of God the Holy Spirit. Our prayers are sometime unanswered, due to being out of fellowship with the Lord and grieving the Holy Spirit in our lifestyle. The privilege of prayer is based upon our position in Christ and on the merit of the Lord. Note the following Scriptures: Gen. 18:23-33; Dan.9:3-19; John 14:12-14; 15:7; James 4:2,3; Matt. 17:20; John 16:23-26; 14:16-17; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 6:18; Jude 20.

RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION — We believe in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; His descent into the abode of the departed spirits and His ascension into Heaven. At present, He is our Advocate and High Priest in the presence of God the Father (Acts. 2:32; I Cor. 15:23; Acts. 1:9; I John 2:1; Heb. 8:1-2).

SALVATION — Many religions, if not all, have some view of life after death. We do not deal with man's imaginations, but rather search the Scriptures and declare the truth of God. Religion stresses self achievement and good works in attempt to outweigh the evil in the worshiper's life. Christianity recognizes the issue as Job recorded, "How should man be just before God?" (Job. 9:2; 16:21;) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God — Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8,9) The righteous character of God requires absolute sinless perfection; no one can measure up to God's standards. So God provided "So Great Salvation" by sending His very Own Eternal son to purchase our salvation with His Own life a ransom for all who believe. Read carefully the following Scriptures: John 3:16-18; John 5:24; Isa. 1:18; Heb. 1:& 2; Col. 1:10-14; Isa. 64:6; Rom.3:1-30; II Cor. 2:15; Eph. 2:8; II Tim. 1:9; Lu. 7:50; Acts. 16:30; I Cor. 1:18; Rom. 6:1-14; Phil. 1:19; II Cor. 3:18; Rom. 13:11; I Pet. 1:3-5; I John 3:1-2; Heb. 9:28; Phil. 1:6; I Cor. 1:30; Eph. 5:25-27; Psa. 8:3; Isa. 53.

SATAN — Satan is a real angelic being, created perfect by God, given tremendous power and once had authority to protect the very Holiness of God. Through pride, he fell into sin desiring to be equal with God. Satan became the father of sin and the arch enemy of God and the souls of men (Job. 1:6-7; Ezek. 28:14-15; Isa. 14:12-13; I Pet. 5:8).

SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST — We believe in the personal, bodily, imminent, pre-tribulation and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, for His redeemed Ones of all ages. He will come in the clouds and meet them in the air and so deliver them from the wrath to come (I Thess. 1:10). The redeemed shall remain in Heaven for the duration of the Great Tribulation. The Lord will subsequently return to earth with His saints to establish His Millennial Kingdom (I Thess. 4:13-18; Zech. 14:4-11; Rom. 5:9; I Thess. 5:9; Rev. 3:10; Rev. 19:11-16).

SIN — We often think of sin as extreme wickedness, but it is also described by God in this way, "Whatever is not of faith is sin." (Rom.14:23b) Sin is anything that breaks the commandments of God (I John 5:17). Sin is doing evil when one knows to do good (James 4:17). The Bible is very clear on the issue of sin: Gen. 4:7; Gen 39:9; Heb. 9:22; Deut. 9:27; 24:4; I Sam. 12:23; 15:23; Psa. 32:1; 51:2; Prov. 14:9; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 4:26; I Tim.5:20; Heb. 3:13; Heb. 12:1; James 1:15; 2:9; 4:17; I John 1:8; I John 3:4,5,8

The consequences of sin in this world are: death, trouble, sickness, wars, hatred, jealousy, greed and the like — all the fruit of the flesh (Gal. 5:17–21). For this reason the Lord Jesus Christ had to come and become the propitiation for our sin, giving us victory over sin. (Rom. 6:7; Matt. 27:4; Ezek. 18:4; Rom.5:8; I John 3:6–8; 5:18; Psa. 69:5; Rev. 1:5; Isa. 38:17; Psa. 79:9; 103:10; Isa. 59:12; I Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 1:3; I Pet.2:24; I John 1:9; 3:5; Isa. 1:18; I Cor. 15:56,57; Col. 2:13)

Sin cannot be tolerated by our Holy God. God's ultimate goal is to eliminate sin once and forever (Dan. 9:24). It cost God the Father His very Own Eternal son to provide the necessary sacrifice. By removing the sin barrier God has done all that can be done for human beings to prevent them from being cast into the Eternal lake of fire, which was prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

TEMPTATION — We first learn of temptation in Genesis. Mother Eve was deceived by Satan, who spoke a lie about God (Gen. 3:1–7). "Hath God Said?" is often Satan's approach. Note also that Satan uses the Scriptures to make his point, just as he did with Christ in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–11; Mk. 1:12,13; Luke 4:1–13). As Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we are reminded:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." I Cor. 10:13)

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. James 1:12)

See also James 1:13–16; I Pet. 1:6; II Pet. 2:9; Heb. 2:18

In the beginning

Was the Word, and the Word was with GOD,
and the Word was GOD

JOHN 1:1

Eternity Past

THE ABSOLUTE GOD
THE ABSOLUTE PLAN
DAN. 9:24

GOD - THE FATHER planned it,
JOHN 10:15-18 : HEB. 10:5b

GOD - THE SON provided it,
JOHN 10:17

GOD - THE HOLY SPIRIT proved it.
1 COR. 12:13

THE ABSOLUTE BLUEPRINT
to achieve a PERFECT
ETERNAL PARADISE -
FREE FROM EVIL
throughout Eternity to come,
based on the Word of GOD

GOD created the
Heaven and the
Earth
GEN. 1:1 : PSALM 19:1

The creation of the Angels

and the realm of their habitation

LUCIFER (Highest Position) ISA. 14:12; EZEK. 28:12-15

MICHAEL (Arch Angel)

GABRIEL (Mighty Angel) well informed

CELESTIAL CREATURES

endowed with a choice

• CHERUBIM (Defenders)

• SERAPHIM (Worship)

• LIVING CREATURES

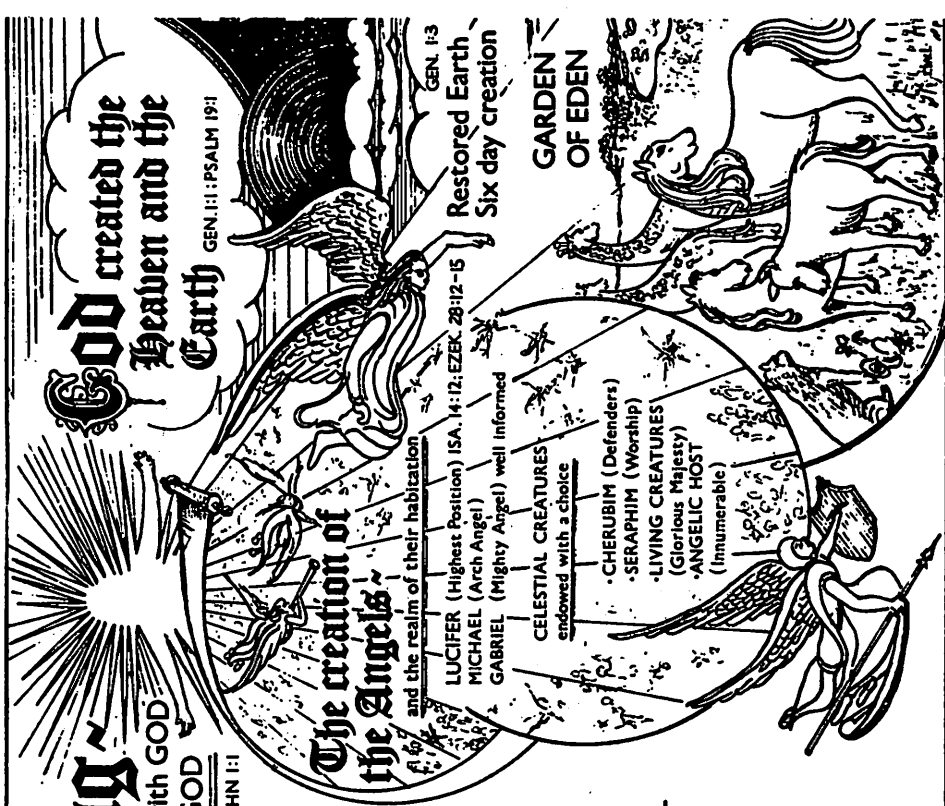
(Glorious Majesty)

• ANGELIC HOST

(Innumerable)

