

Jesus Our Great High Priest After The Order Of Melchizedek And The Melchizedek Priesthood

(Rev 1v5,6 with Heb 2v17,18, 4v15, 7v1-28, 1Peter 2v1-10)

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All Scriptural quotations in this study are taken from the King James Version, unless otherwise stated. The King James Version follows the vast majority of Greek texts in the order of about 1,000 to 10, and it is also confirmed by the ancient manuscripts in other languages, like the Gothic and Peshitta. It is in my opinion still the most accurate translation from the original Scriptures, and is my preferred version, and other translations quoted in this study, are tested against the King James Version. The Hebrew and Greek texts are taken from The Interlinear Bible.

On occasions in this study I have repeated certain truths in different ways, however, this is simply to highlight to the reader how important that particular truth is and the necessity for it to be particularly noted!

Introduction

The emphasis of this study will be upon the High Priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus and the Melchizedek Priesthood and their great importance during the last seven years of this Age (the Age of Grace) and especially during the second half of Daniel's seventieth prophetic week, a period of three and a half years which is known as "The Great Tribulation." Dan 9v27. (In Rev 7v14 "great tribulation," should read, "the tribulation, the great one," "tes thlipseos tes megales." It is an emphatic phrase which calls attention to the adjective "great," rather than the noun "tribulation," the same construction occurs in the references to "the city, the great one," "tes poleos tes megales," in Rev 11v8, 14v8, 16v19, 17v18, 18v10,16,18,19,21. This "great tribulation," is not the "much tribulation" spoken of in Acts 14v22, which all Christians can expect, it is the terrible time of world-wide distress which Jesus warned us about (Matt 24v15-21, Dan 12v1, Jer 30v7, Mark 13v14,19,24) that would occur immediately before His Glorious Second Coming. Titus 2v13).

Understanding the full Truth about the Lord's High Priestly ministry and the Melchizedek Priesthood will be vital for the believer if they are to overcome the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation triumphantly so that they may stand before Christ's Throne at His Second Coming to be judged so that they may receive a reward and be granted to wear white robes in the eternal Kingdom. Failure of the believer to grasp these most important Truths will result in their backsliding and sure apostasy due to being so overwhelmed by the great deluge of evil into the world at the beginning of the Great Tribulation when Satan and his evil angels are cast out of the Heavenly places into the earth and God's restraining hand is removed from them which results in the Devil being allowed to put his evil plan (the Mystery of

Lawlessness) into full operation. It should be noted that the Great Tribulation is **NOT** the wrath of God **BUT** the wrath of Satan who knows that after his expulsion from the Heavens (at the beginning of the Great Tribulation) only has a short time before he is cast into the Abyss for the duration of the Millennium Kingdom at the end of which he is released for a brief period of time to test the inhabitants of the Millennium (God will use him as a hired razor to weed out the apostates before the beginning of the Ages of Ages) and upon completion of this task is cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are for eternity. Isaiah 7v20, Dan 12v1, Matt 24v12,21, Matt 24v45-25v13, 1Cor 3v11-15, 2Thess 2v1-12, 2Tim 3v1-9, Heb chapters 3 & 4, Rev 7v14, 11v15-19, 12v7-17, 19v1-10, 20v1-3,7-10, 21v27.

The Textural Evidence For The Correct Reading Of Rev 1v5.6

"To Him Who actively and continually loves us all the time, and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us a kingdom and priests unto His God and Father, be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen."

"To Him who actively and continually loves us all the time." "toi agaponti hemas."

The best Greek texts inform us that Jesus loves us with a continuous present tense love, for "loves," "agaponti," the present active participle of "agapao," occurs in Ma, Aleph, A, C, the Critical Texts, and Hodges and Farstad. The A.V., T.R., and Mcde, reads, "loved us," "agapesanti," the aorist participle of "agapao;" and the Mb group reads "egapesen," the aorist active indicative of "agapao." The aorist tense would limit that love to a point in time. However, the best Greek texts, by using the present tense, inform us that our Lord's love has always been, and always will be, a continuous present reality, and is not just confined to the time when He died for us.

"Who has washed us from our sins in His own blood."

Some of the modern translations follow the Critical Texts, Mde, Aleph, A, C, the Old Latin h and z; the Syrian Philoxenian and Harklean; the Armenian; Tyconius, Primasius, Cassiodorus, and Andrew's "a" commentary, and read, "having loosed or freed," "lusanti," the aorist active participle of "luo," to loose, to release. However, though the Critical Texts read, "loosed us out of," ("ek"), the majority of texts read, "washed us from," ("apo"). Hodges and Farstad follow the A.V. and T.R., "washed," "lousanti," which occurs in the uncials P, 046, 94, and 1006; most minuscules, i.e. Mac; the Old Latin, dem, div, gig, haf, and t; the Vulgate; the Coptic Bohairic, the Ethiopian; the bav and c commentaries of Andrew of Caesarea, who died 614 A.D. (Arethas, Mb, and Andrew c, read "elousen;" the third person singular first aorist active indicative of "louo," "to bathe.")

"Washed us," "lousanti," is the aorist active participle of "louo;" "to bathe and wash the whole body," (see John 13v10, Titus 3v5); as distinct from "nipto," washing part of the body. See John 13v5,6,8, all the apostles, except Judas, were bathed and clean, and needed only to wash their feet, if they were defiled from their contact with an evil world. The aorist participle points to the point of time when we received the double blessing of justification, and release from guilt, through faith in Jesus, and the cleansing power of His precious redeeming blood. 1Peter 1v18,19, Rev 12v11. The Greek "en," means "in," in the phrase "in His blood," "en toi haimati;" "washed in Thy blood," makes much better sense than, "loosed in Thy blood." This reading is confirmed by the fact that in Rev 5v9 and 7v14, saints are definitely said to wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.

On page B-29 of "Unholy Hands On The Bible," a compilation of Burgon's works, the following comment is made on Rev 1v5 in favour of the Authorised Version reading "washed." "The beautiful expression which has found its way into so many tender passages relating to Christian devotion, 'Who has **WASHED US** from our sins in His own blood' has been replaced in many critical editions by 'Who has **LOOSED US** from our sins by His blood.' In early times a purist scribe, who had a dislike of anything that savoured of provincial retention of Aeolian or Dorian pronunciations, wrote from unconscious bias 'u' for 'ou', thereby transcribing 'lusanti' instead of the correct 'lousanti', unless he were not a Greek scholar enough to understand the difference. And he was followed by others, especially those who, whether from their own prejudices or due to sympathy with the scruples of other people, but in any case under the influence of a slavish literalism, hesitated about a passage in which they did not rise to the precious meaning really conveyed in it. So we find the three uncials which are nearest the point of corruption adopt it, and they are followed by nine cursives, the Harkleian Syriac, and the Armenian versions. On the other side are two uncials B/2 of the eighth century and P of the ninth, and the Vulgate, Bohairic, Ethiopic versions - and what is most important, all the other cursives." End of quote.

"Who has made us a kingdom and priests." Rev1v6.

The Majority Text reading, "a kingdom," "basileian," occurs in Hodges and Farstad, the Critical Texts, Aleph, A, and C; and it is to be preferred to "kings," "basileis," which occurs in A.V., T.R. See Rev 5v10. which reads "kings and priests" in the Majority Text. God said in Exodus 19v5,6, that Israel was to be "a kingdom of priests," He indicated by

this precious promise that He desired Israel to be a nation of prayer warriors and priests for all the world, and the Temple at Jerusalem the house of prayer for all nations. Isaiah 56v7, Matt 21v13, Mark 11v17, Luke 19v46. The Church has now become the true spiritual children of Abraham, and the true spiritual Israel, and God desires the Church to be "a kingdom of priests," who reveal His character, and impart His love, and Gospel blessings to the world. Rom 9v6-9,24-33, Gal 3v5-29. In 1Peter 2v5,9,10, Peter applies the promise and purpose of God in Exodus 19v5,6, to the Church, and states that every member is given the privilege of this intercessory and priestly ministry with Jesus, our great High priest after the order of Melchizedek. Heb 7v11-28.

NB: Because of His humanity and work of mediation the Father is spoken of as Christ's God.

"He has made us a kingdom of priests unto His God and Father." "Unto his God and Father," "toi theoi kai patri autou," which is the dative case, and so the "autou," "His," applies both to "God," and "Father." Jesus said that the Father was His God, and Paul and Peter also speak of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Matt 27v46, 2Cor 11v31, Eph 1v3,17, 1Peter 1v3. When Christ said that the Father was His God in John 20v17, He was still speaking, though risen and glorified, as the incarnate Son and perfect man, who became a servant for the work of redemption. Christ is "Lord," and yet in His work as Redeemer and Mediator, God the Father is His God. When Christ spoke to Mary He was the Great High Priest of the Church, and the mediator and intercessor between God the Father and mankind, "the man Christ Jesus." 1Tim 2v5. The Incarnation was the most wonderful act of sacrificial renunciation, self-demotion, and humiliation, and cost our Lord more than words can ever tell. Unfathomable, all-embracing, all-giving Divine love, inspired the Trinity to make the Creation; and our Lord's willing self-humiliation, emptying, and subordination to the Father, were part of the enormous cost of the sacrifice, pain, work and suffering which the Trinity have had to endure, as a result of our creation and redemption. Phil 2v5-11. Amazing love!

In this age and the Millennial age, Jesus acts as Mediator between man and God the Father. Though Jesus is God and possesses absolute deity, yet as Mediator He reigns with the power delegated to Him by God the Father. Though Jesus is subject to the Father in His work as a mediator; yet even in His incarnation and earthly life He claimed equality with the Father in respect to His divinity, and the Jews fully understood this and tried to kill Him because of this claim. John 5v18,19,30, 8v58,59. After the Great White Throne judgement, Jesus, who existed eternally in the form of God, and claimed oneness and equality with God the Father, will deliver the kingdom to God the Father and demonstrate His subjection to Him for the work of mediation and redemption. 1Cor 15v28, Phil 2v6,7, John 1v1. Having conquered and subdued all foes, Jesus subjects His kingdom to the Father; and they will rule together over their kingdom. The Scriptures inform us that Christ's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and that the saints will share in the rule of His kingdom. Dan 7v27, 2Tim 2v12, Rev 5v10, 20v6, 22v1-5. Jesus is God, and His throne is for ever. Dan 2v44,45, 7v13,14,18,27, Psalm 45v6 with Heb 1v8, Isaiah 9v6,7 with 2Sam 7v16, Luke 1v32,33. Having fulfilled His work as Mediator, and having eliminated evil from the Creation, and brought in everlasting righteousness, Jesus and the rest of the Trinity will rule and guide in love the redeemed creation. Dan 2v44, 7v22,27, 9v24. The creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption and experience the true liberty and freedom ("eleutheria") of the sons of God. Rom 8v21. All the creation will applaud the triumphs of our Lord's grace, love and power; He will be worshipped for ever, as the eternally reigning King of kings and Lord of lords, and our Saviour God. Rev 5v10-12, 11v15, 19v6-16, 22v3-5, Titus 2v13, 2Peter 1v1

"To Him Be Glory And Dominion For Ever And Ever. Amen." Rev 1v6.

John praises and extols Jesus and ascribes eternal glory and dominion to Him, for all His sacrificial love has done for the redeemed. Similar doxologies to Jesus are found in Rev 5v13, 7v10, 2Tim 4v18, 1Peter 4v11, 2Peter 3v18. In 1Peter 4v11, the same phrase, "he doxa kai to kratos" occurs as in Rev 1v6. "He doxa" is used in 2Peter 3v18 and 2Tim 4v18, to state that glory is going to be given to Jesus for ever. "he doxa" is used with other attributes of glory and rank in Rev 5v13 and 7v10.

The phrase in Rev 1v6, "for ever and ever," "tous aionas ton aionon," means literally, "unto the ages of ages," it occurs on twelve occasions in Revelation, in Rev 1v6,18, 4v9,10, 5v13, 7v12, 10v6, 11v15, 15v7, 19v3, 20v10 and 22v5. When God made His creation, He had a clear plan in His mind, He divided time into various ages. In Eph 3v11, "eternal purpose," "prothesin ton aionon," means literally, "the plan (and purpose) of the ages." In Heb 1v2 and 11v3, "worlds," is, "ages." In each of these ages God has brought to pass one aspect of His plan of the ages. In each age God has tried a different way of dealing with part or all of His creation. These ages have been; the ages of angelic administration; the short Adamic age of innocence; the age of forbearance ending with the flood; the age of Law which ended with our Lords first coming; the age of grace ends with Christ's second coming; the next age is the Millennial age where love is mixed with stern justice; then follows the ages of ages of God's eternal kingdom. These ages are God's wonderful plan of the ages, a vast thing which staggers the mind and makes us realise the immense wisdom, power and knowledge of our God and the wonderful future that He has for His children.

Before creation time was not measured by ages, and so it was called, "before the ages, or age times." 1Cor 2v7, 2Tim 1v9, Titus 1v2. The preparatory or probationary ages, as we may call them, finish at the close of the Great White

Throne judgement, and then begins the ages of ages. Life in these endless ages will be filled with the beauty, delight, inexhaustible variety, joy and love, which flow from the being and nature of God. God is the supreme treasure of Heaven, and through His grace we shall enjoy fellowship with Him for ever. During these endless ages God will bestow upon us lives of the fullest possible joy and happiness, there will be no disappointment or disillusionment, there will be a fulfilment of our hopes, which will be exceedingly more abundant than anything we can ask, or our minds can conceive. This was the reason for God's creation, God longed that untold millions of men and angels could enjoy His treasures and blessings for ever. To this end the Trinity have worked and suffered down the ages, giving and sacrificing to the very uttermost. How great and good they are.

A Skeleton Outline Of Revelation. Rev 1v19.

Introduction. The source of Revelation and John's greeting to the Churches. Rev 1v1-8.

1) Things Past. "The things which thou hast seen." Rev 1v9-20.

John's vision of our glorified Saviour, and the comfort and commission that He gave to His aged beloved apostle.

2) Things Present. "The things which are," in the seven churches. Rev 2v1 to 3v22.

Christ's revelation of the spiritual condition of the seven churches in Asia and His messages to them. These messages reveal the relationship and attitude of Christ to His Church on earth.

3) Things Future. "The things that shall be hereafter." Rev 4v1 to 22v21.

a) Events in Heaven and earth from just prior to the last 7 years of this age, to the return of Jesus. Rev 4v1 to 19v21. This portion concentrates mainly on the last 3½ years of this age, the period of time known as the great tribulation (i.e. the second half of the 70th week of Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy. Dan 9v27).

b) The Millennium. Rev 20v7-10.

c) The last judgement and the second resurrection. Rev 20v7-10.

d) The eternal kingdom and the ages of ages. Rev 21 and 22.

A Brief Outline of Rev 4v1 to 19v21.

1) Rev 4 and 5. The revelation of the events in Heaven just prior to the last seven years of this age. The vision of the glory, activity and holiness of God the Father and the perfect sacrificial devotion of Christ to His creation and His worthiness to open the seals and rule in the Millennial kingdom, that follows these seals.

