

The background of the cover is a photograph of a lighthouse at night. The lighthouse is white with a dark top section. Bright beams of light radiate from the top of the lighthouse against a dark blue sky. At the base of the lighthouse, there is a small white building with a dark roof and two chimneys. A group of people is gathered around the base of the lighthouse, and a wooden fence runs across the foreground. The entire image is framed by a thick yellow border.

# **The Lighthouse**

## **NEW TESTAMENT NOTES**

# **Revelation**

**Mark W. Fenison, ThM.**

# The Lighthouse

## New Testament Notes

By  
Mark W. Fenison, ThM.

# Revelation

**Published under the Authority**  
**Victory Baptist Church**  
3 Alpine Court, Vader WA

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### Introduction to the Revelation unto the Seven Congregations in Asia

**Writer:** - The Apostle John wrote this on the isle of Patmos where he was in exile for refusing to acknowledge Caesar as Lord. John lived under a one-world government that persecuted the congregations of Christ. He also lived under a one-world ruler who demanded worship (Caesar) as God (Rev. 1:9). John claimed to be *“your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ”* (Rev. 1:9)

**Time of Writing:** AD 96-97. The temple had already been destroyed at Jerusalem and therefore John placed the focus upon the temple in heaven and its symbolism in nearly every chapter of this book. Timothy was the Pastor at Ephesus when Paul was in Rome, about to die by the hands of Nero (2 Tim. 4:5-6). John was the Pastor at Ephesus much later after the time of Nero, and this is written after John’s pastorate at Ephesus.

**Theme:** Overcoming this world is the theme of this book (Rev. 21:17). The term “overcometh” and its derivatives are found 13 times. The Overcomer appears in Revelation 1:10-18. The congregations are encouraged to overcome in Revelation 2-3. This world is overcome in chapters 4-16. False religion is overcome in chapters 17-19:4. The kingdom of Satan is overcome in chapters 19-20 along with death and hades. This age is overcome in Revelation 21 by a new heaven and a new earth. Christ is presented as the overcomer in Revelation 1 to His churches living under a one world government (Rome) who is ruled over by a god man (Caesar) who demands to be acknowledged as god and Lord. The churches are presented as living in a time of great tribulation and John presents himself to them as “a companion in tribulation” (Rev. 1:9). The book anticipates the final days of this age when the congregations of Christ persevere under a coming one world government ruled by the Anti-Christ waiting for the soon return of Jesus Christ.

**Audience:** This book is addressed to the seven congregations of Asia (Rev. 1:4; 22:16) as representative of all congregations of Christ (Rev. 22:16). These congregations were most likely founded by the Apostle Paul and/or the congregations he founded in the province of Asia (Acts 19:10). Revelation 22:16 says it is to be read in all the congregations without any mention of the seven in Asia. It is designed to give them hope in a hostile world and encourage them to be looking for Christ’s coming.

1. Ephesus is the over-critical congregation
2. Smyrna is the fearful congregation
3. Pergamos is the erring congregation
4. Thyatira is the woman-controlled congregation
5. Sardis is the defiled and dying congregation
6. Philadelphia is the persecuted but faithful congregation
7. Laodicia is the lukewarm congregation

Jesus presents himself in chapter one under various descriptive symbols of his Person. In chapters two through three he presents that aspect of his Person that meets the need for each

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congregation. In each letter there are (1) His provisions; (2) His prescriptions and (3) His promises.

Most of the book is about the opening of a book with seven seals. When the seventh seal is broken the book is opened. The idea is that “the revelation of Christ” is what is revealed when the book is opened. That revelation is the anticipation first presented to the churches in Revelation 1:7 and then progressively anticipated throughout the book (Rev. 4; 7; 11:18-19; 14) but finally revealed in all of its glory in Revelation 19:11-21:3.

## Encouragement Outline:

### **A. Encouraging Introduction – Ch. 1:1-3**

1. A Revelation Not a Hidden Mystery
2. A Blessing Not a Curse
3. A Promised Fulfillment – Isa. 8:16

### **B. Encouraging Relationship to the Overcomer – Ch. 1:4-20**

1. Who He is to Us – Ch. 1:4-6
2. What He is to Us – Ch. 1:7-18
3. Where He is for Us – Ch. 1:19-20

### **C. Encouragement to Overcome – Chs. 2-5**

1. His Verbal Encouragements for Overcoming Chs. 2-3
  - a. His Provisions Encourage Overcoming
  - b. His Prescriptions Encourage Overcoming
  - c. His Promises Encourage Overcoming
2. Visions of Encouragement for Overcoming – Chs. 4- 5
  - a. His Preview of Glory Encourages Us – Ch. 4
  - b. His Possession of the Book Encourages Us – Ch. 5

### **D. Encouragements in Judgment upon our Enemies – Chs. 8-9, 15-19**

1. Partial Payments against Persecutors
  - a. Satan’s Servants Tormented (Unsealed Lost) – Chs. 8-9
  - b. Satans’s Political Kingdom Tormented – Chs. 15-16
  - c. Satan’s Religious Kingdom Tormented – Chs. 17-18
2. Permanent Payments against Persecutors – Chs. 19-20
  - a. Satan’s Religious Kingdom Destroyed – Ch. 19:1-4
  - b. Satan’s Political Kingdom Destroyed – Ch. 19:11-21
  - c. Satan’s Prophet Cast into Gehenna – Ch. 19:20
  - d. Satan’s Beast Cast into Gehenna – Ch. 19:20
  - e. Satan Cast into Gehenna – Ch. 20:10
  - f. Satan’s Family Cast into Gehenna – Ch. 20:11-15

### **E. Encouragement Found between Judgments – Chs. 7, 10-11, 12-14**

1. His People Stand Secure – Ch. 7
2. His Mysteries Completed – Chs. 10-11
3. His Seed Victorious – Ch. 12
4. His Harvest Completed – Ch. 14

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## F. Encouragements found in Final Portions – Chs. 21-22

1. New Heaven and New earth
2. New Capital City
3. God with Us
4. Tree of Life and River of Waters

## G. Encouragement found in final words – Ch. 22:20-21

## Book Outline:

### A. Introduction – Ch. 1:1-9

### B. The Things which Thou hast Seen – Ch. 1:9-21 – (Pre-97 A.D.)

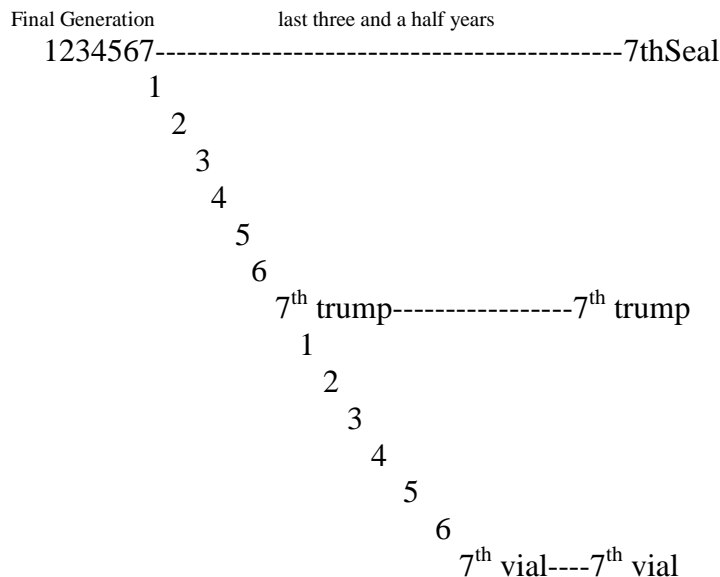
### C. The Things which are – Chs. 2-3 (97 A.D.)

### D. The Things which shall be hereafter – Chs. 4-22:5 (Post 97 A.D.)

### E. Conclusion – Ch. 22:6-22

## The Chronological Graph of Revelation

1 2 3 4 5 seals current age birth pangs in generations between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> coming



The first five seals characterize every generation but as time progresses to the end they increase in severity as birth pangs until they reach the time period of Matthew 24:15. Then all six seals come to their climax, just as birth pangs come to their climax before the birth or revelation of a child from a womb. However, in this case, the climax of birth pangs brings forth the revelation of the Son of God from heaven.

## Introduction to Eschatology

The term “eschatology” comes from two Greek words *eschatos* (last things”) and *ology* (study of) and means “*study of last things*.” In order to grasp some of the disputes that surround this topic, there must be an understanding of some basic terminologies.

For example there are two basic areas of dispute that surround the two terms, “tribulation” and “millennium.” The term “tribulation” refers to a time of great trouble. The term “millennium” means a “thousand” and depending upon your view either refers to a *period of time*, before or after His coming or a *spiritual state* before His coming. Regardless, of your view the word means a “thousand.”

In regard to the tribulation there are three views – Pre, Mid and Posttribulational. In regard to the millennium there are also three views – Pre-, A-, and Postmillennialists.

Let’s first consider the issue of the millennium. The prefix “pre” means “before.” Some are called “**PRE**-millennialists” because they believe that at the end of this age Christ will come and then set up a kingdom on earth and rule on earth for a thousand years **BEFORE** He ushers in a new heaven and earth. At the beginning of this thousand year period, they believe that the nation Israel will be restored to God and will rule over the other nations of the world during this time. The prefix “pre” points out that they believe His second coming will occur **BEFORE** this thousand year period begins.

Others identify themselves as “**POST**-millennialist. The prefix “post” means “after.” A **POST**-millennialist believe that Jesus will come **AFTER** (post) a thousand year reign. They would spiritualize this thousand year reign. Instead of interpreting it as a period of time or one thousand literal years with Christ literally reigning on earth, they believe it is the present rule of Christ through the gospel. They often call themselves “gospel millennialists” because they believe the gospel is being proclaimed now and will eventually dominate the earth so that the world welcomes Christ to earth. In their perspective things will get better and better due to the proclamation of the gospel during this period we live which they identify as the millennium or a spiritualized state or condition of gospel reign. They do not necessarily believe that the nation of Israel will be restored and reign with Christ over other nations although they do believe a “remnant” of Israel will be saved.

A third group identify themselves as “A-millennialists.” They do not believe in a literal thousand year reign of Christ upon this earth. The prefix “a” means “no” in Greek and therefore an “A-millennialists” is one who believes in “no millennium” at least in a literal sense. They believe that Christ is reigning in the hearts of His people now and that someday He will come and put down the kingdoms of this world and usher in a new heaven and earth. They do not believe in the restoration of the nation Israel nor do they believe in the resurrection of the righteous separated from the unrighteous by a thousand years. They believe in a general resurrection of all the dead at one time at the end of this age when Christ comes after He conquers the nations of this world. Upon the return of Christ the resurrection occurs and He immediately raises all the dead in one resurrection and then one judgment scene occurs after which he immediately creates a new heaven and earth.

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Primarily it is among pre-millennialists that there is a dispute over the time of the rapture in regard to the tribulation period. All premillennialists (those who believe Christ will come first and then set up His kingdom on this earth for a thousand years) believe that at the end of this age there will be a time of great trouble upon earth just prior to the second coming and millennial reign of Christ. They are divided over two things concerning this great time of trouble. They disagree when this trouble begins and how long this trouble will last and they disagree concerning the exact time Christ will come in regard to this time of trouble.

Many identify this time of trouble to be seven years in length and synonymous with the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel in Daniel 9:24-27. Others believe that this time of trouble occurs within the 70<sup>th</sup> week beginning in the middle. Others believe that this time of trouble began with the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem and continues unto the end of this age. The area of dispute over the exact time of Christ's return is identified by three prefixes attached to the word "tribulation" – Pre-tribulation, Mid-tribulation and Post-tribulation. All premillennialist believe He will come before the millennial period. However, some believe He will come before this tribulation period begins while others believe He will come during the middle of it while others believe he will come just prior to the close of this period.

Those who call themselves "**PRE**-tribulationists" believe that Jesus will come secretly before this time of tribulation begins and will resurrect and rapture away the saints and then pour judgments out upon this world, the antichrist and his followers. After this seven year period of tribulation they believe He will come with those raptured saints and put down the antichrist and set up the millennial reign of Christ upon a rehabilitated earth.

Others call themselves "**MID**-tribulationists" and they believe that Christ will not come or resurrect and rapture the saints until the middle of this last seven year period. They would make a distinction between Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week and the great tribulation. They would argue that the tribulation does not begin until the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel with the revelation of the Antichrist as "god."

The last group call themselves "**POST**-tribulationists" because they believe that the Second coming involves only one coming and that it occurs just prior to the battle of Armageddon after the tribulation. They would make a distinction between the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and events that occur within this seven year period (such as the great tribulation, the wrath of God, the battle of Armageddon, etc.). They believe that Christ resurrects and raptures the saints to meet Him in the air and then descends to put down all earthly kingdoms at the battle of Armageddon and then sets up His millennial reign.

Hence, much of the debate in the area of eschatology revolves mainly around two periods of time. The period called Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week or the final seven years of this age and the period called the millennial reign. You need to study what the Bible says concerning these two time periods and come to a conclusion about what you believe about them.

This writer is what would be called a Post-tribulation Premillennialists. I believe that Christ will come near the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel just prior to the battle of Armageddon. At that precise time He will resurrect and rapture the saints to Him in the air and then descend and enter

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into that battle. He will win and put down the kingdoms of this world. After His victory at Armageddon there will be a seventy-five day period wherein Christ will reward His saints according to their works and the marriage of the Lamb will occur followed by the marriage supper that ushers in His thousand year reign over this earth.

## *Revelation unto the Seven Congregations in Asia*

### Introduction – Ch. 1:1-9

#### *Chapter 1*

**T**he Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified [given in symbols] it by his angel unto his servant John:<sup>1</sup>

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> and of all things that he saw.<sup>3</sup>

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.<sup>4</sup>

4 John to the seven congregations which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;<sup>5</sup>

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

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<sup>1</sup> **“Things which must shortly come to pass”** – Everything in Revelation 4-21 is anticipated as coming soon. It has been nearly 2000 years since this claim was made. However, Peter reminds us that God does not count time as men count time (2 Pet. 3:8-9). The divine clock regards a thousand years as but a day in God’s sight. **“Signified”** means it was communicated in symbols. However, we should interpret everything literal unless the immediate and overall context clearly shows it is to be interpreted as a symbol. Any other approach only opens the door for whatever nonsense one can imagine.

<sup>2</sup> **“The word....the testimony”** – This has reference to the Isaiah 8:16 prophecy that predicts that “the law and the testimony” or the whole Biblical canon would be completed by “my disciples” or under the supervision and direction of the apostles. John sees this book as the final capstone of the Biblical canon and thus places a blessing upon those who hear it as well as a curse upon those who add or subtract from the scriptures as finalized in this book.

<sup>3</sup> **“The word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ”** – Isa. 8:16 “bind up the law and the testimony among my disciples.” John as the last living apostle was completing this prophecy in Isaiah and placed a curse on any who added to this final revelation of Jesus Christ – Rev. 22:18-19 until the next revelation from heaven (Isa. 8:17; Rev. 22:20-21).

<sup>4</sup> **“Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear”** – This is the only book of the Bible that promises a blessing unto the person (“he”) who will read it and unto those (“they”) who hear the reading of it. This is a book that glorifies Christ and promises victory and gives encouragement.

<sup>5</sup> **“God gave unto him....sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.... John to....from Him....and from the seven Spirits before His throne.....and from Jesus Christ.”** No claim of immediate and direct inspiration could find stronger expression. It is addressed to the seven congregations of Asia as representatives of all the Lord’s congregations.

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6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>6</sup>

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.<sup>7</sup>

8 I am Alpha and Omega [first and last letters of the Greek alphabet], the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.<sup>8</sup>

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos [Island in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Turkey], for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup>

### Things which Thou Hast Seen

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's [Gr. kuriakos], and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,<sup>10</sup>

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven congregations which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and

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<sup>6</sup> **"Hath made us"** – We are presently "kings and priests" unto God. That is our position before God due to justification by his blood (v. 5). Every child of God is a "priest" and has direct access to God through Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:18-19).

<sup>7</sup> **"Every eye will see him"** – John is quoting primarily from Zechariah 12:9-10. The immediate context of this quotation is upon the eve of a planned destruction of Jerusalem by nations gathered against it (Zech. 12:9). The Lord roars out of heavenly Zion to rescue Israel from sure destruction, and as He comes in the clouds, they look upon him and believe in Jesus as their Christ (Rom. 10:26-30). **"They that pierced him"** is a direct reference to the nation of Israel.

<sup>8</sup> **"I am the Alpha and Omega"** – There is only one Alpha and one Omega in the Greek Alphabet just as there can only be one who is "first" and "last." Yet both the Father and the Son claim these titles demonstrating they are one in essence or nature but distinct in person. In verses 10-17 it is Jesus Christ that claims both titles. There can be no doubt it is Christ that speaks in verse 17 as **"the first and the last"** and therefore is the same one speaking in verse 11 as the **"Alpha and Omega."** Jesus is "Jehovah our Savior."

<sup>9</sup> **"Companion in tribulation"** – This was written in a period of tribulation. John says he was in the isle of Patmos because of "the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." However, John was not their only "companion" in tribulation as Jesus Christ presents Himself as standing in the midst of the congregations with them during this time encouraging them to overcome by looking to Him, and finding their needs fulfilled in the revelation given of Himself.

<sup>10</sup> **"On the Lord's Day"** – This does not refer to the eschatological "day of the Lord" as the Greek here is completely different. John uses the exact phrase that signified the observance of Sunday once a month as prescribed by Caesar to worship him as the god man. The only other place the Greek term "kuriakos" is used in the New Testament is 1 Cor. 11:20. The apostles refused to allow Caesar the right to this claim, but used it for observances belonging to Jesus Christ as the true God man. The "Lord's" supper (1 Cor. 11:20) and the "Lord's" day (Rev. 1:10). John was on the isle of Patmos for refusing to offer up incense to Caesar as the god man.

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unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea<sup>11</sup> [cities located in eastern Turkey].

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance [appearance] was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [Gr. *hades*] and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven congregations: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven congregations.<sup>12</sup>

### Chapter 2

Unto the angel<sup>13</sup> of the congregation of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “**Ephesus**” – is the only congregation among those named here that has its origin recorded in the New Testament (Acts 18-19). John was the Pastor of this congregation after Timothy left and may have been responsible for sending out missionaries from this congregation in organization of the other six as the other six follow in the natural route leading east from Ephesus.

<sup>12</sup> “**The angels of the seven congregations**” – Christ does not need to write a letter to angelic beings as they are always in His presence and he has never communicated with them through letters written by human instruments. The term translated “angels” is also translated “messengers” elsewhere. The Pastor is a messenger of the Lord as he receives his messages from the Lord and then delivers it to the congregation. These are the seven pastors of these seven congregations. The so-called universal invisible church has no angel or pastor over it. These seven Pastors and congregations represent all the Lord’s congregations and their Pastors.

<sup>13</sup> “**Unto the angel**” – As in Matthew 28:16-20 Jesus communicates to his congregations through their ordained leadership. The Pastor acts as the messenger from the Lord to his congregation. He receives his message from the Lord and communicates it to the flock.

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2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans [**Conquerors of the people**], which I also hate.<sup>15</sup>

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the congregations; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.<sup>16</sup>

8 And unto the angel of the congregation in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the congregations; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> **"Congregation of Ephesus"** – Ephesus is the critical congregation. Their problem is that they are too critical. Their need is to return to love as their first priority. The solution is to realize that Christ is standing in their midst and examining them and that their leadership are in His hand. The Judge stands in the midst of a judgmental congregation.

<sup>15</sup> **"The Nicolaitans"** – The term means "overcomers of the people." They are also mentioned in verse 15 at Pergamos. Here it is their "deeds" while in Pergamos it is their "doctrine" or teaching. Christ hates both. Some believe this was a Gnostic cult started by Nicolas, one of the seven deacons who supposedly later apostatized. However, it may refer to one of the earliest errors that crept in among the congregations – eldership rule instead of congregational rule (Mt. 18:17). Take note that Jesus never directed these letters to a board of elders to implement but rather held the congregation responsible ("saith unto the congregations").

