

Israel And Christ's Return

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The purpose of Jesus' miracles in Matthew chapters 4 to 12 was to focus Israel's attention on his Messiahship – his claim to being the promised Redeemer and King of Israel.

In Matthew 12:22 the demon possessed man was both blind and dumb, therefore contact with the demon could not be made through physical means. This particular type of miracle was believed by the Jews to be one that only Messiah could affect. It is obvious the people thought so, for in vs.23 we read, "...the people were amazed, and said, *Is not this the son of David?*"

Yet the Jewish leadership rejected this confirmation, and needing to justify their rejection, accused Jesus of performing this miracle by the power of Beelzebub the prince of devils. (Jesus pointed out that this could not be the case because no kingdom divided against itself can stand.)

According to Matthew 12:31-39 this was the unpardonable sin—Israel rejected the Messiahship of Jesus on the grounds he was demon possessed (The people proved they were accomplices to this, for they were unwilling to make a stand and accept the evidence before them, but blindly followed the leaders). From this point on the only sign they would be given would be the sign of Jonah, i.e. the resurrection, seen in the resurrections of Lazarus and of Jesus, and still to come, the two witnesses of Revelation 11:11-12.

This unpardonable sin was the point of no return; there would be no revoking of God's judgement. Such a sin occurred 3 times in Israel's history:

1. Numbers chapters 13-14, i.e. the withdrawal of the offer of the Promised Land (the people were still redeemed but would die outside the land.)
2. 2 Kings Chapter 23; 2 Chronicles Chapter 34 - ending in the Babylonian captivity, which judgement even Josiah's reforms could not cancel. (For Josiah's sake the captivity did not occur until after his death.)
3. And here, Matthew Chapter 12.

These were all national sins where the leadership at the time rejected truth and were willingly followed by the nation.

On the basis of this national sin, the offer of the Kingdom of Heaven to this generation was withdrawn and the offer of eternal life through faith in Christ took its place; an offer made to all individuals, both Jew and Gentile.

The Kingdom of Heaven will again be made available to the nation when it acknowledges this national sin, and this will happen at the end of the age – after the age of the Church. The precondition for Israel entering the Kingdom will be the national confession of the national sin. See DOCTRINE: KINGDOM below.

After this sin, Jesus spoke to the Jewish people only in parables so that they might not believe, but gave the meaning to those who did believe in him.

The return of Israel's Messiah to the earth will not happen until a prerequisite is met.

1. I will go [and] return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early (Hosea 5:15). 'Return to my place' is an O.T. reference to the ascension of Christ.

2. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [thou] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed [is] he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matthew 23:37-39).

Then "...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] firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).

The Jewish people have suffered horrific times throughout the Christian era with most of them being instigated by Christendom or its political allies, which in their religious bigotry have reflected the thinking of Satan rather than the mind of Christ. This bigotry has caused Jewish people to reject everything to do with the name Christ, and therefore they have not heard Christ's voice. True and Biblical Christians should have a love for the Jewish people since the Saviour came from the seed of David, and our salvation and our Christian walk has its roots in the Jewish faith.

Last century, because of general unbelief and ignorance of the mind of Christ (the Bible), Christendom remained silent as Hitler rose to power spouting his anti Jewish cant, and during his reign the Jewish people suffered the loss of one out of every three in the Nazi holocaust; yet still they did not call upon their Messiah.

Like the Scribes and Pharisees of old Christendom also has committed the unpardonable sin of rejecting the truth, and in the process distorted God's word so that they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man (Romans 1:23). In so doing they have rejected the Saviour and put in his stead their own works. Christendom has lost its savour and if "salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13; c.f. Revelation 3:16).

As Christian influence has waned (as Christendom has become apostate) so satanic religion has begun to wax great in the world yet God will have the victory and Israel will turn back to him in faith and repentance.

What will it take to turn Israel from unbelief to faith? First of all they must be given the untarnished truth, and then they must believe and act upon it. In a day to come God will raise up 144,000 Jewish evangelists as a world-wide witness to his name (Revelation 7:4), and will refine

Israel “as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried” through fires far worse than the Nazi years.

(Zechariah 13:8-9). “And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.”

Hosea 5:15 in the words of Messiah writes: “I will go and return to my place, until they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly”.

From the prophecies scattered throughout scripture there emerges a picture of this terrible time of trial, and it is very clear that that time is nigh, even at the doors (Mark 13:29).

However, it will come only after the true Church has been resurrected, that great body of redeemed souls from throughout the centuries, who ‘in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump’ will be raised incorruptible and immortal, and caught away together ‘to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord’ (1Corinthians 15:52 – Thessalonians 4:14-18). This moment has been termed the ‘rapture’. See DOCTRINES: RAPTURE & RAPTURE – PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE below.

There is a deal of scepticism, even in Christendom about the resurrection, yet the whole of the Christian faith hinges on the resurrection of Christ; and if God was able to raise Christ from the dead why should he have difficulty raising those who believe in him? To be sceptical regarding the resurrection of the Church is to be sceptical regarding Christ’s resurrection and if we do not believe Christ was raised we are in danger of being unsaved (Romans 10:9; c.f. 1Corinthians 15:16-17).

When the Church is raised, and only then, the day will come when the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition; the one who exalts himself above God, making himself out to be God, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming at his return to the earth (2Thessalonians 2:3-9; Revelation 19:11-20).

This man will reign for seven years, a time known in the Scriptures as The Tribulation - then will the end come. These seven years are Daniel’s seventieth week.

The pre-tribulation resurrection of the Church: Paul wrote 2Thessalonians some months after his first letter to that church in which he spoke of the catching away of the saints (1Thessalonians 4:13-17, see also 1Corinthians 15:51,52): He wrote his second letter to warn the brethren that they be not soon shaken in mind, or troubled, regarding any false reports, including letters alleged to be from him, of the ‘day of the Lord’ being at hand; for he says, it will not be “except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”.

The day of the Lord is always depicted as a day or time of extreme judgement and destruction.

Why Christians were concerned is not immediately obvious; surely the coming of our Lord must be an event to be looked for. However, if they had been told that the believer's 'meeting the Lord in the air' was to be prior to his return to the earth in judgment, then there would be cause for concern; there would be a fear of having 'missed out', and to those who know they are 'born again' this would cause dismay to the point of devastation. It seems obvious that this was their reaction to such reports - that this was their fear. Paul tells them not to fear because the day of the Lord judgements would not occur until certain things happened.

He continues: "...he who now letteth (or restrains) will continue to restrain, until he (the restrainer) be taken out of the way"; then and only then "shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2Thessalonians 2:7-8).

Who is the one that restrains? He who restrains, katecho to hold down (fast) is one who has the power to restrain wickedness. It cannot be a man, for all are subject to the old nature and unless we abide in the Son of God by being filled with the Spirit we can do nothing, let alone restrain evil (cf. John 15:4-5; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9). It cannot be God's Son for he is, at present, representing us before the throne of heaven. It can only be the Spirit of God, the one whom the Son sent to be a comforter for us (John 14:16-17) and the one whose ministry is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgement to come (John 16:8).

The resurrection or 'rapture' of the Church must occur simultaneously with the taking of the Spirit out of the way, for God has said that while we live, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee". Also, the Spirit of truth who dwells with us and is in us, is God's pledge until the redemption of our bodies (the purchased possession) and is the one by whom we are sealed (Hebrews 13:5-6; John 14:17; 2Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14).

For God to be true to these promises, the indwelling of believers by the Holy Spirit must continue until the redemption of their bodies at their resurrection, at the 'catching away of the saints'; from which moment on, they will ever be with the Lord.

It is clear that the Church will be removed prior to the coming of the man of sin; that Wicked one.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he (the Holy Spirit) who now restrains will restrain, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:"

Daniel's 70th Week - THE TRIBULATION (Hopefully all the events of this seven year period, from throughout scripture, may sometime be placed in good and acceptable order (probably after the event), but although that would be a good thing it is not within this writer's ability or the purpose of this article. The purpose is to put forward a realistic scenario, allowing the student of Scripture to imagine the scene and see in it a political/historical connection, not just a series of semi-detached supernatural events.)

The purpose for the Tribulation is manifold; it is a time of mass evangelism (Severe stress is oftentimes the only way God can gain the attention of people); it will bring to a head the great conflict between good and evil – between God and the devil; it will prove the hardness – the rejection of truth so engrained in the human heart; it will purge evil from the world and cleanse it for the reign of Christ, and it will be the means of bringing Israel back to their God – the cause of them confessing their iniquity and saying “blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”.