2) Rev 6v1-17 and 8v1. The seven seals. These seals show the stages and results of the career of Antichrist, who at first seems to be a small and harmless peace-maker, but his career becomes more and more devilish and destructive, until Jesus destroys him at His coming.

3) Rev 7v1-17. The sealing of the faithful Old Testament saints for ruling in the Millennium, and the vision of the eternal blessedness of the victorious great tribulation saints.

4) Rev 8 and 9 and 11v15-19. God's answers to the prayers of His people, seven trumpet judgements.

5) Rev 10v1-11. God promises to set up His kingdom at the seventh trumpet.

6) Rev 11v1-19. A picture of the conflict in Jerusalem between Antichrist and God's two witnesses. This conflict ends when our Lord returns to destroy the wicked and judge and reward His saints.

7) Rev.12v1-17. The martyrdom of the man-child, and the escape of Christians into the wilderness. Matt 24v15-21, Dan 11v41. Satan is expelled from the heavenly places into the earth and his evil plans ("the mystery of iniquity," 2Thess 2v7.) and malicious interference in the affairs of the world causes the great tribulation. Rev 12v12.

8) Rev 13v1-18. Antichrist and the False Prophet, their character and power.

9. Rev.14v1-20. The Christian rulers, the angels and their messages, the two harvests.

10) Rev 15 and 16. The vials of God's wrath on the wicked.

11) Rev 17v1 to 19v4. The description of Jerusalem as the unfaithful wife, the scarlet women, Babylon the Great, who as the bride of Satan shares in the punishment of his sins.

12) Rev 19v5 to 20v4. Christ's returns and judges the wicked, the two suppers. Satan is chained for 1,000 years.

Things Past. "The things which thou hast seen." Rev 1v9-20.

Patmos.

The island of Patmos where John was imprisoned is off the South West coast of Asia Minor (the modern day country of Turkey), it is to the West of Miletus and 50 miles South West of Ephesus. Patmos is 10 to 12 miles in length, 6 in breadth, and 28 in circumference; it has two rocky peaks which are joined by a narrow isthmus. The Romans banished criminals and political prisoners to hard labour in the mines on Patmos. The best authorities say that John was exiled on Patmos in the reign of Domitian, and received this glorious revelation during the latter part of Domitian's reign. Domitian was a cruel and ruthless opponent of the Church, he has been called "the second Nero," because of his vicious persecutions against the Church. After the death of Domitian in 96 AD, John was released and returned to Ephesus during the reign of Emperor Nerva. John suffered a great deal for his loyalty to Jesus, His hoary head of about 90 years of age, did not move the Romans to mercy, or exemption from working in the mines of Patmos, but God met with His aged servant and gave him the greatest prophetic revelation of all time. The hard labour prison camp on Patmos became holy ground with the presence of our beloved Lord. Exodus 3v5, Josh 5v13-15.

Leaders in the early Church knew what it was to suffer and die for the truth. John was a co-partner and fellow partaker ("sunkoinonos" Strong's NT:4791), with multitudes of other Christians in the pressure, persecution, and tribulation ("thlipsei" Strong's NT:2347), and in the kingdom ("basileiai" Strong's NT:932), and patient courageous endurance ("hupomonei" Strong's NT:5281), of Jesus Christ. John Bunyan in Bedford prison, Moses in exile, Ezekiel and Daniel in captivity in Babylon, Paul in chains at Rome, and multitudes of others have proved the faithfulness of their faithful Lord. How often in circumstances like these God has given wonderful revelations of His plans and purposes, and on Patmos Jesus meets with His beloved servant John, and gives him a glorious revelation of Himself and His eternal plans and purposes. Circumstances can never separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8v31-39. Christ will come in power and blessing where there is one receptive, loving and longing soul. Though God's dear children may be denied earthly comforts and necessities, they will not be denied the consolations of Heaven. 2Tim 2v9, Acts 23v11. Those who endure persecution and tribulation for Christ's sake, will always enjoy His heavenly consolations. Dan 7v27, John 16v33, Acts 14v20-22, 1Cor 4v9-13, 1Thess 1v6, 2v14, 3v3,4, 2Thess 1v4,5, 3v5, Rom 2v7,8, 5v3,4, 8v17,25, 2Tim 2v12, Heb 10v36, 6v11,12,15, 12v22-24,28, Luke 12v32, 2Peter 1v11, Matt 24v13,14, James 5v7-11, 1v12.

"I came to be in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Rev 1v10.

"On the Lords day," "Lord's," "kuriakos," (Strong's NT:2960) means "pertaining to the Lord," (only here and in 1Cor 11v20, "the Lord's Supper, "kuriakon deipnon"), many think that this could be Sunday. See Acts 20v7, 1Cor 16v1,2, John 20v19,26, Rom 14v5. It certainly does not refer, as some have suggested, to the day of judgement on the day of the Lord, "hemera kuriou." 2Peter 3v10.

NB: Visions While In The Spirit.

Many of God's children have experienced visions while, "In the spirit." Rev 17v3, 21v10, Matt 22v43, Acts 10v10, 2Cor 12v2,4. Our spirit is renewed at the new birth. John 3v1-9, Eph 2v1-10, Titus 3v5. Our renewed spirit is the organ of communion with God, and the means whereby He communicates with us, and imparts to us the gifts of the Spirit. John was given a remarkable series of visions while he was, "In the Spirit." See John 4v23,24, 1Cor 2v9-16, 14v15-18. A vision is an accepted New Testament experience. The noun; "horasis," describes the act of seeing, it is used of visions in Acts 2v17 and Rev 9v17; the noun "horama," which means, that which is seen. The verb "horao," to see, is used of visions in Matt 17v9, Acts 7v31, 9v10,12, 10v3,17,19, 11v5, 12v9, 16v9,10 and 18v9. The noun "optasia," which also describes the act of seeing, is from "optano," to see, is used to speak of visions in Luke 1v22, 24v23, Acts 26v19 and 2Cor 12v1. **Supernatural sight is a reality.**

During some of the more important visions, God can cause Christians to become oblivious to their surroundings; this is what happened in Acts 10v10, 11v5 and 22v17; where the Authorised Version states that both Peter and Paul experienced a "trance;" an "ekstasis" (Strong's NT:1611). "Ekstasis," literally means, "a standing out," and so it means a transportation out of a person's normal condition or state of mind. It is used of people being carried out of themselves with extreme astonishment in Mark 5v42, 16v8, Luke 5v26, and Acts 3v10. God even spoke to the sorcerer Balaam in a trance. Num 24v4,16. "Ekstasis," speaks of an elevated consciousness during which God suspends ordinary perceptions and the awareness of natural surroundings, and the person is only conscious of the vision imparted by God. Paul said that on one occasion, when he was having visions of Heaven, he did not know if he was in or out of the body. 2Cor 12v1-4. This does not mean, of course, that the intellectual powers of Paul were suspended, they were enlightened and carried to the greatest heights of spiritual revelation. This is in direct contrast to the experience of mediums, who completely lose consciousness when they go into a trance. Raphael Gasson, in his book, "The Challenging Counterfeit;" tells us from his own pre-Christian experience as a medium, that he lost consciousness when he went into a trance, and had to be told what had taken place during a séance.

The majority of Old Testament prophets received their revelations by vision. Isaiah 1v1, Jer 1v11, Ezek 1v1, Dan 1v17, Amos 1v1, Zech 1v8. etc. The prophets were called "seers," Hebrew "chozeh," and "roeh," because God taught them by visions. 1Sam 9v9,15-20. Vision was the highest form of revelation in both the Old Testament and New Testament; however, visions can vary a great deal in importance in both their method of communication and their content. **The vision of John on the island of Patmos reached the very highest height of continuous revelation from God by "ekstasis" visions.**

John's Vision Of Our Great High Priest. Rev 1v9-20. See Heb 6v20, 7v23 to 8v2.

Christ Revealed To John The Awesome Majesty And Glory Of His Person.

The great Old Testament prophets were enabled to carry on against fierce opposition through the strength imparted by visions of God. John was about 90 and was suffering greatly under the severe prison regime and hard labour in the mines of Patmos. Jesus came to comfort, strengthen, and encourage His suffering friend John, through a wonderful vision of Himself. Christian in difficulty, look for the light that surprises, for the Lord who rises with healing in His wings. Jesus still had great need of His aged servant, He desired to give John one of the greatest prophetic revelations of all time, and few are spiritually able to receive revelations of this kind. Old age and confinement does not mean that useful service has finished; look to Jesus, He has great need of you, and so has His Church. Heb 6v10. The gentle welcoming love and gracious disposition of Jesus are exactly the same as when He was on earth, He is greatly moved by our needs, feelings, and infirmities, and all power is given to Him in Heaven and earth to aid us. 2Cor 5v16, Ezek 1v26-28, Dan 7v9-14, 10v5,6, Matt 17v2, 28v18, 2Peter 1v16-18, Phil 2v9-11, Isaiah 9v6. The majesty and glory of Jesus was so great, that even the beloved apostle John was totally overwhelmed by the vision of his risen Lord, and he became greatly afraid. See Hab 3v1-19, Acts 22v9, Heb 12v21, Gen 17v3, 2Sam 6v9, Ezek 1v28. This wonderful vision of our glorified Lord corrects any wrong earthly ideas that we may have about Him. **He is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. The majestic King of Heaven is our dearest and closest friend. Blessed be His name!**

Jesus is abundantly able to help us in our trials and temptations. The importance of Heb 2v17,18 and 4v15.

We see from Heb 2v17, that Jesus was **in all things ("kata panta") made like us**, in order to become our perfect, merciful, and faithful High Priest. God tells us in Heb 4v15 that Jesus **was tempted in all points ("kata panta") like us**, yet without sin. "Tempted," is "pepeirasmenon" the perfect passive participle of "peirazo" (Strong's NT:3985), to test, to make trial of, to tempt, **the perfect tense shows that temptation and trial was a permanent part of Christ's experience.** There is no calamity or trial of life which Jesus has not experienced, and where He has not gone before us. Jesus knows all our trials, temptations, and difficulties, and is totally sympathetic with us, and manifests perfect compassionate love towards us. Jesus does not just passively watch us, He actively comes to our aid in time of need. We read in Heb 2v18., "For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted (the aorist passive participle of "peirazo" (Strong's NT:3985)), He is able to succour them that are tempted (the present passive participle of "peirazo")." In Heb 2v18, "to succour," is "boethesai," the aorist active infinitive of "boetheo," "to run at a cry or call for help." Jesus is glorified and exalted, but He "runs to aid us when we cry for help. In Matt 15v25, the Syrophenician woman used "boethei," the present active imperative of "boetheo," to ask Jesus to run to her aid.

In Heb 2v18, "hath suffered," is "peponthen," the perfect active indicative of "pascho" (Strong's NT:3958), the perfect shows that suffering and temptation was a permanent part of the experience of Jesus. The soul anguish and suffering of Jesus was at times utterly devastating and extreme. We read in Heb 5v7, that Jesus wept "with strong crying and tears," "meta krauges ischuras kai dakruon." "With loud cries and tears," RSV. "With vehement cries and tears," NKJ. **Christ's mental and spiritual agony and anguish was so great, and so physically destructive, that it seems**

an angel had to strengthen Jesus, in order to preserve His life. In Luke 22v43,44, "agony" "agonia," means, anguish, conflict; "strengthening" "enischuo," only occurs here and Acts 9v19.

God's Word tells us in Heb 2v18, that Jesus is "absolutely able" ("dunamai"), to aid us in our temptations, and trials, not just because of His almighty power, but also because of His human experience of our trials. Jesus fully partook of our humanity, and personally experienced multitudes of really horrendous trials of life because of it. John 1v14, Rom.8v3, Phil 2v7, Heb 2v9. **We can totally rely on the compassionate sympathising humanity of Jesus, as well as His omnipotent Deity.** We read in Heb 2v17, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." "It behoved him," is "opheilen," the imperfect active of "opheilo," (Strong's NT: 3784), to owe money; a debt to be paid, a duty, an obligation. Matt 18v28, Luke 17v10, Rom 13v8. Before the foundation of the world Jesus dedicated Himself to be the Lamb of God to take away our sins, He paid this debt of love on the Cross at Calvary. In Heb 4v15,16, God promises to dispense mercy and grace in time of need from His throne of grace. "In time of need," is "eis eukairon boetheian," help given because of the heartfelt cry of the person in distress, for "boetheia" means to run at the cry, (as in Heb 2v18.) we cry "for well timed ("eukairon,") help," or "for help in the nick of time."

Christ's humanity was complete and real. John states, in 1John 4v3, "every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist..." "In the flesh," "en sarki eleluthora," is included by Hodges and Farstad, Aleph, the vast majority of Greek texts," the Syrian Peshitta and Harklean, the Armenian, Theodoret etc., (a few manuscripts including B and A omit it). Those who deny our Lord's humanity are "not of God." **Never forget that Jesus has suffered infinitely more than we can ever do, the worst of all our griefs and sorrows can never reach the awful soul destroying depths that He endured for us.**

"His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow." "hos erion leukon hos chion."

"Erion," wool, only occurs in Rev 1v14, and as scarlet wool in Heb 9v19; and "chion," snow, only here, and of the angel's clothes in Matt 28v3. In Dan 7v9, the Ancient of Days is described as having garments "as white as snow," and hair "like pure wool," this declares far more than the honour, wisdom, and dignity that was ascribed to the wise experience of an hoary head in the Scriptures. Lev 19v32, Prov 16v31. It is speaking of a manifestation of the effulgent glory of the being of God. It is the shining forth of the uncreated light and glory that was manifested in the "holy Mount," when Jesus was transfigured, and His face shone as the sun, and His garments became shining, exceeding white as the snow, as white as the light. 2Peter 1v16-18. We read in Matt 17v2, that our Lord's garments were "white as the light," "leuka hos to phos;" and Mark 9v3 reads, "glistening, exceeding white," "stilbonta leuka lian;" and Luke 9v29 reads, "white and dazzling," "leukos exastrapton." **Jesus was, "crowned with glory and honour, for the sufferings of death." God the Father let Jesus experience His former glory in Heaven, to strengthen Him to "taste death to the full for every man."** Heb 2v9. "Taste," "geusetai," the aorist mid. subj. of "geuomai," means that Jesus did not have a sip, but experienced and drank to the full, the bitter cup of death and the darkness and isolation of confinement in the Abyss for our redemption. Matt 12v40, Rom 10v7, Eph 4v7-11, Heb 5v7.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire." "ophthalmoi autou hos phlox puros."

This description is again applied to Christ in Rev 2v18 and 19v12. In Dan 7v9, the throne of God is said to be, "like the fiery flame;" and the eyes of the mighty angel in Dan 10v6, are described "as lamps of fire." "Thy kind, but searching glance can scan, the very wounds that shame would hide." Rev 2v23.

"His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."