<sup>16</sup> **"He that overcometh"** – Many of the problems that are present in the congregation are not individual problems but problems that must be addressed and corrected by the majority of the congregation acting in unity as a congregation. Hence, the promises for the overcomer do not refer to individual salvation. These letters are about their works "I know thy works." Those addressed are not non-congregational believers but ones who have spiritual "ears" and are immersed believing members. They already possess eternal life now (Jn. 5:24; 10:28; 11:26). Our faith has already overcome the world (1 Jn. 5:4-5). However, we have not overcome in the area of service which involves our "works." What Christ promised the overcomer is to "eat" of the tree of life not "eternal life." There are saved in heaven who do not "eat" of the tree of life but receive only its "leaves" (Rev. 22:2). There are "saved" that do not have the New Jerusalem as their dwelling place (Rev. 21:24-25) but live outside of its gates upon the new earth. The fruit is reserved for those whose home is the New Jerusalem where the tree of life exists (Rev. 22:3). In the garden of Eden the fruit was for those who deserved to remain in the garden whereas the leaves were for those who lost that right. The New Jerusalem is described in bridal terms because this is where the wife of the Lamb dwells.

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12 And to the angel of the congregation in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.<sup>18</sup>

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans [see Rev. 2:6], which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the congregations; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.<sup>19</sup>

18 And unto the angel of the congregation in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest [allow] that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> **"Shall not be hurt of the second death"** – This is not stated as a condition but as an encouragement. Their salvation is never questioned but declared "Thou art rich" (v. 9). The obstacle they must overcome is fear (v. 10) of persecution unto physical death. Christ cannot promise them they will not be hurt by physical death but he can present himself as one who confronted the threat of physical death, died and overcome physical death (v. 8) and he can promise that nothing beyond physical death can hurt them. They were told in advance that faithfulness would cost them their physical life but they will receive the "crown of life" or the crown in the next life if they did not shrink back due to fear of physical death.

<sup>18</sup> **"The doctrine of Balaam"** – Balaam could not get God to curse Israel, so he devised a scheme to bring Israel under God's wrath. He first enticed them through lust of women and then brought them into idolatry or false worship. The Word of God is the sword of His Mouth. False doctrine is to be confronted by God's Word.

<sup>19</sup> **"Eat of hidden manna....white stone....new name.....which no man knoweth"** – All Israel was given "manna" and all Christians have received Christ as God's manna. However, only the High Priest was allowed to enter into the holiest once a year where inside the ark of the covenant there was a jar of manna. This was the promise of special access beyond that given to all Christians. The new name which no man knoweth but the one receiving it is also a promise of special privilege beyond that given to all Christians. The New Jerusalem is not the dwelling place for all the saved (Rev. 21:24-25) but it is the special privilege for the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2).

<sup>20</sup> **"Because thou sufferest that woman....to teach"** – The Bible explicitly forbids women to "teach" men or to take a public position of leadership over the congregation (1 Cor. 14:33; 1 Tim. 2:11-12). Christ presents himself as Judge who has passed a verdict upon this woman and those that follow her. The congregation is to stand with Christ's judgment of her (1 Cor. 5:4-5). We are not the judge of others but we are to stand with God's judgments when they condemn ourselves or others.

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21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the congregations shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins [motives] and hearts [desires]: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:<sup>21</sup>

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the congregations.

### Chapter 3

**A**nd unto the angel of the congregation in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> **“Power over the nations”** – The “remnant” of the nations that did not go up to Armageddon will be saved and enter into the millennial reign of Christ (Zech. 14:16). In the new heaven and earth there are “nations” of the “saved” (Rev. 21:24) who have “kings” that rule over them. These kings bring their honor into the city (Rev. 21:24). This is a promise to be “kings” over other “saved” peoples in the new earth. This promise is given to those members who take a stand and vote to remove this woman as a teacher in the congregation. However, this is a congregational problem rather than an individual membership problem. No single individual can correct this problem. Hence, to overcome it requires cooperate congregational disciplinary action by the majority. This is another proof that these promises to overcomers have nothing to do with individual salvation.

<sup>22</sup> **“Not defiled their garments”** – Imputed righteousness cannot be defiled because it is judicial and positional. When believers were immersed they would take off their old clothes and put on a white garment to be immersed into the membership of the congregation or “bride” of Christ (Rom. 6:4-5; 2 Cor. 11:2). In the Jewish marriage ceremony the bride would walk “in white” with the bridegroom and the wedding gown represented the faithfulness of the bride (Rev. 19:6-8). Unfaithfulness defiles the symbolism of that immersion garment.

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5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment [clothes]; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.<sup>23</sup>

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the congregations.

7 And to the angel of the congregation in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.<sup>24</sup>

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.<sup>25</sup>

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the congregations.

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<sup>23</sup> “**Book of life**” – There are three books of life mentioned in the Scriptures. (1) One refers to **physical** life, and the termination of physical life by being removed from this book – Ex. 32:32; (2) The Lamb’s book of life refers to **spiritual** life obtained by a sacrificial lamb – Rev. 13:8. (3) Then in ancient times there was the book of the living at the entrance gate to every city listing those with a life of **privilege** to dwell in the city. Each citizen had responsibilities to fulfill. Those who failed to fulfill their social responsibilities were removed from the city, and their names erased. These books can be easily distinguished from each other by their contextual placement. The removal from the book of physical life is found in a context of life “under heaven” (Deut. 25:19; 2 Kgs 14:27). The book of spiritual life is always in a context of redemption and/or heaven (Lk. 10:20; Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 21:27). The book privilege, or city life, is always in the context of the New Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-23; Rev. 3:4-5; 22:19).

<sup>24</sup> “**Because thou hast kept.....I will also keep thee**” – This is not an unconditional promise, but a promised based upon them having steadfastly endured keeping His Word. There were ten general world wide persecutions under the Roman Empires. This promise has a completed historical application to this specific kind of congregation. The words “keep thee” has no reference to be taken out of the world, but to keep them from harm while in the world, as the very same words by the very same speaker are used in John 17: 15 - *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil*. Take note that removal from the world and to keep them are not one and the same.

<sup>25</sup> “**Pillar in the temple of my God**” – Peter, James and John were recognized as “pillars” in the congregation at Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9). The congregation is “the temple” of God (1 Cor. 3:16). These promises are about becoming a permanent resident in the New Jerusalem. The bride in marriage takes the name of the Bridegroom and His Father. The city is likened as a “bride” because she is the dwelling place of the bride (Rev. 21:2). However, not all the saved will dwell in that city (Rev. 21:24). Not all of the “saved” partake of the fruit of the tree of life (Rev. 22:2).

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14 And unto the angel of the congregation of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment [clothing], that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.<sup>26</sup>

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the congregations.

### Things Which Shall be Hereafter

#### Chapter 4

**A**fter this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow<sup>27</sup> round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> **“Sit with me in my throne”** – Not all saints rule with Christ in the new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:24). Not all saints are in the bride (Rev. 19:9). Not all saints partake of the fruit of the tree of life (Rev. 2:7; 22:2).

<sup>27</sup> **“Rainbow”** is a symbol that indicates wrath is passed. John is taken past the seventh seal and shown the completed victory. Christ is enthroned reigning over creation. The saints are enthroned, crowned and reigning with Christ over a new creation. The Lord shows the churches a preview of complete victory as an incentive before showing the contents of the seals. Chapter four is about the Creator ruling over creation. Chapter five is about the new creation honoring the Creator.

<sup>28</sup> **“Four and twenty elders”** – We are bought into the holy of holies in the temple in heaven. In Solomon’s temple, the Levites were divided into twenty four courses for the orderly service in the House of God. In God’s eternal purpose for the “house of God” there is the Old Testament house of God represented by the twelve tribes and there

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5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.<sup>29</sup>

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.<sup>30</sup>

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

### Chapter 5

**A**nd I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.  
2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

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is the New Testament house of God represented by the twelve apostles. The apostles form the “foundations” of the city while the twelve tribes are the twelve gates of the city. The New Jerusalem is the city that represents the “house of God” in both Testaments.

<sup>29</sup> “**Lightnings and thunderings and voices**” – This is the first of four summary expressions of Psalms 18:9-14 (Rev. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18) that indicate the Lord’s coming has occurred and now he is reigning over a world of peace (rainbow). The has come for His people (Psa. 18:16-20).

<sup>30</sup> “**Four Beasts**” – The Levites were divided into twenty four courses or divisions for those who served in the house of God. However, outside the house of God were encamped all the other tribes of Israel in a special order. They were divided into four divisions with each division having a chief tribe with its ensign or flag. The “lion” “*say the rabbins, the standard of JUDAH on the east, with the two tribes of Issachar and Zabulon. The second, like a calf or ox, which was the emblem of EPHRAIM who pitched on the west, with the two tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin. The third, with the face of a man, which, according to the rabbins, was the standard of REUBEN who pitched on the south, with the two tribes of Simeon and Gad. The fourth which was like a flying (spread) eagle, was, according to the same writers, the emblem on the ensign of DAN who pitched on the north, with the two tribes of Asher and Naphtali. This traditional description agrees with the four faces of the cherub in Ezekiel’s vision*” (Adam Clarke). Thus the twenty-four elders and four beasts represent the total elect of God (see Rev. 5:8-9). However, the house of God wherein the tribe of Levi served were symbolic of the New Testament church as the visible representation of the kingdom of God on earth. In the book of Revelation, it is the churches that are being described but at the same time the churches are visible representations of all of God’s people on earth whether all of them serve in and through the churches or not. The churches are God’s appointed means for service for all of God’s family on earth.

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3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.<sup>31</sup>

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.<sup>32</sup>

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials [bowls] full of odours [burning incense], which are the prayers of saints.

9 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 out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;<sup>33</sup>

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.<sup>34</sup>

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

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<sup>31</sup> “**No man was found worthy**” – The search included every aspect of God’s creation. John is taken back in time before the incarnation and the cross when there was no man that could be found worthy.

<sup>32</sup> “**The Lion...hath prevailed**” – John is then taken forward in time after the incarnation, cross and resurrection and ascension of Christ into heaven. He is announced as the “Lion” but when John looks upon him he sees a “Lamb” having been slain (v. 6).

<sup>33</sup> “**Redeemed us**” – Here the four beasts and twenty four elders are identified as representing all the elect.

<sup>34</sup> “**Every creature...in heaven...on the earth...under the earth**” – John is taken to the end of time when all creation joins in unison to glorify the Lamb. Hence, in chapter four he begins with creation and at the close of chapter five ends in the new creation. In the new creation every creature was in harmony with God and in the new creation every creature will glorify Him.

### Chapter 6

**A**nd I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 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.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny [day's wage], and three measures of barley for a penny [day's wage]; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell [Gr *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.

9 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:

10 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?

11 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 fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair [black bag made of hair], and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely [premature] figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.<sup>35</sup>

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

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<sup>35</sup> “**The stars fell**” – This seal corresponds to Matthew 24:29. Indeed, all seven seals correspond to the order of events found in Matthew 24:5-31. Christ characterizes these things like birthpangs that are found in every generation but are gradually increasing until they climax in the final generation with the birth or revelation of Jesus Christ. As in the Olivet Discourse the first seal begins with false Christs (Mt. 24:5, 24-25). It is followed by wars and rumors of wars, death and plagues (Mt. 24:6-8). Then the revelation of the Antichrist with great tribulation (Mt. 24:15-28). It is then climaxed with celestial and terrestrial signs (Mt. 28:29) that immediately precede the day of the Lord or the coming of Christ.

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15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

### *Chapter 7*

**A**nd after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Asher were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasseh were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.<sup>36</sup>

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

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<sup>36</sup> “**Of the tribe**” – John is seeing the physical preservation of “all Israel” that shall be saved at the point in time when Christ returns (Rev. 6:17; Rom. 11:25-28). They are “sealed” or protected from physical harm as lost Jews who shall be saved. They are called “servants” of God in anticipation of what they are preserved unto.

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13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.<sup>37</sup>

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

### Chapter 8

**A**nd when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.<sup>38</sup>  
2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.<sup>39</sup>

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

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<sup>37</sup> **Come out of Great tribulation** – The Greek text supplies the definite article “[the] great tribulation.” The former Jews were PHYSICALLY sealed, but these are the saved or those who had been spiritually sealed by the Spirit. These are the saved who are members of His congregations and other saved persons who persevere through the Great Tribulation period that begins in the latter half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. He takes the reader right into the time described in Revelation 21-22:3 or the new heaven and earth.

<sup>38</sup> **“Silence”** The book repeatedly brings the reader up to the point of anticipating the revelation of Christ from heaven, but then returns to a preceding point in time and provides more details of things that precede His coming. Here the “silence” indicates there is more that needs to occur before the Lord returns.

<sup>39</sup> **“Trumpets”** – Trumpets were used for various things in Israel. They were used to summon Israelites to assemble for worship. They were used to alert the people of God to dangers or a call to prepare for battle. When God was manifested at Mount Sinai with thundering, lightning and a great earthquake (see verse 5; Ex. 19:18) it was in connection with the sound of a trumpet (Ex. 19:13). God is warning His people to prepare for coming judgments upon the earth. The wicked are the objects of these things (Rev. 9:19-20). These are natural and supernatural world wide disasters. Satan is now preparing his people for these things by predicting them as the coming results of “climate change.” Also, Satan is preparing his people for the supernatural things through the increase of paranormal movies from Hollywood – demons, witches and supernatural catastrophes.

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7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

### *Chapter 9*

**A**nd 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.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

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11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon [destruction], but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon [destroyer].

12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men<sup>40</sup> which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

### Chapter 10

**A**nd I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

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<sup>40</sup> “**The rest of the men**” – He is not referring to the physically preserved nation of Israel (Rev. 7:1-8) or the saved people of God as they are not the objects of these things. He is speaking of the rest of the lost world who will respond to these things as described. When all the plagues were descending upon Egypt God spared His people from most of the plagues in the land of Goshen. For example, John is depicted as living in this period (vv. 9-11) and the nation of Israel and the churches of God are symbolized under the temple during this period (11:1-12).

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4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

### *Chapter 11*

**A**nd there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.<sup>41</sup>

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

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<sup>41</sup> **"The court"** – The temple metaphor is applied to the human body (1 Cor. 6:19) as well as to the churches of Christ (1 Cor. 3:16) and to Israel. Here the court represents the yet unredeemed Israel which is not yet "measure" or secured/saved, but is still under the dominion of the Gentiles and Jerusalem is being trampled under their rule. However, the holy of holies and holy place are measured. This does not refer to any literal temple in Jerusalem as the only ones who could "worship" within the literal holy of holies and holy place are Levitical priests. The holy of holies and the holy place represent the churches of Christ during this period and the outer court represent "all Israel" that is not yet saved (Rev. 7). These are the "two witnesses" or two "candlesticks" (Rev. 1:20). The two witnesses are described by the characteristics of all the famous duo's in scripture – Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, Zerubbabel and Joshua and John the Baptist and Christ. God's witnesses during this final tribulation period are Israel and His church. At the close of this period Israel or the elect "remnant" (v. 13) shall be saved (vv. 8,13) and the Lord's churches shall be raptured (vv. 11-12) or "caught up to heaven in a cloud" (v. 12; Mt. 24:31). The outer court is measured or saved and thus the complete temple is saved, which represents the house of God in the Old and New Testaments or the twenty-four elders in Revelation 4 and the New Jerusalem represented by twelve foundations and twelve gates.

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5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded;<sup>42</sup> and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

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<sup>42</sup> “**The seventh**” – The number seven is used in the book of revelation to symbolize completion. At every “seventh” the reader is brought to the anticipated revelation or conclusion of the seven sealed book or God’s rule on earth. This is true in regard to the seventh church (Rev. 3:21) the Seventh Seal (Rev. 7-8:2); the seventh trump (11:15-19) and the seventh vial (Rev. 16:14-17).

### Chapter 12

**A**nd there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:<sup>43</sup>

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 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.

4 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 which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 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.

10 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, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. 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.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

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<sup>43</sup> **In heaven, a woman**” – This woman first appears in heaven and then on earth (vv. 1,6). In heaven she represents the family of God or the mother of us all – the New Jerusalem which is above. On earth she represents the nation of Israel from whence the Christ child was born. Her “remnant” represent the churches of Christ. Israel is given protection in the wilderness (Rev. 7:1-8) until the time of her salvation. Again, here are the two witnesses of God on earth, Israel and the churches of Christ during the Great Tribulation. Even though not all children of God are found in his churches, the churches represent the visible kingdom of God on earth as it is the appointed means for all of God’s people to serve.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.<sup>44</sup>

### Chapter 13

**A**nd I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, [Isa. 57:20; Rev. 17:15] having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.<sup>45</sup>

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints,<sup>46</sup> and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 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.

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<sup>44</sup> “Which keep the commandments of God” – He is speaking explicitly of the churches of Christ, but indirectly of all of God’s family on earth, because the churches are the visible representation of God’s kingdom on earth where the commandments of God are actually visibly observed and seen.

<sup>45</sup> “**The Beast**” – He arises out of the “sea” of humanity. Another “beast” rises up from the land (v. 11). The “*sea*” symbolizes the restless world of lost humanity (Isa. 57:20; Rev. 17:15). This beast represents the final human government on earth ruled by the Antichrist. All of the attributes of the four kingdoms found in Daniel 7 are found in this final government as it is the climax or “*the feet*” of the image found in Daniel 2 which consists of all the preceding world kingdoms in its final days. The spiritual power behind this beast is the dragon or Satan. The false prophet is false religion or the Great Whore and her harlot daughters.

<sup>46</sup> “**War with the saints**” – Here is proof that more than the lost but preserved Jews are present during the tribulation. The term “saints” has to do with the work of the Holy Spirit proving the Spirit is still present on earth and working in and through his people. The Lord’s churches are present and still waiting for the Lord’s return at the end of the sixth vial (Rev. 14:13; 16:15). True Christianity will be perceived as the greatest threat to any kind of unified system of world government under the rule of the anti-christ. Ecumenical unity requires no absolutes except for the absolute of a system of belief that treats all views as equal truths. True Christianity is an enemy to such a system.

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9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.<sup>47</sup>

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 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 beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had 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.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> **“Another beast”** – The previous beast rose up out of the “sea” whereas, this one arise from the “earth.” However, the beasts in Daniel rise up out of the sea (Dan. 7:3) as well as up out of the earth (Dan. 7:17). However, this beast is not described in one world government terms but in terms that directly contrast him to Christ. This is the Antichrist. So in this chapter we have the counterfeit trinity (the Beast, the false prophet and the antichrist).

<sup>48</sup> **It is the number of a man** – Just as seven is the number that symbolizes completion, so the number six is the number that symbolizes man. Man was created on day six. However, this is a triple six. Three is the number of the Triune God, the triple six is the number of the counterfeit trinity (Satan, the lamb that speaks like a dragon, and the false prophet). This is the final and climatic reign of man in the day of man preceding the day of the Lord. He will demand absolute allegiance under his one world government which will combine both religion and politics in a unified one world government. All who do not give their allegiance will not have access to public markets. The mark on the hand or forehead may actually be the place on the body where a microchip or some kind of DNA marker (finger print or eye print) will be placed to perform public economic transactions. Presently our whole economic system is trending away from cash, checks and cards to something that cannot be counterfeited or hacked.

### Chapter 14

**A**nd I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.<sup>49</sup>

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.<sup>50</sup>

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

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<sup>49</sup> **"On Mount Zion"** – This scene does not occur on earthly Mount Zion but heavenly mount Zion as they have been "redeemed from the earth (v. 3) and are standing "before the throne of God" (v. 5) in heaven. This is a preview of elect Israel that was preserved physically from Satan's wrath in Revelation 7:1-8. They are now described in spiritual terms as saved persons in the new heaven and earth within New Jerusalem. Here is the bride of the Father. They are the "firstfruit" of those redeemed at the coming of Christ. Israel is redeemed at His comings (Rev. 1:7) but in addition to them, there is the remnant of the nations who did not take the name of the beast that are also saved and who populate the millennial earth. This scene takes place in Revelation 21, just as the description in verses 10-11 takes place after Revelation 20:12 and verse 8 occur in Revelation 19:1-4. Eternal consequences are described in advance as a basis to encourage the righteous and warn the wicked during the antichrist period (vv. 6-7, 12-13).

<sup>50</sup> **"No rest day nor night"** – Present unseen realities are expressed in language relevant of what we can understand here and now. This is the strongest expression and understandable description that can be given to demonstrate those in Gehenna (Gr. "Geenna") will not be annihilated but will continue to consciously suffer just punishment forever.

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13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.<sup>51</sup>

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs [two hundred miles].

### Chapter 15

**A**nd I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.<sup>52</sup>

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

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<sup>51</sup> “**Like unto the Son of man**” – verses 14-16 is a preview of the rapture that occurs at the Posttrib coming of Christ in Revelation 19:11-14 when Israel is saved, which is immediately followed by the destruction of the armies at Armageddon in verses 17-20 which occurs in Revelation 19:15-21.