Daniel 9:26-27 reveals the start of this seven year period. It does not begin at the rapture (the catching away of the Christian church (1Thessalonians 4:17), it begins when he, the ‘prince’ of the people that destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, confirms a covenant with many ‘for one week’. This is Daniel’s 70th week and is of seven years duration. See PROPHECY – DANIEL’S SEVENTY WEEKS below.

The ‘many’ are Jews. This is seen in the context of the entire passage in its relation to the sanctuary (Temple) and the city (Jerusalem), and in the fact that this ‘prince’ destroys the covenant by causing the sacrifices and prayers to cease. The tone of this passage is wholly Jewish. It is in the midst of the week (after 3½ years) that the ‘breaking of the covenant’ occurs, leading into a time of desolation - another 3½ year period. Although the covenant is made with ‘the many’, not all Israelites will agree with it, however ‘the many’ will include the leadership, and those who would rather follow than think.

(This principal of preferring to follow than to think has been the downfall of the Church today. “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:4). Such men have infiltrated the leadership of Christianity and with their pernicious doctrines have twisted God’s truth into the Devil’s lie, and the unthinking multitudes have followed them into the ditch (Matthew 15:14; Luke 6:39)).

The rapture of the Church must occur before this ‘prince’, this ‘man of sin’ or ‘anti Christ’ is revealed (2Thessalonians 2:3-7) and so there may be some time between the rapture and the ratifying of this covenant. One reason for the belief that this time is near is that Israel is back in the land and a recognised government. Israel is now a recognised government and able to sign such a covenant, whereas up to 1948 that was not possible. (There is a commonly held belief that the generation which saw the rebirth of Israel will also see the coming of Christ. If there is any truth in that belief then we must indeed be close, for in Psalm 90:10 the lifetime of man is given as three score years and ten (70years), or eighty if he does well, which allows another nine to nineteen years from the date of writing.) An exciting thought even if it turns out not to be an accurate chronology.

The book of The Revelation chapters 6-19 cover these seven years. Revelation Chapter 7 speaks of the sealing of the 144,000 servants of God out of every tribe of Israel and it is obvious that these Jewish men are taken from the four corners of the world (vss.1-3); this is an ideal situation for world wide evangelism. These are Jewish men from every nation and language and yet they are of one culture and belief - Judaist/Christian; they have come to believe that Jesus Christ is their Messiah (Revelation 14:4). Someone has described them as 144,000 Saul’s of Tarsus coming to know Christ all at the same time.

Whatever way these men come to believe, it is evident they know and preach the truth. Verses 9-14 reveals an innumerable number of people who understood and accepted the gospel they proclaim. This is the fulfilment of Matthew 24:14; “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

The major reason for the tribulation in regards to Israel however, is to break the will of God’s people - to ‘scatter the power of the holy people’ (Daniel 12:7). Daniel chapter 12 refers to ‘a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation’ (vs.1), a time span of only 3½ years - ‘a time, times, and an half’. These 3½ years are the latter half of the 7 years of Daniel’s seventieth week. The length of this period of intense suffering is given again in vs.11, ‘a thousand two hundred and ninety days’ - 3½ years. There is a short span of days after these 1290 days, which if the people wait patiently through it, they will be blessed (presumably in seeing their Lord and the setting up of the Kingdom).

Ezekiel 20:34-38. This 3½ years is the time the Lord has set aside for the re-gathering and purging of his people, and he will remove from them ‘the rebels, and them that transgress against me’ and ‘they shall not enter into the land of Israel’, but the remainder ‘shall know that I [am] the LORD’ and enter into the land and all it’s blessing - ‘into the bond of the (new) covenant’ (vs.37).

In Israel today, as in yesteryear, many religious leaders are also political leaders, and in Isaiah 28:13-19 the LORD condemns the leaders who make this covenant with Anti Christ (see DOCTRINES: ANTICHRIST below) and tells them that although they have made a covenant with this prince (the LORD calls it ‘a covenant with death’), it will be cancelled and an ‘overflowing scourge’ shall sweep through Israel, and the leadership will be trodden down by it. This is the intense persecution against the Jewish people instigated by the anti Christ when they reject his claim of being God and reject his image in the Temple - the abomination of desolations of Matthew 24.

Jesus spoke of this event in Matthew 24:15-22. “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place ...then let those in Judea flee into the mountains...” Don’t go from the rooftop into the house for belongings; those who are burdened by a babe in arms - and if winter rains were to slow one down, the danger will be extreme. This persecution will have the speed and ferocity of the Nazi blitzkrieg and haste is vital.

In this same warning (Matthew 24:15), the apostle was impelled by the Holy Spirit to add the parenthesis (whoso readeth, let him understand) and this comment contains a strong message. The word for understand means to exercise the mind and is a forceful encouragement for readers to get to know what the abomination of desolation was all about, and directs them to the book of Daniel to find out.

(Daniel Chap 11) Daniel’s words were prophetic and referred first of all to the exploits of Antiochus Epiphanies and particularly to his desecration of the Temple in BC 167 (see below). This parenthesis by the Holy Spirit shows there is something of real significance in those ancient events. So much Old Testament prophecy had a short and a long term application, and if the advice of the Holy Spirit is taken and that prophecy transposed into the time the Lord Jesus

speaks of, then not only Daniel 11:31 but also vs.32-45 can be safely looked at as long term prophecy yet to be fulfilled in another leader likened to the Antiochus Epiphanies of history.

Matthew Henry has written of those times thus: “He (Antiochus Epiphanies) carried on his malicious designs against the Jews by the assistance of some perfidious apostate Jews. He kept up intelligence with those that forsook the holy covenant (Daniel 11:30), some of the Jews that were false to their religion, and introduced the customs of the heathen, with whom they made a covenant. See the fulfilling of this, 1 Macc. 1:11-15, where it is expressly said, concerning those renegade Jews, that they made themselves uncircumcised and forsook the holy covenant. We read (2 Macc. 4:9) of Jason, the brother of Onias the high priest, who by the appointment of Antiochus set up a school at Jerusalem, for the training up of youth in the fashions of the heathen; and (2 Macc. 4:23, etc.) of Menelaus, who fell in with the interests of Antiochus, and was the man that helped him into Jerusalem, now in his last return from Egypt. We read much in the book of the Maccabees of the mischief done to the Jews by these treacherous men of their own nation, Jason and Menelaus, and their party. These upon all occasions he made use of. “Such as do wickedly against the covenant, such as throw up their religion, and comply with the heathen, he shall corrupt with flatteries, to harden them in their apostasy, and to make use of them as decoys to draw in others,” (Daniel 11:32). Note: It is not strange if those who do not live up to their religion, but in their conversations do wickedly against the covenant, are easily corrupted by flatteries to quit their religion. Those that make shipwreck of a good conscience will soon make shipwreck of the faith.”

The False Prophet: It is almost certain that a future religious/political Jewish leader will be the second beast of Revelation 13:11-15. There is good evidence for this belief. This beast’s ministry is to establish Anti Christ as the supreme ruler and worthy of worship, even by the Jews. With the significance of Daniel’s prophecies on the life and times of Antiochus Epiphanies having an end-time fulfilment, this man will be the antitype of those Jewish leaders who attempted to introduce Hellenistic culture into the Temple worship in BC 167.

Other pointers to the Jewishness of the False Prophet: This second beast comes to the fore in Jerusalem where we first see him and his ministry, a ministry in keeping with those apostate Jews of old, i.e. the establishment of the ‘abomination that makes desolate’. He comes out of the earth, which can be a reference to Israel; he has two horns, two sources of power which would be religious and political power, and he is described as a lamb, which has great religious significance to the Jewish mind, and he has some degree of Temple authority, seen in his introduction of the worship of man, the worship of Anti Christ. All this makes it fairly obvious that he is Jewish.

Great tribulation: Isaiah 28:21 speaks of God rising up (for action) and being wroth, and performing his strange work, his strange act. It is described in vs.22 as a consumption that is coming upon the whole earth, a time of extreme pressure and destruction that is designed to purge evil from Israel and also from the earth. It is considered strange because it is so far removed from God’s norm of defending Israel. In this instance he will be seen as fighting against them, although it could also be seen as a final act of love, in trying to turn a rebellious people back to himself.