The word for "fine brass," is "chalkolibanoi," it only occurs here and in Rev 2v18, some think it speaks of the metal referred to as "amber," "chashmal" (Strong's OT:2830), Greek "elektron", in Ezekiel's vision of God in Ezek 1v4,27, 8v2. It was a bright metal compound of gold and silver, and possibly copper, the whole picture is one of burning and shining glory and purity.

"A great voice, as of a trumpet... as the sound of many waters." Rev 1v10,15.

The Lord's voice is majestic and mighty in its authority; but it can also manifest the indescribable beauty, concerned love, and giving goodness of His being; and speak with a voice of gentle encouraging stillness, as He did to Elijah at Horeb, which is equally as awesome as His voice of authority and command. Psalm 29, Ezek 43v2, 1v24, 1Thess 4v16, 1King 19v12.

"Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."

This is literally "a sword two-mouthed sharp," "romphaia distomos oxeia." The sword here is not the "machaira," spoken of in Heb 4v12, it is the "romphaia," the long and heavy broad sword which the Thracians and other nations were armed with, some say the word speaks of a Thracian javelin. The word only occurs here in Rev 1v16, 2v12,16, 6v8, 19v15,21 and in Luke 2v35, of the terrible inner pain that Mary felt when Jesus became "a sign which was spoken against," and was "despised and rejected," persecuted and crucified. The sword of our Lord's mouth is a fearsome weapon that will be manifested at His second coming with devastating effect on the wicked. Rev 19v15,21, Zech 14v12. The sword of the Lord makes demons fear and fly, and He has said that through His Name we can exercise His authority. Luke 10v17-19.

Jesus Revealed To John His Care Of The Churches. "He had in his right hand seven stars."

As we follow our Lord, we are safely kept in the hand of the Father and the Son, and no one can pluck us out of their hands. John 10v27-29. Jesus gives us the gift of eternal life. See also John 6v27,40,47. "Give," is the present active indicative of "didomi," "to give." Eternal life is a present reality, not just a future hope. There has been a great deal of controversy over whether the eternal security of Christians is conditional or unconditional. Is the will of God irresistible regarding salvation, or can a believer frustrate the will of God and become an apostate from the faith? The Scriptures teach that believing in Jesus does not take away our free will, and that it is possible for Christians to apostatise and lose their salvation. However, the Scriptures also emphasise the eternal security of those who cling to and follow their Lord. John 10v27-29.

Christ Has Come To Purify His Churches.

Jesus has come to make us shine with a clear pure light.

We can only derive true spiritual life from Jesus, this is why the churches are looked upon as a lamp, and not a candlestick, which has the energy to burn within itself; a lamp needs a constant supply of oil to keep it burning. We can only shine as we derive our life from our Lord. Exodus 25v31-40, Zech 4v1-14, Matt 5v14,15, 25v1-13, John 1v16,17, 6v53-58,63, Rom 3v24, 5v2,17,20,21, 2Cor 12v9, Phil 2v15,16. Our Lord's eyes, which are like a flame of fire, see all, His ears hear every thought and word (William Branham's angel said that our thoughts are heard in Heaven louder than our spoken words on earth.). Nor is he just passive, the sword of His mouth encourages and commends, rebukes and judges. Jesus has not come into His Church as an idle bystander, He has come as Lord as well as our best friend, and we all need to obey His instructions to us through the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures. Psalm 2v11,12. God is not a sugar daddy, for even though His love, tenderness and gentleness are wonderful, His judgements upon serious sin can be very severe. Isaiah 11v4, Acts 5v1-11, Rev.2v5,16,22,23, Heb 3v6, 4v12, 12v25-29, Rev 19v15. **We need to tremble at the Word of our Lord.** Isaiah 66v1,2.

This vision shows us that Jesus will never fail us in life's great trials.

This vision of our glorious Lord was intended to bring us to a fitting state of mind to hear Christ's words to us, and a realisation of His continual care for His sheep. 1Peter 5v7. Jesus will never fail us, He is the Good Shepherd who died for His sheep, and here we see Him in His watchful visitation of His churches and His continual intercession for them. Jesus has not gone to Heaven to enjoy Himself, He has gone there to work hard on our behalf. It is His love for us that makes Him so desirous of having us pure. Christ's care and love for His people are wonderful. Eph 5v25-27, 3v16-21. In John 13v1, "eis telos" is better translated, "to the uttermost," as in 1Thess 2v16. This vision of Jesus, which fills the Church with joy and delight, causes the wicked to express bitter hatred, anger and blasphemy. Antichrist and his followers even try to destroy Jesus when He returns. Rev 16v9,11,21, 19v19, Psalm 2v1-3. The wicked will even blaspheme God to His face at the last judgement, and gnash their teeth in bitter anger and hatred against Him. Matt 8v12, 13v42,50, 22v13, 24v51, 25v30, Luke 13v28.

Jesus Is The Great "First And Last."

One of the most striking titles of Jesus is the title "First and Last," for in Isaiah 41v4, 44v6-8 and 48v12, God claims that He alone can be called "the First and the Last," yet this title is directly claimed by Christ in Rev 1v17, 2v8 and 22v12-16. The title "The First and The Last," is used by God to emphasise that He is the great Creator who foreknows and declares the future; when Jesus claims this title, He declares to all that He is the Creator God who unveiled future events to John and His Church. Indeed, Christ declares that He is not only "the First and the Last," but that He is "the Alpha and the Omega," and "the Beginning and the Ending." These exclusive titles of absolute deity are used by the Father in Rev 1v8 and 21v5,6, when He proclaims Himself as "the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to

come, the Almighty." Since all these exclusive titles of Deity are applied to Christ; the irrefutable conclusion is that Jesus possesses absolute deity.

Textural note: In Rev 1v11, the "I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last," is omitted by Aleph, A, C, the Critical Texts, Hodges and Farstad, and is only in part of the Andreas Me texts. However, Rev 1v17, 2v8 and 22v12-16, say Jesus is "The First and the Last," the conclusion cannot be denied, Jesus has Jehovah deity.

Jesus Our Lord Has The keys Of Life And Death.

Our Lord's deity is revealed in His title, "the Firstborn from the dead" (Rev 1v5), and here our Lord reveals that the destinies of all of the dead are in His hands, and that He has the keys of death and Hades. Jesus stated that John's life and death were in His hands, not in the hands of Emperor Domitian. Jesus was shortly to bring Domitian's life to an end, and He was going to imprison this evil Emperor in Hades, and He was going to release John, and give him almost ten more years of valuable ministry to the Church. Jesus has the keys of death and Hades, our lives, deaths, and ministries are in His hands.

NB: In Rev 1v18, "Hell," Should Be Translated "Hades," The Abode Of The Dead.

"Hades" occurs 10 times in the New Testament Matt 11v23, 16v18, Luke 10v15, 16v23, Acts 2v27,31, Rev 1v18, 6v8, 20v13,14. The Hebrew equivalent of "Hades" is "Sheol," which occurs 65 times in the Old Testament, it too has been wrongly translated in places as Hell, e.g. Psalm 66v10, and in other places as "the grave," e.g. Gen 37v35. "Sheol" should be translated as "the place of the dead," or simply as "Sheol" in every place where it occurs in the Old Testament. The word "Sheol" never means grave, "Qeber" is the Hebrew word that is used to describe the burying place, grave, or sepulchre, into which the dead are laid. Compare the use of the words in the following Scriptures, the grave and "sheol" are seen in vivid contrast. In each case the first Scripture uses "Qeber" and the second one "sheol." Gen 50v5 with Gen 37v35, 1Kings 13v30,31 with Psalm 30v3, Isaiah 22v16 with 38v10, 2Chron 16v14 with Psalm 49v15, Isaiah 53v9 with Psalm 16v10, Acts 2v17,31.

"Sheol," and "Hades," both speak of the same place, the temporary abode of the dead, from which everyone who is in there, will come out for the Great White Throne Judgement, at the end of the Millennium. Rev 20v11-15. Jesus said that Hades has two parts between which there is a great impassable gulf, and before His death all went to one side or the other. Luke 16v26. The good side was not in God's presence, but in Abraham's bosom, and even though the Old Testament saints who were there had the comfort of their faith in God, none of them wanted to die and go to this place of darkness, and so they lived their lives in fear of death. Isaiah 38v1-3, Heb 2v15, Job 10v20-22, 19v25-27. This outlook was completely changed by the death of Jesus, for He said that, unlike the Old Testament believer, those who believed in Him would not lose their spirit at death and go to Hades, but would go into the presence of God in Paradise in Heaven. John 8v35, 11v24-26, 2Cor 5v1,6-8, 12v2-4, Rev 2v7, 21v10 with 22v2, Phil 1v21,22, Heb 12v22-24, Ezek 28v13.

Many believe that the Old Testament saints were among "the multitude of captives," that Jesus led out of Hades. Eph 4v8, 1Peter 3v18-20, 4v6. We should translate Luke 23v43, "Verily, to thee I say today; with me thou shalt be in Paradise." The thief asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom, Jesus told him that he did not have to wait until the kingdom came for that answer, his faith had saved him **THAT DAY**, and he was going to enjoy Paradise with his Lord. Paradise is in Heaven. Rev 2v7, 2Cor 12v1-4. Jesus did not go to Paradise that day, He went to the sinners side of Hades for our redemption, and suffered its pains. Acts 2v23-32, 1Pet.2v14 (1Peter 3v18), 2Cor 5v21, Matt 12v40, Heb 5v7, Isaiah 53v10. **This victory over death and Hades was our Lord's greatest victory of faith and love. Blessed be His lovely Name!**

We must not confuse Hades with "Gehenna," also known as "the lake of fire," into which the wicked go after the Great White Throne Judgement. Matt 25v41,46. "Gehenna" occurs 12 times in the New Testament. Matt 5v22,29,30, 10v28, 18v9, 23v15,33, Mark 9v43,45,47, Luke 12v5, James 3v6. Fire is often associated with the judgement and doom of the wicked. Matt 7v19, 13v40,42,50, 18v8,9, 25v41, Mark 9v44,46,48, Luke 16v24, John 15v6, 2Thess 1v8, Heb 10v27, Jude v7, Rev 14v10, 19v20, 20v10,14,15, 21v8. **Characters and will are permanently set by the passage of time, and by our acceptance or rejection of the truth. A fixation of purpose towards righteousness or evil is inevitable for everyone. This is why Paul said, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil 2v12) We must set our wills in the paths of righteousness, not in the ways of the wicked.** Jer 13v23, Rom 2v1-11, 9v22-27, 2Tim.3v13-17, 2Peter 2v1-22, Rev 2v21, 9v20,21, 16v9,11,21, 21v8, 22v11. Jesus has the keys of Hades, and at present only the unsaved go to Hades to await judgement. The first people to be put in Gehenna are Antichrist and his followers, at our Lord's return. Satan is not in charge of Hades and Gehenna, they are God's prisons, which Satan and his demons are terrified of being cast into.

Things Present. "The Things Which Are." Rev 2v1-3v22.

The letters to the seven churches are not prophecies of different periods of Church history, they are messages to each named individual church. However, each letter to the churches has lessons for all of Christ's Church in all ages. We need to take note of the warnings, and rejoice in the promises, that Jesus gives to these churches. There have been many different kinds of churches in every period of Church history. All the conditions that exist in each of these seven churches will exist in the Church during the last seven years of this age. The word of God is the eternal voice of God to His people. The Holy Spirit meets the particular and local needs of each church through His gifts.

There is a framework common to each letter.

The letters are all addressed to the angels of the seven churches.

"Angelos," means "messenger," it occurs 185 times in the New Testament; "archangel," "archangelos," occurs in 1Thess 4v16 and Jude v9; and "like the angels," "isangeloi," occurs in Luke 20v36. "Angelos" is mostly used of angelic beings, and is used of human messengers only 13 times; of John Baptist, "My messenger," in Matt 11v10, Mark 1v2, Luke 7v27, quoting Mal 3v1; John's messengers, Luke 7v24; Christ's messengers, Luke 9v52; the spies Rahab received James 2v25; and the seven messengers to the churches in Revelation. "Angelos" can hardly refer to an angelic messenger in the letters to the seven churches, for Jesus has no need to write letters to His heavenly messengers, they receive His instructions directly from Him. Some say these seven messengers may simply be the postal messengers to the seven churches. Luke 7v24,27, 9v52, James 2v25, 1Cor 11v10. Others say that they are the presiding elder, pastor and overseer of each of the churches. In the early Church the elder, "presbuteros," and the bishop, or better, the overseer, "episkopos," were different names for the same office, one tells us that they were older respected leaders of the local church, the other tells us that they were the overseers and shepherds of the local church, Acts 14v23, 20v17,28, 1Tim 3v1-7, Titus 1v5-9, 1Peter 5v2. The most senior and most spiritual elder presided and took the leading part in the church, and so had the greatest responsibility for the church. Some have thought that the honoured place in the hand of Christ is that of the leading elder and shepherd of the sheep. 1Peter 5v1-4. **There is a great responsibility resting upon those who are leading the flock of God, they can make or mar their flocks.**

Each letter describes some attribute of Christ particularly applicable to each church.

We need to be stripped of all false ideas of Jesus for they mislead the soul, and it is only the truth about Him that gives us victory in the day. This is why the prophets were given notable visions of God, their tasks were so difficult that it was only their vision of God that gave them strength to go on. It is the revelation of God to our soul that brings us life and victory. John 6v53-58,63, Ezek 1v26, Dan 7v9-14, 2Chron 18v18, Acts 9v1-16, 22v6-16, 26v12-23. The particular need of each church is revealed by Jesus in the light of some glorious attribute of His own Person, which can meet that need, all we need is in Jesus. Rev 2v1,8,12,18, 3v1,7,14. We are instructed in Heb 12v1,2, to look away from all the distractions and problems of life, and even the cloud of witnesses, and to look instead into the inner being of Jesus and feed our souls on His beauty. "Aphorontes eis," "looking away into" Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith.

There is a description of the condition of each church.

Christ starts with the solemn words, "I know thy works;" words intended to sober and prepare the heart to listen to Him with a befitting seriousness. Our Lord's address to the church follows the following pattern. He first of all commends whatever He can find to commend, then tells them the things that are wrong with the church, only two churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia escape rebuke. Jesus closes with an exhortation either to hold fast or repent, and warns that discipline or judgement will come upon those churches that do not repent. Christ and His angels watch our lives and works, and a kind but searching examination of the detailed record of our lives and works will take place at the judgement seat of Christ. Unseen watchers record our lives and works, for they show what we are, and the value of our faith. Dan 4v13,17-31. **We shall not just be judged on our condition when we meet Jesus, but on our past life as a whole after salvation.** 2Cor 5v8-11. Sin that has been repented of will of course be forgiven and forgotten by our gracious Lord, but He will be perfectly honest and just with us. The fire will try our works. 1Cor 3v10-17. Only real repentance will blot out our sins. Matt 12v36,37, James 2v14-26.