<sup>52</sup> “**The song of Moses**” – After Pharoah had been destroyed in the Red Sea, and after the children of Israel had already crossed over the Red Sea, Moses composed a song to celebrate their victory. Here is another encouraging preview of future victory, just prior to God pouring out his wrath upon the Antichrist and the kingdom of the beast in chapter 16.

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

### *Chapter 16*

**A**nd I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials [bowls] of the wrath of God upon the earth.<sup>53</sup>

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

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<sup>53</sup> “**Upon the earth**” – These bowls are poured out upon explicit targets upon the earth. What is targeted is the kingdom of Satan on earth. None of these have as their objects the people of God. Satan makes war with the saints (Rev. 13:8) but God makes war with Satan’s kingdom on earth.

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14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.<sup>54</sup>

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

### Chapter 17

**A**nd there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:<sup>55</sup>

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.<sup>56</sup>

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.<sup>57</sup>

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

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<sup>54</sup> **“I come as a thief”** – The rapture coming of Christ has not yet occurred but is imminent and occurs right before the battle of Armageddon (v. 16).

<sup>55</sup> **“I will shew unto thee the judgment”** – John is again taken back into history and given the historical rise and identity of the Great Whore followed by a description of her ultimate destruction in chapter 19:1-4.

<sup>56</sup> **“Committed fornication”** – State religion is the illicit union between secular government and religion. State religion is the chief persecutor of God’s saints in all periods of history.

<sup>57</sup> **“Sit upon a scarlet coloured beast”** – The beast is representative of secular world governments headed by “Kings” (v. 2). The harlot is not secular governments of this world.

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5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.<sup>58</sup>

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 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.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.<sup>59</sup>

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

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<sup>58</sup> **“MYSTERY, BABYLON”** – Babylon was the original seat of organized and institutionalized false religion in this world. The “mystery” religions of Babylon were well known and universal in every culture and united to every government in the ancient world and even with Israel at times in her history.

<sup>59</sup> **“One hour with the Beast”** – This is the “hour” when the Beast fights against the Son of God (v. 14; 18:10). These ten kings are in the seventh head or final world government that will arise after the time of John. John explicitly states that they have no kingdom yet in his time. Therefore, that “one hour” had not yet begun in AD 96. The Great Harlot seated at Rome is destroyed “in” (Rev. 18:10) the final “hour” when these “kings” reign with the Beast just before they make war with the Lamb. The fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 cannot be meant here as there was no union of ten kingdoms with the beast to fight the Lamb of God. Neither can the fall of secular Rome in AD 476 refer to this “one hour,” since there was no union of ten kingdoms in AD 476 to fight the Lamb of God. This has reference to the battle in Revelation 19:11-21 when the beast and false prophet are cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. Hence, the Great Whore cannot be secular Rome or Secular Roman Government, because that was overthrown in AD 476 but the Great Whore continues to exist up to the final “hour” of this age.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.<sup>60</sup>

### Chapter 18

**A**nd after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 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.

3 For all 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.

4 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.<sup>61</sup>

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 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 God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

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<sup>60</sup> “**Is that great city, which reigneth**” – This is the city of Rome. Rome is the Great harlot. However, she is called so, because the Great Whore dwells there just as the New Jerusalem is described as a “bride” because the Bride dwells there. In Revelation 18-21 there are two women being contrasted. (1) One is a metaphorical harlot and the other a metaphorical bride. (2) One is described as a worldly city and the other as a heavenly city. (3) One is a persecutor of the saints but has saints dwelling in it while the other is the bride of Christ but has saints dwelling outside of it (Rev. 21:24). The Great Harlot is not secular Rome as she rides on the back of what symbolizes secular governments. The Caesar cult was part of this religion which claimed the lives of all the apostles (except John) and many of the saints. This is religious Rome or the mystery Babylon religion. Later the apostate congregation at Rome would incorporate the leading tenets of the mystery religion. This is why Roman Catholicism can embrace and invite all other world religions to unite with her in prayer and other acts of ecumenical worship.

<sup>61</sup> “**My people**” – God is speaking and omniscience knows His own people from false professors. God commands His people to come out from false institutional religion. Continuing within false religion is to partake of their sins as you support their doctrine and practice by your presence, finances, and obedience. The consequences are physical “plagues” that have been explained.

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11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

### *Chapter 19*

**A**nd after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

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3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 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, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.<sup>62</sup>

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.<sup>63</sup>

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.<sup>64</sup>

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.<sup>65</sup>

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.

12 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.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> **“Made herself ready”** – This cannot refer to the gift of salvation which is not of works (Eph. 2:8-9). This cannot refer to justification by faith which is not of works (Rom. 3:24-28). This refers to the faithfulness of the Lord’s congregations (2 Cor. 11:2) to the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20) as an institution and to the individual members who remain faithful in their service to Christ (Rev. 2-3).

<sup>63</sup> **“The fine linen is the righteousness of saints”** – The Greek text uses the plural “righteousnesses.” The imputed righteousness of Christ is never found in the plural even when applied to all the elect as it is the singular righteousness produced in the life of Christ himself.

<sup>64</sup> **“Blessed are they which are called”** – The bride is never invited to her own wedding as she is the one being honored. Angels are never invited by God to attend anything as they have that right by their position with God. This refers to the rest of God’s elect outside the Bride of Christ. The marriage supper follows the wedding.

<sup>65</sup> **“See thou do it not”** – The created angels “of God” always refuse worship. Satan and his angels seek worship by men. However, the Old Testament describes an uncreated angel (messenger) who received worship as God (Josh. 5:14-15). The angel (Messenger) that Joshua worshipped, led Israel in the conquest of Jericho which is a type of what the book of Revelation is based upon. Seven days (Seven seals) and on the seventh day, Israel marched Seven times around Jericho (Seven trumpets) and on the sounding of the seventh trumpet (seven seals) Jericho fell and so all the cities of the world will fall (Rev. 14:8; 16:19).

<sup>66</sup> **“Dipped in blood”** – At his coming he will trod the winepress of God (v. 15) and his garments will be stained with blood (Isa. 63:1-4).

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14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 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 winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 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;

18 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 the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 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.<sup>67</sup>

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

### Chapter 20

**A**nd I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,<sup>68</sup>

3 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.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment 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

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<sup>67</sup> **“Both were cast alive into a lake of fire”** – They are cast into this lake before the thousand years and after the thousand years they are still there (Rev. 19:10) and not annihilated. The “lake of fire” is Gehenna, or “Geenna” in the Greek (see Mark 9:43-48) as both death and hades are cast into it (see Rev. 20:14-15).

<sup>68</sup> **“Bound him for a thousand years”** – This thousand years cannot possibly refer to this present age as Peter says he is “walking about” throughout the earth seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:6). He hindered Paul and we are called upon to resist him. This thousand year period is yet future after the battle of Amageddon. His “beast” and “false prophet” are cast into the lake of fire due to the defeat at Armageddon and He is cast into the bottomless pit.

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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.<sup>69</sup>

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.<sup>70</sup>

6 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.<sup>71</sup>

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 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.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 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.

11 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.

12 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.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [Gr. *hades*] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell [Gr. *hades*] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

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<sup>69</sup> “**I saw thrones..and judgment was given unto them**” – This occurs after Christ conquers the kingdoms of this world when we reign and rule with Him during a period called “the thousand years.” The time of rewards also occurs at the beginning of this reign with Christ, as those being considered foremost for rewards are those who resisted the beast and his mark during the final hour of the reign of the beast at the end of this age. All these things are physical which they resisted and the consequence for resisting was to be physically “beheaded,” and so the “death” here is not regeneration but physical death for faithfulness in resisting these things as people already quickened, and thus redeemed. They are killed during their resistance to these things.

<sup>70</sup> “**But the rest of the dead**” – The remaining physically dead. This very phrase demands that the previous words “lived again” has reference to physical life from the dead due to being physically “beheaded” for faithfulness rather than spiritual life or quickening during this present age.

<sup>71</sup> “**The first resurrection**” – There is a resurrection before the thousand years and a resurrection after the thousand years. The resurrection before the thousand years has to do with being rewarded and reigning with Christ whereas the resurrection after the thousand years has to do with being rewarded degrees of punishment in the Lake of fire (vv. 10-15).

### Chapter 21

**A**nd 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.<sup>72</sup>

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 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.

4 And 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.

5 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.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

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<sup>72</sup> “**And I saw**” – Always indicates a new vision. This is a vision of another earth and heaven after the old earth and heaven have passed away. Although the millennial earth will go through transformation it cannot be what is in view here as this “new” heaven and earth occurs after the older one has “passed away.” This is the eternal age after the millennial reign of Christ has ended with fire coming down on the enemies of God (Rev. 20:9), ending with Satan and all the lost being cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10-15).

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.<sup>73</sup>

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 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.

### *Chapter 22*

**A**nd he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> **“The nations of them which are saved”** – They have “kings” over them and they “walk in the light” of the New Jerusalem. The “leaves” of the tree of life are reserved for them (Rev. 22:2). The “leaves” indicate who they are. Adam and Eve had the privilege of dwelling in a special place on earth until they fell. When they fell they took “leaves” to cover their shame. They were safe on the inside before they fell and they were “saved” on the outside of Eden after their fall. These “nations” are the “saved” whose sins have removed them from dwelling in a special place for the faithful in the new heaven and earth – the New Jerusalem.

<sup>74</sup> **“Tree of life”** – Neither the fruits or the leaves are partaken for salvation. All the lost have been dealt with at the Great White Seat judgment. No one enters into the new heaven and earth but those already “saved” (Rev. 21:24). Instead the “fruits” and “leaves” are symbolic of the position of the saved in connection with the New Jerusalem

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3 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:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.<sup>75</sup>

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which 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.<sup>76</sup>

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 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.<sup>77</sup>

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.<sup>78</sup>

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wherein the tree of life is located. The “leaves” are for “the healing of the nations” who dwell outside the New Jerusalem on the new earth, whereas the “fruits” are for the overcomers (Rev. 2:7) who dwell within the city.

<sup>75</sup> **“I am thy fellowservant and of thy brethren the prophets”** – Often it is asked what do the saints do now in heaven? Here is an insight to help answer that question. They are serving God in various capacities.

<sup>76</sup> **“Let him be....still”** – There are no second chances at the coming of the Lord. Rewards (v. 12) will be meted out according to what you are at His coming.

<sup>77</sup> **“Right to the tree of life”** – Only the overcomers have the right to eat of its fruits (Rev. 2:7) while the leaves are reserved for the “saved” outside the city. Only the “kings” have the right to enter the city as they bring the “glory and honour” of the nations into the city (Rev. 21:24). The Bride is made up of the faithful who “do his commandments” (Mt. 28:19-20).

<sup>78</sup> **“For without are dogs”** – Outside the city are the “saved” on the new earth (Rev. 21:24) and beyond them are the lost in the lake of fire. However, the “saved” as well as the lost all have one thing in common – disobedience to the commandments of God. The sins that characterize the unfaithful among saved outside of the city also characterize the lost in hell. However, they are all metaphorical “dogs” or “gentiles” (translated “nations”) or outsiders to the New Jerusalem. The term “dogs” is used as a metaphor for “saved” persons that are “gentiles” or outsiders to the house of God. Christ called the syrophenician woman a “dog” and yet she was a believer (Mk. 7:26). Those who do

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16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the congregations. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.<sup>79</sup>

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.<sup>80</sup>

18 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:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city,<sup>81</sup> and from the things which are written in this book.<sup>82</sup>

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

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not come out of the Great Harlot are partakers of her “sins” and may be described by those sins as reasons for being outside the city (Rev. 18:4).

<sup>79</sup> **“In the congregations”** – This book is designed to be read in the congregations. It is a congregational epistle.

<sup>80</sup> **“The Spirit and the Bride say”** – Christ uses the present tense “say” to demonstrate the present existence of “The Bride.” The plural “congregations in verse 16 together are the institutional congregation or the bride of Christ. In Revelation 2-3 the Spirit speaks to the congregations and in Revelation 22:17 the Spirit speaks with the congregations. There are those who are outside of the Bride that give the same invitation (“let him that heareth say come”).

<sup>81</sup> **“Take away his part”** – All the elect have the responsibility to walk faithfully in the commandments of the Lord. Potentially, they have “part” in the book of the living that identifies the citizens in the New Jerusalem. There are three books of life mentioned in the scriptures. There is the “book of life,” from which names are removed upon physical death, which is the book of the physical living (Ex. 32:32-33; Deut. 9:14; 25:19; 29:20; Psa. 69:28; 139:16;) and connected with the phrase “under heaven.” There is the “Lamb’s book of life” (Lk. 10:20; Philip. 4:3; Rev. 17:8) that refers to spiritual and eternal life. Last, there is the book of the living that was on the gates of all ancient cities indicating those who were privileged to conditionally live in that city (Heb. 12:22-23; Rev. 3:4-5; 22:19) if they remained faithful in their civic duties. The physical book of life is always connected with the phrase “from under heaven.” The spiritual book of life is always connected with redemption and from the foundation of the world. The conditional book of life is always connected with a city and civic faithfulness.

<sup>82</sup> **“Add unto....take away from the words”** – This is the final “seal” placed on the finished written revelation predicted in Isaiah 8:16. The next revelation from heaven will be the coming of Christ (Isa. 8:17; Rev. 22:20).

### Can You Know the Time of the Lord's Return?

*So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, **know** that it is near, even at the doors.*  
(Mat 24:33)

*But of that day and hour **knoweth** no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.* (Mat 24:36)

Some suggest that the two texts above cannot refer to the same coming without contradicting each other. Based upon this assumption of a contradiction they suggest that these texts must refer to two different comings of Christ. This assumption says there is a coming that can't be known versus a coming that can be known.

However, there is clear contextual support to show that both texts refer to the very same coming (kingdom coming) and they can be reconciled with each other because the time of this coming cannot be known now, but will become known when certain things yet in the future begin to come to pass.

1. There is but one *literal* description of His coming (vv. 30-31) in the context of each text and it is the same coming – the kingdom coming of Christ.
2. The word “*but*” begins Matthew 24:36 and grammatically demonstrates verse 36 is the conclusion of what is stated in verses 33-35.
3. Hence, what presently cannot be known to anyone but the Father can be known to those watching for certain things to come to pass in the future.

These facts are contextually indisputable, and prevent any reasonable basis for demanding that Matthew 24:36 has any other coming in view other than the one just described in Matthew 24:30-31 – the kingdom coming, as the word “*but*” demands Matthew 24:36 is a continuation of verses 32-35 which has verses 30-31 as its subject.

Moreover, Jesus again confirms that the exact timing of the Post-trib kingdom coming of Christ cannot presently be known to anyone but the Father:

**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.** (Act 1:6-7)

*Therefore, there is no contradiction between Matthew 24:36 and Acts 1:6-7 as both equally deny that anyone can know the time of His kingdom coming now. Acts 1:6-7 refers to the time when the kingdom is restored to Israel which is a post-trib event. Indeed, Matthew 24:33*

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*demands that the time of the Post-trib coming described in Matthew 24:29-31 is presently unknown to all:*

**So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. – Mt. 24:33**

Common sense should tell you that verse 33 above makes no sense if it could be known presently. Hence, the present denial that anyone can know His coming in verse 36 is perfectly consistent with verse 33 demanding that one must watch for future events to know what they cannot know now without those events first coming to pass.

Right now before “*these things begin*” no man can know that time when the Lord returns but the Father. However, when these things begin to come to pass, the Lord tells the same ones that they can then “**KNOW**” that it is near.

### What Things Reveal the Unknown Time?

*And when **these things** begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. (Luke 21:28)*

*And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; (Luke 21:29)*

**When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. (Luke 21:30)**

*So likewise ye, when ye see **these things** come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. (Luke 21:31)*

*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. (Luke 21:32)*

Again, the answer to the question is made clear by simply observing the contextual factors. For example, in Matthew 24:4-14 the Lord lists certain things that do not indicate the end has come. After listing some things beginning in verses 4-6 he then concludes verse six by denying such things mean the end has come:

**And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (Mat 24:6)**

*He goes on to list more things that “**shall**” come, but then in verse 8 repeats that such are not signs the end has come, but rather are just the beginning of birth pangs:*

*All these are the beginning of sorrows. (Mat 24:8)*

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He goes on using the familiar future tense “*shall*” to describe other things, but it is not until verses 14-15 that he first describes the things that do reveal the end has come:

*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.* (Mat 24:14)

*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) (Mat 24:15)*

With the words “*when ye....shall see*” of verse 15 is a specific thing and a specific time frame described that characterizes that the end has come. We believe that beginning in verse 15 is what Jesus was referring to when He said “*when these things begin...know that it is nigh.*” Why? Because everything prior to verse 15 cannot be dated, as these are general trials and tribulations that are found in all generations including the last generation. However, with the “*when*” of verse 15 the Bible student knows that he has come to a specific dated event. Daniel pinpoints the occurrence of this event in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel or exactly three and one half years before Christ comes in glory. Without question, this event lets the believer “*know*” exactly where he is in God’s time schedule of events, and when the Lord will come from heaven. The literal generation that sees this specific event occur will be the literal generation that sees the Lord coming in glory.

Furthermore, it is at this specific event that the Lord says, “*he that readeth let him understand*” – Mt. 24:15. Understand what? From the context the answer should be obvious. He had been asked “*when*” would the end of the world come and what would be the sign of His coming (v. 3). He then listed things that he explicitly says do not indicate the end or his coming. But when he comes to verse 15 and then says, “*when you see*” he lists the very first thing that does indicate the end of the world and His coming is near. Therefore, “*he that readeth let him understand.*” He is to understand that “*then*” and in “*those days*” or those days described between verses 15-29 are the final days of this age. From verse 15 forward the Lord uses time terms repeatedly such as “*then*” and “*in those days*” showing this is a specific period of time and all the events listed occur within that final period of time. Hence, there is no excuse for the reader to misunderstand his later words when he says “*when these things begin*” as he is pinpointing the events that reveal the precise time when they can “*know*” the kingdom coming is at hand. Those events are listed for us between verses 15-29.

Jesus used the same telescopic method used by all Old Testament prophets. He takes a near event (destruction of Jerusalem of A.D. 70) which concludes in scattering Israel into all the world thus bringing an end to the nation of Israel “*until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled*” (Lk. 21:24). However, after Israel has again been gathered to Palestine and Jerusalem this A.D. 70 event will be revisited and replayed, except instead of the armies of Titus, it will be the armies of the whole world gathered against them in the land of Israel outside of Jerusalem in the plains of Megiddo where the battle of Armageddon will take place under the sixth seal, sixth trumpet and sixth vial. However, the sign that such a time has come is when the Anti-Christ is publicly revealed. This is a world leader who openly claims to be God the Son, the promised Messiah – the Anti-Christ or the one who openly takes the place of Christ before the world stage.

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*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 worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.* – 2 Thes. 2:3-4

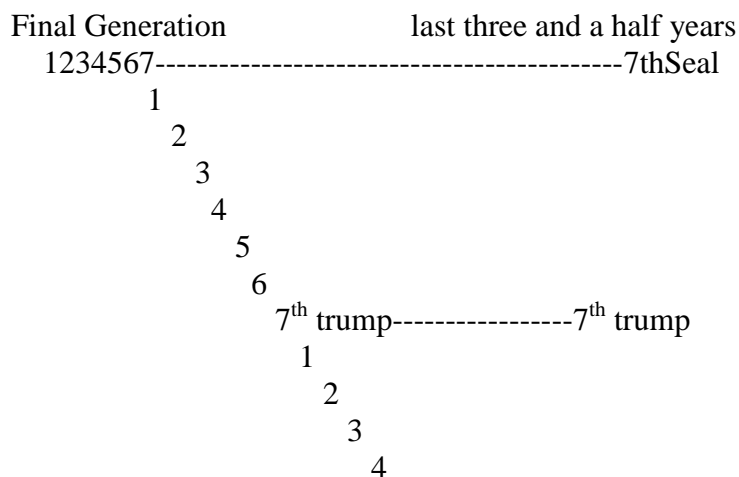
Matthew 24:29 provides the reader with a second sign, which is another timed event – “*immediately AFTER the tribulation of THOSE DAYS.*” This is the second major sign that the end of the world has arrived and His coming is near at hand. This is the sign that interrupts the armies from destroying Jerusalem and turns their focus upon the heavens. Miraculous terrestrial and celestial phenomena occur which stops the armies of the Antichrist from destroying Jerusalem (Rev. 6:12-19). These terrestrial and celestial phenomena are the subject of the seven trumpets (Rev. 8-11).