In Jeremiah 30:4-7 the LORD warns Israel regarding this time, describing it as being 'great travail'. He calls it the time of Jacob's trouble but promises that Israel will be saved out of it. This does not mean every Jew, but a believing remnant of the nation. It is in the remnant that the nation of Israel will be saved to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven - the millennial reign of Christ.

In Matthew 24:22 the Lord again promises the nation that although this period will be a time of the world's greatest tribulation ever, yet for the elect's sake (the remnant), those days shall be shortened. It is estimated that during the reign of this anti-Christ, 65 - 75% of the world's population will perish through mass murder, warfare, and by natural and supernatural calamities.

In Revelation 12:1-6, in the figure of a woman, we see Israel fleeing into the wilderness. This flight is preceded by a quick overview of Satan's enmity toward Israel. The woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars is a direct reference to Genesis 37:9-10 and a picture of Israel. The pregnancy refers to Israel as being the nation from which Christ came, and verses 3-4 tell of Satan's concerted effort to destroy Christ as an infant. The whole scene is a thumbnail sketch of the centuries, with vs.5 encompassing the life, ministry, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

God had told Satan that although he will bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, he (the seed) would bruise Satan's head (Genesis 3:15) and Satan must either destroy Christ, which he failed to do, or keep Israel from fulfilling the prerequisite for Christ/Messiah's return; they must call for him in repentance and faith (see Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 23:39). If Satan can keep Israel from calling upon the name of the Lord, Christ/Messiah will not return and Satan will go on to slaughter them all and will have won the day. But we can rejoice for we have read THE BOOK and know the end of His-story.

Joel Chapter 2 is a prophecy of this terrible time but it ends with the words "And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:32).

The woman (believing Israel) flees into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days - the 3½ years of 'great' tribulation, or Jacob's trouble. She is given the means to escape into this wilderness (she is given the wings of a great eagle, c.f. Exodus 19:4; Psalm 103:5; Isaiah 40:31).

This wilderness refers to Bozrah where the Lord says he will assemble and protect Jacob (Micah 2:12), and from where he, the King, shall break forth and go before them (Micah 2:13). There will be a great number of people at Bozrah for it is written, "they shall make great noise by reason of [the multitude of] men" (Micah 2:12).

On his return to deliver Israel and starting from this wilderness, Messiah sweeps all his enemies before him as he returns to the mount of Olives to deliver Jerusalem at his second coming (ref. Isaiah 34:6, Isaiah 63:1; Zechariah 14:4).

Revelation 12:7-17 gives further reasons for the devil's hatred of all things Godly. It is at this

point, half way through the seven years that the devil and his angels are cast out of heaven – they no longer have access there (vs.8). And now; “Woe to 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 hath but a short time”. Satan now knows his end is near and it is from this moment that he sets in motion his pogrom of exterminating the Jews (vss.13-17). It is at this point that the abomination of desolations is set up in the Temple, and at this point we see the flight of the believing remnant into the wilderness.

In the first half of the tribulation the political structure of the world looks likely to be a ten kingdom confederation as per the ten toes of the beast (Daniel 2:42) and the ten horns (Daniel 7:24 and Revelation 13:1). There are many autonomous nations in the world today (2010), but it is highly probable the world (or possibly the democracies of the world) will be divided into ten regions, for even now we can see the foundations of this being laid and its fulfilment attempted.

The religious structure of the world will change; something we can also see happening today. As Christendom becomes more apostate and we hear increasingly of a united world religion, it is easy to understand how this will end in what Revelation 17:5 calls “MYSTERY - BABYLON THE GREAT - THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH”.

In the political scene, after the true Church has been taken out from “the hour of temptation that is to come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Revelation 3:10), the Anti Christ will come to the fore and in a short time, conquer three of the ten regions and will be given allegiance by the others. This will prove to be an uneasy alliance. It is debated whether the religious system rides to power on the back of the political beast or whether the politicians gain power through religion. It is more probable that the second option is the case.

It is the belief of some very sound Bible teachers, that the headquarters of this political/religious system will be transferred to the site of the ancient city of Babylon on the Euphrates River in present day Iraq. If this is the case we could see more movement in that direction in our day (the restoration of the ancient city was started by Saddam Hussein).

In support of this belief we have in Zechariah 5:5-11 a vision by the prophet, which refers to the relocation of a woman, whose designation is ‘Wickedness’ to a permanent base in the land of Shinar, i.e. Babylonia (I believe we can equate this woman with the MOTHER OF HARLOTS above). The fact that Babylon is the original site of anti God religion would have a certain attraction to the anti Biblical religions of today (including many in Christendom), and would be more acceptable to all the participating kingdoms as a central and neutral point for a new world order.

In Revelation 17:12-18, the kings - the rulers of the ten political regions give their allegiance to Anti Christ and because of their contempt for religion will turn and destroy the religious system. Revelation 17:16 says the kings “hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire”. The cause of this hatred may be the religious objections to absolute power being given to Anti Christ; on the other hand destruction of the religious system may be the only means for that power to be had. It would certainly remove the major opposition to his image being set up in the Temple in a renewal of ‘Emperor’ worship.

Such a system of worship would combine both the political and religious systems under a single authority.

Religion and politics are fundamentally antagonistic and when these two systems compete for power the one who holds the allegiance of the military, and the resolve to annihilate the other will win out: In this future instance it is the political head. Satan cannot allow two centres of power and to bring people's allegiance directly to himself he destroys religion and concentrates all his power into this one man (remember the word's of Christ Jesus regarding a divided kingdom not being able to stand). Religion in the second half of the tribulation will be the enforced worship of this man who claims to be God, a man whose image will be in the Temple.

The Kings of Daniel 11:40 and Beyond: Sometime prior to the second 3½ years with all its horror of a Satanic dictatorship, there is an attack against Anti Christ's reign by the Kings of the South and of the North (Daniel 11:40). We know it is during the tribulation for it is an attack against Anti Christ (and therefore after he had come to power), and we can know it is before the second 3½ years because in Daniel 12:1, just after the invasion, the Archangel Michael stands up in readiness to help the people of Israel through "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation [even] to that same time".

The identity of the king of the north is not known with certainty although there are thoughts of him being 'Gog of Magog' (Ezekiel 38-39) but this is unlikely for reasons we shall cover shortly. Another possibility is the rebellion of one or more of the ten confederate Kings (see below).

(The king of the south is probably Egypt, for anti-Christ sweeps through Palestine and conquers Egypt in what may be an act of retribution.)

King of the North (Daniel 11:40): The term King of the North in Daniel 11:6 to 20 refers to the ancient Kings of Syria.

In 11:21, 28, 29 it refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, with Daniel 11:31-39 alluding to Antiochus' desecration of the Temple, and also on into the 'time of the end'/'the time appointed' (vs.35) to the time of Antiochus' counterpart (Antichrist), of which Christ Jesus spoke in Matthew 24:15.

In Daniel 11:40, speaking of anti-Christ, it states that at the time of the end (see vs.35) the 'King of the North' shall come "against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships". This latter king cannot therefore refer to Antichrist for he would have to come against himself. There must be another King of the North "having a mighty army chariots, horsemen, and with many ships".

Ezekiel 38: 14-15, speaks of Gog of Magog, a chief prince, coming out of the north parts to invade Israel with "many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army", and being destroyed upon the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38:22 - 39:1-2).

This description does correspond with Daniel 11:40 and suggests the identity of this King from the North as being Gog of Magog. But does it?

Probably not, for at least three reasons:

1. Gog's invasion is against Israel, "the people [that are] gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land" (Ezekiel 38:12). Gog comes down to take a spoil from Israel not to attack anti-Christ.

2. The aftermath of both invasions speak of events that preclude them being concurrent, for Daniel 11:40-43 shows anti-Christ as an invader, entering into Israel 'the glorious land' overthrowing (killing or conquering) many people, and other countries in the area being invaded. The point is that during such a time Israel is unlikely to have the freedom to spend seven months in burying the dead of Gog's invasion forces (Ezekiel 39:12-16), therefore Daniel 11:40-43 and Ezekiel 39:12-16 are separate events.

3. In line with the second reason, Israel also makes use of the captured military hardware of the Gog invasion to produce their energy needs for seven years (Ezekiel 39:9-10), which would indicate Gog's invasion occurs at least seven years before anti-Christ's invasion of the 'glorious land'. This burning of the weapons of war might occur after the tribulation and in the first years of Christ's reign, but that is improbable.

(A note on the 'many people being overthrown': With the Hebrew rab meaning 'abundant in quantity' and there being limited nations in the area it seems clear the 'many' refers to people, not countries as the KJV implies. This is supported in vs.42 where it goes on to speak of countries as also being conquered. Even though Edom, Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon escape invasion, anti-Christ does invade Egypt even to the borders of Ethiopia.)