GEN. 1:3
Restored Earth
Six day creation

GARDEN
OF EDEN



GOD'S PLAN OF ALL AGES
by REV. DR. ANDREW J. LOSIER
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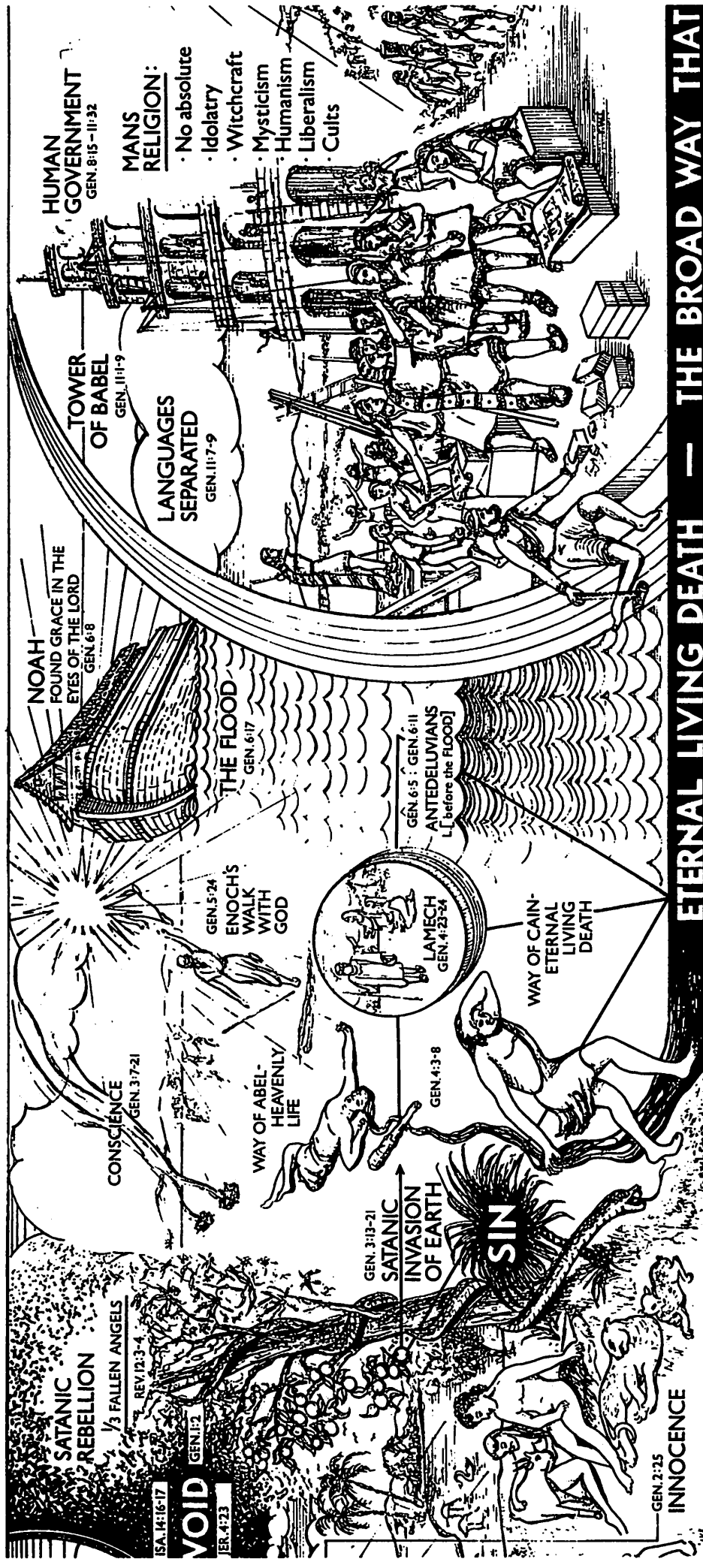
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The following pages have been perforated and printed on one side only for those who wish to remove the God's Plan of All Ages Chart and assemble it on a wall or into a scroll.

NOT TO BE SOLD



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HUMAN GOVERNMENT
GEN. 8:15 - 11:32

MANS RELIGION:

- No absolute
- Idolatry
- Witchcraft
- Mysticism
- Humanism
- Liberalism
- Cults

TOWER OF BABEL
GEN. 11:1-9

LANGUAGES SEPARATED
GEN. 11:7-9

NOAH FOUND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD
GEN. 6:8

THE FLOOD
GEN. 6:17

GEN. 6:5 + GEN. 6:11
ANTEDELLUVIANS
[before the FLOOD]

GEN. 5:24
ENOCH'S WALK WITH GOD

LAMECH
GEN. 4:23-24

WAY OF CAIN - ETERNAL LIVING DEATH

CONSCIENCE
GEN. 3:7-21

WAY OF ABEL - HEAVENLY LIFE

GEN. 4:3-8

GEN. 3:13-21
SATANIC INVASION OF EARTH

SIN

SATANIC REBELLION
1/3 FALLEN ANGELS
REV. 12:3-4

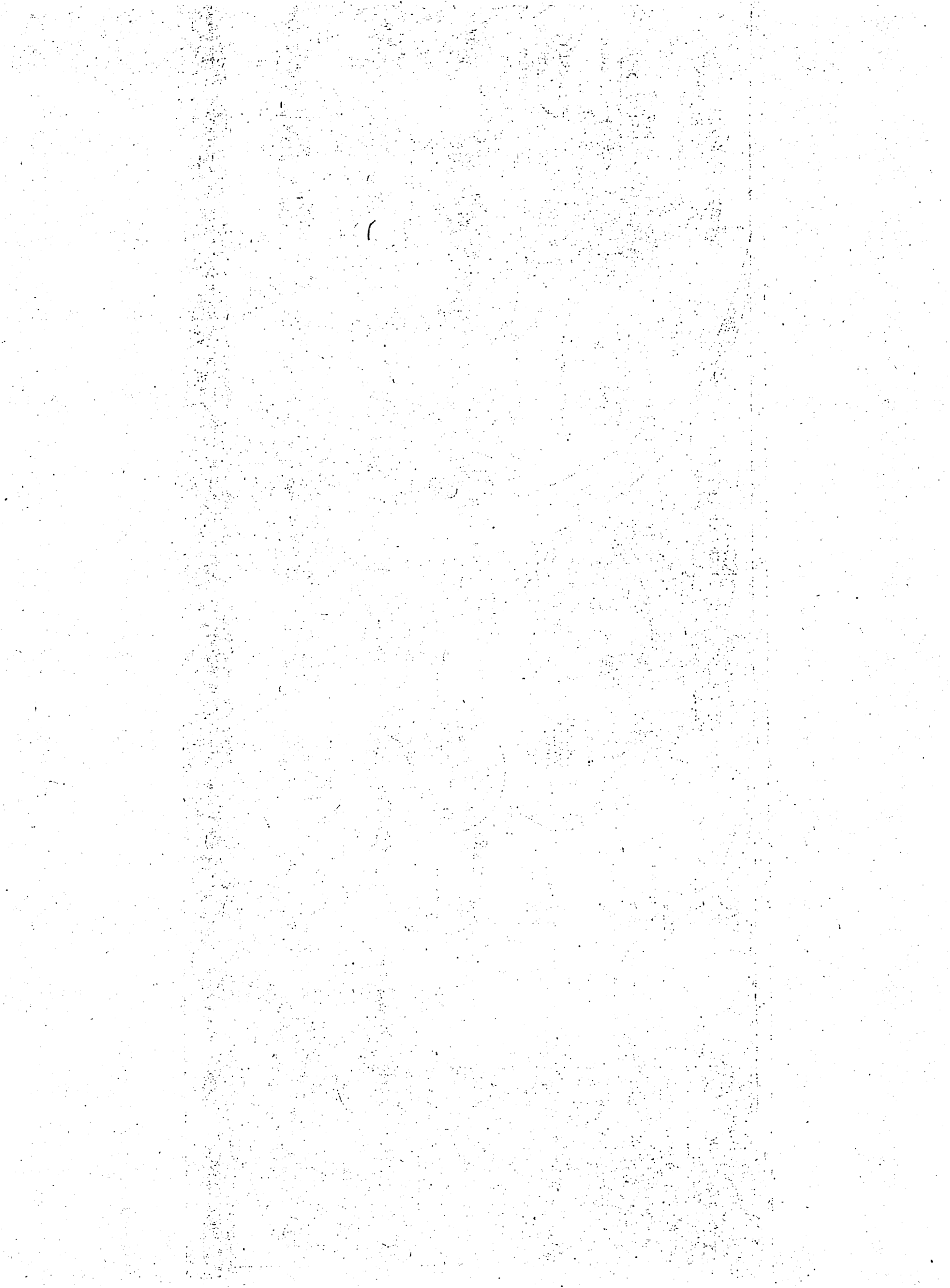
GEN. 12

VOID
ISA. 14:16-17
JER. 4:23

GEN. 2:25

INNOCENCE

ETERNAL LIVING DEATH — THE BROAD WAY THAT



God
SCATTERED MANKIND
 GEN. 11:8

LINEAGE OF SHEM
 GEN. 11:10-32

- SHEM
- Arphaxad
- Salah
- Eber
- Peleg
- Reu
- Serug
- Nahor
- Terah
- (Abram)
- ABRAHAM