The picture of a lamp stand conveys the truth that the churches are intended to be lights that shine in the darkness of the world. The powers of darkness try to extinguish or pollute this light, and so the church is attacked by temptation, persecution, by infiltration of Satan's children into the Church, and by treachery, sin or division from within the

Church. Joshua 7 all, 9v3-27, Acts 5v1-11,13, 20v28-31, 8v1-3, Gal 1v6-9, 5v7,11,12, 3John v9-11, Jude v3,4,12-21, 2Peter 2v1-3.

Jesus reveals the people and means by which Satan attacks the churches.

False Religion. This, rather than atheism, is Satan's objective, for by this means he can deceive more people, and his real aim is worship of himself. False religion is seen in the following ways in these churches.

Synagogue. Rev 2v9. Even the order laid down by God can become the instrument of Satan, if only the outward form is carried out, and truth and Christ are rejected in favour of man-made tradition. The Temple of God at Jerusalem became a den of thieves instead of the house of prayer for all nations, and Israel's religious leaders rejected and crucified their Christ. Matt 15v1-14, Rom 2v17-24, 2Tim 3v1-5, 1Peter 1v17-19.

Paganism. Rev 2v20. The gods of the heathen are really demons, or Satan, who desires to be like God and be worshipped, he is the god of this degenerate world. 1Cor 10v19-21, 2Tim 3v7,8, 2Cor 4v4, 2Thess 2v7,8, Rev 13.

False Doctrine. John 8v44. Satan had infiltrated several of the seven churches with deadly false doctrines that included immorality and idolatry. Sensuous evil teaching such as this was part of the teaching of the Nicolaitanes, Baalamites, and the followers of Jezebel, and this kind of lawless Antinomianism has been a bane of the Church throughout its history. The voice of God repeats again and again, "Be ye holy, as I am holy." 1Peter 1v15,16, Rev 3v7, 4v8, 15v4, 6v10, 22v11.

Martyrdom. Rev 2v10. What Satan cannot win by seduction he tries to destroy by persecution, he has often used those who have unscriptural traditions, or practice false religion, or have political power, to persecute God's dear children.

Worldly Interests. Satan once offered Christ the world in exchange for His cross and he still comes with the same offer to the brethren of Jesus. The church at Laodicea had succumbed to this temptation, and many others who resist Satan in other ways often fall prey to prosperity. We are urged to keep ourselves from the idols of the world and all worldliness. 1Tim 6v17-19, 1John 2v15-17, 4v4,5, 5v4. A struggle for power in the church is one of the most dangerous and sinful of the worldly attitudes that can attack the church, this sin cost Satan his place in Heaven, this struggle for power is sometimes disguised by a false claim to divine illumination and prophetic authority, we judge all such claims in the light of the Scriptures. God reveals the truth about the activities of seducing spirits to spiritually minded Christians. 1Cor 14v29, 1Thess 5v19-21. Godly spiritual elders can guide the flock of God out of spiritual danger and deliver the flock from ambitious persons. Heb 13v7,8,17, 1Tim 3v1-13, Titus 1v5-16.

An attack on their personal communion with God and their love for God. Our Lord's rebuke to Ephesus was absolutely necessary, for if a church is lacking in prayer and communion with God, it is totally defeated. If Satan can defeat us here, he has defeated us everywhere. A church can have a reputation for evangelism and spirituality, that is quite false, its inner communion with God can be almost non-existent, like Sardis it can be said of it, "thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." Prolonged earnest seeking of God is essential, if we are to preserve the spiritual effectiveness of a church.

Satan's Throne. Satan follows God's pattern and puts angels in charge of the nations. Dan 10v13,20,21. It could be that Satan made himself personally responsible for Pergamos, but it could refer to the Caesar worship that was practised at Pergamos, Satan was certainly the power behind Caesar's throne. Rev 12v3,9, 17v10.

There is a precious promise to those who are overcomers.

In Rev 2v7,11,17,26, 3v5,12,21 and 21v7, Jesus uses the present active participle of "nikao," to be a victor, to be victorious, to gain a victory, to speak of the overcomers. The present tense indicates continuous victory. This verb occurs 16 times in Revelation, see Rev 5v5, 6v2, 11v7, 12v11, 13v7, 15v2, and 17v14 as well. Jesus gives these precious incentives to us, to inspire us to live victoriously, and He tells us to repent if we are living in defeat, or we will not experience a full reward. 1Cor 9v27, 2Tim 4v7,8, 2John v8. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev 3v11. The grace of God can enable us to overcome. Rev 12v10,11, John 16v33, Rom 8v28-39, Phil 4v19, 2Cor 12v9, 1John 5v4,5. We have to fight to keep our garments clean, from defilement by the world, the flesh and the Devil, the believer who is living in sin has dirty garments. Zech 3v1-7, 2Cor 5v3, 7v1, 1John 2v14-17, Rev 3v4,5,17,18, 19v8. Some have said that the overcomers are a select group among Christians, others, like myself, believe that they are all Christians who get the victory over the trials and temptations of life, and endure to the end. Those who do not overcome are those who apostatise from the faith.

To Ephesus. "To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Rev 2v7. All who are saved will eat the fruit of the tree of life, so overcomers cannot be a select group of Christians.

To Smyrna. "He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev 2v11. It is unbelievers who are cast into the lake of fire, not Christians. This again shows that overcomers are not a select group of Christians.

To Pergamos. "To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows except he who receives it." Rev 2v17. God gives soul satisfying manna, and public acclaim which is signified by a white stone, and a secret name of precious significance, to every Christian who wins through to the heavenly kingdom.

To Thyatira. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works to the end, to him I will give power over the nations: 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 have received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. Rev 2v26-28. Power over the nations in the Millennium is promised to the overcomers, a similar promise is given in Rev 3v21.

To Sardis. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and the Holy angels." Rev 3v5. Overcomers do not have their names blotted out of the book of life, but those, who apostatise and lose their faith, do.

To Philadelphia. "He 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 from Heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Rev 3v12. All believers in Jesus have this heavenly calling, and are "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Heb 3v1, Eph 1v18, 2v19-22, 1Cor 12v12,13.

To Laodicea. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev 3v21. A similar promise to that given to the church at Thyatira in Rev 2v26-28; If we suffer for Christ's sake, we shall reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will deny us. 2Tim 2v12.

To All. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Rev 21v7. All true Christians are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Rom 8v17. In Gal 3v1-5 and 4v4-7, God makes us sons and heirs by redemption grace, and not by attainment through works of the Law. Our inheritance is received entirely by grace, through faith in Jesus. 1Peter 1v3-7,17-19, Col 1v12. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." Rom 8v32. All things are freely given to us in Jesus. In 1Cor 3v21-23, Paul said to the wayward Corinthians, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." However, in 1Cor 3v10-17, Paul warns us that the fire will test the quality of our works, and that if they are not acceptable, they will be burnt up, but we shall be saved, "yet so as by fire." In this same passage, the destruction of those who defile the temple of their bodies and souls with evil, is also stated by Paul. 1Cor 3v17. Persevering faith and love are the distinguishing characteristics of the overcomer.

The spiritual qualities that make up the character of the overcomer.

Mention must be made of this subject as it is so important, the promises given to the overcomer are so great that the subject deserves special consideration. Christ has solemnly warned the Christians of the last days that they will have to live very careful, prayerful and godly lives if they are to overcome and come through the gross darkness with flying colours. Matt 7v24-29, 24v11-13,42-25v13, Mark 4v19, Luke 8v14, 18v1-8, 1John 2v28. Let us consider the spiritual qualities that cause a person to be an overcomer and the things an overcomer does and is.

1) They Love The Word Of God. They are not lazy in Bible study, they learn the doctrines and truths of God's Word, they know truth and long for more, it is the joy and rejoicing of their heart. Joshua 1v8, Psalm 1 all, John 17v17,26, Acts 17v10,11, 20v32, Rom 6v17, Eph 6v14,17, 2Tim 3v15-17, Heb 5v11-14, 1Pet 2v2.

2) They Love To Do God's Will. They actively serve God, they seek the lost, they have an evangelical fervour. Isaiah 52v7, Matt 6v10, 26v42, 28v18-20, John 4v34, 5v30, 12v26, Rom 12v1,2, Col 1v9, Heb 10v7, 12v23. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Spirit of God. Rom 8v14, Eph 4v30, 1Thess 5v17, Rev 2v7,11,17,29, 3v6,13,22. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Word of God, e.g. "follow after love and desire spiritual gifts." Matt 7v21, 12v30, Luke 6v46, 11v34, John 14v21-24.

3) They Love To Seek Their Father's Face. They love to pray, they have a life of public and private praise and prayer, they tarry for the Spirit, they wait on God. Psalm 27v8, 34v3,6, 37v9, 62v1,2,5,6 84v4-10, 91v1,2,9,14,15, Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13, 18v1-8, Eph 6v18,19, 1Thess 3v10, 5v17, Jude v20,21.

4) They Love To Walk With God In Their Daily Lives. They live a practical holy life. Rom 8v5-14, Gal 5v16-26, Eph 4v1-3,17-32, 5v1-6v9. By the grace of God they keep themselves pure and in victory. They are not in bondage to sin. By the grace of their Saviour they have overcome the world, the flesh and the Devil. Psalm 37v23,24, Matt 5v8, John 16v33, Rom 6v14-23, 2Cor 7v1, Phil 3v7-21, 1Thess 4v2,3, 1John 2v13-17, 3v1-10, 4v4, 5v4, Rev 14v1-5.

5) They Love the Brethren. Psalm 133v1-3, John 13v34,35, 15v12-15, Acts 1v14, 2v1,44-47, 4v32,37, Phil 4v1, 1Thess 2v11, 1John 3v10-24, 4v7-5v3. They love to have fellowship with God's people, and dwell on the things of God together. Deut 6v4-9, Prov 27v17, Mal 3v16-18, Heb 10v24,25. In the home as well as the church building. Matt 23v37-39, Acts 2v1-4 with 1v13, Rom 16v5, 1Cor 16v19, Col 4v15, Philemon v2. Our conversation should be centred on heavenly things and should be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ, gracious and loving like those of our gracious Lord, "They were all astonished at the beautiful words that fell from His lips." Luke 4v22 cf. Col 4v6. If this is not so, there is a definite need of reconsecration. Matt 15v10,11, Mark 7v20-23, Eph 5v4,5.

6) The letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation give us a very good idea of what the Lord expects of the Christian, and what an overcoming Christian is like. We read the Christians are to have works, love, service, faith, patience, increasing works, a willingness to be faithful unto death, a separation from the world, spiritual alertness, and the thing that will assure all these, they must keep their fervent first love for Christ. Perhaps more qualities of the overcomer could be added to these, but these will suffice. In **ALL** things we are to follow the example of Christ, for by His grace we can overcome **ALL** that comes our way. Matt 11v28-30, 13v23, Luke 8v8,15, John 15v1-8, 1John 2v6, 4v17, Rev 12v10,11.

The saints are exhorted to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In spite of importance of the Messenger, we can refuse to hear "Him who speaks from Heaven." Heb 12v25. God is looking for people who will tremble at His Word and obey it, whether it comes through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or His written Word, but, alas, this is rare. Psalm 2v11, Ezra 10v3, 9v4. Isaiah 66v2,5, Phil 2v12.

Some examples of those who heard God's Word and obeyed. Noah and Abraham. Heb 11v7,17-19. Rehoboam. 2Chron 11v4. Compare 12v14. Pekah. 2Chron 28v9. Ahab. 1Kings 21v27. Even Ahab gained a respite by trembling at God's Word. Amaziah. 2Chron 25v7. What a good man Josiah was! 2Chron 34v18-33. Paul. Acts 16v9.

Some examples of people who heard God's Word and rebelled.

Noah's contemporaries. 1Peter 3v20, 2Peter 3v5. Lot's sons in law. Gen 19v1,12-15,24,28. The generation which had not seen the mighty acts of God's power in action in Canaan. Judges 2v1,2,10-19. This is a solemn warning to any movement that is brought into being by the power and grace of God, but which later loses that power. Balaam and Balak. Numb 22v1-12, 24v1-9, 31v8-16, Rev 2v14. Saul. 1Sam 18v12-29, 13v8-14, 15v3,9,15,26, 1Chron 10v13,14. What a warning! Asa, a godly man rebels at God's Word through a prophet. 2Chron 16v7-10. Jeroboam. 1Kings 13v33. Israel. 2Kings 17v13-18, Neh 9v26,27. Judah. 2Chron 24v19-22, 36v15,16. The religious leaders of Israel in Christ's day. Matt 21v32, Luke 7v29,30, Matt 23v1-39. etc. God's people often rejected the Word of God, and the leaders that God appointed. Moses. Acts 7v25,35-39. Samuel. 1Sam 8v1-8. Jeremiah. Jer 42v1-6, 43v1-4. Paul. 2Cor 10v10, 11v4,12,13,20-22, Gal 1v6-9. People can tremble in fear at God's Word, they know it is true, but will not accept it, or obey it. Joshua 2v9-11, 5v1, 9v9,24, 1Kings 22v14-35, Acts 24v24-27.

Those who had once loved Paul turned away from him in favour of false apostles. 2Tim 1v15. The motives of such false prophets and apostles will usually be quite plain. They seek such things as popularity, financial betterment, position, prestige, or a following of worshippers or disciples. 2Chron 18v12, 1Kings 18v19, Neh 6v12-14, Jer 5v31, Luke 6v24-26, 3John v9-11. False prophets condone the practice of the sins that people love. 2Peter 2v1-22, Acts 20v29,30, Jude v3,4.

The Scripture warns us that there will be a great deal of false prophecy in the last days by the Devil's disciples. 1Tim 4v1-3, Matt 24v24, Rev 13. all. 1John 4v1-3. False prophecy comes out of a bad heart, but if the people of God are walking with God, they will recognise the true prophet of God even when they are surrounded by many false prophets who are all saying the same thing. Matt 7v15-23, 2Chron 18v4-27, Jer 20v1-18, 37v19. There is a difference, however, between false prophecy arising from a bad heart and wrong prophecy arising from ignorance and stupidity, for example, when Christians are told to prophesy in faith when they have nothing from God. You only have the authority to prophesy when the Spirit of God has come upon you and given you a message to speak. The honest heart

that fears the Lord never need fear, but the Lord will severely punish the wilful false prophet. Jer 28v17, 29v21-32, Acts 13v11, Rev 2v20-23, 19v20. It is a sin to make a false claim to speak for God.