The question 'who is the king of the north' in Daniel 11:40, therefore remains.

With Gog of Magog being an improbable contender and with no other identifiable candidate, it leaves the identity of this 'king' unknown. But his existence is real and rebellion against anti-Christ his aim.

It appears his is not the only rebellion, for later while anti-Christ is in Egypt, Daniel 11:44 speaks of tidings coming "out of the east and out of the north", tidings that alarm him to such an extent that he loses control, and in intense anger sweeps northward to annihilate 'many'. What those tidings are is open for conjecture but it is probably a second break of allegiance.

We saw in the events of Antiochus Epiphanies' incursion into Israel, a type of anti-Christ, and it could be that other events of Antiochus' day may have prophetic significance also.

AUBERLEN, on page 65 of his THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL etc, accepts Porphyry's statement that "Antiochus, in the eleventh year of his reign (166-165 B.C.), invaded Egypt again, and took Palestine on his way. The "tidings" of Daniel 11:44, as to the revolt of tributary nations then led him to the East". Porphyry made the statement that, "Antiochus, starting from Egypt took Arad in Judah and devastated all Phoenicia; then he turned to check Artaxias, king of Armenia. He died in the Persian town Tabes, 164 B.C."

This statement from history does seem to fit with the future movements of anti-Christ prophesied in Daniel 11:44-45.

“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 make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”

Rebellion against anti-Christ by unidentified persons from the north seems to be the best we can do in answering the question: Who is the ‘king of the north’ of Daniel 11:40.

The ‘tidings’ from the north and the east of Daniel 11:44 may refer to the arrival of the huge army from the east, whose passage was made clear by the drying up of the Euphrates river (Revelation 16:12).

Whatever the identity of the kings of vs.40 is, their attack seems to be the grounds for anti-Christ’s invasion of Israel - the ‘Glorious Land’, and probably the catalyst for breaking his covenant with her - the time when he causes ‘the sacrifice and the oblation to cease’ (Daniel 9:27). In the frustration and anger caused by this attack from the north and south, anti-Christ could lash out at anyone who he perceived as an enemy and if at this time Satan is ejected from heaven and indwells him, just as Antiochus Epiphanies did before him, this Anti Christ could turn on Israel in satanic fury.

Daniel continues: “He (Anti Christ) 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 of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians [shall be] at his steps.” (Daniel 11:42-43)

The mention of Ethiopia and Libya here may link this whole campaign back to the time of the ‘Gog of Magog’ invasion for we read in Ezekiel 38:5 of Ethiopia and Libya’s part in that confederacy. Anti-Christ’s incursion into Egypt could be one of retribution against Egypt and a mopping up in regards to Ethiopia and Libya.

Invasion of Israel and the desecration of the Temple will cause many in Israel to flee to the wilderness of Edom and Bozrah, or to be more specific to Petra. This corresponds to the flight of the woman into the wilderness (Revelation 12:6).

The armies of Anti-Christ pursue them but are swallowed up. We should keep in mind that at the mid way stage of the seven years; the kingdoms of the world suffer a great earthquake and almost certainly many casualties. The timing of this first great earthquake may be analogous to the earth opening to swallow Satan’s pursuit of the woman into the wilderness (Revelation 12:16).

Ant-Christ is able to advance on Egypt however, and will take control of that nation’s wealth. As he prepares to invade Ethiopia and Libya, “...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 make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him (Daniel 11:44-45).

While he is in Egypt tidings from the north and the east bring him hurrying with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. There is no mention what these tidings are, or who 'the many' might be. One would suspect invading forces to be involved but he does not enter into a battle; in fact he "plants the tabernacles of his palace" (sets up headquarters) near Jerusalem.

This leads one to suspect 'the many' may be those inhabitants of Jerusalem who were not killed or taken captive in Anti Christ's initial attack against her and are now fortified in Jerusalem and offering strong resistance to his will. (I refer you to Zechariah 14:2, where Anti Christ's initial attack against Jerusalem sees half of the city going into captivity and "the residue of the people not being cut off from the city"). The many may be those who manage to fight off the Anti Christ's armies, and in offering resistance, are the reason for his fury. We notice that in this passage from Daniel there is no mention of any immediate battle and the news from the East may have been of chaos in Babylon, the results of the destructive earthquake (if Babylon had been rebuilt to serve as his palace and capitol, its destruction would cause his anger).

Such a natural God ordained destruction, plus the Jewish resistance in Jerusalem, could very well turn this Satan possessed, anti-Christ/anti-God man into uncontrollable and destructive fury against all that is of God.

It is this last campaign of Anti-Christ centered against Jerusalem and against the defences of Bozrah that will refine the remnant of Israel, the remaining 1/3, who in the immense pressure of certain annihilation will call on the name of the LORD and so fulfil the prerequisite for the Lord's return (Zechariah 13:9).

There are so many events recorded in the scriptures to do with this last 3½ years that to fit them all in chronological order seems more a matter of assumption than of evidence. The reality of these individual events is sure and although the chronological order is difficult to know, we can visualize the overall scene as a world in geological, political, social and economic chaos, and armies and allegiances in disarray.

Revelation chap 16: These final years, months and days are covered by this chapter with its bowls of God's wrath. God says his fury is likened to strong drink, and is sufficient to make men mad "because of the sword that he sends among them" (Jeremiah 25:15-16).

The bowls of wrath include plagues, natural catastrophe, panic, excruciating heat and pain and these will take toll on the world's sanity and will end in a mad scramble to bring it all to an end. It is clear from vs.13 that satanic forces are used to gather the nations for an all out assault on Israel (and on the Lord). Nations that have rejected God can only make evil decisions; and because evil is susceptible to greater evil, the persuasion of these demonic spirits will ensure the kings of the earth and of the whole world, will gather to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Fear, jealousy, anger, hatred, pride etc. are all areas of human nature that can be manipulated by the forces of evil, for they are predisposed to evil. The political puppets of Anti Christ will not be strong enough to stand against him and will do his bidding. Such evil is well documented in history; there are several instances from Nazi Germany of Hitler's demonic control over the

hearts of other evil and weaker men. It is possible that not all of these leaders are weak, yet their evil will still be manipulated to bring them down to this conflict.

In Revelation 16:16 we see that it is God who gathers these armies to Har Megiddo, the Mount of Megiddo. Using the arrogance and pride of man God draws them to the campaign of Armageddon and they assemble in the valley of Jezreel about fifty kilometres north of Jerusalem. This will be the staging area for two final battles; one against Jerusalem and the other against the Jews at Bozrah.

In Joel 3:9-11 God displays his derision for the pretensions of ungodly men, and in Psalm 2:2-5 he laughs them to scorn. This final great battle is Satan's and man's attempt to "break their (God's) bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:3). God's reply to this arrogance is seen in verses 5-9: He shall 'speak to them in wrath and will vex them in his sore displeasure' and because these kings are not wise nor will they be instructed, God's Son 'shall break them with a rod of iron; and shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel'.

In Revelation 16:18 we have the record of a second earthquake, the central earth shattering event of this final judgement, "...a great earthquake occurred, such as did not occur since man came into being on the earth, such a huge earthquake, so great!" This is greater than the breaking up of the great deep in the time of Noah, greater than anything in the age of Israel, and no city of the world survives. They all collapse and because Babylon is mentioned in the same context, this total destruction must also include Babylon (the new capital of Anti Christ). The vibrations of strong earthquakes are known to liquefy the earth and solid objects (buildings) have been seen to sink deep into the earth. This earthquake is so great mountains and islands disappear.

The earthquake and total destruction of Babylon follow the assembling of the armies on the Plain of Esdraelon. The destruction of Babylon is spoken of in Isa. 13:19 "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there."

This whole chapter from Isaiah 13 seems a foretaste of the latter part of Revelation 16. Although it originally applied to Cyrus as the one who had been sanctified, set apart for the task of humbling Babylon, Babylon was conquered but never destroyed in such a manner as we see happen in these final verses. In Revelation 16 it seems that the end has come at last. Sodom and Gomorrah were not destroyed by invading armies but by volcanic activity and here it seems Babylon is finally destroyed by this world shattering earthquake.