PROMISE: UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT
 GEN. 12

ABRAHAM OFFERS ISAAC
 GEN. 22:10

ISAAC
 GEN. 24:63

JACOB
 GEN. 28:12-15

GOD SEPARATED MESSIANIC LINE

MOSES CROSSES THE RED SEA
 EXODUS 14:26-31

MOSES GIVING OF THE LAW
 EXODUS 35:1

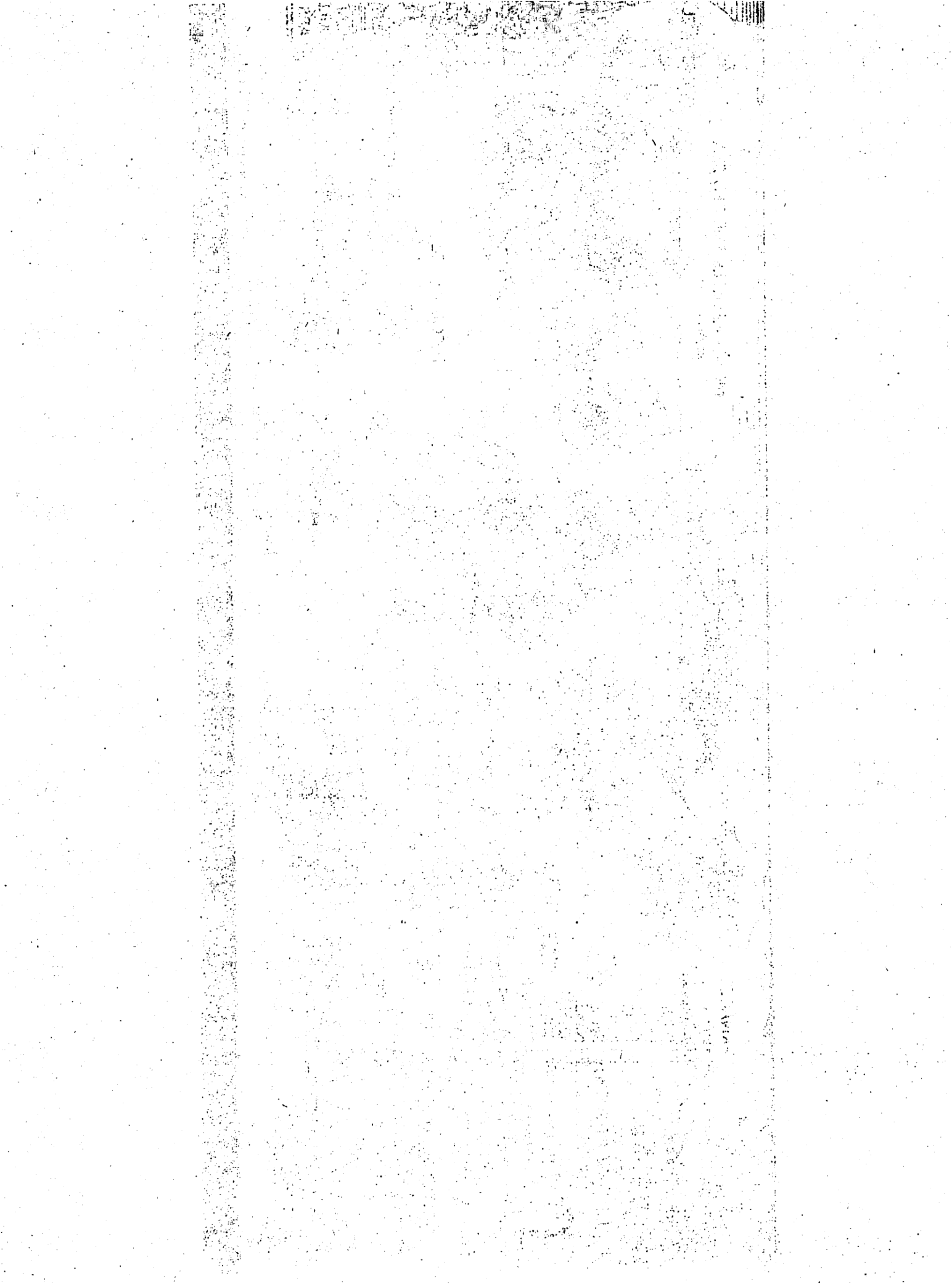
JACOB/ISRAEL
 GEN. 32:28

JACOB'S prophetic declaration to his sons. GEN. 49:3-28

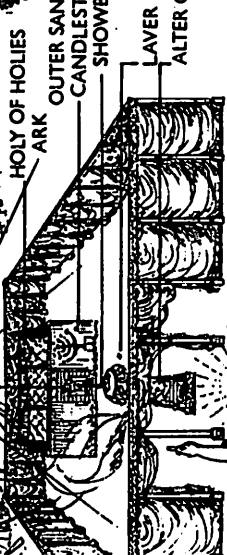
- REUBEN
- SIMEON
- LEVI
- JUDAH*
- ZEBULUN
- ISSACHAR
- DAN
- GAD
- ASHER
- NAPHTALI
- JOSEPH
- BENJAMIN

(The twelve tribes of ISRAEL)

LEADS TO DESTRUCTION GAL. 5:19-21; ADULTERY, FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS



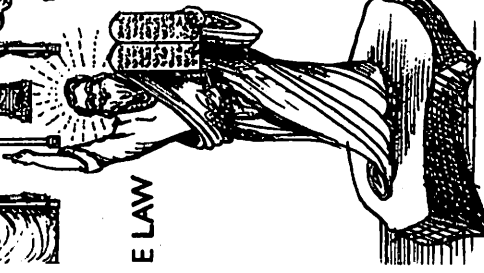
TABERNACLE OF THE WILDERNESS



HOLY OF HOLIES
ARK
OUTER SANCTUARY
CANDLESTICK
SHOWBREAD
LAVEN

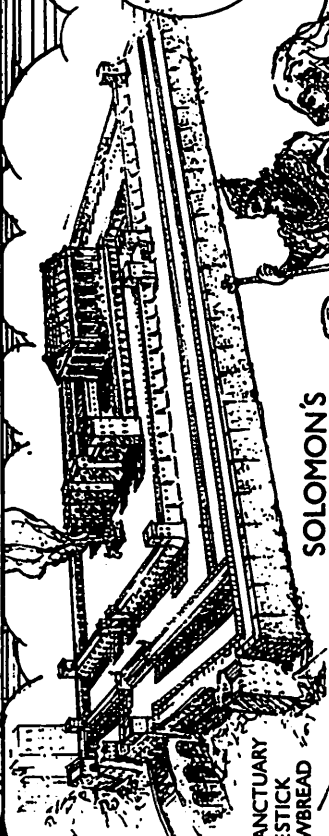
GOD'S SANCTUARY - ALL PORTABLE AS RECORDED IN EXODUS 35-40

E LAW



DAVID INSTRUCTS SOLOMON - PERTAINING TO ERECTION OF THE TEMPLE

1st. CHRON. 28-11-19

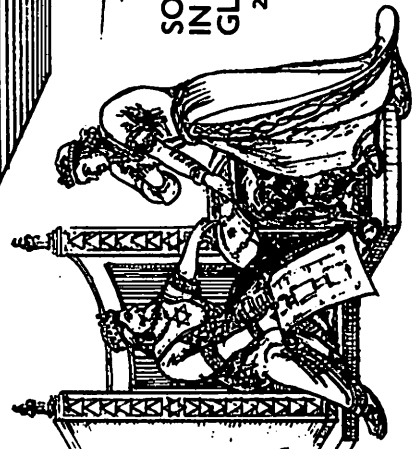


SOLOMON'S TEMPLE
1st. KINGS 5-6

ALTER OF SACRIFICES

SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY

2nd. CHRON. 9:1-28



ELIJAH ASCENDING TO HEAVEN
2nd. KINGS 2:1-11



GOD SENDS PROPHETS DANIEL & EZEKIEL

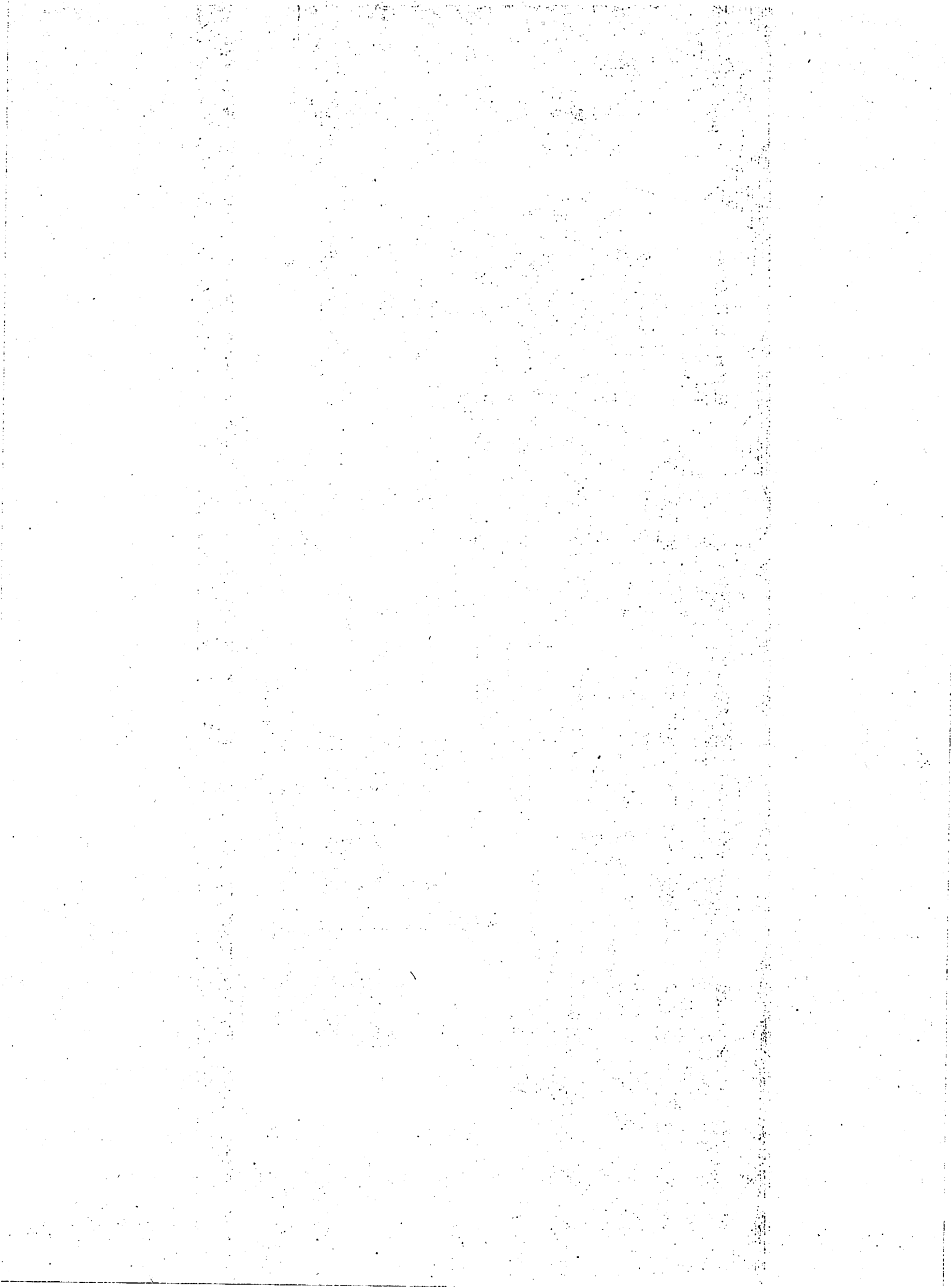


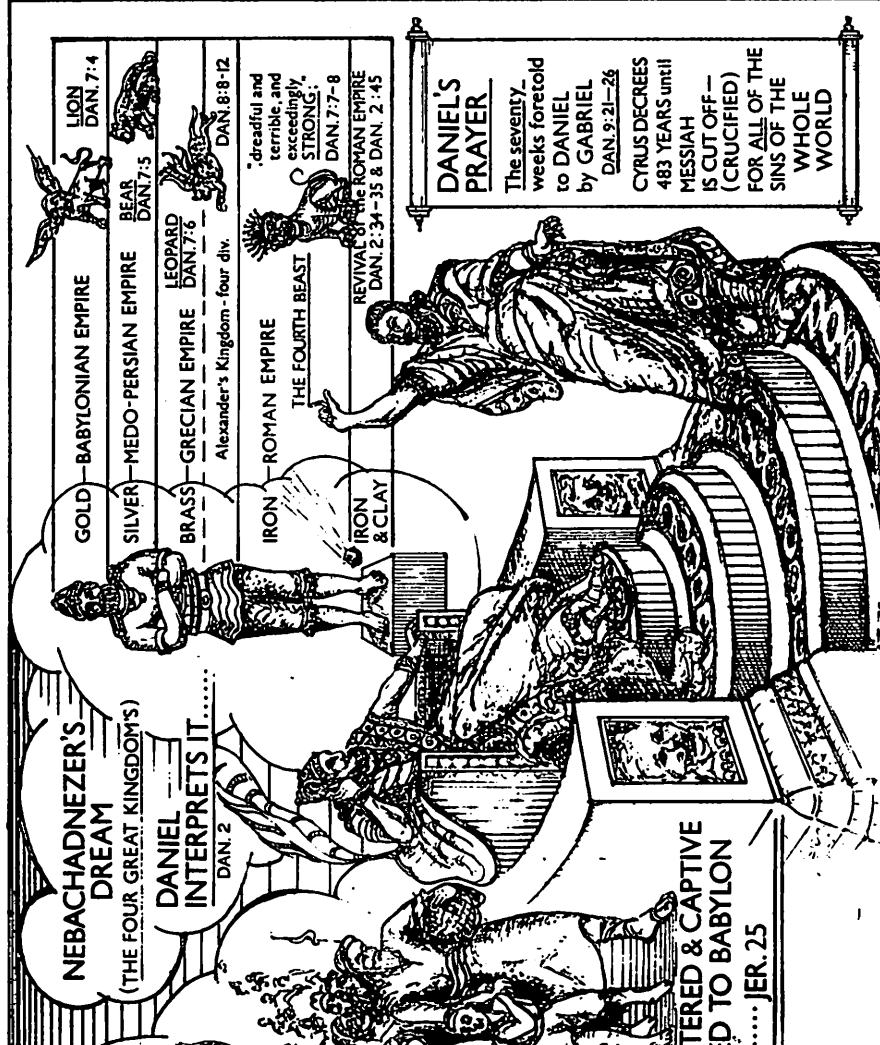
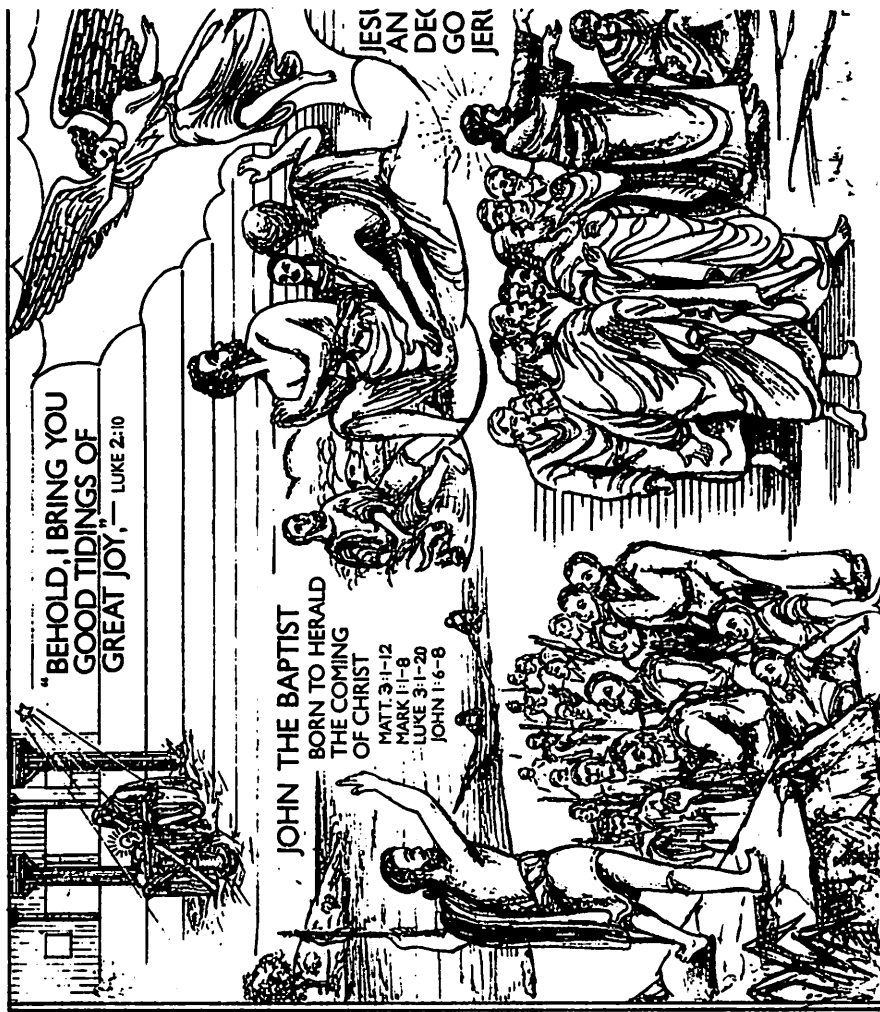
MESIANIC HOPE MAINTAINED - (VIA) JUDAH AND BENJAMIN... the 2 TRIBES EXILE