The Holy Spirit is Lord, He has come to do His will, not ours, and we should obey Him. We should not make our plans and then ask His blessing, we should seek His plans and then His blessing will automatically follow. This shows the importance of genuine prophecy, for prophets are the mouthpiece of God to the churches. Ezek 3v1-11, Jer 1v9. Prophets, however, differ a great deal in the importance of the things that they say, and the people to whom they speak. One may speak only words of comfort to the local church, another may speak words of wisdom and knowledge to the church universal. There are many that prophesy, but there are few set in the Church universal as prophets. Compare the importance of Isaiah's prophecies with those of the old prophet of 1Kings 13v20-22, 1Cor 12v28, Eph 4v11.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit were operating in all of these seven churches, for they had been led into these experiences by the apostles, and about a hundred years later they were still operating in Lyons in France in the church of Irenaeus. It could be that no one was willing to give the messages of rebuke that were necessary for some of the churches, or that the prophecies that were given were ignored and rejected, it is necessary to not only admire, but obey the voice of God through His gifts. We must also take care that we are not stumbled by the kind of person that God uses to speak for Him, for God has chosen some strange people, at least by the worlds standards, to speak for Him. 2Kings 1v8, Amos 1v1, Matt 3v4, Isaiah 28v11-13.

The following things characterise the true prophet of God.

a) An anointing of the Holy Spirit, which on matters of importance will be very great.

Spiritual people will recognise God's prophetic word and witness to its truth. 1John 2v20,26-29. This anointing is not to be confused with oratory, a fluent flow of words, or a lot of noise, it can be discerned by a spiritual and prayerful Christian without any difficulty. Ezek 3v22, 8v1, 11v5, 1Cor 14v29. 1Thes.5v18-22.

b) A man of God will have a good life. Matt 7v15-23.

The gentleness, tenderness, and love of Christ should be abundantly manifested, even when severe rebukes are given by God. Hos 11v1-8, Matt 11v29, 1Thess 1v6-8,11,12, James 3v13-18, Rev 3v15-20. Compare Dan 1v4,8,17, 10v11,19 with Isaiah 28v7, Jer 23v9-32. See Titus 1v10-16, 2Peter 2v9-22.

c) A prophet's message will be confirmed by other prophets.

Just as the Old Testament prophets confirmed each other's prophecies. 1Cor 14v29.

d) If a prophecy contains a prediction, it will be fulfilled. Deut 18v20-22.

However, promised blessing can be withheld because of sin, or judgement withheld by repentance. Deut 13v1-3, Jer 28v9, Jonah 3v3 to 4v2.

e) There will be a patience in suffering if the prophetic word of God brings suffering upon the prophet. James 5v10, Luke 6v14-29, 2Chron 16v10, 18v26,27. False prophets say nice things to please people, but true prophets often suffer for their message. Jer 6v14, 8v11, 2Peter 1v20,21, 2v1, Matt 24v24, 1Kings 18v25-41, 22v6-28, Gal 4v16, Rev 11v3-12.

f) A true prophet will never contradict Scripture.

Nor will they claim that their revelations take precedence over Scripture. Isaiah 8v19,20.

Ephesus. Rev 2v1-7.

Ephesus was about sixty miles from Patmos, and the postal messenger would reach it first. It was the most important city of the (Roman) province of Asia, even though Pergamos was the official capital of Asia. Ephesus was near the sea on the river Cayster, and being on the sea end of the principal trade route with the East, there was as a consequence, a constant flow of trade through its port, which had some problems through the silting up of the mouth of the river Cayster. It was an extremely busy city full of merchants, traders and workmen, and was for a long time the greatest

commercial centre of the country, many side roads and sea routes converged there. Corinth was the next great city on the way westwards to Rome. Ephesus was a large busy city, where multitudes of people, and great areas of new people could be easily reached with the Gospel, so we can see why God directed Paul to Ephesus, and why he stayed so long here. Ephesus had one of the seven wonders of the world, it was a great temple dedicated to the worship of Diana, better, Artemis, she had many worshippers, and a very profitable business was done in the sale of silver shrines and magic charms. Acts 19v19,20,24. It was the home of mystery cults, magic, and idolatry, and the conflict with this idolatry finally drove Paul from Ephesus. When the persecutions under the Caesar's started, many of the Christians who were condemned, passed through Ephesus to be executed at Rome.

The tremendous privileges that the church at Ephesus had enjoyed.

The short visit of Paul. Acts 18v19.

Apollos had ministered to them.

Luke states that Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures and fervent in spirit, he was full of passionate sincerity and heavenly energy, even before Priscilla and Aquila instructed him more thoroughly in Christian things. The memory of this man of keen intellect and burning heart should have kept their hearts burning. Acts 18v24-28. Luke uses the word "zeo" to describe Apollos, it means "to be hot," and is used to describe boiling liquids and glowing solids. "Zeo" and its derivatives is used in either a good sense or a bad one, either of fervent godly zeal, or ungodly jealousy, covetous anger. John 2v17, Rom 10v2, 12v11, 13v13, Acts 7v9, 13v45, 17v5, 1Cor 3v3, 12v31, 13v4, 14v1,39, 2Cor 7v7,11, 9v2, 11v2, Gal 4v17, Phil 3v6, Col 4v13, James 3v14-16, 4v2, 5v16, Rev 3v15,16,19. **Let us glow with heavenly love and zeal, not boil with anger, envy or jealousy.**

Paul was at Ephesus for almost three years. Acts 19v26, 20v31.

There was a tremendous revival with great persecution because of the financial loss that the idol makers suffered due to the reformed lives of many of their former customers. Acts 19 all. NB v8,10, Acts 26v18-20, 1Thess 1v9.

Paul's meets with the elders of Ephesus at Miletus in 58 AD. Acts 20v17-38. NB v31.

Paul reminds them of his sacrificial and loving ministry among them in the past, and asks them to care for their flocks in the same way. Paul then gives them a prophetic warning that they would be attacked by false teachers from without and ambitious leaders seeking a following of disciples from within. It seems from Paul's letter to the Ephesians in 64 AD, that his warning was heeded for a time, for there is no mention of any problems in it. However, by 66 or 67 AD, when Paul wrote in 2Tim 1v15, "This thou knowest, that ALL they which be in Asia are turned against me;" it seems that even Ephesus was estranged from Paul for a while. It appears that by the time that this letter in Revelation was written, any false prophets and ambitious leaders had been rejected. Rev 2v2,6. We also need to beware of wolves who wear the sheepskin of the Gospel. Matt 7v15-23, 2Cor 11v13-15,26, 2Peter 2v1-3, 1Tim 1v19,20, 1John 2v19, 3John v9-10.

Paul wrote one of the most spiritual epistles of all to the Ephesian church.

They must have been in a spiritual position to understand Paul's epistle. It was written in about 64 AD (63 AD?), and in around 96 AD, about 32 years later, Jesus said that they had lost their spiritual foundation, their first love for Him.

They had enjoyed prolonged oversight of the highest quality.

Tradition informs us that Timothy was an overseer here for a long period of time. 1Tim 1v3, 2Tim 4v19,20 with Acts 18v24-26, Phil 2v19-22. John had a long ministry here, it was his home and administrative centre, and he returned here from Patmos.

The spiritual condition of the Ephesian church when Christ addressed them.

The Ephesian church had many commendable points and by modern standards we would say it was a good church. They had "works," "erga," John 5v17, 6v29; had "toiled hard with exhausting work," "kopos;" had "steadfastly endured," "hupomene," and had not grown weary or flagged, "ou kekopiakes," in their service for God. They had faithfully served God and had rejected false apostles and false doctrine, which other churches had accepted. This church had enjoyed the most spiritual and loving leaders possible, but they had failed in the most vital part of

Christianity, they had lost their first love for Jesus, and probably because of this their fervent love for each other. "Aphikes," the aorist active of "aphiemi," to leave, forsake, or abandon, is a strong word, they had left their first enthusiastic love for Jesus. What had cooled off their love and zeal for Christ? Was it the loss of their pastor John, the apostle of love? Had they neglected fellowship, earnest prayer and love of God's Word? Did they feel that supreme spiritual effort was no longer necessary? Had they cooled off to become more accepted by the worldlings and Jews to avoid persecution to give their families security? Had the church become more worldly-minded and gone after material possessions? Whatever the cause of this loss of first love, remember nothing can take the place of love for Christ and communion with Christ. **We need a tender heart full of deep affection for Jesus, as well as a clear well-informed mind.**

Jesus tells them to keep on remembering ("mnemoneue," the present active imperative of "mnemoneuo," continue mindful), from where they are fallen and to repent and do (the aorist active imperative of "poieo," "Do at once") the first works ("ta prota erga") and renew the first love which had grown cold. Act 19v20, 20v37, Eph 1v13-16. **Action was needed, we cannot live on past memories, even though we may be encouraged by them.** Our love for God must be nourished and kept alive day by day, or the first love, and first works that spring out of that love, will die away. The first and greatest commandment directs us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, this will decide the quality of work that we do for our Lord.

The Ephesian Christians still laboured for Christ, they had evangelistic endeavour and good works, but they had lost some of their original power to bless; for Christ demanded a return to both first works and first love. A fullness of ministry can only flow from fervent and genuine Christian love. Acts 2v1 to 4v37, 1Cor 12v31 to 13v13, 1Peter 4v8. Christ knew that unless they repented, they would degenerate to the place where they would have all the words and outward form of Christianity, without the inner reality of the power and love of God, and would end up with a dead form. In 2Tim 3v5, "form," is "morphosin," which means, the outline of the "morphe," without its substance and reality. Rom 2v20. Jesus, therefore, told them to remember the spiritual loss that they had sustained, and to repent and do the first works. This church had great privileges, it must therefore have a corresponding life. **To whom much is given, much shall be required.** Luke 12v48.

In the first "repent" in Rev 2v5, Jesus uses the aorist active imperative "metanoeson," of "metanoeo," to change one's thinking, to repent, when He said that He would come and remove their lamp stand if they did not repent. The aorist imperative suggests a decisive break; this is in contrast to the present imperative, "repent," which suggests a continuing attitude. The second "repent" in Rev 2v5, is "metanoeseis," the aorist active subjunctive of "metanoeo." The removal of the lamp could mean either that the church would cease to exist as a light for Christ, or He was going to move the shining of His light to another place. Since Jesus said he would remove the lamp, not extinguish it, the second is more likely. Jesus could have meant that He would bring a remnant out of the church, or raise up another group of spiritual Christians. It is often easier for God to raise up a new church than to give life to a dead form. Churches can carry on for centuries with a dead form without God's blessing, and can drift so far from the truth that they shed darkness instead of light, and even persecute the true Church of God. John 16v1-4. It is our personal affection for Christ that determines our position in the Christian life. This love will be manifested in the fruits of the Spirit and not just in lip praise or emotion. Matt 5v1-16, Mark 4v25, John 14v15.

False apostles. Rev 2v2.

These false teachers arrogantly proclaimed that they had an apostolic ministry, and assumed an air of authority, the Ephesians had tested them and proved that they were deceivers and not apostles. Paul often had to write in defence of his apostleship, and he tells us how to recognise a true apostle. He states that God, not men, sets apostles in the Church, and confirms their ministry by signs, wonders and miracles. Rom 15v18-20, 1Cor 12v28, 2Cor 12v11-13, Eph 4v11, 1Thess 2v1-14. True men of God have an outstanding revelation of Christ and truth from Christ. Gal 1 and 2, 2Cor 12v1-10. They also manifest a Christ-like life. Gal 1v15,16, 1Thess 2v10, 1Cor 11v1. True apostles have to suffer for their ministry, it is the way of the cross. Paul bore in his body the scars that he had received for Christ's sake, they proved his love for Jesus. 2Cor 11v23-33, 12v7-10, 1Cor 4v9-13, Gal 6v17. Paul had continual opposition from the Judaizers, right from his first controversy with them over whether Gentile Christians should keep the Law in Acts 15v1-34. NB v1,24. Some Judaizers falsely claimed that they were apostles, and they won the allegiance, and corrupted the faith, of many of the churches that Paul founded.

Here we see that over 30 years after Paul's warnings, the church at Ephesus is again plagued by false apostles and by evil false doctrine through the Nicolaitanes and Balaamites. Some say that Nicolas is the Greek version of the Hebrew Balaam, however, Jesus differentiates between them in Rev 2v14,15. Both groups had immoral teaching in their doctrine, and they appear to have said that it did not matter what your morals were as long as you believed, and that sin made the grace of God to abound more. **This evil antinomian doctrine is with us today, those who teach unconditional eternal security go a long way down this dark road.** We have been redeemed from the curse of the Law, but we will always have to obey the moral law of God, it will be the basis of the happiness of Heaven. We can

never sin and get away with it, for wilful sin destroys the soul. 2Peter 2v9-16, Jude v4,11, Rom 6 all, Prov 3v18, 11v30, 13v13-15, Ezek 18v4,20,30-32.

Jesus closes his exhortation by encouraging the Ephesians with the promise of eternal life in Paradise for those who overcome and faithfully follow Him. **Jesus knows all about our lives, and knows if there is any cooling off of our love for Him.**

Smyrna. Rev 2v8-11.

Smyrna was about 50 miles north of Ephesus, and was almost as important as Ephesus. It had a very good harbour at the head of a well protected gulf, and was at the sea end of another great trade route, and had a flourishing trade that was almost as good as that of Ephesus. It was a seat of Emperor worship with a temple to Tiberius. There were many Jews here who were very hostile to Christianity, and they joined with the Romans in persecuting and killing Christians. In Rev 2v9, "tribulation," is "thlipsis," which indicates crushing pressure; the word for "poverty" is not "penia," which means they had only life's essentials, but the more severe word "ptocheia," which means they were totally destitute. Trench writes, "The "penes" has nothing superfluous, the "ptochos" nothing at all." The church at Smyrna was financially destitute but spiritually rich. This poverty was probably due to a trade boycott by the traders of Smyrna, and it was probably inspired by the large numbers of Jewish traders at Smyrna. These Jews had rejected their Messiah, and were certainly not looked upon as God's elect; they had set themselves against the Christians at Smyrna, and had become the servants of Satan, and their synagogue Satan's house. The Christians at Smyrna were the spiritually rich poor among the spiritually bankrupt rich, their Christianity was costing them something. Though poverty is not in itself commendable, the poor are looked upon by God with special concern. In his earthly life Jesus was poor and He came to preach the Gospel to the poor, and the early Church was mostly made up of poor people. 2Cor 8v9, Luke 4v18, Rom 15v26, 1Cor 1v26-31, Gal 2v10. There has always been a vivid contrast between the financially poor but spiritually rich church, and the materially rich but spiritually bankrupt church.

Jesus says, "I know thy tribulations and poverty," this must have given great comfort to these hard pressed suffering saints. He who is the First and the Last has suffered and died for us, and he knows our suffering and lives to meet our every need. "Jesus knows," these are sweet words when the trials of life beset us. The crown of life is promised to martyrs from a martyr. Trials even unto death are not out of the will of God. There is no certainty of deliverance from, or out of, persecution, but there is a sure promise for grace to have victory in tribulation and temptation. Rom 8v37. Just to be saved and be in God's kingdom will be wonderful, but to overcome all that opposes us and to reign with Jesus, and care for the creation, will be beyond all thought. If we Abide in Jesus we will not be ashamed at His coming. Ezek 44v10-16, Luke 19v11-27, 2Cor 5v1-11, 2Tim 2v12,20,21, James 1v12, 1Peter 1v7, 2Peter 2v9-12, 1John 2v28, Rev 16v15, 17v14.