No amount of emphasis on these words can describe the destruction that is going to occur to the earth's surface, and it is impossible that loss of life would not be in proportion. The earth has been rocked and shattered (all the cities are in ruins), there have been plagues, there has been warfare, and criminality will be rife. With 2/3rds of the surface of the earth shattered it is logical to assume there would be a proportionate loss of life. The destruction of 2/3rds of the Jewish people during this time is foretold, and it is estimated by some scholars that this same figure will apply to the gentile nations also.

The destruction during these years will mean the power arrayed against Israel in the latter stages

is unlikely to have the same force as before, especially if the armies involved have used nuclear weapons against each other. From the breaking of the covenant these events are limited to just 3½ years and with decimated forces; the warfare could possibly be restricted to ground warfare or even hand to hand fighting.

Armies of Anti Christ at Jerusalem: Zechariah 12:2-3. God will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling (likened to drunkenness) and a burdensome stone to all who try to conquer her, and will utterly destroy them, even if it be the entire world. Many nations have overrun Jerusalem in the past; therefore the day spoken of here must be another day, a future day.

Vs.4 God will be behind the scenes causing disruption to the enemy in both equipment failure (horse with astonishment), and psychologically (madness – i.e. fear, rage, and perhaps stupid bravado).

Vs.8 In the day of this siege God is going to motivate the people of Jerusalem so that the feeble will have the strength of a young and vigorous fighting soldier and the leadership will be inspirational; likened to the angel of the LORD. That this is God's Spirit at work there can be no doubt.

Vss.5-6 The people of the surrounding countryside (Judah) will see the valour of the citizens of Jerusalem and will be moved to emulate them. Their exploits in the field of battle is likened to a devouring flame.

In Micah 4:9 - 5:1 we have this same battle described, with the Jewish residents (daughter of Zion) being strengthened by the Lord to destroy many of the enemy. It must be clear to those who know anything about the six day war of 1967 that Israel had supernatural help to sustain, strengthen and enable her to win against such superior numbers. This end-time event will be even more unequal in the natural sense (but God is on the side of his people). There will be deaths, but God uses death as judgement and as pressure for testing, and the people who survive this onslaught will know it is God who has been with them and given them the victory.

From Zechariah 14, it appears the last 3½ years are all considered to be the Day of the Lord, for the passage begins with Jerusalem being overrun and half of the people being taken captive, but the rest remaining in the city (vs.2). These manage to hold out against the armies of the world until the Lord's personal intervention against Israel's enemies in his return to the earth on the Mount of Olives (vss.3-4). The cataclysm that results splits that mountain in two with a great valley being formed, to which the Jewish people are told to flee; the valley will be a means of protecting the people from the effects of the 'plague' that is to follow.

Before this final event, we are told in Zechariah 12:7, the LORD will deliver 'the tents of Judah' first. The countryside will be made secure before the Lord turns his attention to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

Armies of Anti Christ at Bozrah: Micah 2:12 tells of the gathering of the remnant of Israel to a place called Bozrah. Bozrah means sheepfold. In this verse God is saying that the remnant of Israel will be as a flock of sheep gathered into the sheepfold (Bozrah). The walled-in rock city of Petra would make a wonderful and very large sheepfold.

Bozrah is recognised by many as being the same as Petra, and this being true, the rock walls of this wilderness city of Petra will be the place to which the Lord gathers his remnant. In the first 3½ years of the 7 year treaty with Anti Christ, there will be many Jews who hear the words of Jesus of Nazareth found in Matthew 24:15-16, "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." The mountainous area surrounding and centred on Petra is the place where they will flee, in heed to the words of Jesus of Nazareth.

Edom, and Moab, and the major portion of Ammon are all part of the kingdom of Jordan, and include Petra.

Isaiah 34:1-2, 5-6 speaks of God's indignation and wrath against the heathen and a great slaughter that rains upon them in the land of Edom. For this to happen, those gentile armies must first be there. In vs.8 the reason for God's wrath is made clear; it is "a year of recompense for the cause (the defence) of Zion". Since 1948 the Jewish peoples have had to defend themselves against Arab attacks, incessant terrorism and at times full scale warfare, and God's wrath waits the day when his people call upon his name.

Israel's national salvation: We saw at the very start of this study the prerequisite for the Lord's return; the Jews must call upon the name of the Lord.

They must acknowledge their offence, which offence was the utter rejection of Jesus as Messiah, and they must call to this same Jesus who their forebears had rejected, as 'blessed' favoured of God who comes in the name of the Lord. Under the threat of national annihilation the remnant that have heeded the warnings thus far "will (in their affliction) seek me early (earnestly)" (Hosea 5:15).

Arnold Fruchtenbaum believes Hosea 6:1-3 suggest this will be three days prior to the return of Messiah to Bozrah and then to the Mount of Olives:

"Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him."

One can imagine, in the terror of these last 3½ years, the Jewish people anxiously discussing this issue. Obviously Jesus the Messiah/Christ, the Son of the Living God has been preached to them (by the 144,000 evangelists) and they will, by the end, understand the claims of Christ and will come to agreement that they must call on his name.

Second coming of Christ: We now see the fulfilment of Christ's promise: They call, and he returns to save and re-gather the Jewish people. The deliverance from their enemies will be witnessed by the entire earth for "...every eye shall see him, and they [also] which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Revelation 1:17; Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27).

He will return first to Bozrah to destroy the armies of Anti Christ and to lay waste the country of Edom.

“The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, [and] with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea” (Isaiah 34:1-6)

“And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever” (Isaiah 34:9-17).

In Micah 2:13 we are told of a breaker (deliverer), shattering the siege against the sheepfold (Bozrah) and freeing the remnant that had been shepherded there 3 ½ years earlier: “They will break out, Pass through the gate, And go out by it; Their king will pass before them, With the LORD at their head.”

This is the beginning of the final battle; which is fought by the Lord himself. In Isaiah 62 the LORD tells Israel of their deliverance and redemption, and follows in Chapter 63 with a description of their conquering King of kings and LORD of lords:

“Who [is] this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this [that is] glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore [art thou] red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people [there was] none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance [is] in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and [there was] none to help; and I wondered that [there was] none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth” (Isaiah 63:1-6).

In Revelation 19:11-13 we recognise this to be the one who is also called The Word of God. “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.” This is the resurrected Christ pictured as Israel’s deliverer and Messiah, and judge of all the earth.

This battle extends from Bozrah to Jerusalem and beyond, for Revelation 14:20 speaks of a wine-press extending a thousand and six hundred furlongs. There is divergent opinion as to what is meant by this fantastic flow of blood, but because the Greek haima can refer to any liquid or similar substance of a reddish colour, it is more than probable Tom McElmurry is correct in his assessment that it is magma flowing out of the fissures caused by the geological upheaval of the time. This winepress of God’s wrath against the ungodly enemies of Israel will bring death to countless numbers.

It is seen in Revelation 19:21 that prior to this great slaughter, the Anti Christ and the False Prophet, the leaders of the armies of the world, are cast into the Lake of Fire.

This battle will be fought outside the walls of Jerusalem and in a place called the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2, 12, 14). This is not a historical name, there has never been a valley known by that name; it is a designation given in this instance to the Kidron Valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives because it is the place of the final great deliverance of the Jewish people (c.f. 2Chronicles chap 20).

Zechariah 14:4-5. “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee by the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee.”

Zechariah 14:12-15. “And this shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite all the peoples that have warred against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from Jehovah shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in those camps, as that plague.”

This entire scene is the moment of the Lord’s return ‘with his saints’, and from vs.12 and 15 we see it is accompanied by what is described as a plague. It is unlikely this plague is a nuclear explosion, for the Lord fights this great final battle alone, therefore it is almost certainly a supernatural destruction of all things flesh - Because of the symptoms, it is likely to be something of great heat, heat that consumes flesh but not bone therefore superheated air from the volcanic activity is a real possibility (ref. Tom McElmurry). Every other living creature surrounding Jerusalem will feel the effects of this plague. The Jewish remnant is told to flee into the great valley caused by the cleaving of the Mount of Olives; suggestive of it being a protection from the plague.

This time of destruction and upheaval ends with rivers of living (clean fresh) water flowing from Jerusalem, east into the Dead Sea and west into the Mediterranean (vs.8), followed by the statement that “Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one” - It is seen in this statement that Messiah/Christ is Jehovah.

One can imagine the mopping up that will be needed following such a catastrophic time, but Messiah’s destruction of these armies finalizes the time of Jacob’s trouble and ushers in events leading into his Kingdom on earth – the Millennial reign. These events will include the incarceration of Satan into the bottomless pit and the ejecting of demonic forces off the earth, presumably along with Satan and awaiting the final great battle at the end of time (Revelation

20:8). And there will be the judgement of the sheep and goats - the nations of the earth (Matthew 25:32-33).