After providing two clear signs that the end of the world has arrived, Christ then provides the sign of His coming. Celestial signs have turned the focus of the armies surrounding Jerusalem unto the heavens. These terrestrial and celestial signs occur over an unknown period of time between the end of the tribulation and the coming of Christ from heaven (Rev. 8-11). However, the celestial signs in heaven transform into the last and final sign of His coming. They had not only asked, “*what is the sign of the end of the world*”, and he gave them two distinct signs, but they had asked “*what is the sign of..... thy coming.*” In Matthew 24:30 he answers that question. The sign of His coming will be the armies of heaven seen visibly over Jerusalem with the King of kings as their leader. It is at this point, the armies of the Antichrist turn their focus away from Israel and Jerusalem and vainly attempt to engage the armies gathered in the clouds. The period of time covered under this sign is the content of the last seven plagues (Rev. 16).

The book of Revelation is not in a strict chronological order but in an overlapping order based on the number seven. The overlap is *somewhat* akin to the following graph on the next page.

### The Chronological Graph of Revelation

1 2 3 4 5 seals current age birth pangs in generations between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> coming



5

6

7<sup>th</sup> vial----7<sup>th</sup> vial

The first five seals characterize every generation but as time progresses to the end they increase in severity as birth pangs until they reach the time period of Matthew 24:15. Then all six seals come to their climax, just as birth pangs come to their climax before the birth or revelation of a child from a womb. However, in this case, the climax of birth pangs brings forth the revelation of the Son of God from heaven.

### The Question

**And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (Mat 24:3)**

This question hinges on two words “*when*” and “*what*”. The first question is answered by the same word “*when*” found in verse 15 (“*when ye shall see...then*”). The second word is answered first negatively in verses 4-14 (“*the end is not yet*”) and then positively in verses 15-29 (“*when...then....those days...these be the days...immediately after those days...then...*”).

Our contextual interpretation fits the contextual question exactly. Jesus tells them first what “*things*” do not indicate the end has come or that His coming is near. He then proceeds to use time terms to describe the exact events and time that precedes His coming. After doing this, he reverts to parables to reinforce the need to be WATCHING for exactly those things that will indicate His coming is near.

### *The Parable of all Eschatological Parables*

*And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and **all the trees**; (Luke 21:29)*

There are three significant things about this parable. First, it is the only parable repeated in all three accounts of the Olivet Discourse. Second, it is the only parable Jesus says “**Now learn.**” Third, it is the first parable listed in each of the three accounts of the Olivet Discourse. Therefore, it is the interpretative parable for all the other parables.

The parable is simple if taken the way the Lord gave it. The lesson is not to be limited to merely one kind of tree, but it is a lesson that can be learned from “**all the trees.**” This statement denies any specific restriction of this parable to the nation of Israel, as its lesson is taught by “**all the trees**” and not just one (fig tree).

Since Christ has told them clearly what things **do not** indicate His coming is nigh versus what things **do** indicate His coming is nigh, He then proceeds to use this parable to emphasize the

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need for watching for those things that indicate His coming is nigh, so they can “*know*” when the end of the world has come and his appearance is nigh. The parables emphasize the need for “*watching*” for the very things that allow them to “*know*” His return is nigh at hand.

His point is very simple. If you are not watching for when the trees begin to “*shoot forth*”, you are not watching for the coming of summer. To watch for summer’s coming is to watch for when the trees begin to “*shoot forth*.”

***So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. (Luke 21:31)***

The direct analogy to the time of His coming could not be set forth any clearer – “*SO LIKEWISE*.” So likewise what? Just as one must watch for the coming of summer by watching for those things that indicate spring has arrived, so likewise, “*when ye see these things*” (the things listed in verses 15-30) then at that precise time you can “*KNOW*” what you could not know about the time of the end of the world and the appearance of Christ. What is it that could not be known about the end of the world and the coming of Christ previous to His arrival of those things? You could not know THE TIME of the end of the world or the time of His coming.

Nothing could be plainer or clearer, unless you have an unbiblical view you must defend, which clouds your ability to see what is set before you in clear and simple language.

### **The Focal Point of His Coming**

No parable could be more simple and straight forward. You cannot be watching for the Lord’s coming if you are not watching for these things to begin. You cannot “*know*” how nigh His coming is if you are not watching for these things to begin. The “*So Likewise*” conclusion of this parable demands they are inseparable from the command to “*watch*” which follows. The “*So likewise*” conclusion of this parable demands “*these things*” are the inseparable focal point for watching for His coming. A *focal point* is something that is defined as the object of watching. He has clearly defined “*these things*” as the object to watch for if you are watching for His coming. If you are not watching for these things to begin you are not watching for His coming.

Pre-tribbers are not watching for our Lord’s return because they are not watching for the very things Christ commanded “*his disciples*” to watch for in order to know the time of His coming and the end of the world.

In other words, you cannot be truly and Biblically watching for the coming of Christ if you are not watching for the coming of the anti-Christ first, as this is part of those “*things*” that one must watch for if they are truly watching for His return.

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## What it means to Watch

To watch for these things to begin is to watch for His coming, as the former announce the latter. Therefore, “*his coming*” in the remaining parables includes the focal point (these things) as well as His actual arrival. He presents his coming in the manner of the ancient coming of kings to a city. The king’s caravan included soldiers going before him, and those who would clear the path and announce his arrival. All “*these things*” listed in verses 15-29 go before him clearing the path and announcing his arrival. That is why Jesus says,

*And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.* (Luke 21:28)

The remaining parables view the coming of the Lord as inclusive of this whole caravan that attends His coming.

The parable of the good man of the house defines “*watch*” to be constantly on guard, as now none know when “*these things will begin*” and thus none know when Christ will come EXCEPT by watching. Thus, if he evil servant had watched he would not have been surprised. However, the Pre-trib view demands all must be surprised.

Noah’s generation defines “*watch*” to be inclusive of taking heed to obvious preceding signs. The gospel was being preached by Noah announcing the end was coming. The ark was being built that announced it. The animals coming in two by two clearly announced it. All these preceding signs announced the coming of the flood. Likewise, all “*these things*” that immediately precede His appearance (Mt. 24:15-30) clearly announce His coming.

The evil steward parable defines “*watch*” as a warning against waiting until the last minute to be holy as there is no such thing as instant holiness. To be ready then is to be living holy now, as holiness cannot be put on and off as a coat. His coming will always come upon those suddenly who are not watching.

On the other hand, the parable of the ten virgins warns against depending solely upon holiness when you are told that such preceding things will occur. The only difference between the virgins was that five prepared in advance for what they knew was coming. The foolish were shut out of the joy that could have been theirs if they had been prepared in advance (Lk. 21:28). Pre-tribbers will be in a state of denial that they are actually living in this period (Mt. 24:15-24) because their whole system denies they could live in such a time, and therefore they shall not be prepared to face “*these things*.” So “*these things*” will come upon them while they are totally unaware of the time in which they are actually living.

The parable of the talents warn against depending solely upon advance preparation as watching includes serving God accountably NOW with what we are given.

The final exhortation has to do with a warning not to depend upon mere profession without good works. Real salvation produces good works with love for those born of God. All the wicked in the former parables (the wicked servant, the evil steward, the foolish virgins) failed to measure

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up to the meaning of “*watch*.” It is not a mere mouth profession that avails but a profession with the life that measure up to the word “*watch*”

Mark ends his account by saying that the need to watch is not addressed to Jews but to “all.”

*And what I say unto you I say unto **all**, Watch. (Mar 13:37)*

## When does the Day of the Lord Begin?

### Exegesis or Eisegesis

If the scripture demands a distinction that is one thing, but if a distinction is manufactured because a theory demands it that is another thing and it is called “eisegesis” or reading into the text what is not there.

The New Testament does not make a distinction between “*the day of the Lord*” and “*the day of Christ*.” In fact, the Apostle Paul combines them as one event or “*the day of the Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14). This event begins with the Posttrib coming of the Lord right before Armageddon and concludes with the ushering in of the new heavens and earth. The day of man ends with the destruction of the man of sin at the revelation of the Lord (2 Thes. 2:8). The Lord reigns over the kingdom’s of this world until he turns them over to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). The Pretrib advocates manufacture an artificial distinction between “*the day of Christ*” and “*the day of the Lord*” in order to make the scriptures fit their theory instead of making their theory fit the scriptures. This is just one of many manufactured distinctions by the Pretrib theory.

### According to the Apostle Paul:

*That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.* (2Th 2:2)

*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;* (2Th 2:3)

Many Pretrib theologians fanatically argue that the Critical Text reading “*the day of the Lord*” ought to be accepted as the true meaning in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 instead of the Received Text “*the day of Christ*.”

Their insistence on this is understandable as the phrase “*the day of Christ*” is only used six times in the Scriptures and only by the Apostle Paul, and all previous five times are admittedly describing the day of resurrection/rapture. Therefore, if the reading “*the day of Christ*” is admitted to be the correct reading in this text then this would clearly condemn the Pre-trib theory as deception in the strongest terms – “*Let no man deceive you by any means...*”

However, by accepting the Critical Text reading “*the day of the Lord*” the Pre-trib theory fares no better, but even worse. Why? Because if that reading is accepted in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 then we are strenuously commanded not to be led astray by anyone who says that “*the day of the Lord*” will begin BEFORE two specific events.

- (1) “*a falling away first*”
- (2) “*and that man of sin be revealed*”

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This would demand that “*the day of the Lord*” must at least begin after the revelation of the man of sin. The revelation that Paul has in mind is plainly stated in the very next verse:

*“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2Th 2:4)*

This revelation is what all Pre-trib teachers call “*the abomination of desolation*” mentioned by Daniel the Prophet. All Pre-trib teachers admit that this revelation is pinpointed chronologically to occur exactly three and one half years into the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. The basis for this chronological date is the following Scriptures:

*And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until **a time and times and the dividing of time**. (Dan 7:25)*

*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. (Dan 9:27)*

*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**. (Dan 12:11)*

**And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. (Rev 13:5)**

These texts clearly give the exact time of his reign as three and half years (time, times and half; forty and two months, etc.). These texts also clearly tell us that this abomination begins “*in the midst*” of the week.” This pinpoints this revelation precisely three and half years from the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week.

This means that Paul is saying clearly that “*the day of the Lord*” cannot begin until **after** the middle of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Those who teach that it does begin before that are not to be believed by “*any means*” according to Paul.

So, it makes no difference what reading they choose. If they stick with “the day of Christ” as the proper reading, which is defined by Paul as the day of the rapture in every use prior to this one, then Paul is condemning anyone who believes the rapture will occur prior to the revelation of the man of sin. That condemns the pre-trib theory as deception. On the other hand, if they insist that the reading “*the day of the Lord*” must be followed it demands that the day of the Lord does not occur before the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. Therefore the coming of the Lord mentioned in verse 1 cannot occur prior to the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. Those who teach that the Lord’s

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coming or the revelation of the man of sin as the abomination occurs before the middle of the seventieth week are labeled as deceivers by Paul.

### According to the Prophet Joel

The “day of the Lord” is explicitly pinpointed in regard to its exact beginning point by many Biblical writers. For example, Joel demands that certain celestial events occur prior to the beginning of the day of the Lord:

*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.* (Joe 2:31)

*Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is NEAR in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.* (Joel 3:14-16)

Notice that the very same celestial signs occur **before** both “*the terrible day of the Lord*” (Joel 2:31) and “*the day of the Lord*” (Joel 3:14-16) according to Joel demonstrating they are both one and the same “day.”

*celestial signs>>>>The day of the Lord*

Joel places these same celestial signs between the time that the armies have already gathered together at Armageddon and the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven.

*Gathering to Armageddon>Celestial signs>The day of the Lord*

It is the Lord’s revelation from heaven that introduces “*the day of the Lord.*” Hence, Joel places it not only **after** the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week but after the armies gather to Armageddon which is described under the 6<sup>th</sup> vial in the book of Revelation (Rev. 16:14) as **after** specific celestial signs in the heavens which usher in the Lord from heaven.

Some try to avoid this conclusion by manufacturing another day of the Lord. So now they have the day of the Lord and the great and terrible day of the Lord. They say one begins at the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week and the last one occurs at the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week with the revelation of the Lord from heaven. They say they are described as “*the day of the Lord*” and “*the great and terrible day of the Lord.*”

*The day of the Lord>70<sup>th</sup> week>armies to Armageddon>the Great day of the Lord*

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However, this distinction is not supported by scriptures. Why? Simply because Joel uses both disputed expressions and yet places the very same celestial signs as occurring immediately **before** both (Joel 2:31 and Joel 3:14-16).

*Celestial signs>>>The day of the Lord; the great and terrible day of the Lord*

So now they are forced to manufacture two different celestial signs in addition to three different days. One error demands another error.

Also the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 uses the simple expression “*the day of the Lord*” (if the Critical text is accepted) and places it **AFTER** the middle of the week rather than at the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week where their theory demands that particular expression must begin and be regarded separate from the great and terrible day of the Lord at the end of the seventieth week!!!

*Middle of 70<sup>th</sup> week>celestial signs>The Day of the Lord*

Therefore this distinction between two different days of the Lord in addition to another day of Christ with two different celestial signs is artificial and designed to protect a theory rather than to be true to the Word of God.

### **According to Jesus Christ**

*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Mat 24:29-31)*

**Middle of 70<sup>th</sup> week > Great Tribulation > Celestial Signs > Day of the Lord**

The Lord Jesus also places the day of the Lord after the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week (see Matthew 24:15) as well as after the tribulation period and after the celestial signs. There is perfect agreement with Paul, Joel and Jesus concerning the exact beginning of the day of the Lord. It begins with the revelation of the Lord from heaven in wrath upon the armies of Armageddon. Up to that time it has been the day of man, particularly the day of the man of sin, who is the man of all men. However, with the revelation of Christ the day of the Lord begins. Jesus further confirms that the day of the Lord is His glory appearing when He says:

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*And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; (Rev 6:12)*

*And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (Rev 6:13)*

*And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Rev 6:16-17)*

According to Christ the celestial signs occur after the opening of the sixth seal just before the world beholds the angry “face” of Christ coming. Hence, the chronological order is precise and there is perfect agreement between Paul, Joel, John and Christ:

1. According to Paul – AFTER the middle of the week
2. According to Joel – AFTER the gathering to Armageddon and AFTER the celestial signs in heaven
3. According to Christ – AFTER the great tribulation and AFTER the sixth seal and AFTER the celestial signs in the heavens

If we put it on a chronological graph it would look like thus:

***Middle of 70<sup>th</sup> >tribulation>Armageddon>6<sup>th</sup> seal>celestial signs > The Day***

The one solidifying sign that distinctly places the day of the Lord after all these things is the celestial sign. Joel and Jesus refer to this sign in relationship to other end time events. They place this celestial sign AFTER (1) the gathering of armies to Armageddon – Joel 3:14-15 (2) AFTER the revelation of the man of sin – Mt. 24:15, 29; (3) AFTER the tribulation period – Mt. 24:29; (4) AFTER the opening of the sixth seal – Rev. 6:12-13 but BEFORE “*the day of the Lord*.”

Some object to the chronological order given in the sixth seal and insist that because the words “*is come*” are found in the Aorist tense that it should read “*came*” and thus points to a time in the past – the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. However, every event listed in the sixth chapter is found in the Aorist tense. According to that logic the entire contents of the sixth seal should occur at the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week and thus **before all the other five seals, or at least prior to the fifth seal**. Moreover, the context shows that it is the inceptive Aorist “*is about to begin*” that is intended as the mighty men of the earth see His angry face and are trying to hide from Him as they expect Him to descend from the clouds to earth, proving he has not yet ascended.

### According to Peter

*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the 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 therein shall be burned up. (2Pe 3:10)*

*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (2Pe 3:11)*

*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? (2Pe 3:12)*

Note that Peter says it is “the **day of the Lord...in the which**” the heavens shall pass away. Peter says “**wherein**” or within “**the day of God**” the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved. We as Christians are to be “**looking**” for such things. However, these things occur not only after the tribulation period but at the close of the millennial period (Rev. 21:1-2). This day begins with Christ coming in fire (1 Thes. 1:7-8) and ends with fire (Rev. 20). The Day of the Lord is the day when Christ appears as King of kings taking vengeance upon the Man of sin and the rulers of this world and ends with fiery vengeance upon Gog and Magog (Rev. 20) and a new heaven and new earth.

Pre-trib theologians argue that “**the day of the Lord**” begins at the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week with the rapture primarily because Peter identifies the expectation of the churches with the beginning of “**the day of the Lord.**” That certainly fits the Posttrib rapture of the saints but not a Pretrib rapture.

Peter plainly identifies the coming of the Day of the Lord as the “**thief**” coming of Jesus Christ, and the promise of His coming for the church saints (2 Pet. 2:3, 8-9). Church saints are “**Looking for and hasting**” for this “**day of God.**” The Pretribber asks how can one be exhorted to be “**looking**” for something that is not imminent at any second? Peter proves that such language does not mean something must be imminent or can occur at any second. When does it occur? AFTER the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. AFTER the tribulation period. AFTER the gathering of armies to Armageddon. AFTER the opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal. Hence, we can be “looking” for Post-trib events and thus we can be “looking” for a Post-trib coming without doing any violence to this language.

Moreover, all the major terms that Pretribbers demand must mean an “**imminent**” expectation are used to describe the coming of the day of the Lord (“**looking for**” “**as a thief in the night**”).

For example, Paul also contends that the coming of “**the day of the Lord**” is like a thief in the night:

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*But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.** (1Th 5:1-2)*

For example, Jesus also says that no man knoweth the time of its arrival but the Father in heaven and that it is “**nigh at hand**” and “**even at the doors.**”

*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.** (Act 1:7)*

**So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. (Mar 13:29)**

**So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. (Lk 21:31)**

Hence, the very same exact language that Pretribbers demand means an imminent expectation are used to describe the expectation for the kingdom coming of Christ at which time he restores the kingdom to Israel, which occurs after the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, after the tribulation, after the armies have gathered to Armageddon and after the celestial signs from heaven and after Christ sits upon the throne of David in Jerusalem.

### The Pretrib Problem

Every major term and description that Pretribbers demand must **infer** another coming before the tribulation or must demand an “imminent” expectation is equally applied to the expectation and arrival of “**the day of the Lord.**” Furthermore, Peter ties the hope of the churches and their expectation with “**the day of Lord**” as also the “**promise**” of the rapture.

What kind of problem does this present to the Pretrib theory? It totally invalidates any Biblical basis for such a Pre-trib INFERENCE. There is no distinctive language that demands the INFERENCE of a Pre-trib coming, rapture or resurrection at all. If the basis for such an INFERENCE is invalidated then the theory is proven false, as there are no literal and plain statements that bluntly state that Jesus will come before the tribulation anywhere in the Bible.

However in reply, Pretribbers argue there are no literal statements in Scripture that say the rapture and resurrection will occur AFTER the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week or AFTER the tribulation period or AFTER the gathering to Armageddon or AFTER the celestial signs in heaven either.

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They are wrong! There is explicit scripture that teaches a posttrib coming and rapture of the saints which Pretribbers must explain away.

### The Posttrib Rapture

*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming **in the clouds of heaven** with power and great glory. **And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.** (Mat 24:29-31)*

This gathering together is initiated while Christ is still “*in the clouds*.” The angels are sent to earth while Christ is still in the clouds. The trumpet sounds “*in the clouds*” before the angels are sent. Jesus uses the same exact Greek term for the rapture “*gather together*” as Paul uses in 2 Thessalonians 2:1. Jesus uses the same word that includes all the saints of God “*the elect*.” Don’t confuse Matthew 24:29-31 with Matthew 25:31. In Matthew 25:31 a gathering occurs **after** He comes to earth and **after** His throne is set up 75 days **after** His revelation from heaven. But in Matthew 24:31 this gathering occurs **while He is still** “*in the clouds*” at His revelation **before** he sets foot on earth.

Paul provides a clear and explicit Post-trib rapture coming:

*Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled **rest with us, WHEN** the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (2Th 1:6-8)*

With the precision of a grammarian, Paul tells the church at Thessalonica that they will **not** have rest from the tribulation of their enemies **until** the Posttrib revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven. The words “*rest with us when*” define grammatically the exact and precise time **when** they will receive “*rest*” from tribulation. That precise time is “*when*” the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven “*in flaming fire*.”

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 is one sentence in the Greek text. Grammatically, the term “*when*” coincides chronologically with the word “*when*” of verse 10 as the SAME “*day*” of His Post-trib coming. On that precise day of His revelation from heaven, the rapture of the saints occur first while He is in the heaven and then He descends with His elect to take vengeance upon those that brought “*tribulation*” upon the churches.