Polycarp.

The church at Smyrna was privileged to have Polycarp as a member of their church, he had been a Christian about 26 years when this letter was written. Eusebius puts the date of the death of Polycarp at 166 AD, others put it at 156 AD. When Polycarp was martyred he had been a Christian for 86 years, for he said at his death, "Eighty and six years have I served Christ." This would, taking the date of Eusebius, 166 AD, put Polycarp's conversion at 80 AD; the earlier date would put it at 70 AD. Polycarp was obviously converted as a child, and had about 20 to 30 years contact with the apostle John. During the lives of John and Polycarp huge numbers of Christians died for their faith. Our Lord never deceives us when He asks us to follow Him, He warns us that it may cost us our life. Ignatius, while on his way to Rome to be martyred for Christ in 108 AD, wrote a letter to Polycarp which showed that Polycarp was the leader of the church at that time, so he could well have been one of the leaders of the church at Smyrna when Christ wrote this letter to it. Irenaeus writes in his work "Against Heresies," Book 3. c3. 4.; "Polycarp was not only instructed by apostles and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also by apostles in Asia appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna; whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried on earth a long time, and when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffered martyrdom."

Jesus warns the Christians at Smyrna that greater problems than poverty, discrimination and slander were about to overtake them, some of them were about to die for their faith in Him. Jesus tells them, "Do not at all fear," "meden phobou," and arms them against the fear of imprisonment and death by telling them with a strong double negative, "ou me," that those who are faithful to death will not be hurt of the second death. Untold millions of Christians have been martyred in this century. At the end of this age there is going to be an even worse persecution of Christians, this letter to the church at Smyrna should strengthen the resolve of all who will suffer and die in this future time of trial. Rev 6v9-11, 12v17, 13v7, Matt 24v9. etc.

The name Smyrna was derived from myrrh, with which our Lord's body was embalmed, John 19v39; the Christians at Smyrna knew the shadow of death was upon them. Jesus warns them that Satan would be behind the coming persecution, and that he would imprison and kill some of them. Jesus assures them that this trial of faith was for a limited period of time. Satan had corrupted the Church at Laodicea by getting them to compromise and seek worldly things, but he had failed with the Christians at Smyrna, and so he comes in like a roaring lion. The persecutors were the servants of Satan, he was the one who drove and prompted them. The Church has been well warned of these sufferings by Jesus. Matt 10v17-19, Luke 21v12-17, Phil 1v29, 1Peter 2v20, 3v14, Acts 8v3. God allows Satan to try the faith of the saints in order that the world might see and be challenged by the faithful witness of God's people. The faith of Christians is established and proved by such experiences and it is found unto praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus. Deut 8v2,3, 1Peter 1v7, 5v10, James 1v3,12. God uses Satan to try and purify His saints when He knows that it is necessary, e.g. Peter. Luke 22v31-34. Jesus searches our hearts and then allows trials to show the good, as well as the bad, that is in them. While we are in the trial He is interceding for us and making His grace available to us. Tribulation, temptation and trial faced with Christ can only do us good. Rom 5v1-6, Heb 4v14-16, 7v25-28. The Christ who was faithful unto death promises those who are faithful unto death a crown of life, this was the victors "stephanos," the garland of life, not a "diadema," a royal crown. 2Tim 4v8, 1Peter 5v4, John 14v28-31.

Pergamos. Rev 2v12-17.

Pergamos was an ancient city about 55 miles Northeast of Smyrna, but some 15 miles in from the coast. At one time it had been more important than either Ephesus or Smyrna, being the capital of the Pergamenian kings and the chief town of the Roman province of Asia. However, because of the better commercial position of Ephesus and Smyrna, it had lost much of its importance. It had a medical university, and a library of 200,000 volumes until Anthony removed it and gave it to Cleopatra. Parchment was first made at Pergamos and was called "charta Pergamena." Pergamos was said to be "full of idols beyond the rest of Asia," it was a city of temples devoted to sensual worship. It was the chief centre for the worship of Asklepius, the god of healing, whose symbol was a serpent. There were temples to Zeus, Athena, Dionysius, and Asklepius. A statue to Zeus was built here and called "Zeus the Saviour." It was the chief centre for the worship of the Roman Emperor, the first temple dedicated to the worship of Augustus (Octavius Caesar) was erected here in 29 BC, and other shrines dedicated to other Roman Emperors followed. Some think that "Satan's throne" refers to Emperor worship, while others think that Pergamos was the place where Satan set up his headquarters on earth. The phrase "where Satan dwelleth," shows that it was certainly a place where Satan was most active. Rev 2v13. What a dreadful place to live in! The worship of idols is really the worship of demons and Satan. The Scriptures reveal to us that the real rulers of the nations are evil angels under the control of Satan. Eph 3v10, 6v11,12, 2Cor 4v4, Rev 12v7-12, 13 (all), Dan 10v10-20, 2Thess 2v9, 1John 5v19, John 14v30.

The church at Pergamos had allowed worldly, sensual and Satanic doctrines to enter the church. All lies are dangerous, but moral lies are especially dangerous, for they destroy the character and testimony of the church. Rom 2v24. Oecumenius tells us that the Nicolaitanes "were most impious in doctrine and in their lives most impure." We also know that the Balaamites incited people to idolatry and immorality, so this church had two groups of immoral people with corrupt doctrine in it. Num 25v1,2, 31v16, Jude v11, Acts 15v29, 1Cor 8v9,10. Jesus twice threatens them with "the sword, the two-edged, the sharp," if they don't repent. Rev 2v12,16. **All Antinomianism, that is, false doctrine that says moral law is not binding upon Christians, must be rejected. Christ's death does not give us a means of sinning without reaping the consequences. His death established the moral law and taught that the wages of sin will always be death.** Rom 3v26,31, 6v1-4,11-18,23, 8v1-13, Jude v3-25.

In the past this church had been faithful to God even in severe persecution, but gross immorality and idolatry had come in and ruined its testimony. It seems that while Antipas was alive this evil was not tolerated in the church; the loss of a godly leader can certainly make a tremendous difference to a church. **Pastors and Teachers (also called Overseers and Elders) can either make or mar a local church.** Had the persecution in which Antipas was martyred caused some of them to compromise and lower the standard? You get little persecution from the world when you are as worldly and sinful as they are. John 16v8-11, Jesus demands repentance from those who had sinned, and action to purify the church by those who had not fallen, or certain judgement would follow.

We have to be very careful what we allow to take place in our Christian fellowships, and who we allow in as members, people who are living in sin should be dealt with by the church, or the church can expect judgement from Christ. With some the sentence is passed and executed now, but others pass on for judgement. 1Kings 18v40, 2Kings 10v19-30, Jer 28v17, 29v21,22,31,32, Acts 13v11, 1Tim 5v24. Christ reminds this church that He comes to judge sin and purify His church, and warns them that they have to repent or expect judgement. The reward to those who overcome is hidden manna and a white stone. The hidden manna is the eternal friendship of Christ and His unsearchable riches. 1Cor 2v6-12, Col 2v2,3, Eph 1v13,14. The white stone was used for many purposes, as a pass into a banquet or assembly, as a pledge of friendship and worth, as a sign of acquittal to those who were tried, a black stone was given to those who were condemned. To those who reject the deep things of Satan, Christ promises His eternal riches and His eternal friendship and blessing.

Thyatira. Rev 2v18-29.

Unlike the previous cities we have considered, Thyatira was a place of little importance, but it was famous for its flourishing industry of dyeing. The waters of Thyatira were so suitable for dyeing cloth that no one could match the brilliant and permanent colour of their purple and scarlet. Lydia, Paul's convert at Philippi, was involved with the export of this dyed cloth. Acts 16v14,15. Thyatira was a commercial centre and was noted for its guilds, William Ramsey informs us that there were more trade guilds in Thyatira than any other Asian city. The leading false deity of the city was Apollo, who was worshipped as the sun-god under the surname Tyrimnas. Thyatira was an inland city about 40 miles South East of Pergamos. It is possible that these strong trade guilds made it difficult for Christians to earn a living. Membership of these guilds involved attendance at guild banquets, which usually involved sexual immorality, and eating meat which had been sacrificed to idols. Perhaps "Jezebel" had collapsed under financial pressure and had compromised truth in order to make a living. Expediency may have replaced integrity and principle.

The church at Thyatira tolerated people who should have been disciplined. Rev 2v20-22.

Jesus says the Christians here had many good points, "agape" love, faith, service, patience and increasing work for Christ, and unlike Ephesus their last works were more than their first. However, the church had allowed a false prophetess and her followers to come in and corrupt the church. They had lacked the moral courage to deal with this "Jezebel," and allowed her to carry on her evil practices unchecked and unrebuked. Though many church members had not participated in her sins, they were guilty of allowing her evil influence to continue in the church. The woman's real name was almost certainly not "Jezebel," Jesus was obviously trying to shock the church into action by naming her after Ahab's evil wife to show what He thought of her, and how wicked and dangerous she was. Jesus had even given this evil "Jezebel" space for repentance, but He warns that if she and her followers do not repent He will personally execute them. 1Kings 15v13, 16v30-33, 18v22,40, 21v25,26. The failure to repent for similar gross sin in the Corinthian Church had resulted in the death of some of its members and the sickness of many more. 1Cor 5v1-13, 11v29-32, Acts 5v1-11, 1Tim 1v20. Those who trade on the great grace of God and harden their heart, mistaking His kindness and longsuffering for weakness, are only bringing upon themselves more severe judgement. Prov 29v1, Eccles 8v11, Rom 2v3-5, Rev 2v23, Heb 10v26-31.

The A.V. and T.R., "thou sufferest," "eas," the present indicative of "eao," "to let, allow, permit, leave alone, suffer to be done;" should read, according to Aleph, A, C, Hodges and Farstad and the Critical Texts, "thou sufferest," "apheis," the present active indicative of "apheo," an irregular form of "aphiemi," which means "to send away," in this application it means "to allow," "to permit," "to forgive." See Matt 9v2,5,6, 12v31,32, Acts 8v22. They suffered and forgave people who should have been disciplined. Truth and principle were sacrificed for expediency, something which often occurs today.

NB: Jezebel could have been the leading Pastor's wife.

The A.V. and T.R. reading of, "that woman," "ten gunaika," is based on Me, Aleph, C, the Critical Texts; the Old Latin; the Vulgate; the Coptic Sahidic and Bohairic; the Armenian and Ethiopic versions, the Church fathers, Tertullian, Ambrosiaster, Tyconius, Epiphanius, Haymo, and the bav commentary of Andrew. Most manuscripts add "sou," and read, "ten gunaika sou," "thy wife;" the evidence for this reading is found in Hodges and Farstad, Mabcd, Q, the Syrian Philoxenian and Harklean; the Church fathers, Cyprian; Primasius; Andrew's a, c, and p commentaries; and Arethas; Codex A adds "sou ten." Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, the king of Israel, so this gives more evidence to show that Jezebel was the leading pastor's wife.

Jezebel actively and continually seduced people into immorality and idolatry.

Jezebel, like Balaam, seduced the children of God from the truth and godly living. Balaam cast a snare, a "skandalon," the bait stick of a trap, before Israel, Balaam knew that they would forfeit God's protection, if he could tempt them to idolatry and immorality. Num 31v16. The A.V. and T.R., "didaskein kai planasthai," "to teach and seduce," should read, according to Mabcede, A, C, the Critical Texts, and Hodges and Farstad; "and teaches and misleads," "kai didaskei kai plana," the present active indicative, "plana," describes the active moral seduction and wickedness of 'Jezebel' far better than the present passive infinitive "planasthai." "Jezebel" was a dominant false prophetess and false teacher, whose teaching and life of continual sin led many in the church at Thyatira into immorality and idolatry. Jesus even gave this evil woman space to repent, but He said that lack of repentance meant that divine judgement and death was about to come upon her and her followers. **Those who backslide into evil like this destroy their born-again spirit, and without repentance can only expect judgement.** Jude v11-13, "twice dead" in spirit. 1John 3v9, 5v18, 2Peter 2v4,12-22, Heb 6v4-8, 10v26-39, Matt 7v13-29. NB: v23.

Space for repentance had been treated with contempt. Rev 2v21-23.

The Authorised Version and Aleph, read, "And I gave her time to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." The Majority of Texts, C, Hodges and Farstad and Critical Texts read, "And I gave her time to repent, but she is not willing to repent of her sexual immorality." All efforts to bring her to repentance had failed. Jesus wept over Jerusalem when His great ministry and love failed to convince them of the error of their ways, and turn them from the evil that was destroying them. Matt 23v37-39, Luke 19v41-44. It is not easy for Jesus to let people reap the fruit of their evil ways, His amazing love and grace gives rebellious sinners time to repent, and tries hard to restore them.

Our Lord repeats the solemn words, "All the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and the hearts: and I will give to everyone of you according to your works." Rev 2v23. **Our private lives are lived in public; the eyes of the Lord Jesus search our hearts and then He allows trials or Satan to expose them.** 2Chron 16v9, 32v31, Job 1 and 2. NB: 1v22 and 2v10, Luke 22v31-34. In the case of Job the trial was allowed to prove his worth, whereas, in the case of Peter, it was to rid him of the thought that he was more devoted and more spiritual than the other disciples. The Lord Jesus is purifying our hearts and some trials can be very severe, and as in the case of Peter, they can give us some startling revelations of our hearts. Mal 3v1-3, Deut 8v2-6, Luke 22v61,62. Jesus had searched out the sin in this church and He was going to crush it in such a way that all would know that it was the judgement of God. Christ's examination and scrutiny of the soul is exact and irresistible, He blesses the righteous and judges the wicked in the churches with perfect justice and love. The Lord Jesus exhorts the righteous saints in this church to hold fast to what they have got. Jesus promises power over the nations and the morning star to the overcomers. When the morning breaks they are promised a kingdom and glorious fellowship with the King of kings. Dan 7v27, 1Cor 6v2, Dan 12v3, Rev 5v10, 12v5, 22v16, Rom 8v18, 2Cor 4v17,18.

Sardis. Rev 3v1-6.

Sardis was about 30 to 35 miles South East of Thyatira, it was the chief city of Lydia and had once been a very prosperous and flourishing city, it had been the capital city of the very wealthy Croesus, however, under the Romans its rank and importance had rapidly declined. In 17 AD a great earthquake devastated Sardis, some say it never recovered from the enormous amount of damage that was done, others say it was quickly rebuilt through generous aid from Emperor Tiberius. Sardis was a city famous for its arts and crafts and notorious, even by heathen standards, for its loose, luxurious and licentious living. The more wealthy took up mystery cults, of which the most notable was that of the licentious worship of Cybele, and we are informed that the temple ruins still survive today.