Many teachers tend to gloss over the immediate aftermath of these terrible years as if a magic wand will be waved and everything set to rights in a moment; but the earth will continue to be ruled by God's natural laws, survivors will be people of flesh and blood and will have all the emotional trauma to cope with, it will be a time of physical and emotional adjustment throughout the world. God's will however will have been done, the earth will have been purged of incorrigible sinners, Israel will have called upon Jesus their Messiah, and the thousand year reign of Christ will have begun; a time of faith but also a time of enforced law and order (Revelation 12:5) and subsequent peace.

The fact that law and order need enforcing proves the continuation of the sinful nature within mankind. We are a fallen race, a race of selfish beings that need encouragement in controlling our nature. Selfishness is a basic characteristic of all human beings, with the criminal element coming from those among us who will not control their selfishness or tolerate others to do so. The proportion of criminals within a society increases as law and order decreases. This is a fact today and will be seen again at the end of the Millennium in the great battle of Revelation 20:8 where Satan is let loose for a little season to test those born during the thousand years of peace.

Criminals rebel against law, and the emotional tension of a rebellious heart will be intensified during this time of enforced law and order. After one thousand years of peace and prosperity due to such enforcement, it is inevitable the criminal element will revolt at the instigation of Satan, and in so doing prove their criminality and ungodliness. Criminality is ultimately destroyed when fire comes down from God out of heaven, and devours them (Revelation 20:7-9) and this old world is changed.

The Apostle Peter tells how this will come about, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2Peter 3:12).

Isaiah prophesies it, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

The Apostle John had a vision of the event, "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).

And the aftermath, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27)

It is therefore seen that believers of the Millennium will have been given resurrection bodies, for they survive this destruction and the fervent heat of God's recreation (2Peter 3:10-12) and enter into the Kingdom where there is only righteousness, peace and harmony. From 1Corinthians 15:42 it would appear that only death does away with the old sin nature and resurrection allows entrance into eternity.

ASSOCIATED DOCTRINES:

1. ANTICHRIST

SCRIPTURE - Daniel 7:8,21-26; 8:23-25; 9:26,27; 11:36-45; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Revelation 13:1-18; 17:16,17; 19:19,20.

2. BIOGRAPHY

The Antichrist is the world ruler who will emerge as a violently anti-God despot, who will emerge after the removal of God's church. He comes from the gentile nations (the sea) in the last times. His power base will be a ten nation empire closely related to the old Roman Empire known as the Revived Roman Empire. The Antichrist is very clever and infiltrates by means of a peace campaign. He is, however, very hungry for power and once he wrests power from his subjects, he destroys the apostate religious system which has been working closely with him until then. He makes a covenant with Israel, allowing them to sacrifice in the temple, but eventually sets himself up to be worshipped as God in the temple. His reign of almost seven years duration becomes increasingly and openly anti-God, involving signs and wonders. He has a close relationship with the false prophet, the leader of Israel at that time. At the end of his empire he moves on Jerusalem, which is being held by believers. Jesus Christ returns at the second advent to deliver those in Jerusalem and capture the Antichrist and false prophet, throwing them into the lake of fire.

3. EVALUATION

- a) The Antichrist arises out of the Gentile nations with the final empire of ten nations (Revelation 13:1).
- b) The seven heads are seven mountains which speaks of Rome (Revelation 17:9).
- c) There are seven kings: five are fallen, one is, and one is to come (Revelation 17:10). These are empires - the five that are fallen are Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea, Persia and Greece. The one in existence in 96 AD (when John wrote Revelation) was Rome, and the one to come is the Revived Roman Empire.
- d) The ten horns are ten future kingdoms which receive power for a short time. (Revelation 17:12).
- e) He rules empires (Revelation 13:2; cf. Daniel 7:4-6).
- f) His power is from Satan (Revelation 13:2; cf. Revelation 20:2).
- g) Satan gives Antichrist the world empire (Revelation 13:2).
- h) Satanic worship is a key part of Antichrist's regime (Revelation 13:4,8).
- i) He is a great orator. He is anti-God and has power for 3 1/2 years (Revelation 13:5).
- j) His empire becomes a world empire (Revelation 13:7).

k) The dictator of Palestine who is demon possessed ("the false prophet") promotes him (Revelation 13:11).

l) Great wonders and miracles are a feature of this empire (Revelation 13:13).

m) A statue of the Antichrist is constructed. It has the ability to speak. Worship of it is compulsory on the pain of death (Revelation 13:14,15).

n) The Antichrist controls the world economy by marking members of the human race on the forehead or on the right hand (Revelation 13:16,17; cf. Revelation 14:9-11).

o) His number is 666, a number which represents "perfect man" or "perfect sin" (Revelation 13:18).

p) He will not be revealed until the restrainer is removed (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7)

q) The Antichrist's rule features power, signs and lying wonders from Satan himself (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

r) He deceives the unbeliever (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

s) The Antichrist is destroyed and thrown into the lake of fire at the second advent (Revelation 19:19,20).

4. PRINCIPLES

a) Satan is the ruler of this world (John 16:11).

b) World domination and internationalism is Satanic in origin (Genesis 11:6-9).

c) Miracles, signs and lying wonders are strategies employed by Satan to deceive (John 8:44).

d) Economic control of the individual enslaves that individual (Proverbs 22:7).

e) Ultimately vast power creates the delusion that the person in control is God (Genesis 3:5; Isaiah 14:13,14).

f) The antichrist will not be revealed until after the Rapture of the Church when the Holy Spirit who restrains him (and indwells all Christians) will be removed from the world (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7)

g) A few years of power is not worth an eternity of suffering.

h) Eventually man must account to Jesus Christ as his judge if he does not accept Jesus Christ as Saviour (Revelation 20:12-15).

i) At a point, people become so hardened to God that God gives them over to their own delusions (2 Thessalonians 2:11, Romans 1:28).

j) The Antichrist is a person, not to be confused with the many antichrists of (1 John 2:18) or the "spirit of antichrist" of (1 John 4:3)

5. In the Tribulation there will be a counterfeit trinity with Satan (father), the Antichrist (son) and False Prophet (spirit).

6. Names given to the Antichrist:

- a) The seed of Satan (Genesis 3:15)
- b) The little horn (Daniel 7:8)
- c) The king of fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23)
- d) The prince that shall come (Daniel 9:26)
- e) The desolater (Daniel 9:27)
- f) The wilful king (Daniel 11:36)
- g) The man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- h) The son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- i) The lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- j) The Antichrist (1 John 2:22)
- k) The beast (Revelation 11:7)

7. Characteristics:

a) He is called the seed of Satan (Genesis 3:15). Just as Jesus Christ had a supernatural birth being born of a virgin, it may be that there will be something supernatural about the birth of the Antichrist. It is likely that Satan will impregnate a human woman and thus be the father of the Antichrist in a similar way to the angelic infiltration of (Genesis 6:2)

b) In (Daniel 9:26) he is said to be of the people who destroyed the Temple. The Roman Empire destroyed the Temple in 70 AD. The Antichrist may therefore be of Roman origin.

c) The identity of the man of sin will not be clear until the start of the Tribulation, although he may be fairly prominent in politics prior to that period. He will not be revealed until after the Rapture of the Church when the Holy Spirit who restrains him (and indwells all Christians) will be removed from the world (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7). In the middle of the Tribulation, he sets himself in the Temple calling himself God (v4-8).

d) In (Daniel 9:27) the start of the Tribulation is marked by the signing of a seven year covenant between the Antichrist and the nation of Israel. When Israel signs the covenant, God issues a decree of destruction against the whole earth (Isaiah 28:14-22) - the judgements of the book of

Revelation. The Antichrist is shown as the rider on the white horse of (Revelation 6:1) who brings the promise of (false) peace.

e) The rise of the Antichrist to power:

i) In (Daniel 8:23-25) he is seen as a skilful leader, involved in the occult power (v23), will war against the Jews (v24), and will rise to power through deceit (v25).

ii) In (Daniel 11:36-39) he shall do what he wants, claiming to be God and exalting himself (v36), he will repudiate all religious practices from his ancestors (v37). He however will honour a god whom his ancestors did not know (v38) who assists him to power (v39), this god being Satan. He will accept the offer of the kingdoms of the world which our Lord refused in the wilderness.

iii) In (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9) we are told that his coming is according to the energising of Satan accompanied by miracles, signs and wonders.

iv) During the first half of the Tribulation, he gains political control of the ten groups that make up a One World Government. This includes the removal of three of the ten leaders (Daniel 7:23-24, Revelation 17:12-17)

v) He also destroys the One World Church ("Mystery Babylon") that has operated in the first half of the Tribulation (Revelation 17:5,16.) In (Revelation 11) he is able to kill the two witnesses who have been causing him major problems. They however will be resurrected much to his dismay.

f) The death and resurrection of the Antichrist .In (Daniel 11:40-45) he kills the Kings of the North, South and East. and in (v 45) he will come to his end and none shall help him. However in (Revelation 13:3) he receives a fatal wound but the fatal wound is healed. This suggests that the Antichrist dies and is resurrected by the power of Satan. This miracle deceives the world that the Antichrist is god and the world now worships him.