FOR 70 YEARS

GEN. 49:22-27

ESS, LASCIVIOUSNESS, IDOLATRY, SORCERY, HATRED, STRIFE, JEALOUSY,





BEHOLD, I BRING YOU
GOOD TIDINGS OF
GREAT JOY, - LUKE 2:10

JOHN THE BAPTIST
BORN TO HERALD
THE COMING
OF CHRIST
MATT 3:1-12
MARK 1:1-8
LUKE 3:1-20
JOHN 1:6-6

- GOLD - BABYLONIAN EMPIRE
DAN. 7:4
- SILVER - MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE
DAN. 7:5
- BRASS - GRECIAN EMPIRE
DAN. 7:6
Alexander's Kingdom - four div.
- IRON - ROMAN EMPIRE
THE FOURTH BEAST
DAN. 7:7-8
- IRON & CLAY
REVIVAL of the ROMAN EMPIRE
DAN. 2:34-35 & DAN. 2:45

DANIEL'S PRAYER

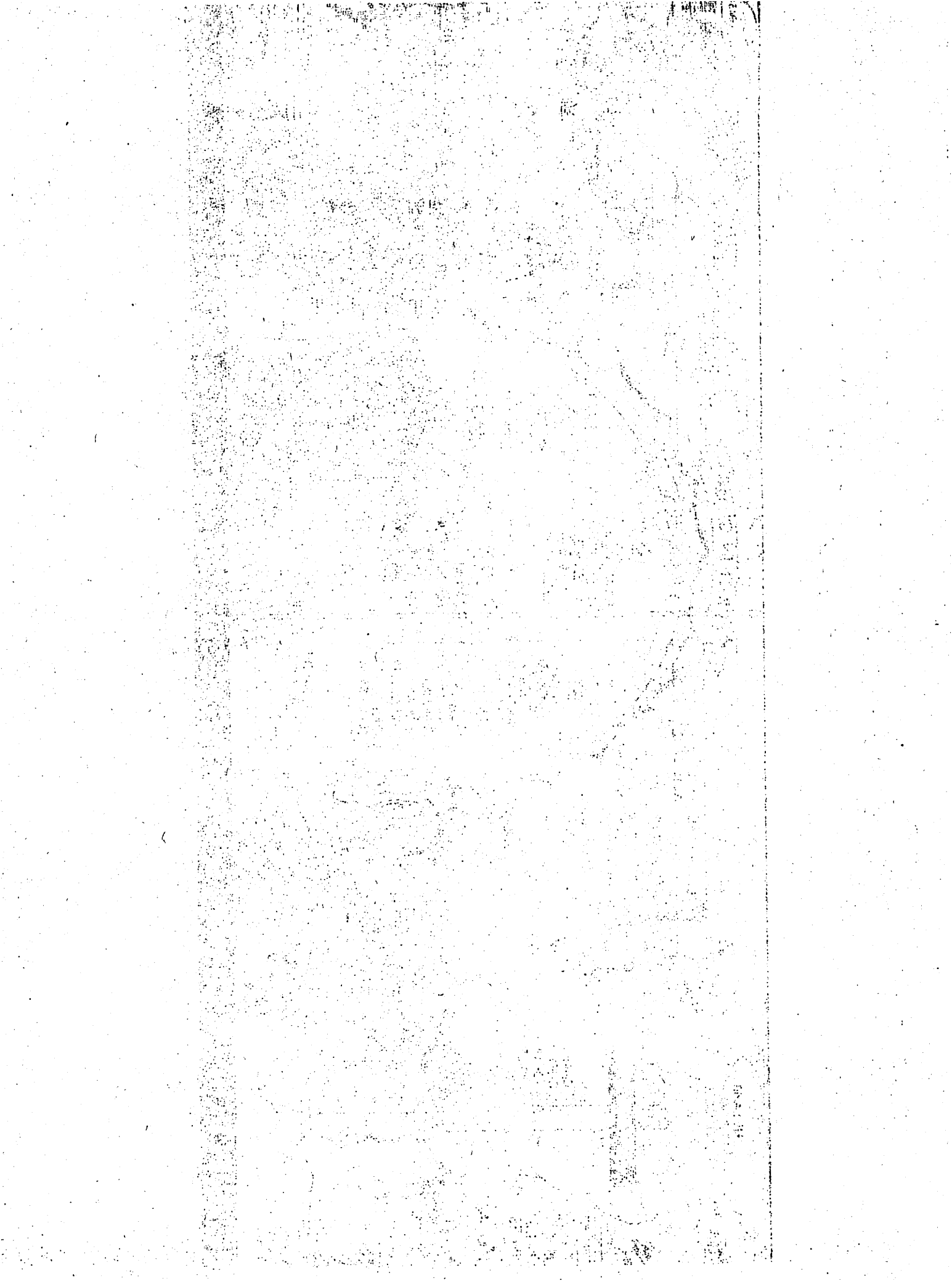
The seventy weeks foretold to DANIEL by GABRIEL DAN. 9:21-26
CYRUS DECREES 483 YEARS until MESSIAH IS CUT OFF - (CRUCIFIED) FOR ALL OF THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD

NEBACHADNEZER'S
DREAM
(THE FOUR GREAT KINGDOMS)