Furthermore, if “*the day of the Lord*” is confirmed by other Scriptures to occur after the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, after the tribulation, after the gathering at Armageddon, after the celestial signs, then in the book of Revelation there should be such an expectation for that coming by the saints right about at the gathering of the armies to Armageddon. The Lord provides such an expectation right before the battle of Armageddon:

**For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.**

*And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Rev 16:14-16)*

Here is undisputable proof that the “*thief*” coming of Christ has not yet occurred prior to the gathering to Armageddon, or prior to the tribulation period, or prior to the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, or prior to the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. Remember, Paul said the “*day of the Lord*” comes “*as a thief*” in the night (1 Thes. 5:2).

If this chronology is accurate there should be a description of the rapture just prior to the Lord’s descent to Armageddon to do battle:

*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. (Rev 14:12-16)*

I believe this is a picture of the rapture of the saints just prior to another picture of destruction of the wicked at Armageddon. Notice the reaping is done **FROM THE CLOUDS**. Notice the picture that immediately follows is of the battle of Armageddon. This reaping will “gather” them to be cast into the winepress of God’s wrath.

*And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. (Rev 14:17-20)*

This gathering of the wicked occurs **on earth** outside of Jerusalem. Also in the final description of the Lord’s coming at the end of the tribulation you should expect first a description of a heavenly scene where Christ is with His saints before descending to earth to do battle:

*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, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. (Rev 19:11-14)*

Immediately preceding this scene He has already defined the “*fine linen, white and clean*” to be the “*righteousness of the saints*”.

*And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Rev 19:8).*

Therefore, we find the precise order consistent throughout the scriptures that the day of the Lord does not begin until Christ appears in heaven just about to take vengeance upon the Armies gathered at Armageddon. It is at this precise moment, the elect are raptured to “*meet*” Christ in the air (1 Thes. 4:17) just prior to the “*day of the Lord*” (1 Thes. 5:1). This term is always used in scripture to describe a party going out to “*meet*” another party who then returns to the very place they travelled from in order to meet that person (e.g. Acts 28:15).

NOTE: Some attempt to use the book of Isaiah and other Old Testament prophets to teach that the “*day of the Lord*” is an extended period that precedes His kingdom coming, and therefore begins with the Pretrib coming. However, these Old Testament writers are taking near prophetic events (destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon, captivity of southern kingdom by Assyria, etc.) and are applying them to the destruction of the world by Christ at His post-trib advent from heaven. Such an inference contradicts the multitudes of clear and explicit teaching of the order of events in regard to the origin of the day of the Lord.

### **“Come Let us Reason Together”**

An Invitation to Pretrib Advocates

**A. The Major Concerns of Pretrib believers:** The Pretribber clings to his position because he honestly believes that this is the only position that can harmonize a number of Biblical factors:

1. Scriptures that demand present and constant readiness
2. Scriptures that deny knowledge of a coming in contrast to scriptures that clearly set forth preceding events to a coming. – Hence two comings, one that is unknown and one that is clearly made known by preceding events.
3. Scriptures that seemingly demand imminence of His coming

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4. Scriptures that demand a change of focus from the church to Israel
5. Scriptures that speak of a coming “*for*” saints and others that speak of a coming “*with*” saints.
6. The impact of such a coming as an incentive for holy living
7. Scriptures that demand that saints are not appointed to wrath

This list is not exhaustive, but it does represent the major concerns of the Pretrib advocate and why he clings to his position. He honestly wants to embrace something that can harmonize with all of the above, and in his mind the Pretrib position seems to do just that. Finally, this position is the most popular position among evangelicals.

**B. The Posttrib response to these concerns:** In addition to all the above concerns of the Pretribber, the Posttribber also is concerned that a Biblical position must not contradict any prophetic teachings of the Scripture. That is, any position with an emphasis that contradicts and denies the very essence of Biblical prophecy cannot be acceptable. The essence and heart of the Pretrib position is that it demands that NOTHING MUST precede the coming of Christ. However, it is a very simple task to illustrate from Acts chapter one to Acts chapter twenty-eight that the scriptures are full of necessary preceding predictions to the coming of Christ. The book of Acts is just the beginning where a list of necessary preceding prophecies can be found.

However, the Posttrib advocate demands that the true Biblical position must harmonize not only with all seven Pretrib concerns but must harmonize with necessary predictive prophecy as well. The Posttrib position can easily harmonize with all seven concerns. For example:

**1. Scriptures that demand present and constant readiness:** Acts 1:6-7 clearly demonstrates that the precise time of the Posttrib kingdom coming is presently UNKNOWN to all but the Father. To prove this is simple. Please tell me the exact day and hour when any of those “*things*” that announce His kingdom coming will occur???? You cannot tell me can you? Let me ask another question. Can holiness be put on and off like a coat? No, holiness is a maturing PROCESS. A person cannot wait until certain things begin to start being holy and prepared for His coming. The fact that none know when such things will begin is in itself a motivating factor to practice holiness now with the intent to be ready when such things do begin. Peter teaches clearly that Posttrib expectations can be used as incentives for present readiness and holiness (see 2 Pet. 3:12-14). He points the believers past the tribulation, past the millennial reign to the new “heaven” and new “earth” and exhorts them to live holy lives in expectation of that new creation to come. What about death? Surely, the imminence of death should be enough of an incentive to practice holiness now without inventing a view of eschatology to do so?

**2. Scriptures that deny knowledge of a coming in contrast to scriptures that clearly set forth preceding events to a coming. – Hence two comings, one that is unknown and one that is clearly made known by preceding events.**

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However, as already pointed out, Acts 1:6-7 characterizes the time of the Posttrib coming as an unknown to all but the Father. Moreover, when Matthew 24:36 is considered in its context it is clear that it too refers to the coming just described in the verses that immediately precede it (vv. 29-33). The point of these verses is not that His coming is to be UNKNOWN ALWAYS but rather it is unknown PRESENTLY. It remains unknown until certain events announce it. Hence, there is no basis for inventing another coming by using this text as Acts 1:6-7 demonstrates so clearly.

**3. Scriptures that seemingly demand imminence of His coming.** The key to understanding such language is found in the parable of the “*fig tree*” and “*all the trees*.” This parable clearly teaches that it is the FOCUS POINT of His coming that is uncertain and impending. By FOCUS POINT we mean what we are directed to be LOOKING for. This parable demands that the FOCUS POINT for the coming of summer is the sight of trees budding and green foliage appearing. If you are looking for the coming of summer, Jesus demands that your FOCUS POINT be upon these things. Then, the Lord applies this to His own coming which is unknown to all but the Father (Acts 1:6-7 with Mt. 24:36). He says “*SO LIKEWISE ye, when ye SEE THESE THINGS begin to come to pass KNOW that it is nigh even at the doors*.” The words “so likewise” means that we are to apply the point of his nature illustration in regard to watching for summer to watching for His coming. Just as the FOCUS POINT for the coming of summer is the budding and green foliage SO LIKEWISE the FOCUS POINT for His coming is the beginning of “these things.” In other words, you cannot watch or be looking for the coming of summer if you’re not watching or looking FIRST for that which announces its coming. SO LIKEWISE, you cannot be looking for His coming if you are not FIRST watching or looking for “these things” which announce the time of His coming. This parable defines the FOCAL POINT of His coming and it is this FOCAL POINT that is unknown and impending. It is this FOCAL POINT that the rest of the parables in the Olivet Discourse refer to as unknown and impending.

Furthermore, the terms “*looking for*” and “*watch*” do not mean something may occur at any second. Peter clearly demonstrates this when he uses these terms in regard to the Posttribulational, Postmillennial new heaven and earth (2 Pet. 3:12-14). The simple fact of the matter is that we presently do not know when “*these things*” will begin and therefore we cannot know the time of His coming until they do begin. Since they are unknown, it behooves us to be ever watching and looking and ready as we know not the hour.

The Apostle Peter warns against “*scoffers*” that will arise in the “*last days*” who will scoff at the “promise of His coming” due to the fact that long periods of time have lapsed between His departure and their day. They scoff because the language of His promise does not harmonize with the fact that a long period of time has come and gone and yet no Christ. Peter warns Christians not to be so ignorant as to count or reckon the “*promise*” according to how men count such terms. In other words, “*quickly*” and “*is at hand*” and other such language of his coming is not to be understood as men reckon such terms. Men reckon such terms as terms of imminence. However, Peter says for Christians to do so is ignorance (2 Pet. 3:8-9). God counts this promise as in terms of DIVINE IMMINENCE and divine imminence sees a “*THOUSAND YEARS*” as but one day. Hence, with the Lord it has only been TWO DAYS since the promise has been made. The point Peter is making is that His coming cannot be considered in terms of human imminence or it would make Christ a liar and the scoffers would be correct. Of all people, Peter knew that

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Christ could not come at any second because Christ bluntly told him that he would grow old and die before His coming. For Peter to teach Pretribbism would be to make Christ a false prophet.

Moreover, in the book of Revelation the so-called language of imminence is used for all the things recorded that are yet future in the book (Rev. 1:3 the time for those “*things*” to occur are “*at hand*.”).

Some argue that the metaphor of Christ coming “*like a thief*” demands human imminence or any secondism. However, it should be noted that this metaphor is ALWAYS used in contexts where saints are described as NOT LOOKING for His coming and NEVER in contexts where the saints are looking and watching. Indeed, Paul denies that Christ will come like a “*thief*” upon those watching (I Thes. 5:4). Indeed, it is the “*day of the Lord*” is what comes upon those not watching as a “*thief*” in the night. The “*thief*” coming is still the expectation at the time of the sixth vial right before the battle of Armageddon:

*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.* – Rev. 16:16-17

**4. Scriptures that demand a change of focus from the church to Israel:** The New Testament says that the “church” was a “mystery” previously hidden in the Old Testament (Eph. 3:1-5). Therefore, you should not expect any explicit mention of it in Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of Christ. However, it is wrong to suggest that both Israel and the church cannot be on earth at the same time. The church overlapped with Israel until 70 A.D. a period of 40 years and therefore it can easily overlap again for a period of 7 years at the end of the age. The book of Matthew knows of only two ages (Mt. 12) and the church is said to be present on earth until the end of this age (Mt. 28:20). The absence of the term “*church*” in Revelation 4-21 does not keep Pretribbers from finding it in chapters 4,18,19 or 21 and therefore why should it be a problem in any of the other chapters. The term “*church*” is not found in Revelation where there are visions in heaven. The most likely reason that this term is not found in these chapters is simply because it is a time of tribulation and in such times the churches have met secretly as abundance of historical records from the Dark Ages will show. The term “*church*” refers to a PUBLIC assembly.

**5. Scriptures that speak of a coming “*for*” saints and others that speaks of a coming “*with*” saints.**

This is the easiest argument to reconcile with the Posttrib coming of Christ. Indeed, I Thessalonians 4:13-17 demands that Christ comes FIRST “*with*” the departed saints FOR those that are alive. Hence, what is supposed to be the chief proof text for Pretribbism demands that ONE coming is both WITH the saints and FOR the saints. Besides, how can I Thessalonians 3:13-17 be used for a Pretrib SECRET coming???? There is a “*GREAT SOUND*” of a trumpet and a “*SHOUT*” and the emptying of graveyards that occur first. Is God using a dog whistle for a trumpet and will people on earth be both deaf and blind?

**6. The impact of such a coming as an incentive for holy living:** Fear is a good incentive. However, it would seem that the fear of death and the possibility of dying and coming into the presence of God would be a sufficient incentive without creating another theory of His coming. If such a coming is necessary for holy living, then, were Old Testament saints without such an incentive?

The Posttrib position gives a much better and more scriptural incentive for holy living. For example, when are you closer to God? When trouble and tribulation is threatening or when things are going good? The Bible says that “*tribulation worketh....*” (Rom. 5:3-5). Every trial we now experience matures and prepares us for great trials to come and for greater usefulness.

**7. Scriptures that demand that saints are not appointed to wrath:** All such scriptures when considered in their context MAY be easily applied to ETERNAL WRATH rather than TEMPORAL wrath. Usually the context refers to the doctrine of justification and the cross. Shouldn't we make a difference between “*tribulation*” and “*wrath*”? If saints are not appointed to tribulation then why does the New Testament continuously repeat that we are appointed to tribulation (James 1:2; Jn. 16:30; I Pet. 4:12; Rom. 5:3-5; etc.)? Pretribbers believe that saints will be in the 70<sup>th</sup> week and some will survive it. If saints are not appointed unto tribulation are these INFERIOR saints. When the time for rewards are given out, why then, are these tribulation saints given the preeminence (Rev. 20:4) IF they are an INFERIOR class of saint appointed to wrath? Either saints are or are not appointed unto wrath. If they are not, then neither are those in the Tribulation. The Pretribber fails to make a distinction between the “wrath” of God and the “tribulation” upon saints by the world. In the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel the Great Tribulation refers to the wrath of the Antichrist, the Great Harlot and the world. Saints are in the Great Tribulation and therefore are appointed to tribulation as have been all saints in all ages. Furthermore, Revelation 9:20-21 and Revelation 16:1-14,16-17 clearly show that the trumpets and vials are for the wicked only and not for the saints. None of the Gentile saints in Revelation are sealed in the forehead and yet many survive it (Mt. 25:31-44; Rev. 7:9-14). It seems to me that just like in Egypt, God is able separate His people from the Egyptians.

**CONCLUSION:** None of the above concerns contradict the Posttrib coming of Christ in the least. However, the Pretrib position violates the scriptures terribly. The Bible never uses a plural *comings* or any other plural to describe the coming of Christ (revelation, appearance, coming, etc). If there were two comings then such a plural should be found somewhere? To argue that there are not two comings but only two “phases” is absurdly ridiculous. If you left your house got in your car and went to church but didn't go in, merely picked someone up and returned to your house and then seven days later left your house and got in your car and went into the church would that be TWO COMINGS to church or only TWO PHASES of one coming to church? The essence of the Pretrib teaching contradicts and denies multitudes of necessary preceding prophetic events. Another thought to ponder – Jesus spends a whole sermon teaching His disciples not to “*fear*” such things but rather to embrace them with joy and expectation (Lk. 21:28). Why then do Pretribbers constantly present the same things in the context of FEAR and DREAD and hope of escape???????

Look at the other articles on this page and reconsider your position in the light of God's Word and a balanced position that harmonizes necessary preceding prophecies and constant readiness.

### The Biblical Warnings against the Pretrib teaching

There are three distinct passages of scripture that deal with the tenets of the Pre-trib theory and explicitly condemn it as error. These three passages are found in Matthew 24:22-31; 2 Thess. 1:6-2:12 and 2 Pet. 3:3-14.

**Matthew 24:22-31:** In this passage Jesus deals with three false teachings concerning His return. He first identifies them and condemns them and then provides the correct response to each error. (1) Some will teach that Christ will come "*then*" during the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel; (2) Some will teach that Christ will come at some out of the way place on earth where all His disciples will have to gather themselves to that location. (3) Some will teach that He will come secretly. In each case the Lord responds, "*Believe it not.*" However, after he lists these three errors, he continues to give the correct view in response to each error beginning with the last error and working backwards to the first error. Instead of coming secretly He will come like lightening that is seen from east to west. Instead of coming to some isolated place where His followers will have to seek him out, he will gather them together as buzzards are gathered together upon a corpse. They are gathered together in air and in flight. Instead of coming "*then*" He will not come until "*immediately after the tribulation of those days*" after certain celestial signs occur in heaven.

Jesus uses two metaphors and one literal time statement to answer these errors. He uses the metaphor of lightening and the metaphor of gathered birds in flight upon ONE carcass (this cannot refer to Armageddon as there are many carcasses there). He does not use a metaphor to answer the time question as only a time response can answer that.

This response of Christ condemns the tenets of pretribbism. Pretribbism teaches a coming BEFORE those days instead of "*immediately after the tribulation of those days.*" Pretribbism teaches a secret coming. Pretribbism denies a Posttrib gathering of the saints in the air.

**2 Thessalonians 1:6-2:12:** It is the inspired grammar and special words used in this passage that condemns Pretribbism as deception and error. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 the passage is one sentence in the Greek text. There is no rest from tribulation for the churches until the glorious revelation of Christ in heaven. The grammar demands that this rest does not occur until the Post-trib appearance of Christ in heaven. Hence, the churches continue under tribulation until the Post-trib coming. The release from tribulation by the world is due to two things. In regard to the wicked, the tribulation upon the churches is stopped by the Lord coming in flaming fire upon the wicked. In regard to church saints, the tribulation is stopped due to glorification by rapture and resurrection at the Post-trib return. In verse 10 the word "*when*" points back to the rest, which occurs in the day of Christ's Post-trib appearance.

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2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 sets forth the positive teaching of the rapture at the Post-trib return while 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 sets forth the negative defense of that day. In verse one the Greek grammatical rule (Grandville Sharpe Rule) demands that His “*coming*” and “*gathering together*” of the church are the same event. Verse one identifies the topic being addressed as the day when the church is raptured. In verse two the words “*day of Christ*” continues the discussion about the rapture begun in verse 1. Paul is the only Biblical writer who uses this phrase (“*day of Christ*”) and this is the sixth and last time he uses it. In all previous five times the “*day of Christ*” refers to the rapture day as all pre-trib scholars admit. Why reject this established meaning in this last use by Paul especially when verse one says this is the very topic being discussed? Some had been teaching that the resurrection was past and that the Thessalonians had missed the resurrection day. Paul identifies two men who had been teaching this same error:

2Ti 2:18 *Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.*

Of course the resurrection day was also the rapture day as both occurred together as Paul instructed them in I Thessalonians 4:13-17 and in 1 Corinthians 15:50-57. It is easy to see why such a teaching would be upsetting and disturbing. Paul tells them not to let anyone deceive them into thinking that the rapture/resurrection day (“*day of Christ*”) could occur before two primary end time events – the great apostasy and the revelation of the great apostate. Immediately after stating these two preceding events must occur first, he goes on to describe both events. The revelation of the great apostate is described in verses 4-8 while the great apostasy is described in verses 9-12.

Some have argued that the terms “*falling away*” refer to the rapture. However, the ridiculousness of this conjecture is seen by trying to read it that way in context – “*Now concerning the rapture day (v. 1) don’t believe anyone that says the rapture day has already come (v. 2). Because that day cannot come until the rapture day comes first.*”

This conjecture is based on pure nonsense. The Greek word that underlies the English translation (*apostasia*) is never used in Biblical Greek or Classical Greek for anything other than a political or religious revolt. The contenders for this argument know this and so they totally discard the word the Holy Spirit used (*apostasia*) and tell us that what the Spirit meant for us to understand was the root form of this word (*aphistimi*) which is used many times by Paul elsewhere. Paul used the root word (*aphistimi*) elsewhere but chose not to use it here. Why? Moreover, in every case this root word is used in Scripture it is never once used for a *spatial* departure but always used for *religious* or *philosophical* departure. The Holy Spirit chose the Greek word *apostasia* where we get our English word “*apostasy*.”

Moreover, both preceding events (apostasy and revelation of man of sin) are further described in the following verses (vv. 4-12). Paul warns them “*Let no man deceive you*” inferring that those who teach a PRE-apostasy or PRE-antichrist coming are deceiving them. Pre-tribbism is a deception.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:4-6 the one who “*restrains*” is mentioned. Pre-tribbism interprets this restrainer to be the Holy Spirit in the churches. They argue that the church must be raptured

before the antichrist can be revealed. However, this interpretation not only contradicts what has just been denied in verses 1-3, but it is a speculation in contradiction with the clear teaching of Scripture. In the book of Daniel the Lord gives the order of governments that will arise one after the other right up to His coming. In chapter 10 the restraining power that regulates the rise and fall of these governments is said to be angelic with Michael at the head permitting and restraining these governments including the antichrist government. In the book of Revelation it is angelic beings that pour out the wrath of God and Michael is the one who finally restrains both the antichrist and Satan. The restrainer is Michael who directs the angels in the book of Revelation in restraining things until the time for the revelation of the man of sin is appointed.

Pre-tribbism says the rapture occurs before the revelation of the antichrist whereas Paul says it does not. Paul identifies pretribbism as deception and those teaching it as deceivers.