KINGDOM

1. The Kingdom of Heaven is distinguished from the Kingdom of God.

a) Kingdom of Heaven

i) The Kingdom of Heaven will be the visible future Kingdom of the Lord on the earth. (Luke 1:31-33)

ii) Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, includes those physically alive going into the Millennium. (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50)

b) Kingdom of God

i) The Kingdom of God is spiritual (John 3:3, Romans 14:17, Luke 17:20)

ii) Entrance into the Kingdom of God is through regeneration. (John 3:3-7)

iii) The Kingdom of God covers the divine authority over all creation for all time. (Luke 13:28, 29, Hebrews 12:22, 23)

2. The King was born as prophesied of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14 cf Matthew 1:18-25) and in Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2 cf Matthew 2:1)

3. The Kingdom was announced as at hand (Matthew 4:17) but was rejected by the Jews both from a moral (Matthew 11:20) and official viewpoint (Matthew 21:42-43). As a result the King was crowned with thorns.

4. Afterwards He announced His purpose to build His church. (Matthew 16:18)

5. The mysteries of the Church and the Kingdom of Heaven were seen as concurrent - they both refer to the spiritual kingdom. (Ephesians 3:9-11)

6. When He returns at the second advent, the Lord Jesus Christ will establish the Kingdom for 1000 years before eternity resumes. (Matthew 24:27-30, Luke 1:31-33, Acts 15:14-17, Revelation 20:1-10)

7. At the end of the Millennium, Jesus Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28)

8. The eternal throne is of God and the Lamb. (Revelation 22:1)

PROPHECY – DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

1. Scripture:- Daniel 9:24-27

"Seventy weeks 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. "
(Daniel 9:24)

2. What is a week? In the ancient world both Greek and Latin philosophers knew the week, as the week of years. In this system one week equals 7 years. Thus seventy weeks equal 70×7 years = 490 years.

3. What Type of Year? The year used in scripture of Daniel's time was the Jewish year which Abraham had preserved from his Chaldean home. Abraham's year was the lunar year and consisted of 360 days. The period stated then is $70 \times 7 \times 360$ days giving a total of 176 400 days.

4. Who are Involved? 'Thy people, thy holy city' refer to the Jews and Jerusalem or Judea. We therefore have a period of 490 years involving the Jews and Jerusalem.

5. When Does this Period End?

a) In the second half of verse 24 the end of the period is given by six separate events:

i) to finish the transgression - the start of the Millennium at the 2nd advent.

ii) make an end to sins - perfect environment starts at the 2nd advent and continues for a thousand years. (Romans 8:19-21)

iii) make reconciliation - since AD 70 the Jews have been dispersed amongst the nations, they will continue to be dispersed until Jesus Christ calls them back to their land at the 2nd advent.

iv) bring in everlasting righteousness - the millennium starts a period of everlasting righteousness with the reign of Christ, this everlasting righteousness continues into the eternal future. This period starts at the 2nd advent.

v) to seal up the vision and prophecy - the 2nd advent fulfils the Abrahamic, Palestinian and Davidic covenant and this prophecy.

vi) to anoint the most Holy - at the 2nd advent Jesus is anointed King of Israel.

b) The terminal point in all six statements can therefore be said to be the 2nd advent of the Lord Jesus Christ or the midnight hour of (Matthew 25:6). We thus have a period from (Daniel 9:24) of 490 Jewish years each having 360 days terminating at the 2nd Advent.

c) In the next three verses the period of 70 weeks is carefully divided into three sections.

d) "Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks (49 years) and three score and two weeks (434 years):the streets shall be built again, and the wall even in troubled times. " (Daniel 9:25)

e) We have therefore three periods into which the 70 weeks is split - 7 weeks + 62 weeks leaving a balance of 1 week.

Expressed in years we have 49 years + 434 years + 7 years.

6. What is the Starting Point?

a) There were three edicts issued by Persian princes dating after the time of Daniel and relating to the Jews returning to their homeland, they were:-

i) The edict of Cyrus in 538 BC to rebuild the house of the Lord (Temple) (Ezra 1).

ii) The edict of Darius in 520 BC to rebuild the temple which is found in (Ezra 6) Darius' edict was to confirm Cyrus' previous order, the temple works having been stopped after the death of Cyrus.

iii) The edict of Artaxerxes Longimanus to rebuild Jerusalem in 445 BC (Nehemiah 2)

b) Inspection of Daniel 9:25 shows that the critical commandment which starts the 70 weeks clock ticking was the order to rebuild Jerusalem not the temple. The correct order was the edict of Artaxerxes in 445 BC The practice of Persian Kings was to issue such orders on their New Years day, the 1st of the month of Nisan. Using the services of the Astronomer Royal in London, Sir Robert Anderson, was able to determine that the 1st Nisan of 445 BC occurred on 14th March 445 BC. We therefore have the following date:-

c) 14th March 445 BC -- 490 years -- 2nd Advent

d) It also states that Jerusalem will be rebuilt with its walls completed after 49 years (7 weeks) in difficult circumstances. There is considerable biblical evidence that Jerusalem was rebuilt under very difficult circumstances.

e) "And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself. " (Daniel 9:26a)

7. Who is the Messiah? - Jesus Christ!

In Luke's gospel on entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, just prior to his crucifixion, the crowd welcomed Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah (Luke 19:38) this being the only time when he was so called by the mass of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

8. When was He cut off?

According to (Luke 3:1) Jesus Christ was baptised in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar. As his ministry was three years in length, the entry into Jerusalem occurred in the 18th year of Tiberius. Searches of literature including, 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' by Gibbon, has shown that Tiberius became Caesar in 14 AD Entrance into Jerusalem was therefore on Palm Sunday 32 AD Again by computation the date of Palm Sunday 32 AD was 10th Nisan or 6th April AD 32, the crucifixion occurring on 9th April AD 32.

9. If this is correct, we should find correlation between the 483 Jewish years to the cutting off of the Messiah and the time between 14th March 445 BC and 6th April AD 32. The time between these two dates is 476 years and 24 days. Total number of days are therefore as follows:-

476 years x 365 days = 173,740

14/3 to 6/4 = 24

Leap years = 116

TOTAL = 173,880 days.

Jewish time: 483 x 360 = 173,880 days

10. Our scale now shows:

14th March 445 BC -- 483 years -- 6th April 32 AD

11. The following questions now arise:

Has the second advent of Jesus Christ occurred? - No.

Is it longer than 7 years since Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem? - Yes.

Therefore there must be a gap between the 69th week and the 70th week.

445 BC -- 483 years -- 32 AD -- GAP -- 7 years -- 2nd Advent

12. This gap has been filled in God's view of history by the church age. (see topic of Intercalation).

The 70th week which is 7 years in length therefore starts at the end of the church age - at the Rapture. These 7 years of the 70th week are the worst 7 years in the history of man - the tribulation.

13. CONCLUSION The course of this 70th week is denoted in (Daniel 9:26b, 27).

a) "and the people of the prince (the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire) that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and until the end of the war, desolations are determined.

b) And he (the dictator) shall confirm the covenant (mutual defence pact) with the many (the Jews) for one week (7 years) and in the midst of the week (3 1/2 years) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, (this refers to the erection of a statue in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, see Revelation 13:11-15). even until the consummation (the 2nd advent) and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (the dictator will be judged and cast into hell, see Revelation 19:20)."

c) We thus have Daniel's 70 weeks divided as shown:-

d) 445 BC -- 483 years -- 32 AD -- CHURCH -- unspecified period of time -- RAPTURE -- 7 years -- 2nd Advent

PROPHECY: SEQUENCE OF END TIME EVENTS

1. Note: Some of the events in the Tribulation may occur in a slightly different sequence.

2. CHURCH AGE

a) Rapture of the Church. (1 Corinthians 15:51-58, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

b) Judgment Seat of Christ (believers only - purpose is rewards) (1 Cor 3:12-15).