DANIEL
INTERPRETS IT.
DAN. 2

TERED & CAPTIVE
D TO BABYLON
..... JER. 25

WRATH, FACTIONS, SEDITIONS, HERESIES, ENVYINGS, MURDERS, ETC. T



THE LAMB OF GOD SACRIFICED

"CHRIST DIED FOR US" ROM 5:8-10 40 DAYS

HE WAS DRIVEN TO JERUSALEM MARK 10:32-34



ACTS 2:1-12 THE DAY OF PENTECOST

JOEL 2:28

ASCENSION ACTS 1:8-9

CHRIST IN GLORY THE AGE OF GRACE

THE CHURCH AGE FROM PENTECOST TO RAPTURE OF BELIEVERS

EPHESUS REV 2:1-7 Apostolic, good works

LAODICEA REV 3:14-22 Apostasy

PHILADELPHIA REV 3:7-13 Missionary

SARDIS REV 3:1-6 Reformation

THYATIRA REV 2:18-29 Idolatry

PERGAMUS REV 2:12-17 Formal Religion

SMYRNA REV 2:8-11 Suffering Church

2nd COR. 5:10 1st COR. 3:9-15

JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

1st THESS. 4:13-18

JOHN 14:1-6

THE RAPTURE MEETING IN THE AIR

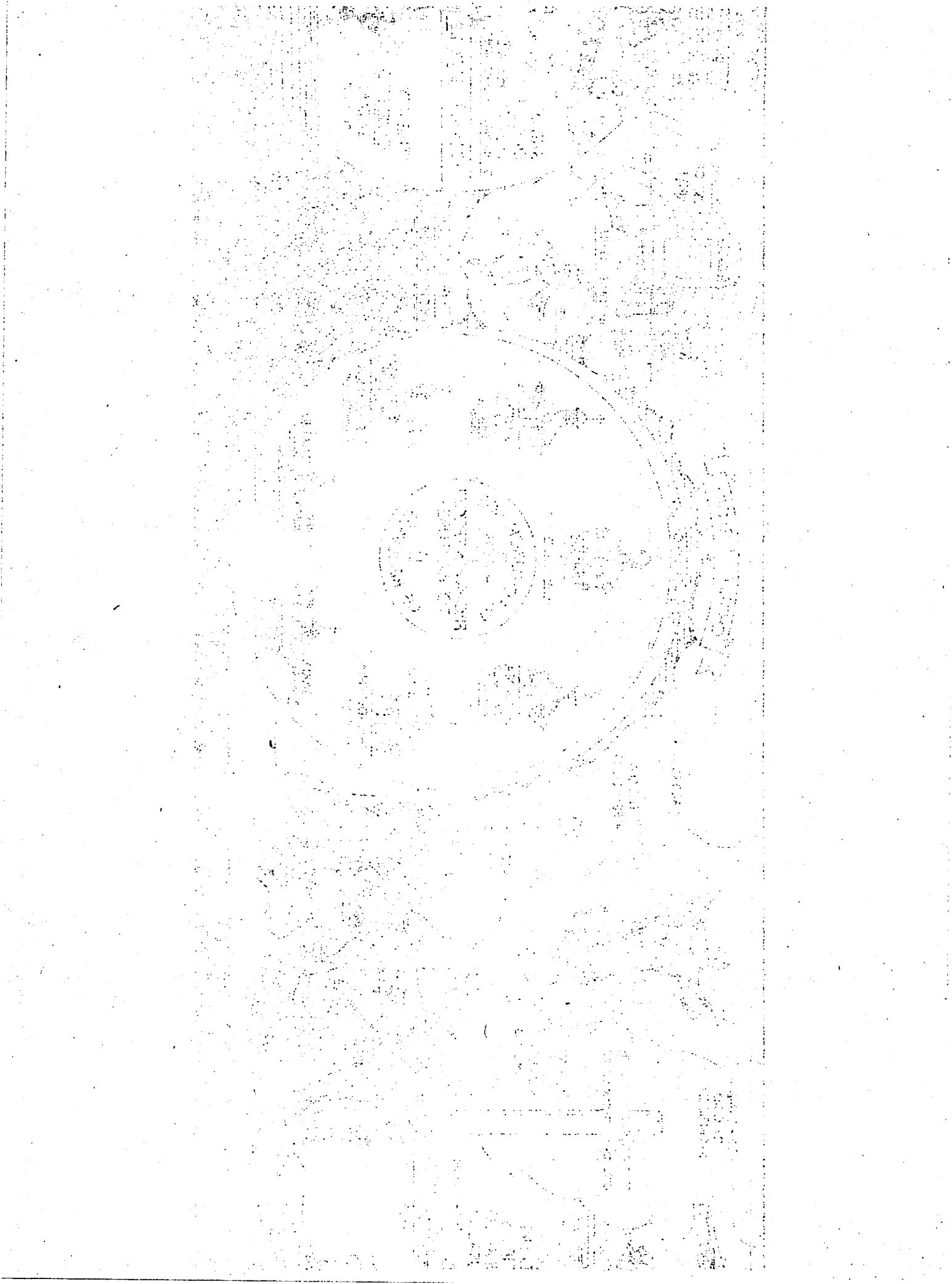
JOHN 3:16

SATAN DRIVEN OUT OF HEAVEN BY MICHAEL AND HIS ARMY (3 1/2 yrs.) JACOBS REV. 12:7-17

THE KEY TO SATAN REV. 9:1-21

REV. 5:10 REV. 5:11 REV. 5:12 REV. 5:13 REV. 5:14 REV. 5:15 REV. 5:16 REV. 5:17 REV. 5:18 REV. 5:19 REV. 5:20 REV. 5:21 REV. 5:22 REV. 5:23 REV. 5:24 REV. 5:25 REV. 5:26 REV. 5:27 REV. 5:28 REV. 5:29 REV. 5:30

THE REJECTION OF CHRIST AS THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD



MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB OF GOD
REV. 19:7
THE MARRIAGE SUPPER
REV. 19:17

ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION
MATT. 24:15

MYSTERY BABYLON
REV. 17:1-18
REV. 18:1-24

TROUBLE (3 1/2 yrs.)

THE GREAT TRIBULATION
(70th - Seven)

OF DANIEL
9:24
9:26,27

THE BEAST & FALSE PROPHET

CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE
REV. 19:20

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST RETURNS TO REIGN OVER HIS

(RIGHTEOUS) KINGDOM ON EARTH

1st THESS. 3:13 : REV. 11:15
REV. 19:11-21 : ISAIAH 40:10

HEAVENLY RIGHTEOUSNESS COMING DOWN UPON THE EARTH

"Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done
ON EARTH,
as it is in
HEAVEN"
MATT. 6:10