The church at Sardis had a false reputation for being spiritually alive, Jesus said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." They were living on their past reputation, and on the reputation of the few who had white garments in this church, the rest of them were spiritually dead. They were a church in name only, for their vital communion with God had ended. They still claimed to be a Pentecostal church, but they had words but no power they had lost God's anointing, they had fallen from experiencing the truth. **It is possible to have great intellectual knowledge of truth, and yet be a spiritual babe in God's eyes and without either spiritual power or love.** We can have truth without experience, the letter without the spirit, and even have a measure of spiritual gifts and yet be powerless and dead. Jesus warns that if their deadness of soul continues their names will be blotted out of the book of life. The book of life only contains the names of those who are spiritually alive to God, and are living in fellowship with Him. John 17v3, Luke 10v20, Phil 4v1, 1Tim 5v6, Jude v12, Rom 8v13.

Many churches today have only a reputation, they have a name without an experience, like the church at Sardis, only a few things remain, and the rest are ready to die. Genuine repentance is the only possible way to experience renewal in such cases. There will be no getting away from the facts at our heavenly trial, our lives are under the scrutiny of God and His Watchers and Holy Ones. **We may not realise it but we live our secret lives in public, the Holy Spirit will give perfect evidence as to the condition of our lives.** Matt 12v36, 24v43,50,51, Dan 5v5,27, John 14v17.

This church had accepted the Gospel with great joy and for time had lived for Christ with great enthusiasm and diligence, for Christ says "remember how thou hast received and didst hear." How tragic it was that they had so fallen, but there are many churches today in the same condition and we all need to be careful lest we go the same way. The Lord Jesus warns this church that in spite of all His efforts by earthly and angelic ministry the majority of the church had degenerated and there were only a few faithful Christians in the church, the rest were spiritually dead and almost devoid of any work for Christ. How grand it is to see some of the church were still walking with the Lord in victory in spite of the depressing standard of the rest, the Lord Jesus promises these overcomers white garments and eternal fellowship with Himself in Heaven. The white garments of the Christian are the result of a righteous life. The apostle Paul tells us that he strove to serve Jesus so that when he met Him he had some works to present to Him. Rev 16v15, 2Peter 3v10, Matt 24v43, 1Thess 5v2,4, Rev 19v6-8, 2Cor 5v1-4, 6v14 to 7v1.

The Lord warns them to repent and be watchful, and strengthen and stabilise the things that remain, or He will come as a thief and find them wanting. Like Joshua the high priest, they would be clothed in filthy garments, or like the church at Laodicea, they would be naked and without any Christian works. **Eternal life is the gift of God to all who believe in Christ as their Saviour, but we will be rewarded according to our works, shame or glory are the results of our own actions.** Compare Abraham and Lot. Rev 3v18, 16v15, 22v12. The garments that were renewed at salvation will become filthy if we live in sin, the Lord Jesus can give us the grace to overcome temptation and sin. John 8v31-36, Rom 6v11-14,15-23, 1Cor 10v12,13, 2Cor 12v9, Phil 4v13,19, 2Peter 1v5-10, 1John 1v6, 2v1,4,6,13,14, 3v3-10, 4v4,17, 5v4,16-21, Jude v20,21,24.

There is no mention of persecution in this church and this is no surprise, for the majority of the Christians were so spiritually dead that they did not trouble the conscience of the unsaved, Christians with dirty garments are little respected and very little troubled by the worldling. These Christians probably prided themselves on their reputation, what a shock it must have been to them, to hear from the lips of Christ that the vast majority of them were terribly backslidden. Jesus tells the church at Sardis that there is still hope for them, they can still be among the overcomers and wear white garments, they are to remember, repent and hold fast, repentance and earnest prayer can renew their spiritual glow and cleanse their garments. Are your garments white?

Philadelphia. Rev 3v7-12.

Philadelphia was in Lydia, and was about 28 miles South East of Sardis, it was a rich and powerful city, but it suffered frequent earthquakes being placed directly on a fault in the earth's structure, the earthquake of 17 AD ruined it completely and it suffered 20 years of earthquakes after this great earthquake. The Lord's words to this church take into account their perilous past, they were promised a temple which they would not have to flee out of, they would be a pillar that would be forever established. The reference to "the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God" and "my new name," is almost certainly a reference to the proposal to give the city the new name of "Neocaesarea" in gratitude to Tiberius Caesar for his generous financial help towards earthquake relief. These frequent earthquakes tended to make the city smaller than it would have been, for it had good trade from large areas to the East and North.

The Open Door For Material Provision And Christian Service?

The church at Philadelphia, like the church at Smyrna, received no criticism from their Lord, both churches had stood true to their Lord in spite of severe persecution. Christ promises that He will open a door for them which no man can shut. This open door could have been a commercial door, for the strong Jewish guilds had obviously greatly persecuted and opposed them, and caused them very considerable financial distress and problems. God is very concerned about our financial welfare. Matt 6v19-34, NB: v30-32. Christ the Door opens doors for us. John 10v7,9. This open door could also refer to an open door into prayer and Christian service. 1Cor 16v8,9, 2Cor 2v12, Col 4v3, Acts 14v27, 16v6-10, 10 (all), 13v1-4. God opens doors to service by our gifting, Prov 18v16, by men, by circumstances, by His Spirit's express instruction, or a great need set before us, and even by heavenly vision. **When God calls us to a work He will confirm it in many ways and will give us an great peace and assurance that we are walking in His way.** The ambiguity of this promise of an open door is probably deliberate on the part of our Lord, so that both the church at Philadelphia, and ourselves, can apply it to our many different needs.

The Open Door Into Heavenly Places.

The open door may also refer to the open door into heavenly places as experienced in Rev 4v1 by John. It is very sad that the heavenly places in Christ have been totally unreal to many Christians, and they have thought that these heavenly and supernatural experiences are symbolic descriptions of spiritual truth. Other false teachers have said that the experiences of these men of God were the results of either a heated imagination or a deranged mind. Many others say, in spite of all the evidence against this view, that these experiences happened in the past, but "they are not for today." Christian teachers and preachers have hidden this key to a vital experience of God by wilful omission, false tradition, distorted and false exposition, and unbelieving example, and they will have to answer for it on judgement day. Luke 11v52, Mal 2v7, Mark 7v13. God wants His children to taste the powers and blessing of the age to come **NOW**, so that we can take the riches and blessings of God to the world around. This will demand faith, patience, endurance and courage, and will bring an inevitable conflict with the powers of darkness. We can respond to this challenge like Abraham, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Peter, John, Paul, and many others, or we can draw back, and like Esau, despise our heavenly birthright, and let our minds be taken up with worldly things and so lose the ability to be a blessing. Heb 6v11,12, 12v15-17. We should, as we grow in grace, become increasingly aware of the following.

God's throne and the tremendous activity around it. Rev 4 and 5, Ezek 1, Isaiah 6v1-8, 1Tim 6v15,16.

The Scriptures reveal that the heavenly places are crowded with life and activity. There is the incessant activity of countless numbers of angels. Dan 7v9-14, 2Kings 6v17, 1Kings 22v19, Rev 5v11, Heb 12v22, John 3v13 with 17v24. There is continual conflict between good and evil angels, and we have to fight our way into these heavenly places. We can, unfortunately, imitate the ten spies, whose hearts failed when they saw the difficulties ahead, and draw back in fear and unbelief. However, those who fight through, like Caleb and Joshua, can possess a rich spiritual inheritance from their heavenly Father.

The suffering of the Godhead over a rebellious creation and a suffering world and Church.

See Rom 8v22,23,26, Acts 9v5 with Isaiah 42v13-16, 63v9, Hosea 11v8, Luke 12v50. There is the continual conflict of the good angels and saints on earth with the powers of darkness. Job 1v6-12, 1Kings 22v19-23, Dan 10v13,20,21, Rev 12v7-12, Eph 6v10-20, Matt 4v1-11, Luke 10v18-20, 22v39-46. The suffering of His Creation causes immense suffering to our loving God.

The joy in Heaven in the character of the Father and Son and their victories over evil. Rev 4 and 5.

Ineffable joy and thanksgiving over the blood of Christ. Heb 12v24, Rev 12v7-12, Col 2v14,15. Great joy when sinners are saved. Luke 15v7-10. Joy over the glorious future of the inhabitants of God's kingdom. Rev 11v15-17. There is the glorious city and garden of God, His Paradise in Heaven. Rev 2v7, 21 and 22, Heb 11v16, 12v22,23,28, Psalm 24v7-10, Ezek 28v13-16.

The longsuffering love of God, and the just anger of God that flows from that love.

Rom 2v2-5, 2Peter 3v9-11, Isaiah 42v13,14. The saints will rejoice when the unreconcilable wicked are destroyed or judged. Rev 15v2-6, 18v20, 19v1-6. This is not pleasure or satisfaction in seeing the wicked suffer and die, it is the thankfulness that their evil influence and the suffering that they caused is forever finished. Ezek 18v23,32, 33v11.

NB: Christ's power, strength and grace are given to the humble weak.

Jesus said that the church at Philadelphia had little strength, and so He moves to act on their behalf. Jesus gives the kingdom of Heaven to the beggars in spirit, He makes those strong who realise their weakness, He opens doors for those who can't open doors for themselves. Isaiah 9v6, 22v22, 40v27-31, Matt 5v3, Eph 6v10. Jesus is, "Him that is holy and true," and those who rely on Him will find that He works on their behalf. This is a strong consolation for all who have fled to Jesus for refuge; He is utterly devoted to us, and absolutely faithful to His Word. Heb 6v13-20, Rev 6v10, Job 6v10, Isaiah 40v25, Hab 3v3. These Christians at Philadelphia needed this comfort, for they had suffered a great deal of persecution from Jews who thought that they were obeying and following God, when they were really being used by Satan. Jesus was going to make these Jews see their true spiritual condition and relationship to God, He was going to make them prostrate themselves before the Christians they had despised and persecuted. Rev 3v9, Ezek 5v13, 6v7,13, 7v4, Isaiah 49v23.

The Lord also promises that He will keep the Christians here from some kind of ill that was to befall all in that area. This deliverance from trouble is by no means the rule in the Christian life, the contrary is more true, God keeps us from being overcome by trials, if we face them with Him, not from being tried. There is a real need for us to be faithful in the trials and temptations of life. It is worth noting that Peter was delivered from death, whereas James was killed, we can rightly pray for deliverance from trial and temptation but we cannot always expect it. Luke 11v4, Acts 12v1-17, James 1v2, 1Peter 1v4-7. The Lord promises that those who overcome will be a pillar in the temple of God. There is a position of privilege and responsibility awaiting the faithful in Heaven. 1Kings 7v16-22, Gal 2v6. The writing of a name is obviously a mark of approval and affection; those who overcome will be on the honours list in Heaven and be near to their God forever.

Laodicea. Rev 3v14-22.

Laodicea was some 40 miles East of Ephesus, it was a small and unimportant place before the time of Rome's power, but it grew very rapidly into a city of great power and wealth, becoming one of the richest commercial centres in the world. It was so rich that when the city was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 AD, it did not accept the financial help of the Emperor, as many of the greatest cities of Asia had done which had suffered from the earthquake. It was the frequency of these earthquakes that many years later made the people abandon the spot altogether. Laodicea was ideally situated at a point on the great trade route that connected the interior with the West, and several branch roads joined there. Laodicea was famous for the garments made from the beautiful black wool of its sheep, it was also a centre of banking and business transactions and was well known for the business that it did in gold. It was an assize

town, it also had a celebrated school of medicine, its most famous medicines were an ointment that strengthened the ears, and a powder made from crushed Phrygian stone for the eyes. Thus we see the force of our Lord's words, He counsels them to obtain from Himself the gold of heavenly riches instead of placing such great value on the gold of Laodicea. Jesus urges them to desire the white garments of a righteous life instead of the beautiful glossy black garments which they made. Jesus warns them that they also needed to be healed of their spiritual blindness and self-deception, for this was of more importance than their enthusiasm over their medical school and ointments.

This church at Laodicea had been tended by Epaphras, a most sacrificial and prayerful servant of God, but the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, and other worldly desires, had dominated their lives and choked the Word of God. Matt 13v22, Mark 4v19, Luke 8v11-15. **Church History and the Laodiceans prove that nothing can corrupt a person's character and spiritual life as quickly as wealth and affluence.** Mark 4v19. All the Laodiceans actually possessed was a blind self-conceit and complacency; the fire, enthusiasm and love that Christ expects were gone, they had got to the place where they thought that their godliness was proved by material gain. 1Tim 6v5,6. compare Phil 1v21, 3v7, 2Cor 8v9, Col 1v7, 4v12. The Lord Jesus emphasises that His judgement of them is true by calling Himself "The Amen." What He says is always the truth, and what He says He will do, He will always perform. His judgement is perfect and we can only say "Amen" to all that He does. Rev 7v12, 19v4, 22v20, 2Cor 1v20. In Isaiah 65v15,16., "truth" is in both cases the Hebrew "Amen."

Robinson's Greek Lexicon makes the following instructive note on "Amen."

"Amen, -- is strictly an adjective, true, certain, faithful. The Hebrew word occurs often in the New Testament as an adverb, truly, certainly, surely; usually at the fulfilment of them, so be it. So in oaths and imprecations where the people answer amen and bind themselves. Neh 5v13. Or in praising God, when the assembly respond to the reader or choir, Psalm 41v13, 72v19. Or lastly by individuals after an imprecation, or to a command. More rarely amen stands in the Old Testament at the beginning of a sentence, for the sake of emphasis, assuredly, verily, in truth. Hence in the New Testament:

From the Hebrew as an adjective, true, faithful. Rev 3v14, the true, the faithful and true witness, where the last words explain the first.

As an adverb at the end of a sentence, viz. after ascription of praise, hymns, etc. amen, so be it. Matt 6v13, Rom 1v25, 9v5, Rev 1v6, 5v14, 19v4. Also after benedictions, invocations, etc. Rom 15v33, 16v24, 1Cor 16v24, Heb 13v25.

As an adverb at the beginning of a sentence by way of asseveration, (i.e. solemn affirmation) truly, assuredly, certainly, Matt 5v18, 16v28, Luke 9v27, Matt 25v40, Luke 4v24, John 5v25. In John it is repeated, amen, amen, John 3v3,5,11, 5v19, 8v51. etc. Very rarely in this sense in the end or middle of a clause. Rev 1v7, yea verily. 2Cor 1v20, are yea and amen. i.e. are most true and faithful." End of quote.

Jesus emphasises His faithful, true and reliable character, which is in sharp contrast with, and a rebuke to, the unfaithful and worldly Laodicean church. He states His claim upon them as their Creator, by calling Himself, "The beginning of the creation of God." Those who say that the word "arche," "beginning," in Rev 3v14. teaches that Christ was a created being, must also say that the Father was created too, for "arche," "beginning" is used, in Rev 21v6, by the Father to describe Himself, when He says that He is "the beginning and the end."

The Abbot and Smith Greek Lexicon, states that "arche" in Rev 21v6 refers to God as the eternal and first cause, and this is what Jesus is claiming in Rev 3v14.