### Peter and the Promise of His Coming

**2 Peter 3:3-8:** Peter warns that in the last days there shall come scoffers which reject the “*promise*” of His coming. The basis for their objection will be the fact that long periods of time have come and gone since Christ promised to return. This long period of delay is interpreted by scoffers to be contradictory to the language used for His promised return. Christ promised to return “*quickly*” and that “*all things are at hand*.” Pre-tribbers interpret this language the very same way scoffers do – in terms of human imminence. In so doing, Pretribulationist scoff at necessary preceding prophetic events to His coming. Therefore, they join the atheistic scoffers in regard to the prophetic Word.

Peter responds that such a principle of interpretation is due to ignorance of how God views time. God does not intend for us to understand that such terms demand an imminent expectation that denies necessary preceding events nor interpret how humans define imminence. Instead God intends for us to understand such terms according to how He counts time. Two thousand years to Him is but two days according to how He reckons time (vv. 8-9). It has only been two days since the promise has been made and therefore to come quickly and to consider all things “*at hand*” is consistent with Divine imminence according to how God counts time.

Moreover, according to Peter, “*looking for*” something does not demand an imminent expectation. He says we are to be looking for the post-tribulational, postmillennial new heaven and new earth (2 Pet. 3:12). Such expectations are anything but imminent by human reckoning and therefore those post-millennial expectations do not deny necessary preceding or pre-millennial events. Furthermore, he says that such a postmillennial expectation can be used as incentive for holy living (2 Pet. 3:14). Indeed, expectation of tribulation is a far greater incentive to holy living than any hope of escape. Indeed, our own death is imminent, so we do not need an imminent expectation of Christ’s coming to motivate us to holiness and imminent expectation to see Him, as the imminent approach of our own death provides that incentive.

Peter could not possibly believe or teach a Pretrib coming. He was bluntly told that He would die before the Lord returns, and he reminds his readers of that necessary preceding event. Moreover, after his death he predicts yet to come a period called the “*last days*” (2 Pet. 3:37)

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wherein scoffers were yet to arise and base their scoffing upon this predicted delay between the first and second coming. The very essence of this prediction denies the validity of pretribbism as pretribbism denies the necessity of any such necessary future preceding events to the coming of Christ. Indeed, pretribbism demands that Christ could have come the very next second after Peter laid his pen down. This very last day prophecy in and of itself is a denial of Pretribulationism. Pre-tribulationism cannot be harmonized with necessary preceding events. Pre-tribbism uses the very same interpretation of His promise that scoffers use. Peter says that both are ignorant, and both fail to properly understand that the promise of His coming does not deny, but includes such necessary preceding events.

### **Pre-tribbism distorts I Thessalonians 4:13-18**

This passage is directed to those attending the funeral parlor so that they are not to sorrow as those who have no hope for a reunion with their departed loved ones. It is to be used to comfort the saints at funerals. It is not stated or implied that it is for the use to comfort saints about the Great Tribulation period or the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel.

Moreover, the pretrib interpretation of this passage is utterly ridiculous. They interpret this passage to teach a Pretrib secret coming for the churches. Some secret coming!! The world will have to be deaf and blind to miss this coming. There is the sound of a great trumpet and the resurrection of the dead out of the graveyards as well as the rapture of saints into the air. Nowhere does it say that the resurrection or rapture occurs in a split second. It is the body that is changed in a split second not the occurrence of the resurrection or rapture into the sky.

For the Pretrib view to be correct the trumpet must be a dog whistle and the emptying of graveyards must be invisible as well as their departure into the clouds.

On the other hand, the words “*we which remain*” can be literally translated “*we which survive*.” This is the same gathering and same trumpet that sounds in Matthew 24:30-31. In Matthew 24:30-31 the gathering takes place while He is still “*in the clouds*”. He sends the angels to gather His elect not only from the four corners of earth but from heaven as well (living and departed). He sends his angels to gather his elect while still in the clouds.

*“Immediately after the tribulation of those days...And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man IN HEAVEN. And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man COMING IN THE CLOUDS of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of HEAVEN to the other.” – Mt. 24:29,30,31*

This is the very same coming presented as the expectation for the churches in Revelation 1:7-8

*“Behold (literally “look”) he cometh with the clouds and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him, and all kindred’s of the earth shall wail because of him.*

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***EVEN SO. Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is TO COME, the Almighty.”***

This is the very same coming described to the churches at the close of the book using the very same language (“*behold He cometh*” vs. “*behold, I come quickly*”; “*Even so. Amen*” vs. “*Even so, come Lord Jesus.*”)

***“And, behold, I come quickly...I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last....Surely I come quickly, Amen. EVEN SO, come, Lord Jesus” – Rev. 22:12, 13, 20***

### **Pre-tribbism is a result of Mishandling the Word of God**

There is not one literal description of the Pretrib coming found in the Bible. Nowhere does Scripture say, “Immediately BEFORE the tribulation of those days shall Christ come or gather together His elect.”

The Pretrib theory depends upon supposed necessary inferences in order to establish itself in the Bible. In direct disobedience to Peter’s admonition concerning the language of His promise (2 Pet. 3:8) pretribbism demands that such language can only be interpreted to mean immanency. Pre-tribbism jerks out of context statements concerning the unknown time of the Post-trib coming of Christ (Mt. 24:36 with Acts 1:6-7) and demands this refers to another coming (pretrib) nowhere to be literally described in the context. Pre-tribbism jerks out of context the statements concerning Christ coming as a thief and supposes this must mean an imminent pretrib return when in actuality this phrase is only applied to those who are not watching for His coming and never to those who are watching (1 Thes. 5:4). The Scriptures never use a plural “comings” or a plural for any of the terms used to describe the Second Advent (parousia, epiphany, revelation, etc.) but Pre-tribbism demands two future comings separated by seven years. Pre-tribbism violates the most fundamental law of Biblical interpretation which demands that doctrines are not to be established upon parables, metaphors, types and inferences but rather to be established first upon clear and unambiguous contextual precepts and statements of Scripture and then only supported by parables, metaphors, types and inferences and never in reverse.

Pre-tribbism is categorically rejected by Biblical writers as deception (Mt. 24:23-31; 2 Thes. 1-2; 1 Pet. 3) and is the end times teaching of “peace, peace” when there will be no such peace. In short, such a teaching is a detriment to Biblical readiness for the Lord’s return. Jesus warns us of those who will come in the last days and claim to be anointed ones by the Holy Spirit and preach that His coming is drawing near before necessary preceding things come to pass.

***“And he said take heed that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in my name, saying....THE TIME DRAWETH NEAR, go ye not after them.” – Lk. 21:8***

**NOTE:** Please read my article entitled, “*We Can Know the Time of His Coming*” as it harmonizes both Christ’s denial that anyone **NOW** can know that time in contrast to “WHEN” certain predicted things appear much later toward the end of this age. Please also read my article on the Parable of all the Trees. You will find them right next to this article on our website.

### Looking for Christ or the Anti-Christ?

Pre-tribbers deny that the Posttribber is looking for Christ since the Posttribber believes that the Anti-Christ will precede the Lord’s return for His people. They claim we are looking for the Anti-Christ instead of Christ. Sounds impressive but is it even a logical, much less scriptural objection to the Posttrib position?

**1. Pay day expectations** – I don’t know about you, but I look forward to each pay day with great expectations. I know exactly how many days intervene between now and next payday but that still doesn’t keep me from LOOKING FOR the next payday. Such an expectation is not imminent as there are many necessary preceding days that must occur first. However, even so, such preceding days does not damper my expectation at all. How much more should our expectation for the Lord’s return be even though many things may precede His coming.

**2. Imminent hope of a New Heaven and Earth?** “*Nevertheless we, according to His promise, LOOK FOR new heavens and a new earth, wherein 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.*” – 2 Pet. 3:13-14

Is it possible to be LOOKING FOR something that is preceded by necessary events and great lapses of time and yet not be imminent? Is it possible that such a non-imminent expectation can be used to encourage holy living? Peter says so! However, the Pretribber would take issue with Peter. The Pretribber argues that terms like “looking for” demand imminence and without an imminent expectation there is no motivation for holy living. Peter denies this argument by his very command to “**LOOK FOR**” a POST-trib, POST-millennial, POST Great White throne judgment event. He says this POST, POST, POST event can be motivation for present day holy living. By the way, when are you on your knees more (1) when you expect blessings or (2) when you expect trouble? You see, a Pre-trib expectation of blessing does not motivate one to a closer walk as much as a Post-trib expectation does. Peter used a Post-trib expectation to motivate to holy living.

**3. The True Biblical Expectation is increased by certain preceding events:** “*And when these things BEGIN to come to pass, THEN look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth NIGH...So likewise ye, when ye SHALL SEE these things COME TO PASS, KNOW ye that the Kingdom of God is NIGH at hand.*” – Lk. 21:28,31

Certain preceding events are likened unto Heralds of His coming. Our response to such things are designed to increase our expectation as they indicate His coming is nearer than it was before. Every generation has believed that “*all these things*” could occur in their own generation.

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Paul believed that all these things could occur before His death and expressed that expectation. However, when he came near to the end of His life, he then under inspiration prophesied of a “*last days*” yet to come beyond his own life time (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1). Peter also prophesied of a “*last days*” yet to come after his death and yet before the coming of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:3-9). Although there was plenty of time before their death for an imminent expectation, instead they denied such an imminent expectation by pointing their readers beyond their death to “*the last days*” yet to come. The Bible teaches the possibility of an ANY GENERATION coming of Christ but not an any second expectation.

**4. You are not Biblically LOOKING FOR Christ if you are not first looking for those things that HERALD His coming** - *“And when these things BEGIN to come to pass, THEN look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth NIGH...So likewise ye, when ye SHALL SEE these things COME TO PASS, KNOW ye that the Kingdom of God is NIGH at hand.”* – Lk. 21:28,31

Those who deny certain preceding events to the Lord’s return are the ones failing to LOOK FOR Jesus as the Bible teaches. You cannot be looking for Christ’s return and at the same time not looking for the very things that HERALD His return.

**5. Titus 2:13 and the Grandville Sharp Rule** *“Looking for that blessed Hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”*

Syntax is the order of words necessary to convey something that makes sense. Without grammar there is no communication and everything is nonsense. The Holy Spirit expresses Himself according to the rules of language or else there is no expression at all. The grammatical structure of this text demands that the blessed Hope IS the glorious appearing of Christ as “the great God.” This rule of grammar is called the Grandville Sharp Rule which is recognized by all Trinitarian Greek Scholars (Pre and Post). Pre-tribbers who do not know Greek Grammar ignorantly suppose two comings are expressed in this verse. However, that is ignorance and false and distortion of God’s Word. For a full understanding of this Greek grammatical rule, see A.T. Robertson’s book entitled “The Minister and His Greek New Testament” pp. 61-68.

The Holy Spirit identifies the “*blessed Hope*” as the coming that cannot possibly be secret or hidden to anyone. The Greek root of the term translated “glorious appearing” is used consistently in the Scriptures of anything that is in direct contrast to anything hidden or secret. Hence, the Blessed Hope is not a secret or hidden coming. This same term (glorious appearing) was used consistently for the open and obvious appearance of a king to a city.

### NOW LEARN A PARABLE

One key failure to properly understanding the Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24; Lk. 21; Mk. 13) and the book of Revelation is failing to properly understanding the key parable provided by Christ to actually grasp the central truth about His coming.

#### This is the Key Parable

*“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh.” – Lk. 21:28*

*“Now learn a parable...(Mt. 24:32)..Behold the fig tree, and all the trees....When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves...(Mk. 13:28)....ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away...(Lk. 21:29-33)...*

*“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only.” – Mt. 24:36*

The above scriptures are taken from all three gospel accounts of what many call the Olivet Discourse. It is called the Olivet Discourse because Jesus spoke these things on the Mount of Olivet. The Olivet Discourse is the only full length discussion the Lord left us about end time events. The parable of “*the fig tree and all the trees*” is one of the parables spoken by the Lord in this discourse. The above combinations of texts provide the fuller picture of this grand parable. For example, Luke 21:28 acts as the transition verse between the previous historical section (Luke 21:7-27) and the following parabolic section (Luke 21:28-33). This discourse opens with a historical listing of events and closes with parables. Luke 21:28 is the introduction and transition verse between the historical and parabolic sections. Luke 21:29 and Mark 13:28 provide more details left out by Matthew. Matthew 24:36 provides the natural conclusion to the primary lesson of this parable.

Why should we be diligent to “*learn*” this parable above all other parables dealing with end time events? First, it is the only end time parable Jesus commanded us to “*learn*.” This separates it from all the others. Second, this is the only parable repeated in all three accounts. No other parable has this kind of emphasis. Luke records no other parable but this one and Mark records no other parable found in Matthew but this one. Finally, in all three accounts the Holy Spirit places this parable first before all others in all three accounts.

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These three facts clearly demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is giving this parable preeminence above all other parables in this discourse. These facts demonstrate this parable is intended to be the interpretative parable. The fact that Luke records no other parable but this one clearly shows it is intended to be the interpretative parable. He commands us to “*learn*” this parable because it is the key to understanding what Jesus means when he says “*watch*” in all the following parables. There are several things we can learn from this parable.

### A. Learn the Primary Lesson of the Parable:

There are some that believe the primary lesson of this parable is to understand the “*fig*” tree to represent Israel. The inclusive “*all*” along with the mention of the “*fig*” tree means that the “*fig*” tree and “*all the trees*” share something in common. It is this common factor shared between “*all*” the trees that provides the primary lesson of this parable.

The “*fig tree*” was mentioned by name because those listening would most naturally be watching it above all others because of its coveted fruit. However, the primary lesson of this parable had to do with what the “*fig*” tree had in common (rather than in contrast) with “*all the trees*.” What do all trees have in common? During spring time the “*fig*” tree and “*all the trees*” react in a common way. They begin to bring forth green sprouts and leaves. It is this common productivity found in “*all the trees*” including the “*fig*” tree that Jesus is going to use to teach His primary lesson.

His lesson has for its focus not the type of tree but the type of response and time of that response which all trees share in common. The response is the productivity of leaves and sprouts which indicate that the time is now spring.

*“When they now shoot forth, ye SEE and KNOW of your own selves that summer is nigh at hand.” – Lk. 21:30*

Did you get the point? When the sprouting takes place, those WATCHING can know what time it is “*NOW*” and therefore can also know what time is “*NIGH*.” When this response occurs spring is “*now*” and summer is “*nigh*.” Therefore His primary lesson is concerning how to **KNOW** what time it is by WATCHING for specific preceding events to summer.

*“WHEN ye shall see these things....KNOW that it is near, even at the doors.” – Mt. 24:33*

*“WHEN ye shall see these things.....KNOW that it is nigh, even at the doors.” – Mk. 13:29*

*“When they now shoot forth, ye SEE and KNOW of your own selves that summer is nigh at hand.” – Lk. 21:30*

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After clearly emphasizing this primary point shared by “all the trees” Jesus directly applies this illustration in nature to His kingdom coming.

*“SO LIKEWISE ye, when ye shall see all these things, KNOW that it is near, even at the doors” – Mt. 24:33*

*“SO ye IN LIKE MANNER, when ye shall see these things come to pass, KNOW that it is nigh, even at the doors” – Mk. 13:29*

*“LIKEWISE ye, when ye see these things come to pass, KNOW that the KINGDOM OF GOD is nigh at hand.” – Lk. 21:29,31*

*“And WHEN these things BEGIN to come to pass, THEN look up, and lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh.” – Lk.21:28*

The point of this parable is to define how to know what is presently unknown. The illustration from nature shows how to know that Spring is “*now*” and therefore KNOW that summer is “*nigh at hand*.” The words “*SO LIKEWISE*” or “*SO...IN LIKE MANNER*” demand that the same point is being made in regard to His coming and the preceding signs that announce it. Apart from these preceding signs there is no other way to KNOW the “*day*” and “*hour*” or “*times*” and “*seasons*” as His coming is hid to all but the Father.

*“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” – Mt. 24:36*

*“...Lord, wilt thou AT THIS TIME restore 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.” – Acts 1:6, 7*

This parable teaches that the Father has designated heralds at a precise time in the future to reveal the time of Christ’s coming to all who are watching. Hence, just as watching for summer is inseparable from watching for those Spring time events that announce it is nigh at hand, so likewise, it is impossible to be watching for the Lord’s coming apart from watching for those preceding events that announce it is nigh at hand.

Just as watching and being ready for summer fruits inseparably includes watching for the trees to announce Spring life, so likewise, watching and being ready for the Lord’s coming involves watching and being ready for those preceding events that herald it is nigh at hand. This is the point of the parable of “*all the trees*.” Watching is inclusive of both the heralds and the appearance of His coming. Hence, to “*watch*” is defined by this first parable to be inclusive of both the heralds of His coming as well as His personal appearance.

The more imminent aspect of His coming is the herald aspect of it as this precedes and announces that His appearance is at hand. Moreover, there is no warning that one

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is in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, because the things that characterize all previous generations (Mt. 24:5-14) characterize the first half of Daniel's week. Hence, His coming, regarded as inclusive of the heralds and actual appearance (Mt. 24:15-31) is imminent in that none can know when it will begin except by watching for it to occur. It is also imminent from God's perspective of time (2 Pet. 3:8-9).

This first parable has defined what we are to watch for (the heralds) if we are to be watching for the Lord's return at all. Jesus closes this parable by reminding us that NONE but the Father knows the time of His coming and therefore we must be watching NOW unless we be taken by surprise and "*these things*" come upon us like a "*snare*" or like a "*thief*" and catch us in an unready state in disgrace. Remember, there is no such thing as instant holiness, watching involves spiritual readiness inclusive of growth in progressive sanctification and daily readiness.

The historical section has warned us how we ought not to respond to these things when they occur. In so doing, He is implying that we ought to be ready to respond the right way. That right way is described in Luke 21:28. How to be ready to respond that way is the subject of the parabolic section that follows. Those ready can respond to the heralds in joy whereas those not ready can only respond like the rest of the world (fear, surprise, deception, ignorance, and in dishonor).

The parable of the "*good man*" is an illustration to impress upon the reader the need of constant watchfulness. Jesus said "*if the good man of the house would have known what hour the thief had come HE WOULD HAVE WATCHED.*" – The point is, he DID NOT watch and so his house was damaged. The damage refers back to the warnings in the historical part. The world will be damaged by surprise, confusion, deception and fear because they are not ready or watching. If he had been watching he would **not** have been caught by surprise. Constant readiness and watching is the lesson of this parable.

The illustration "*of the days of Noah*" teaches us that those who fail to take heed and watch will be caught by surprise. Jesus says that they "*knew not.*" This answers the objection often thrown against Posttribblers. The objection is "*how can anyone be taken by surprise when the tribulation begins*"? Jesus answers this objection by the illustration of Noah. How could anyone be taken by surprise by the flood? Didn't Noah warn them for over 100 years? Didn't the building of the Ark alert them to coming judgment? Didn't the animals marching in two by two (seven by seven of the clean) alert them? Yet the Bible says that when the flood came they "*knew not.*"

It didn't take Noah or his family by surprise. Why? Because Noah and his family took heed and watched and was ready. When "*these*"

***things begin to come to pass***” they will take by surprise all those who were not prepared in advance.

The parable of the just and unjust stewards teaches another area of advance preparation for His coming. There is no such thing as instant holiness. When these things begin to come to pass it will be too late to become holy. Holiness comes by progressive faithfulness to God’s Word. Those living unholy or ungodly lives will not be ready for what these things announce – the coming of the Lord in judgment. These things will bring judgments upon the unfaithful stewards and shut them out of the joy of those described in Luke 21:28.

The parable of the ten virgins is a very clear and very simple point. Both knew in advance that the Lord was coming. The wise did what was necessary in ADVANCE to prepare for that coming while the foolish did not. Jesus had instructed His disciples in the historical section of what to expect and how not to respond when these things begin. The wise would take heed to this instruction and be prepared to respond exactly as instructed “when these things begin.” In so doing, they could receive these things joyfully in great expectation. On the other hand, those who are not mentally and spiritual prepared for such things in advance will be shut out of that particular joy of His coming. The point of this parable is that it is FOOLISH not to prepare in advance for what you know will come. Those who are not prepared in ADVANCE will be scurrying about trying to obtain mentally and spiritually what the wise obtained in advance. The point is that those who do not take heed to His instructions concerning “*these things*” in advance will be SHUT OUT of that particular joy that can only be for those ready when these things begin (Lk. 21:28).

The parable of the talents provides us with another lesson of advance preparation. While we are watching and waiting we are to be busy in the Lord’s work. Those standing idle will not be ready to face the Lord at His coming. Watching includes spiritual faithfulness BEFORE He comes.