1000 YEAR KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ESTABLISHED
REV. 20:6

NATURE RESTORED
ISAIAH 11:6-9

THE SAINTS SHALL TEACH GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS
REV. 5:10
LIFE SPAN EXTENDED
ISA. 65:20

FIRE FROM HEAVEN
REV. 20:9

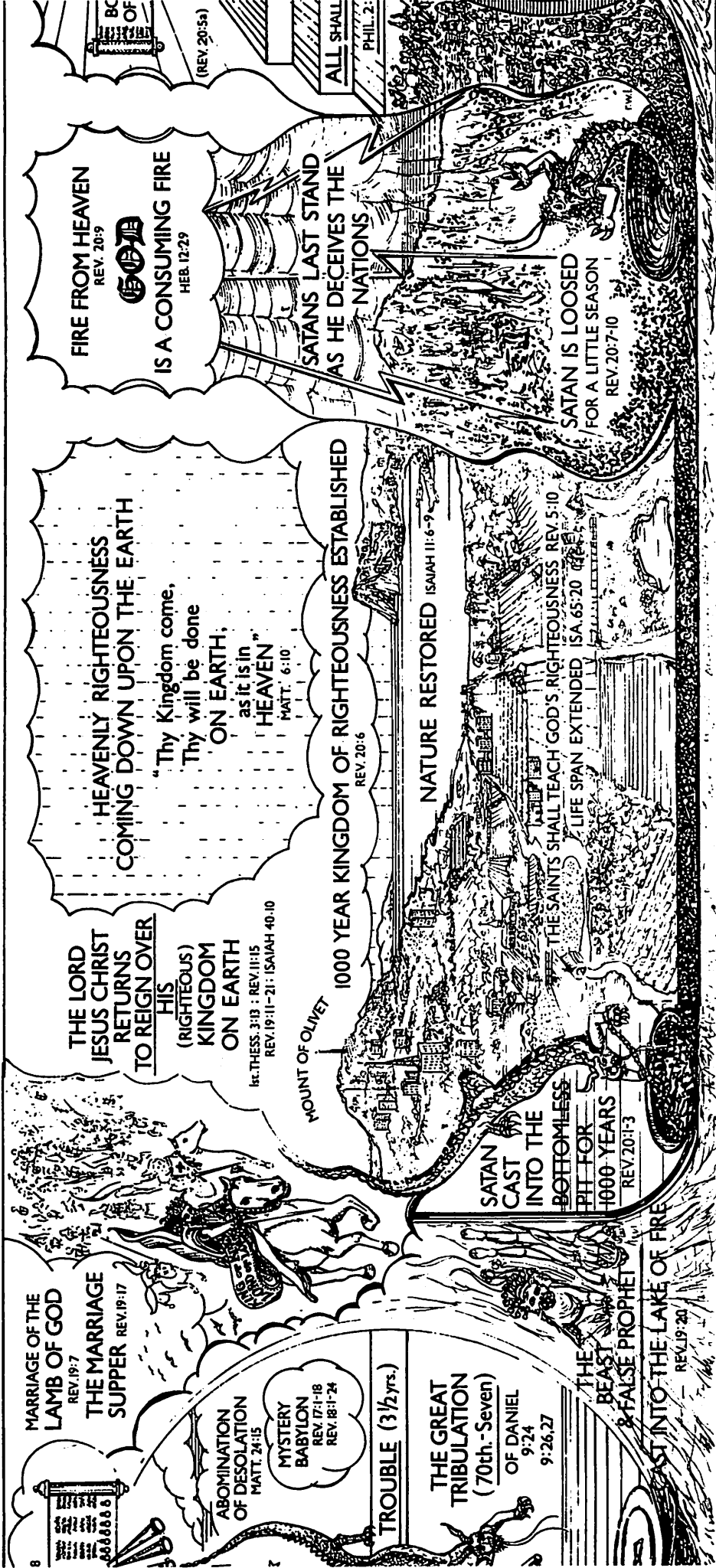


IS A CONSUMING FIRE
HEB. 12:29

SATAN'S LAST STAND AS HE DECEIVES THE NATIONS

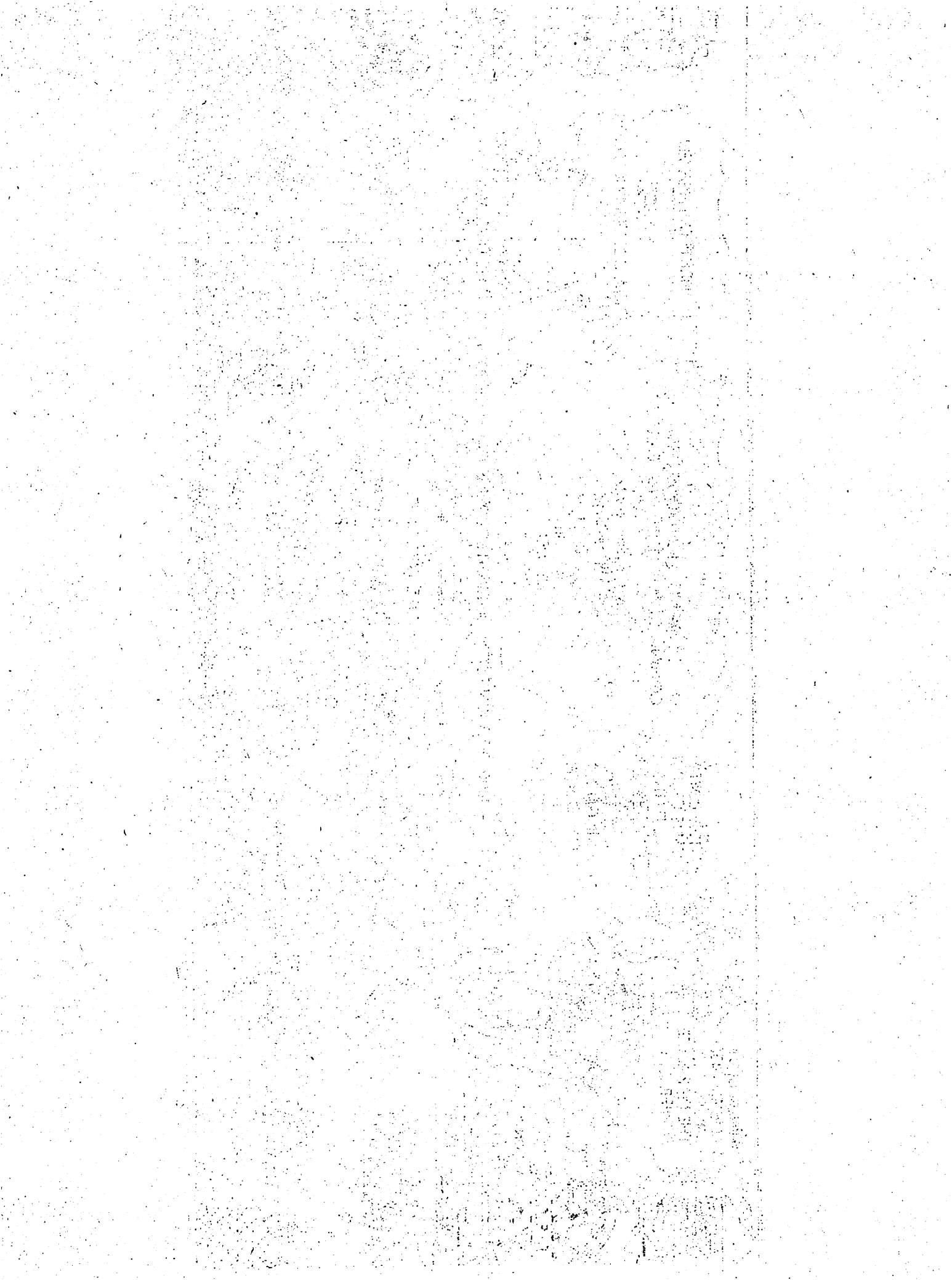
SATAN IS LOOSED FOR A LITTLE SEASON
REV. 20:7-10

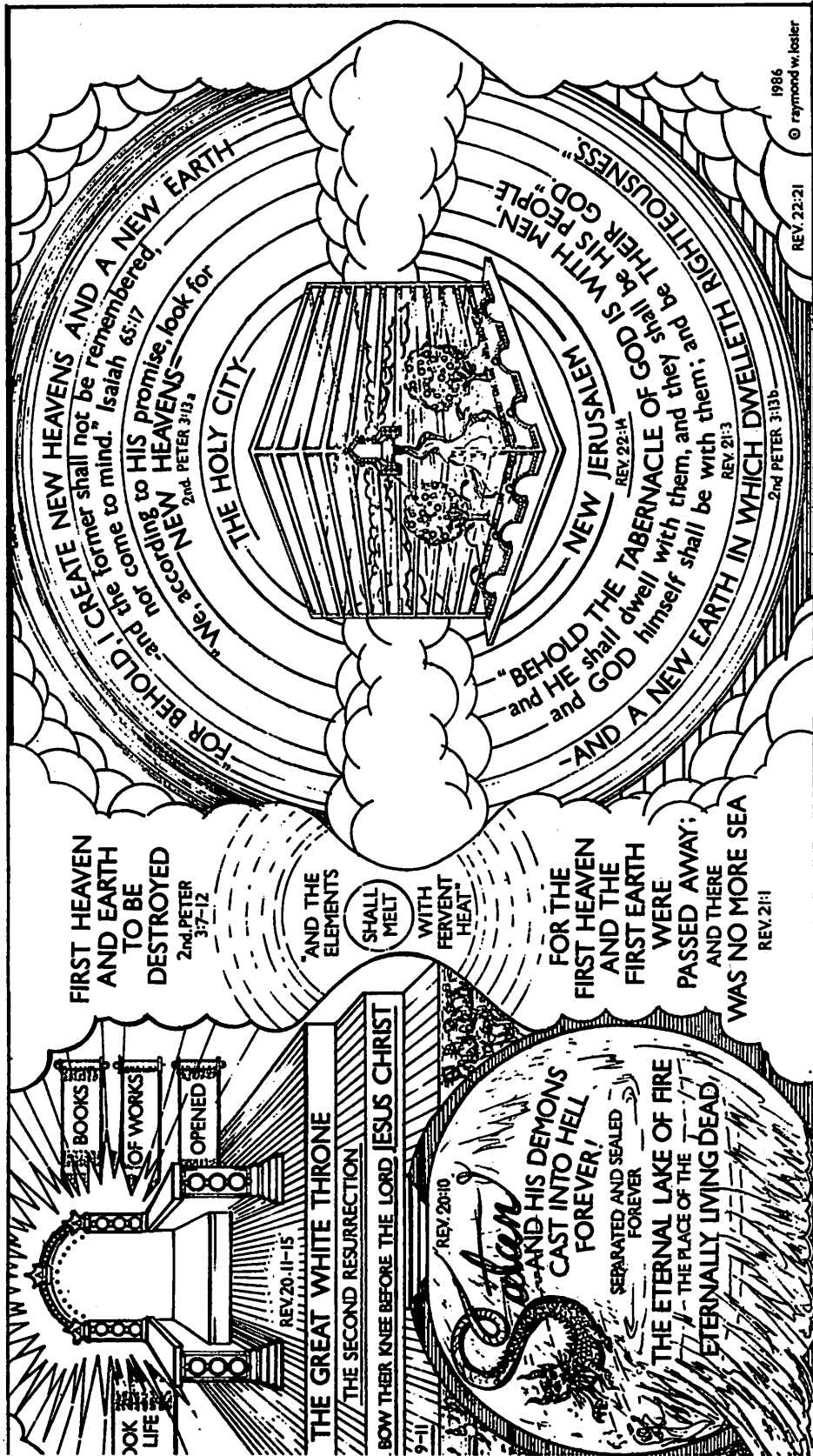
SATAN CAST INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT FOR 1000 YEARS
REV. 20:1-3



BC OF (REV. 20:5a)

ALL SHALL PHIL. 2:





FIRST HEAVEN
AND EARTH
TO BE
DESTROYED
2nd PETER
3:7-12

AND THE
ELEMENTS
SHALL
MELT
WITH
FERVENT
HEAT

FOR THE
FIRST HEAVEN
AND THE
FIRST EARTH
WERE
PASSED AWAY;
AND THERE
WAS NO MORE SEA
REV. 21:1

BOOKS
OF WORKS
OPENED
REV. 20:11-15
THE GREAT WHITE THRONE
THE SECOND RESURRECTION
BOW THEIR KNEE BEFORE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
9-11