3. TRIBULATION (first 3 1/2 years)

a) Revival of Roman Empire, a Ten Nation Confederacy. (Daniel 7:7, 24, Revelation 13:1, 17:3, 12, 13)

b) Rise of the Anti Christ. (Daniel 7:8, Revelation 13:1-8)

c) Peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27)

d) Temple rebuilt in Jerusalem

e) World church established. (Revelation 17:1-15)

d) Seven seals judgments (Revelation 6:1ff) and seven trumpets judgments (Revelation 8:7ff)

e) Two witnesses preach from Jerusalem until killed.

h) Russia attacks Israel about four years before the second coming of Christ. (Ezekiel 38, 39)

4. GREAT TRIBULATION (second 3 1/2 years)

a) Peace treaty with Israel broken

b) Antichrist sets up Abomination of Desolation and demands worship (Matthew 24:15,21)

c) World government, world economic system, world religion begins. (Daniel 7:23, Revelation 13:5-8, 17:16, 17)

d) Seven trumpet judgments (Revelation 16:2ff)

e) Martyrdom of many Tribulation Saints and Jews. (Revelation 7:9-17, 13:15)

f) Catastrophic divine judgments poured out on the earth. (Revelation 6:17)

g) World war breaks out in Middle East; battle of Armageddon. (Daniel 11:40-45, Revelation 9:13-21, 16:12-16)

5. SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

a) Second coming of Christ. (Matthew 24:27-31, Revelation 19:11)

b) Tribulation surviving believers proceed into the Millennium (Matt 3:12).

c) Unbelievers cast off the earth (Ezekiel 20:33-38, Matthew 3,12, 25:31-46, Jude 14, 15, Revelation 19:15-21, 20:1-4)

d) Satan bound. (Revelation 20:1-3)

e) Resurrection of Old Testament saints and Tribulation martyrs. (Revelation 20:4)

6. MILLENNIUM

a) Millennial kingdom begins. (Revelation 20:5, 6)

b) Christ reigns on earth for 1,000 years in perfect environment and peace (Rev 20:4-6)

c) Satan released at the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:7-9).

d) Rebellion of Gog and Magog at the end of the millenium. (Revelation 20:7-10)

e) Resurrection of all unbelievers (Revelation 20:5a)

f) Great White Throne Judgment. (unbelievers only - purpose is judgment) (Revelation 20:11-15)

7. ETERNITY

a) New heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem. (Revelation 21, 22)

- b) Believers blessed forever with Christ (Rev 21 - 22:5).
- c) Unbelievers punished forever with Satan (Matt 25:41)

RAPTURE:

1. The Rapture of the Church is the termination of the Church Age and is the taking of all believers since Pentecost to Heaven by the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. General Scripture (John 14:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
3. The Rapture and the 2nd Advent should not be confused, they are 7 years apart being separated by the Tribulation and have different characteristics.

4. Rapture

- a) Not revealed in Old Testament.
- b) Promises to the Church fulfilled.
- c) Judgement Seat of Christ rewards (1 Corinthians 3:12-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11, 2 Timothy 2:11)
- d) Christ the Bridegroom and Head
- e) Believers body changed (not creation) (1 Corinthians 15:51-58, Philippians 3:21)
- f) Church goes to heaven. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
- g) Imminent - no signs to be fulfilled before the Church can be removed.
- h) Time of comfort for believer. (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- i) Christ will meet the Church in the air. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
- j) Private (only believers will see)
- k) Before tribulation
- l) Believers go out of the world. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)
- m) Removal of the Holy Spirit. (2 Thessalonians 2:7)

5. Second Advent

- a) Spoken of by all major Old Testament prophets. (Zechariah 14:4)
- b) Promises to Israel fulfilled.

c) Great White Throne Judgement (after Millennium) - unbelievers. (Matthew 25:31, Revelation 20:12-15).

d) Christ the Messiah to Israel (Daniel 9:25)

e) Radical changes in nature. (Romans 8:19-22)

f) Church comes back to earth (1 Thessalonians 3:13) 4:17)

g) Many details of prophecy yet to be fulfilled. (Revelation Chapters 6-19)

h) Time of terror for unbeliever. (Revelation 6:15-17)

i) Christ will come back to earth (Zechariah 14:4)

j) Public - every eye shall see him (Revelation 1- 7)

k) After tribulation.

l) Unbelievers taken off the earth (Matthew 24:37-42)

m) Removal of Satan (Revelation 20:1-3)

6. The Rapture is before the Tribulation. Thus the Pre Tribulation Rapture position is shown by nine factors.

a) The worried Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 2:1-6)

b) The Restrainer removed (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12)

c) The lack of the word 'Church' in (Revelation 13:9)

d) The verb Tereo in (Revelation 3:10)

e) Grace before judgement (John 14:3)

f) Resurrections in their order. (1 Corinthians 15:22-26)

g) The Covenant approach. The Abrahamic, Davidic and Palestinian covenant fulfilled at 2nd Advent.

h) The Church is in heaven before the Seal Judgements (Revelation 4,5)

i) The contrast between the 2nd Advent and the Rapture

RAPTURE – PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE:

(Why the Church will not go through the Tribulation)

1. On the basis of the distinction between Israel and the Church:

- a) God never deals with Israel and the Church at the same time.
- b) Because of the promises to Israel, yet unfulfilled, Israel must have a future. Evangelistic and missionary responsibility of Israel will be completed in the Tribulation.
- c) The nation Israel has not been completed.
- d) "Daniel's 70 weeks" not completed. (Jeremiah 25:11, 12, 29:10, Daniel 9:2, 24, 25)

2. Statement and Structure of Revelation:

- a) The statement (Revelation 3:10) "Tereo ek" (to keep out), not "Aireo" (to take out) used in context.
- b) The structure: Church Age/Tribulation/Millennium/Eternity. (Rev. 2-3, 7-19, 20, 21:1-8)

3. The Statement of Thessalonians:

- a) Removal of the restraining presence of the Holy Spirit is impossible without removing the Church at the same time. 2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7.
- b) In 2 Thessalonians 2:2 the incorrect translation in the A.V. confuses the entire passage. "Day of Christ" should read "Day of the Lord".(False teachers came with a forged letter supposedly from Paul which implied that the Day of the Lord, or the Tribulation, had already come).
- c) In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 the phrase "in Christ" refers to believers in the Church Age. Verse 18 emphasises a comfort which could not exist if the Church went through the Tribulation.

4. Remnant of the Tribulation:

- a) Christ returns to the earth with His saints. (1 Thessalonians 3-13, Jude 1 4).
- b) Jesus at the same time delivers saints at the Second Advent. (Zechariah 14:1-5)
- c) Christ cannot come with saints and deliver saints unless there are two groups of saints - Church and Tribulation. Obviously, both groups exist and both groups of saints are separated.

5. Grace before judgement: God gives grace before judging.

- a) Warning - Noah was rescued by heeding God's warning.
- b) Rescue - Lot was rescued by God.

6. Imminence of the Rapture:

- a) No prophecy of Scripture has to be fulfilled before the Rapture can take place. (1 Corinthians 1:7, Colossians 3:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:1, Titus 2:13)
- b) Hence, the Rapture can take place at any time.
- c) Not so the Second Advent: much prophecy must be fulfilled before Second Advent.

7. Nature of the Tribulation:

- a) Purpose of the Tribulation: to bring judgement on a Christ-rejecting world. God demonstrates that man cannot provide a perfect environment when Satan has full control and restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit is removed.
- b) God completes His dealings with Israel, which allows the Jews to fulfil their missionary ministry begun after the Babylonian Captivity.
- c) God prepares Israel for the fulfilment of the Unconditional Covenants by the return of Christ during Israel's darkest hour and the low point of human history Tribulation).

8. Activity of the Church in Heaven (Revelation 4,5)

- a) Before the Church returns to the earth with Christ, they must appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ for evaluation of production in the Christian walk - rewards. (2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15)
- b) Hence, some interval is necessary (7 years) before the Bride of the Lamb can be prepared.
- c) The marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven. (Revelation 19:6-8) after which the Bride returns to the earth with the Groom. (Revelation 19:14). The wedding feast is held on earth. (Revelation 19:9)