The parable of the sheep and goats teach that separation will occur within the professing kingdom of God when Christ returns. Many other texts teach this same judgment of professors (Mt. 7:21-23; 13:28-30; 36-43). The goats asked when Christ was in such need and they did not respond to His needs. In other words they claimed to be Christians. At that day Christ will not judge the fitness for entrance into His kingdom on the basis of mere profession of faith but rather upon the evidence of a living faith. The term “*brethren*” is being referred to in the same sense as “little children” in Matthew 18. Both the “*brethren*” and “*little children*” are spoken of in the third person but represent true believers. The point of this last parable is that mere profession does not make you ready for the Lord’s return. These goats refer to professing Christians that survive the tribulation period such as the evil servant and the idle servant in the previous parables.

Throughout these parables the emphasis has been on holy living and the uncertainty of timing when the Lord returns and therefore the need for constant watchfulness. We

believe this fits perfectly with the intent of the parable of “*all the trees*.” Now nobody knows the exact time of His coming therefore in order to KNOW that time we must be CONSTANTLY WATCHING and READY. That time will be announced by particular preceding events yet in the future and the time for these revealing events are yet unknown. To simply wait until “these things” occur before attempting to get ready for His coming is IMPOSSIBLE because holiness is not something you put on or take off. Either you will be ready to respond in joy to these things or you will not and the difference is advance mental preparation and expectation.

**Some have lifted Matthew 24:36 out of its context and demanded that Jesus is referring to an altogether different coming than what the immediate context has just described (Mt. 24:29-35). Not only is such an interpretation unwarranted by the immediate context but it is destructive to the intent of the parable that precedes it. The intent of that parable is to define what Christ wants us to be watching for when later He says “watch” and why we need to watch for preceding events as that is the only way to come to KNOW what none presently know but the Father.**

*“....when ye shall see these things come to pass KNOW that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.”*

### **B. Learn The Subjects being Addressed:**

The subjects are identified in the parable as “*ye*.” Grammatically, pronouns are identified by their nearest antecedent. If we trace this pronoun back to its nearest antecedent we find that it is identified in Matthew 24:3 as “*the disciples*” and in verse 1 as “*his disciples*”. Mark 13:3 more specifically identifies these disciples as “*Peter and James and John and Andrew*”. From the beginning of this discourse unto the end there is no change in the pronoun and therefore no change in the subject being addressed. This whole discourse is spoken to “*his disciples*.”

The issue of debate has always been concerning what capacity is Christ addressing “*His disciples*”? Are they being addressed by the common understanding of the term “*disciple*” as used in the New Testament or is there a departure from this common meaning? The book of Matthew provides only one definition of “*His disciples*” and that is found in Matthew 28:19-20. This definition is followed by all other gospel writers and epistles. The Bible knows of no other definition or usage of “*His disciples*” outside of the Matthew 28:19-20 definition. It certainly cannot be disputed that “*Peter and James and John and Andrew*” were of the Matthew 28:19-20 kind of disciple.

Some argue that they represent a special class of unbaptized and unchurched Jewish believers during the Great Tribulation. However, will the immediate context support such a new and different definition of “*His disciples*”? For example, does the

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Bible anywhere identify a special class of unbaptized, and unchurched believers as “*His disciples*”? Does the immediate context explicitly make such an application?

Whoever they might represent, one thing is clear from the grammar. The grammar demands that only one subject is consistently addressed from beginning to the end of this discourse. Grammar says there is no change to another subject.

Not only does the grammar demand one consistent subject being addressed but the contextual development insists that the same subject is being addressed throughout the discourse. For example, Matthew 24:5-29 lists events still future to those being addressed as “His disciples.” The purpose in listing these events is not only to answer their question about the future but primarily to instruct them how to respond to such things when they face them. For example, they are not to be deceived when false Christ’s arrive. They are not to believe certain things indicate the end has come. They are not to fear such things when they do come. They are not to believe certain teachings about His coming. In Matthew 24:25 Jesus bluntly tells “*his disciples*” – “*Behold I have told you BEFORE.*” Hence, from Matthew 24:5 until Matthew 24:25 they represent the same subject whom is being forewarned prior to any of these things coming to pass. This fact demands two obvious conclusions.

First, they are being addressed as PRE-crisis disciples. If “these things” are descriptive of the 70 AD destruction then they are PRE-70 AD disciples. If the contextual crisis is the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel then they are PRE-70<sup>th</sup> week disciples. Whatever the crisis may be they are “his disciples” prior to these things. That makes them PREtribulation disciples.

Second, there is no sense in forewarning them if they are not going to be present when these things come to pass. Why tell them not to believe certain teachings if they will not be present when such teachings occur? Why tell them not to fear that certain things indicate the end has come if they are not present when such things occur? Hence, common sense dictates that they are being forewarned as Pretrib disciples because they will remain on earth and become tribulation disciples. Luke 21:28 makes the transition from prewarned pretrib disciples to tribulation disciples.

*“And when these things begin to come to pass then look up and lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh”.*

Matthew 24:5-29 list the preceding things to His coming and warn them how they ought not to respond to such things. However, Luke 21:28 instructs them how they should respond to these things. While the world responds “*Oh no, woe is me*” they are to respond in excited expectation that these same things herald the near coming of Christ – “*Oh boy, here comes the Lord.*”

He has told them how not to respond as well as how they should respond to these things when they begin to come to pass. In the parabolic section (Mt. 24:32-25:30), he instructs them how they can be ready to respond as directed in Luke 21:28.

### AD 70 and/or 70<sup>th</sup> Week Disciples

There have been two extreme applications of this discourse. There are those who insist that it has already been completely fulfilled in the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman General Titus. There are others that are just as insistent that it is all yet future, and will be fulfilled in the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel.

The truth is that both are right and both are wrong. Jesus is employing a prophetic technique commonly used by Old Testament prophets. He is prophetically describing a greater event way off in the distant future (70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel) through the use of a lesser nearer event (70 AD destruction).

For example, both Isaiah and Jeremiah would predict the near fall of Assyria by Babylon and then the fall of Babylon by the Medo-Persia kingdom. However, they would use terms and descriptions that would go beyond the immediate and find fulfillment in the overthrow of the final kingdoms of this world by God at the end of the age. So likewise Jesus is using the near AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem to point to and describe the final attack of the Antichrist against Jerusalem in the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel at the end of this age.

Both Matthew and Mark place emphasis upon the far event. However, Luke who is writing to gentiles (Lk. 1:3) separates the two events because the gentile reader would not be familiar with this prophetic technique.

Luke describes the AD 70 destruction in Luke 21:20-24a. He also predicts the aftermath of a span of time when Israel is scattered into all nations. However, he then introduces the second event with the words “*until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled.*” These words needed no explanation to the readers of Daniel. The precise time of this fulfillment is spelled out by Daniel in the following language:

*“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand **UNTIL a time and times and the dividing of time.** But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”* – Dan. 7:24-27

This three and half year period is the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles. Here is how the times of the gentiles will be fulfilled. It will be fulfilled in a three and half year period at the end of the age when tribulation upon God's saints occurs and wrath upon the Antichrist and his kingdom will occur. Luke goes on to describe God's wrath upon the world (Lk. 21:25-26) which is later described by John under the metaphors of trumpets and vials.

This double application resolves the argument over what “*this generation*” means. It refers to “*this generation*” at Christ’s first coming which would see the near prophetic event in AD 70. It also refers to “*this generation*” at Christ’s second coming which would see the far prophetic event described in Daniel.

Furthermore, in regard to the near AD 70 event it cannot be denied that “*his disciples*” refers to the literal baptized church “*disciples*”. They would literally see all those things that led up to and culminate in the AD 70 destruction. They were PRE-70 AD disciples. So likewise, the final application has to do with that generation of disciples living prior to the far event. They are PRE-trib disciples.

The grammar and context of the Olivet Discourse absolutely demands this. The pronoun remains unchanged throughout the discourse. They are obviously pretrib disciples because they are warned in advance. They become tribulation disciples because they are told how to respond “*when these things begin*” (Lk. 21:28). Those “*disciples*” in “*this generation*” that precedes the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel not only see all these things begin but they see all these things actually come to pass including the coming of Christ in power (Lk. 21:30). No amount of mental gymnastics can avoid these clear statements and deny the continuity of the subject before, at and during those things being described. The subject does not change at any juncture. Regardless of whether it is the near or the far application “this generation” precedes the crisis and then enter into it. Next it will be proven that “this generation” refers to the literal generation at the first and the second coming of Christ.

### This Generation, not “race”

Prior to 1984 there was general agreement among conservative scholars that “*this generation*” referred to the common understanding of the term “*generation*.” However, most interpreted the Biblical “*generation*” to be 40 years. In 1948 Israel returned to Palestine and most conservative scholars believed that within a period of 40 years the end would come. However, when it did not come as expected another interpretation became more popular. They decided that the Greek term should be translated by the rare meaning “*race*” instead of “*generation*.” This interpretation would not limit “*these things*” to a limited time frame but rather to the continuity of the Jewish race. The resulting idea was that THE JEWISH RACE would not go out of existence until all these things be fulfilled. This interpretation gave them more breathing room.

However, does the context support this new interpretation? One basic rule of interpretation demands that we must accept the common meaning of a word as long as the common meaning makes sense before seeking a rare meaning. “*Race*” is a rare meaning. Can the common meaning make sense in this context. Those who oppose the common meaning argue that the common meaning makes no sense in this context. These interpreters see only the final and ultimate application (70<sup>th</sup> week) and thus argue that “this generation” to whom Christ was literally speaking did not live to see such

things. However, was Christ referring to His own generation at the first advent in Matthew 24:35 or to the generation that would see all these things begin as well as come to pass in fulfillment?

Moreover, if the prophetic technique of a dual fulfillment is recognized then the common meaning makes perfect sense. If Christ has in view two separate events and two separate generations – the generation at His first advent and the generation at his second advent, then, “*this generation*” as applied to each advent makes perfect sense. Such an application of “*this generation*” would mean that the literal generation at the first advent would indeed “see all these things come to pass” in regard to the AD 70 prediction. Likewise, the application of “*this generation*” to the second advent would mean that the literal generation at the second advent would indeed “*see all these things come to pass*” in regard to the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel.

Furthermore, the common meaning is fully supported by the immediate context. The first mention of “*this generation*” is found in Matthew 23:36. Here Jesus contrasts “*the days of our fathers*” who killed the prophets with “*this generation*” (Mt. 23:30,36). Making a contrast between “*the days of our fathers*” and “*this race*” makes no sense as the “*this race*” would be inclusive instead of contrasting. The phrase “*days of our fathers*” is synonymous with the “*generations of our fathers.*” Christ’s point is that in each “*generation*” the prophets received the same treatment as He would receive in “*this generation.*” However, “*this generation*” is the culmination of all previous generations as “*this generation*” will kill the prophet of Whom all prophets in all previous generations prophesied about. Hence, the rejection and killing of Christ was the culmination of all previous generations. Absolute evidence that “*generation*” instead of “*race*” is the intended meaning is the fact that Christ begins with “*Abel*” as the first prophet killed. The Jewish “*race*” had no existence prior to Abraham. However, Abel was the first prophet killed in the first “*generation*” of mankind and every generation since has followed suit. The particular evil of “*this generation*” is that they would reject Christ while all other generations rejected only those who predicted Christ. In Matthew 23:36 “*this generation*” by context refers to the literal generation that would see the AD 70 destruction because of their rejection of Christ.

His second use of “*this generation*” occurs in Matthew 24:34. Immediately after saying “*this generation*” in Matthew 24:34, Christ compares “*this generation*” with “*the days of Noah*” (Mt. 24:37). This phrase “*days of*” is synonymous with the idea of Noah’s “*generation.*” He is not referring to the “*days*” before or after Noah but to that present generation which witnessed all those things that led up to the end of the world. The point of comparison is that Noah’s “*generation*” was the final generation at the end of a world. They saw all those things that announced the end of the world come to pass. So likewise, “*this generation*” or the final generation of mankind will also see all the preceding signs that announce coming judgment at the end of the world.

In Matthew 23:36 “*this generation*” has reference to the generation living at Christ’s first advent which would see the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple as the judgment prophesied in Isaiah 28 and Daniel 9:26:

*“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” – Dan. 9:26*

However, in Matthew 24:34 we have it referring to the literal and final generation of mankind on earth. We know the context demands this because there is the immediate comparison with *“As in the days of Noah.”* The telescopic technique used by the prophets would only reinforce this interpretation. If it is recognized that Jesus is combining two events, one near while the other one is far in the future, then, *“this generation”* could be applied to each without contradiction and make perfect sense. He is describing the far distant 70<sup>th</sup> week event in terms that also apply in a limited way to the near 70 AD prophetic destruction of Jerusalem. Both the first and second coming *“generations”* are in view.

### **Learn what “things” you need to watch for**

In Matthew 24:5-14 Jesus first describes things that we are not to interpret as indicators that the end is near (Mt. 24:6,8):

*“...for ALL THESE THINGS must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” – v. 6*

*“ALL THESE THINGS are the beginning of sorrows” – v. 8*

Jesus is describing general birth pangs that can be found in every generation including the last generation. However, as such, they do not clearly distinguish the last from all others. Therefore He plainly says that *“all these things”* do not indicate the end of the world has come. These things are not the distinctive signs of the final generation.

Beginning in Matthew 24:15 the specific things that reveal the last generation are spelled out in detail. Indeed, verse 15 is introduced by a watch word *“When ye shall see”* and then followed by verses which describe a particular period of time identified as “then” and “those days” and finally closes with the time words *“immediately after THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS”* (v. 29). Between verses 15-29 there is a definite period yet to come with definite signs that is called *“the tribulation of those days”*.

Remember that Jesus is using the Old Testament technique of a future final event crouched in the description of a near event. If we want to know what are the specific signs of the **near** event they are spelled out in Luke 21:20-24a. If we want to know what are the specifics of the **far** and **final** event it is found in the language that goes beyond the AD 70 event which includes the actual coming of Christ in the clouds. Matthew and Mark emphasize the signs of the far event while Luke emphasizes the preceding signs of the near event. This provides both *“generations”* clear warning.

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For example, Matthew and Mark point the reader to the eschatological person of the “*abomination of desolation*” found in the book of Daniel – the picture of the final antichrist on earth. On the other hand, Luke points to the “armies” of Titus the Roman General (Lk. 21:20). Matthew and Mark speak of a “*shortened*” tribulation that is greater than any that ever preceded it or will follow it. Luke also brings the reader up to the final great crisis at the end of the world when he says “*until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled*” (Lk. 21:24b). Any reader of Daniel knew that the times of the gentiles would be fulfilled by the final beastly kingdom at the end of this age (Dan. 7:19,23) under the antichrist (Dan. 7:20-21,24-26). Indeed, Luke continues after his description of the AD 70 destruction and the scattering of Israel among the gentile nations to describe a time of universal trouble after the fall destruction of Jerusalem and scattering of Israel among the nations that the world has never seen before or will see again:

*“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations; with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of the heaven shall be shaken.” – Lk. 21:25-26*

These are the things that terminate the “*times of the Gentiles*” as well as the end of this age. They are those things described in the book of Revelation under the trumpets and vials.

Matthew and Mark mix the near with the far whereas Luke separates them from each other. Luke is writing to gentiles (Lk. 1:3) who would not be familiar with the prophetic technique of mixing so He separates the two.

As the literal disciples being addressed in the Olivet Discourse were PRE-70 AD disciples being warned in advance in order to know how to respond when Titus the Roman general encompassed Jerusalem, SO LIKEWISE, we as PRE-trib disciples are to be watching for those things that announce the 70<sup>th</sup> week in order that we too might respond accordingly (Lk. 21:28).

What we are to be watching for are those things that define the final generation of mankind from all previous generations. It is “these things” that herald the end of the age and it is these things that the parable of the trees would have us WATCH for.

### Learn the designated time for an increased Expectation

*“And **WHEN** these things BEGIN to come to pass **THEN** look up, lift up your heads for your redemption draweth **nigh**.” – Lk. 21:28*

The above verse specifies an exact point of time when an increased expectation is to begin. This exact point of time begins “*when these things BEGIN to come to pass.*” As previously noted, Jesus is not talking about those things listed in Matthew 24:5-14 but

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rather those things beginning in Matthew 24:15-29. Those things listed in Matthew 24:15-29 are the things that identify the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. The abomination of desolation is revealed in the midst of the 70<sup>th</sup> week according to Daniel 12:11-13. It is this specific sign that reveals exactly what time it is on God's prophetic calendar. All other previous things (Mt. 24:5-14) are general signs that characterize every generation to some extent. But "*when you shall see...the abomination of desolation*" you know exactly what time it is. Hence, at this precise point the countdown can begin.

It is significant that Jesus says that they can know that their redemption "*draweth nigh*." There is a great difference between "near" and "here." Jesus does not say that their redemption is here when these things begin. He says it is "*nigh*" or near. They are to respond to these end time events with greater expectation for the coming of the Lord. Why? Because "*this generation*" will be the first generation in the history of mankind (other than Noah's) that can KNOW that the end has come and the Lord's return is nigh at hand.

All the parables that follow this interpretative parable impress upon the reader the need for watching NOW for Christ as defined by this interpretative parable. The kind of expectation described in the parables that follow this interpretative parable implies two things. First, the uncertainty of "*when these things*" will begin and the need for constant readiness. Second the certain expectation of the Kingdom of God when these things do begin. Hence, by context these parables are applicable only to pretrib disciples entering the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. Obviously, the generation of disciples seeing all these things come to pass cannot help but have a greater expectation of the soon return of Christ. They will be the only generation that can KNOW how nigh His coming is.

### **The Expectation of Early Christians**

In the first three centuries of Christianity, the early Christians mistakenly believed that the abomination of desolation or antichrist was revealed in the Roman Emperor who claimed to be God and to be worshipped as God. Under his persecution they believed they were already in the Great Tribulation and therefore expressed the expectation that Christ's coming was shortly at hand.

Pretrib historians quote only the aspects of their expectation while avoiding their clear belief that the churches of Christ were either already in the Great Tribulation or were about to enter it. Pretrib historians acknowledge that these Christians expressed the belief they were already in or about to enter tribulation but dismiss it because they are unable to harmonize these two aspects. However, their belief was consistent with Christ's teaching in the parable of "*all the trees*". It is the pretrib historians that have failed to learn this parable and therefore failed to understand these early Christians. All Baptist groups during the dark ages clearly stated that they believed they were already in the Great Tribulation and identified Rome as the Great Whore and the Pope as the

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Antichrist. In accordance with that belief they also expressed an expectation for the soon return of Christ. These early Christians responded to what they perceived to be the antichrist and the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel just as Christ taught them:

*“And when these things begin to come to pass then look up and lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh.” – Lk. 21:28*

Learn from the parable of “*all the trees*” that an expectation for the soon appearing of Christ is consistent with thinking you’re in the Great Tribulation or about to enter it. Learn from the parable of “*all the trees*” that WATCHING for Christ’s return includes watching for these things to begin. Learn from this parable that you MUST be watching NOW for these things to begin in order to KNOW in advance when the Kingdom of God is coming nigh. The parables that follow this interpretative parable simply reinforce these principles. The parables that follow are applicable to disciples that will see all these things begin to come to pass in the final generation. Are we the final generation? That can only be KNOWN if we see these things “*begin*” to come to pass.

*“Therefore what I say unto you, I say UNTO ALL, Watch” – Mk. 13:37*

The expectation of those being addressed in the Olivet parables is dependent upon “*when ye shall see these things come to pass.*” Knowing how near the coming of the Lord is, is dependent upon “*when ye shall see these things come to pass.*” The parable of all the trees demands that you cannot be watching for the return of Christ without watching for “*when...these things begin to come to pass.*” The parable of all the trees defines what it means to “watch” for Christ in all the following parables of the Olivet Discourse. This is why it stands at the head of all the other parables. This is why it is the only parable repeated three times. This is why Jesus commands us to “learn” this parable.

Therefore, our expectation is an *any generation* expectation and all these things can “*shortly come to pass*”. Be alert and be watching for you do not know the hour or the day, the times or the seasons apart from WATCHING for these things to begin.

### **Learn the Certainty of the fulfillment of unfulfilled prophecy**

*“Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”*  
– Mt. 24:35

The ultimate proof of the inspiration of the scriptures is 100% fulfilled prophecy. All other religions and all other religious writings cannot measure up to this standard. Only God can be so accurate and therefore only the Bible is God’s Word. The failure of even one unfulfilled prophecy would make God a liar and His word untrustworthy and reduce Him down to the level of the gods of other world religions.