REV. 20:10
AND HIS DEMONS
CAST INTO HELL
FOREVER!
SEPARATED AND SEALED
FOREVER

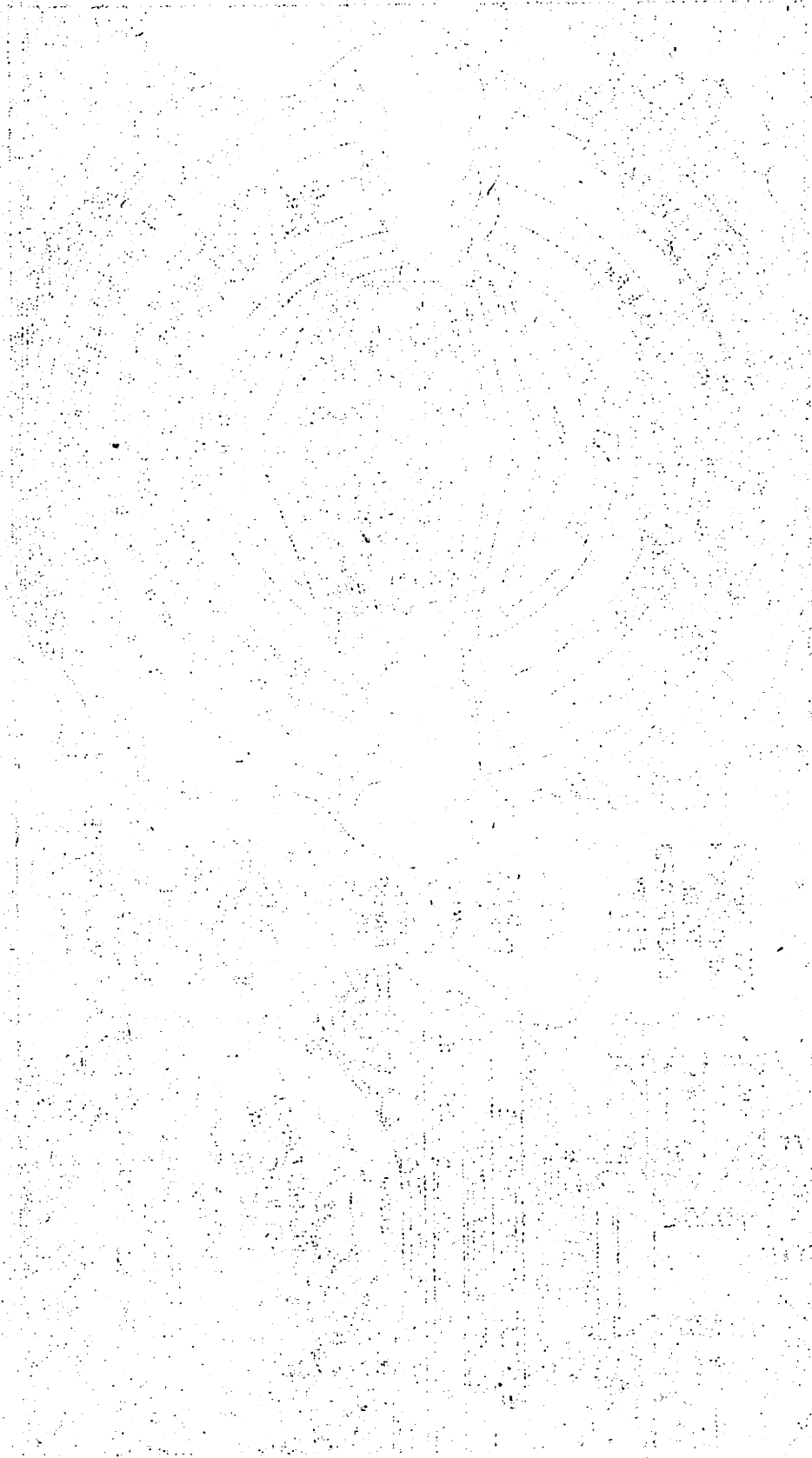
THE ETHERNAL LAKE OF FIRE
THE PLACE OF THE
ETERNALLY LIVING DEAD

FOR BEHOLD I CREATE NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH
and the former shall not be remembered,
nor come to mind. Isaiah 65:17
We, according to HIS promise, look for
NEW HEAVENS
2nd PETER 3:13

THE HOLY CITY



NEW JERUSALEM
REV. 22:14
BEHOLD THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN,
and HE shall dwell with them, and they shall be HIS PEOPLE,
and GOD himself shall be with them; and he shall be THEIR GOD.
AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS.
REV. 21:3
2nd PETER 3:13b



Publications

by

Rev. Dr. Andrew J. Losier

A Study of the Book of Daniel

Amazing Grace

Analytical Theological Questionnaire Vol I and Vol II

Battleground and Warfare of Christians

Biblical Outline of Sermons

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The Book of Romans

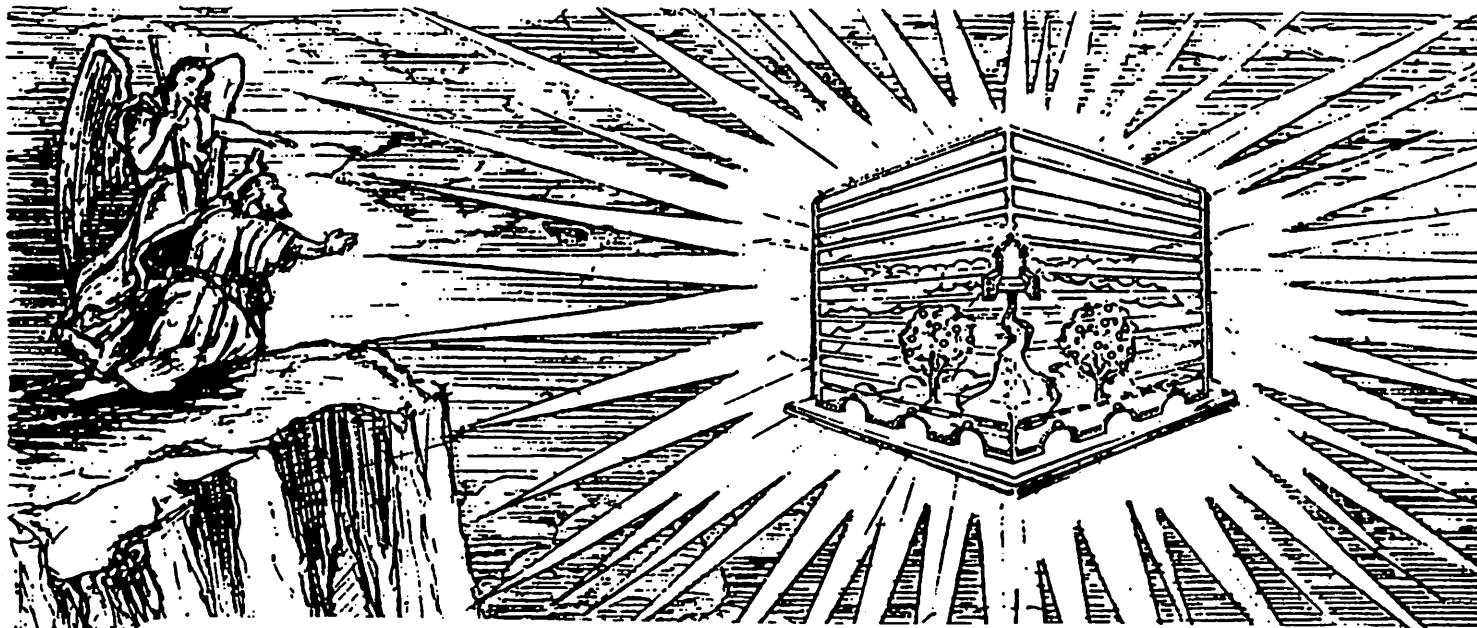
The Cross of Christ

The Holy Spirit

The Glory of God

Treasure Chest of Eternal Gems

What Does the Future Hold?



"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from GOD" – Revelation 21 : 10

Author: Rev., Dr. Andrew J. Losier

Missionary in Africa since 1938, established the first of the Christian Literature and Bible Centers in Kenya, East Africa in 1952. Since then, over a billion pieces of FREE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE have been distributed throughout Africa in approximately 50 different languages. The overwhelming response of African Christian leaders to the WORD OF GOD, inspired Rev., Dr. Andrew J. Losier to write this book.

JESUS said "I am ALPHA and OMEGA"

Revelation 1:8