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There is a theory today that is very popular which has its basis in the denial that there exists even one unfulfilled prophecy that must precede the coming of the Lord. The popular “any second” expectation of the Lord’s return rests solely upon the belief that nothing prevents the Lord from returning at “any second” since He ascended into heaven. If there is but one unfulfilled prophecy after His ascension into heaven that must be fulfilled prior to His return, then, this would be SOMETHING that would prevent anyone from believing that NOTHING prevents His return at any second. If such unfulfilled prophecies exist after the ascension of Christ then any theory that would deny such is a serious error as it would force those who embrace that theory to choose between prophetic inspiration and this any second theory. It is impossible to believe that preceding prophecies must be fulfilled prior to the Lord’s return while at the same time believing NOTHING prevents the Lord from returning at any second. There is no middle ground; one is true while the other is error. If there are preceding prophecies that need to be fulfilled first then to embrace a theory which deny their fulfillment is to deny the inspiration of the Word of God. Nothing can be more heretical than taking a position that forces you to deny prophetic inspiration as all other truth depends upon prophetic inspiration.

We can clearly show that not merely one, but many unfulfilled prophecies prevented early Christians from believing such a theory.

For example, even before the ascension into heaven, Jesus commanded them to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit “*not many days hence*.” This prophecy was emphasized by John the Baptist and Christ. This is something that prevented an *any second* expectation of His return after His ascension. He could not come before without making God a liar and the scriptures untrustworthy.

For example, before the ascension into heaven, Jesus commanded them to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judah and Samaria unto the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). This was the great commission of the Church. It wasn’t until Acts 8 that the church went further than Jerusalem. It wasn’t until after Acts 10 that the first gentile was witnessed to. It wasn’t until Acts 13 that the first missionaries were sent unto the gentiles. Even at the writing of Acts 28 Paul had not gone to Gaul and other parts. This is SOMETHING that prevented an “any second” expectation of His return after His ascension. He could not come before this without making God a liar and the scriptures untrustworthy.

For example, after His ascension into heaven Peter stood up and quoted an unfulfilled prophecy in regard to the office of Judas (Acts 1:15-17). He said that this prophecy “must” be fulfilled. Here is SOMETHING that prevents the any second expectation after His ascension. He could not come before this without making God a liar and the scriptures untrustworthy.

For example, God told Ananias that Paul “must” suffer many things for His name sake and go “*bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel*” (Acts 9:15-16). This necessarily implied a long and extended ministry. Paul had not been sent

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out unto the Gentiles prior to Acts 13. He was still quoting this statement by Christ in Acts 22:21 and Acts 26. Here is SOMETHING that prevented an *any second* expectation after His ascension. He could not come before these things without making Himself a liar and the scriptures untrustworthy.

For example, Christ told Paul by the Holy Spirit “*in every city*” (Acts 20:23) that he “*must*” go to Jerusalem, and then he “must” go to Rome (Acts 23:11) and then he “must” stand before Caesar (Acts 27:24). Here are SOME THINGS that prevented Christ from coming at “any second” after His ascension. He could not come before these things without making Himself a liar and the scriptures untrustworthy.

For example, Christ told all of us in the Olivet Discourse that Jerusalem would be destroyed BEFORE they were scattered into all nations and BEFORE the times of the Gentiles would be fulfilled (Lk. 20:24) and BEFORE the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel begins (Dan. 9:26). Here is SOMETHING that prevents the “any second” expectation of Christ’s return after His ascension. He could not come before these things without making Himself a liar and the scriptures untrustworthy.

For example, Isaiah prophesied that the cannon of Scripture would be completed under the supervision of the Apostles prior to the coming of the Lord (Isa. 8:16-18). Jesus affirmed this promise in the upper room by the coming of the Holy Spirit which would lead them into “*all truth*”. The apostles recognized this prophetic task and claimed to be fulfilling it (2 Pet. 3:15-17; I Jn. 4:5-6; Rev. 22:17-18). Here is SOMETHING that prevents the expectation of an “any second” return after the ascension of Christ. He could not come before this without making God a liar and the scriptures untrustworthy.

For example, Peter was told that when he was young he went where he wanted but when he grew old he would die a certain type of death (Jn. 21:18-19). John said that these things were popularly known (Jn. 21:23) and especially since he published in his gospel. Peter says this prophecy was well known (2 Pet. 1:14) as he also published it abroad. Here is SOMETHING that prevented the expectation of an “any second” return after His ascension. He could not come before this without making Himself a liar and the scriptures untrustworthy.

The list goes on and on (Isa. 11:11, 2 Thes. 2:1-3, etc.). However, only ONE is sufficient to prove that the “any second” theory is something that New Testament Christianity could not believe without making God a liar and the scriptures untrustworthy.

### **How do Pretrib theologians respond to such problems to their theory?**

First, some argue that all these things could have occurred FASTER than they actually did. Grant it but still they had to happen FIRST and anything which must happen FIRST denies an expectation that demands NOTHING must happen first.

Second, some deny the need of fulfillment. They argue that Jesus could come and render all these things unnecessary. In other words, they are clearly inferring that the Holy Spirit is a liar and the prophetic word is not dependable.

Third, some try to argue that all unfulfilled prophecies are NOW fulfilled and therefore nothing NOW prevents the any second return. This is an admission of error. This admits that New Testament Christianity could not and did not believe in imminency and therefore it is only NOW an acceptable belief. This also begs the question. How can we NOW believe in a doctrine that New Testament writers could not teach nor believe THEN? The scores of unfulfilled prophecies prevented any apostle from believing that NOTHING prevents the any second return of the Lord. If many unfilled prophecies existed THEN how can we be sure that many do not exist NOW? This is just mental gymnastics that tries to beg the question.

Last, some try to argue that most Christians did not know of these unfulfilled prophecies and therefore they believed nothing prevented them from embracing an any second return of Christ. These prophecies were published early and spread among the churches. More importantly, the Holy Spirit knew and such a theory would make Him speak out of both sides of His mouth. The Holy Spirit would not teach some that necessary preceding prophecies were still unfulfilled while leading others to believe nothing needed to be fulfilled. – This makes God the author of confusion.

You cannot believe in the inspiration of the scriptures and hold to the pretrib theory. Why? Simply because the pretrib doctrine of imminence forbids you to believe in the necessary fulfillment of unfulfilled preceding prophecies prior to the coming of the Lord. You cannot believe that NOTHING prevents an any second return and at the same instant believe that SOMETHINGS must be fulfilled prior to the Lord's return. You must choose one or the other as they contradict each other. To choose the pretrib doctrine is to deny Biblical inspiration of the scriptures.

## II. Three Biblical Warnings

Jesus, Paul and Peter warn Christians against embracing expectations similar to the Pretrib theory.

### The Warning of Christ

In the Olivet Discourse Jesus warned about false teachings concerning His coming. He pointed out three types of error. (1) The teaching that He would come during the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel – Mt. 24:21-23; (2) The teaching that His disciples would have to gather themselves unto Him in some remote parts of the earth – Mt. 24:26a; (3) The teaching that Christ would come secretly – Mt. 24:26b;

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In response to each of these errors Christ immediately responds beginning with the last stated error unto the first. (1) He will not come secretly but His coming will be obvious and evident as lightening that shineth East to West – Mt. 24:26; (2) His disciples will not have to gather themselves to Him unto some remote desert or parts of the earth but they will be gathered together upon Him as eagles in flight gather together upon a carcass – Mt. 24:28; (3) He will not come before or during the tribulation period but “immediately after the tribulation of those days....” – Mt. 24:29-31.

The Lord uses two metaphors to answer the two final errors (lightening; eagles with carcass) but in regards to the error dealing with the exact timing He responds by exact time reference – “*immediately AFTER the tribulation*”. Some argue that the eagles refer to the battle of Armageddon. However, in that battle there is more than one carcass. Christ has all the eagles in flight gathering upon ONE carcass in Matthew 24:28. This is a metaphor of the rapture as further explained in Matthew 24:30-31.

### The Warning of Peter

Peter predicts some scoffers that will appear AFTER his own decease in what he calls “the last days” (2 Pt. 3:1-8). There are two aspects that form the basis for their scoffing. First they argue evolutionary principle of uniformitarians. All things continue without any disruption or Divine intervention. Second, the basis of their scoffing is the fact that Peter predicts that a long period of time will occur between the time that the Lord ascended into heaven and the days of these scoffers. Indeed, the whole basis for their scoffing is this long extended gap between the promise and the yet unfulfillment of such a promise. They point out the “*promise*” of His coming demanded He would come “*quickly*” and yet the long period of time that has elapsed contradicts this “*promise*.”

Peter responds to both arguments. First, he points out that they are ignorant of a previous day of judgment by worldwide flooding and therefore are ignorant of another world wide judgment yet to come by fire at the Lord’s return. Second, he tells Christians not to count or reckon the promise of the Lord to come “*quickly*” according to how humans “*count*” time but rather according to how God count’s time (v. 8). Two thousand years to complete a promise of quickness is not how we count quickness. However, God considers a thousand years as one day. Hence, according to how God counts time, Jesus has only been gone a couple of days. Third, he responds that the “longsuffering” of the Lord is salvation for those coming generations of mankind in which God’s elect are to be found. Christ will not return until all the elect are saved.

The Pretrib doctrine of imminence is based upon the very same principle of interpretation that scoffers use to deny His promise to be true. Pretribbers argue that “*quickly*” can only mean imminent. They argue that “*looking for*” Christ is to demand an imminent expectation. This is exactly how the scoffers counted the promise of Christ. Peter goes on to define “looking for” something to be consistent with not only a Posttrib expectation but a Post-millennial expectation of a new heaven and a new earth (2 Pet. 3:12-14). Hence, Peter denies that such terms are terms of imminence. The posttrib position counts such time terms as God reckons them rather than how scoffers and

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pretribbers reckon them. Peter warns us not to be ignorant of this very thing and this is the very ignorance that the Pretrib position is based on.

### The Warning of Paul

In 2 Thessalonians 1-2 the apostle explicitly condemns the Pretrib theory as heresy that should be avoided by all means. These two chapters are the foremost arguments presented against the Pretrib theory in the New Testament.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 Paul plainly states that there will be no rest for church saints until Jesus is revealed from heaven with His angels taking flaming fire upon the ungodly. The Greek grammar demands that the time of rest from tribulation occurs simultaneous with the revelation of Christ from heaven in flaming fire. Christ does not come in flaming fire from heaven at the supposed Pretrib coming. This is a secret coming according to Pretribbers. Yet, Paul insists that the churches do not rest from, that is, they do not escape tribulation until the Posttrib coming of Christ. Second, the day of rest from tribulation is also the day of their glorification in verse 10. Grammatically the “*when*” of verse 10 refers back to the “*when*” in verse 7 as the same time of rest in verse 7. It is this “*day*” that continues to be the theme of chapter two verses one through three. If there is no “*rest*” from tribulation until the Posttrib coming then there is no rapture, no resurrection, and no glorification until the Posttrib coming.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-8 is the strongest passage in the Bible against the Pretrib theory. In verse one the grammatical rule known as the *Grandville Sharpe Rule* demands that the “*coming*” and “*gathering together*” occur as one event, not two.

In verse two the apostolic warning is against any kind of communication that would declare that the “*day of Christ is at hand*”. The terms “*day of Christ*” are used only six times previous to this passage and all by Paul. In all previous six times it refers to the day of the rapture and resurrection. Paul is making it clear that the “*day*” in chapter two verse 10 is the day He is continuing to speak of in chapter two verses 1-3. What the King James translates as “*is at hand*” Dr. Lightfoot the great Greek grammarian translates as “*is imminent*.”

The problem was that some in the church at Thessalonica had quit working altogether and were living off others and even encouraging others to stop working because of the imminence (v. 2) of “*our gathering together unto Him*” (v. 1). Some religious fanatics in Arkansas convinced some people of the same idea. They all sold their belongings and started looking up waiting to be raptured because some nut told them that the time for the rapture had arrived and therefore they should forsake all worldly ventures (working at their job, family duties, going to school, etc.). There were those who did not accept this view and were struggling to stop it from spreading over the church. In short, this false teaching tore the church apart and caused anxiety and confusion.

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Paul warns them not to believe any writing or anyone that says “*the day of Christ is at hand*.” Indeed he says “*let no man deceive you by any means*” (v. 2a). He says that “*the day of Christ*” (v. 2) identified as “our gathering together (v. 1) shall not come except two events occur first. (1) The great apostasy; (2) the revelation of the great apostate.

Paul goes on to deal with both of these preceding events in verses 4-12. He deals with the last stated event first (vv. 4-8) and then deals with the great apostasy (vv. 9-12).

In dealing with the great apostate he also speaks of what is withholding the apostate from being revealed. He told the church that when he was with them he had taught them these things (v. 4). The New Testament was not written yet. Paul used the scriptures (Old Testament) to teach the churches along with new revelation God had given them.

In the Old Testament book of end times events – Daniel – God gives Daniel the precise order of kingdoms that would arise right up to the kingdom of God (chs. 2,8,9,10-11). Daniel also reveals in chapter ten the restraining force that keeps these kingdoms in check until it is their time to arise. That restraining force is the angelic host of God – particularly the arch angel Michael (Dan. 10:21-22). Paul tells them that the Antichrist cannot arise and will not be revealed until it is his time. The one restraining him was well known to the readers of Daniel. Daniel speaks of this antichrist more than once (ch. 7, 11).

Paul’s point is very simple, the day of our gathering together unto Christ cannot be considered imminent (“*is at hand*”) until after two major unfulfilled prophecies occur. Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 24:22-31. From God’s perspective it has been and will come “*quickly*” and will “*shortly come to pass*.” However, from our perspective, we cannot be looking for Christ if we are not looking for those things that herald and announce His coming. These preceding heralds are considered part of “*His coming*” just as the coming of ancient kings included the heralds that went out before them and announced their imminent arrival. His coming or *parousia* includes both the heralds and His appearance.

There is only one parable that Jesus commanded His disciples to “*learn*.” Pretribbers have never learned this parable. This parable is the parable of “*all the trees*” (Lk. 21:29). The parable is simple and straight forward. You cannot be looking for summer if you are not looking for those things that precede and herald its approach – SO LIKEWISE, you cannot be looking for the coming of the Lord if you are not also looking for those things that precede and herald His appearance.

## III. The Follies of Pretrib Arguments

The only way that Pretribbism can be defended is by mishandling the Scriptures and by blindly accepting illogical arguments. For example:

### **1. The “not appointed to wrath” argument:**

Pretribbers argue that children of God cannot enter the tribulation period because God has not appointed us to wrath. For this argument to be true two things must also be true: (1) Wrath and Tribulation must be synonymous; (2) There must be no children of God in the tribulation.

The folly of this argument is shown by the fact there all parties agree there are children of God in the tribulation (Rev. 7, 12, 17-18). Second, tribulation is from the world and Satan upon God’s children whereas wrath is from God upon the world and Satan. Revelation 9:20-21 and Revelation 16:1-17 make it very clear that the objects of God’s wrath are the non-elect. Can God spare His children from such wrath? Ask Moses when he was in Egypt. Can God supply the needs of His people when none can buy or sell? Ask Moses when he was in the wilderness for forty years? Finally, all the proof texts used to support this “wrath” argument are taken from contexts where deliverance is from eternal wrath through the cross.

### **2. The Kept from “tribulation” argument:**

Pretrib theologians argue that Revelation 3:10 and the words “**keep you from**” means the promise of a rapture out of the world before the tribulation occurs. How can anyone interpret Rev. 3:10 in such a way that it has no literal application to the very historical and literal church it is addressed to? This is exactly what the Pretrib interpretation of this text does. That literal church was not raptured! However, it was preserved through tribulation that came upon the earth under ten different Roman persecutions. Jesus uses the same disputed words in John 17 and there he says that the Father would not “**take them out of the world**” but rather that He would “**keep them from**” the evil one while in the world. Jesus is the speaker in both cases and uses the same words in both cases. He defines “**keep from**” in contrast to “**take out of the world.**” However, Pretribbers interpret “keep from” to mean “**take out of the world**” by rapture. We prefer to the meaning Christ gives to these words. Not only so, but the basis for this promise in Revelation 3:10 is the very same basis applied to tribulation saints in Revelation 14:12.

### **3. The Absence of the word “church” in Revelation 4-20:**

They build a case out silence in regard to the word “church” in Revelation 4-20. Since the word “**church**” is not found in these chapters they conclude it must not exist on earth during this time. However, these same chapters include heavenly scenes and

there is no “church” mentioned in heaven either. Moreover, this does not stop Pretribbers from finding the church in Revelation chapters 4 and 19-20!!! They have no problem finding the church in both passages under different terms (“John” and “bride”). How then can they object to Posttribbers finding the church under terms used commonly throughout the scriptures for church saints (saints, elect, etc.). The absence of the term “church” is easily accounted for. The historical meaning of the term “ekklesia” translated church implies a PUBLIC meeting. It should be obvious that in such a time of persecution that no public assemblies will be found as they will not be tolerated.

#### **4. The Thief Coming Argument:**

Pretribbers argue that Christ’s coming must be *imminent* because He comes “*as a thief in the night*.” Since a thief does not announce the time of his coming then the rapture coming Christ can never be known and thus must always be imminent.

However, what the Pretribber fails to see is that each and every text where this metaphor is found it is always applied to those who DO NOT WATCH. It is said of the good man of the house that if he had known what hour the thief came HE WOULD HAVE WATCHED – meaning he did not watch. In Revelation 3:3 Christ’s says, “*If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*” If you don’t watch you can’t know. In Revelation 16:15 Christ says, “*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*” The point is that if you are watching you won’t be taken by surprise but if you do not watch you be taken by surprise. When guards were found sleeping the captain of the guard would set the sleeper’s clothes on fire and put him to open shame.

However, those who are watching, the Apostles says, “*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief*” (1 Thes. 5:4).

Therefore, this argument does not prove another secret coming in addition to the kingdom coming. Neither does this argument prove an imminent coming that can never be known by anyone. Indeed, this metaphor is to motivate us to WATCH for these things to begin so that we might KNOW in advance that He is coming – “*And WHEN these things begin to come to pass THEN look up and lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh.*” – Lk. 21:28

#### **5. Going up just to come down argument:**

Pretribbers argue that it makes no sense for us to be raptured up to Christ in the clouds only to come right back down. What is the point of the rapture if we come right back down?

The Greek term translated “*meet*” was commonly used of the Roman Legions who came back to Rome after a victory. They would camp about a mile from Rome. Heralds would be sent to announce their arrival. All the citizens would prepare for the entrance of the army into the city. First, every citizen would go out of the city and meet the army and then turn around and accompany the army into the city. Why? Because this going out to “*meet*” the army and returning with it was an act of giving honor and glory to the victorious general and his army. This is the picture behind the rapture and the term “*meet*”. Likewise, in the last chapter of Acts when Paul had come to the apian way that led to Rome. The members of the church at Rome came out to “*meet*” Paul only to escort him back to Rome. They were showing him honor and respect.

Moreover, we are raptured up to meet the Lord in the air because at the same instant of the rapture, the Lord pours out his wrath upon the Antichrist at Armageddon.

### **6. A Posttrib rapture leaves none to enter the Millennium:**

Some argue that if the rapture occurs at the Posttrib time then all saints would be raptured and none would be left to enter the kingdom on earth.

However, the scriptures clearly teach that at the rapture all Israel is saved on earth (Rev. 1:7; Rev. 14:1-5). Moreover, Zechariah 14 states that there are remnants of the nations that did not go up to Armageddon and that these would enter the kingdom. Apparently they are saved along with the Jews. Revelation 1:7 infers that more than those who pierced Him would mourn and be saved.

## IV. The Pretrib Confusion about the Great Tribulation

Pretribbers equate the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel with the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord. They believe they are synonymous. However, the Great Tribulation occurs within the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and is a period of days that are “shortened” for the elect’s sake while the 70<sup>th</sup> week is a fixed seven year period. Furthermore, certain celestial signs occur “immediately after the tribulation of those days” (Mt. 23:29) but occur before the day of the Lord (Joel 2:31 with Rev. 6:12,17). The Great Tribulation does not begin until the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week with the revelation of the Antichrist (Mt. 24:15-29 with Dan. 12:11-12). It is concluded by these celestial signs which in turn introduce the day of the Lord. Any way you look at it, the Great Tribulation and the 70<sup>th</sup> week and the Day of the Lord are not one and the same. Both the great tribulation and the day of the Lord occur within the latter half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. However, they are separated by specific celestial signs.

### 70<sup>TH</sup> WEEK OF DANIEL

(-----first half-----/---(tribulation)—(signs)—(day of the Lord)