The New English Bible, translates Rev 3v14, as, "The prime source of all God's creation." Only the Creator is the origin, prime source and active cause of creation, this verse does not teach that Jesus was the first created being, it clearly states that He was the one who brought creation into being. We see in Rev 1v8,11,17, 2v8 and 22v13, that Jesus is, "The First and The Last," another title of the Creator God, and Great I Am, and many Scriptures confirm this fact. Neh 9v6, John 1v3, Col 1v15-17, Heb 1v3,8-12, Rev 4v11. Jesus, like the Father, is from everlasting, as well as to everlasting. Micah 5v2, Isaiah 63v16, Psalm 90v2, 93v2, Isaiah 9v6, John 17v5,24.

The Laodiceans were deceived by their wealth and filled with an arrogant self-sufficiency, they said, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Their wealth and spiritual poverty is in sharp contrast with the Christians at Smyrna, who were poor but spiritually rich. Rev 2v9. The Laodicean Christians were completely ignorant of their true spiritual condition, they had been blinded by wealth and worldliness, they were rejoicing in their wealth when they should have been repenting of their spiritual poverty. They had deceived themselves but they could not deceive the Lord Jesus. There can be no doubt that the Christians gathered together for prayer and worship at the

Lord's table, and probably exercised the gifts of the Holy Spirit to a certain extent, but they lived lives completely out of the will of God. In the face of great spiritual needs around them they were taken up with worldly interests and petty pursuits. In an hour of crisis when the Lord was imploring them to listen to Him, they were deaf to His voice, and His interests and plans were completely ignored.

Jesus, the foundation stone and prime source of the creation, tells the Laodiceans that their foundation was built upon sand. He that was clothed with zeal as with a cloak, finds their lack of zeal spirituality distasteful. Isaiah 59v16,17. When Jesus told them that He desired them to be either hot or cold, it cannot mean that He desired them to be spiritually dead and unsaved in preference to them being just lukewarm. Jesus was saying that they had only the nauseating effect of a lukewarm drink, just as the hot springs at Hierapolis six miles away were lukewarm and useless when tapped at Laodicea. Jesus threatens to spue them out of His mouth, which probably means that He would cast them on one side as useless in His service.

Those who realise the poverty of earthly things and seek first the kingdom of Heaven can taste the riches of Heaven while here below. Matt 5v3, 6v31-34. The Christians at Laodicea needed the gold of character and not just gold in their bank, this gold is a love, faith and obedience that stands true under trial, a tried faith which has passed the test. They were naked and needed the white garments of a pure, faithful and righteous life. 2Cor 5v3, 1Peter 1v7, James 1v12, Rev 3v4,5, 4v4, 7v9,13, 16v15, 19v7-9. They needed to have their spiritual blindness healed, so that their eye could again be single and their whole personality full of light. Matt 6v19-24. "Blind," is "tuphlos," spiritual blindness, as in Matt 23v17. They needed to behold the city of God and desire to lay up treasure there. They had neglected the one thing that was needful and could make them truly rich, communion with Jesus. Heb 11v10,13-16, Luke 10v41,42. So Jesus reproves them with some very strong words, "thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." "Wretched," is "ho talaiporos," which means wretched and pitiable, only here and Rom 7v24. The word for "miserable" is "eleeinos," which speaks of a person who the object of the most extreme pity, Paul uses it in 1Cor 15v19. "Poor," is "ptochos," which speaks of total spiritual destitution and beggary. Compare 2Cor 8v9, where it states that Jesus, who was rich and owned all things, became as poor financially as the poorest beggar, so that He could make us rich with the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of Heaven.

If Jesus spoke to us in the way that He spoke to the Laodiceans, many would say, "That is not the Lord, He loves us too much to talk to us like that." **Prophecy is nearly always intended to comfort us, but we should take heed if godly, loving and spiritual people are used by God to correct us.** Jesus corrects us because He loves us, and His love flowed out to this conceited, self-satisfied and disobedient church at Laodicea. He would not let them continue on the path to spiritual destruction, if He could stop it. Jesus commands them to repent, and replace their lukewarm service by zeal. Jesus reproves and chastens those who He loves, if we will not listen to His wise counsel we must be taught to do so by a chastening that must of necessity be painful. Heb 12v1-17, John 3v20, 16v8, Job.5v17, Prov 3v12.

The Lord uses some very strong words in the Scriptures to show us the enormous privileges of those who overcome and the fearful loss of the slothful, timid and unbelieving. Matt 25v14-30, Heb 3v6-19, 6v1-20. Jesus makes the most tremendous efforts to save us from such a dreadful fate, He stands and knocks at the door of the heart, urgently, plainly and persistently, with great condescension, forbearance and importunity, and for those who hear there is complete restoration, they sup with God. Luke 12v36,37. John 10v4,27, 14v23. They also have the glorious prospect of reigning with Christ, a glorious promise that shows how the grace of God can restore the backslider. Jesus says that they could still overcome and reign with Him.

Jesus was standing and knocking, not at the hearts of sinners, but at the hearts of the saints. How awful! Jesus was shut out of the lives that He had saved. They thanked Him for His love, but would not listen to His plans, His guidance, or His desire to use them to bless a needy world. This happens today in many modern Laodicean churches. Jesus still knocks upon the closed door of the heart of lukewarm Christians, by the Scriptures, by the Holy Spirit, by the example of spiritual Christians, and sometimes by painful means such as sickness, bereavement and persecution. 1Cor 11v27-32, 2Kings 10v31,32, 2Chron 16v7-12 with 2Chron 15v1-8 and 1Kings 15v1-15. He chastens in this way, so that we might have our eyes turned from the transient riches of earth to the eternal riches of Heaven. John 17v24, Luke 22v30, Matt 19v28, 2Tim 2v12, 2Cor 4v17,18.

There is no mention of persecution in this church, though there may have been, we know that those who live godly in Jesus do suffer persecution. 2Tim 3v12. It could be that their Christian standards were so low, that they did not convict the ungodly of their sin. If we are Laodicean we can soon find out, no works, no first love, an emphasis on worldly things, no burden for the lost, a deaf ear to the voice of Jesus, and a life that is tolerated by the world, because it is so very little different from their own.

Conclusion.

We see the spiritual condition of these seven churches about 40 to 50 years after they had been established by the apostle Paul and his helpers, only two out of the seven escape rebuke from the Lord Jesus. It is impossible to tell from the condition of these towns today, what the reaction of these churches was to the message of Jesus. Their response is to be found in Church history, if the facts are at all available. **Church history reveals that every revival started by God has spiritually degenerated, and in the end has been ruled by men instead of God.** The further churches are from the source of revival, the more polluted the river of church life becomes with the traditions of men, Jesus made this very point in Matt 15v3-9 and Mark 7v5-13. Even Jesus found it impossible to revive these tradition-bound formal religionists. God has almost invariably raised up a new revival movement, by moving upon new seeking hearts, and bringing out a faithful remnant out of the existing churches. This does not mean that Christians should leave dead or lukewarm churches without an effort to renew their spiritual glow, they should strive in prayer, love, and witness to revive their churches. However, Paul tells us that the time may come when we have to "turn away" from those "who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." 2Tim 3v5.

When God has raised up a faithful remnant into a new movement full of His power, there has almost inevitably been violent opposition from other churches, and even from Christians from the same church background. Earnest Christians who have desired and experienced revival have often been expelled from movements and denominations by those who have objected to their experience of God, and refused to listen to the voice of God. Christ's true Church has always experienced criticism and opposition, and God-inspired revivals have, like our Lord, invariably been, "a sign that is spoken against." Luke 2v34. The early Church was looked upon and persecuted as an heretical dangerous sect by both Jews and worldlings, the Jews at Rome said to Paul, "for as concerning this sect, we know that it is everywhere spoken against." Acts 28v22. Martyrdom is a real possibility in genuine revival. John 16v1-3. We need to take to heart the words, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches," or we shall fail to be among those who overcome and inherit the promises.

The History Of Melchizedek And The Melchizedek Priesthood

The Order Of Melchizedek. (Heb 7-10)

It is amazing to find that "the order of Melchizedek" of which Christ is High Priest, was instituted long before the Aaronic Priesthood, but so far as we know, was not in operation until Christ Jesus revived it after the resurrection. (However, although the Melchizedek Priesthood was not in operation after it died out sometime after the death of Melchizedek, God was not without a Melchizedek type priesthood which He could use not only to bring His Power, Presence and Love to His saints but also to a needy world and also to act as a restraint upon the powers of darkness, the wicked and wickedness upon the earth. This type of Priesthood was seen and realised through the calling of Abraham (the beginning of the Age of Promise) and his (spiritual) seed, i.e., all those who would follow his example of faith, spiritual walk and obedience and seek a heavenly inheritance; those who would rise up with their Lord, the preincarnate Christ and enter God's promised rest, during not only the Age of Promise, but also during the Age of Law. Gen 22v18, Exodus 19v6, Heb 4v1-3, 11v8-40). Genesis 14v18-24 should be read together with John 8v56, Luke 22v19,20, Psalm 110v4. Hebrews 7 and 8 are taken up with showing the shortcomings of Aaronic Priesthood, which necessitated a better one being raised up. The Melchizedek priesthood is eternal, the Aaronic priesthood was a temporary part of the Law. We read in Heb 8v13, "In speaking of "a new covenant," he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear." (NRSV)

Hebrews 9 and 10 point out that, although the old Law and Priesthood were insufficient, yet, as coming events cast their shadows before, so all the details of the old were typical of the good things to come in the new. In asking the Jewish Christians to give up the Temple and its Aaronic God-ordained ministry of Priests and Levites and sacrifices, Paul (the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews) is careful to point out only the ineffectiveness of the Old Covenant, Acts 13v39, 15v10, Gal 2v16 Rom 8v4; but also the vast superiority of the Christian Priesthood, which resumed the Melchizedek order, so that they might be willing to exchange the Jewish shadow for the Christian substance. Rev 14v17, 15v5,8.

It is amazing that the Melchizedek order, like all the Christian Blessings, went back to Pre-Jewish Days (e.g. Justification by faith etc., Hab 2v4, Rom 4v1-3) and here in Gen 14v18-24 the Christian breaking of bread is seen to date back to the days of Abraham. Both Melchizedek and Abraham must have known the significance of the bread and wine. Possibly it was at this very meeting when Abraham was tempted to fall as Lot did, into close and profitable fellowship with the king of Sodom (Gen 19v1) that John 8v56 was fulfilled and Abraham had explained to him the coming sacrifice of God's Son at Calvary and His resurrection. If so, then Heb 11v17-19 receives fresh light. The God who was going to raise His own Son from the dead after he was killed by evil men, could also raise Isaac! Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek was no chance meeting. Melchizedek came to strengthen Abraham in an hour of trial. The fact that Abraham gave him tithes shows that he recognised his superior authority and dignity. He was received by Abraham as the messenger of the most High God.

Lot who had already moved towards Sodom for the sake of earthly prosperity and had been shown that he would be

safer with Abraham, now adds this terrible sin of accepting what Abraham had just refused. When we next come across him he is in an official position in Sodom in spite of his dislike for their dreadful ways. So he ruined his wife and family and ended up in abject fear in a cave! Gen 19, 2Pet 2v7. The admonition and exposition of Melchizedek found no lodging place in his heart. How deep and grievous was the breach between uncle and nephew is seen by the fact that Abraham, when praying for Sodom, never took his appeal below ten souls, and never mentioned Lot's name to the Lord. So far as we know the breach was final and irremediable. If Abraham is a type of the overcomer, Lot certainly reminds us of those who suffer loss and are saved through fire. 1Cor 3.

Theologians have found it difficult to decide who Melchizedek was or what the description of Heb 7v2,3 means.

Three main theories are held:-

- a) That it was Christ Himself: but it is difficult to believe that he lived on earth as king of Salem.
- b) That it was an angelic being who was sent upon earth by God as a kind of counter blast to Satan's wicked angels.
- c) That he was a man, about whom the Scriptures left out all details, and made him in this way a type of Christ. We see that Heb 7v3, could then mean that Melchizedek was a mere nobody of whose birth and death no one was sufficiently interested to leave any record. We can imagine a godly king being as despised in those days as he might be now.

Salem means "peaceful." It is the name of a place linked with Melchizedek as its king. Gen 14v18, Heb 7v1,2. See Psalm 76v2. The main identification of Salem according to Jewish commentators, from Onkelos (Targum) and Josephus (War, 6, 10; Ant. 1, 10, 2; 7); is that Salem is Jerusalem, on the ground that in Psalm 76v2, Jerusalem is so called. However, the Samaritans have always identified Salem with Salim, East of Nablus. Jerome states without hesitation, though he was apparently alone in his belief, that the Salem of Melchizedek was not Jerusalem, but a town near Scythopolis, which in his day was still called Salem, and where the vast ruins of the palace of Melchizedek were still to be seen. There can be no doubt that a Salem existed where Jerome places it, for a Salem is mentioned in Judith 4v4, among the places which were seized and fortified by the Jews on the approach of "The valley of Salem," as it appears in the Apocrypha, this Salem must surely be that mentioned by Jerome.

"Without father, without mother, without genealogy," Heb 7v3, Greek, "apator, ametor, agenealogetos." There is no record concerning his parentage, or his genealogy. This indicates a totally different type of priesthood from the Levitical, in which genealogy was most important. No one could exercise priestly functions who was not of the lineage of Aaron. The phrase, "Having neither beginning of days nor end of life," does not mean that he was a miraculous being, without birth or death, it probably means that history is silent concerning his birth and death. This could mean that the pedigree of Melchizedek was of no consequence, and his parentage did not count in any way, and so they never troubled to keep a genealogy. In this way he would be like our Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus, whose parents were nobodies and whose occupation was despised. All priests of this Melchizedek Order seem to be despised and rejected by worldly people. When Jesus became High Priest of this order by being raised by God His Father from the dead, He created a heavenly Brotherhood of the Kings and Priests of the Most High God. Heb 5v5,6, 1Peter 2v4-10, Rev 5v10, 21v7, 22v5

Although there is very little written in the Scriptures about Melchizedek, what is written speaks volumes, Gen 14v18-24 states:

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abraham, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abraham said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abraham rich: Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

Archbishop Ussher dates Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek as 1912 BC (with Abraham's (meaning "exalted father") original call to come out of Ur of the Chaldeans in 1922 BC (his birth was 1996 BC), so when he met Melchizedek at the valley of Shaveh (later called the King's valley or dale, where Absalom built a pillar to himself, probably by brook Kidron near Jerusalem, 2Sam 18v18), he was about 84 years old and had been a believer in the Most High God, El Shaddai (Exodus 6v3), for about ten years. Also note that the great Old Testament saint Job would also have most probably been alive at this time. (Job 42v16, the Septuagint for this verse reads, "And Job lived after his affliction a hundred and seventy years: and all the years he lived were two hundred and forty: and Job saw his sons and his sons' sons, the fourth generation"). It states in Gen 14v19 that "he (Melchizedek) blessed him

(Abraham);" this was not mere words spoken by Melchizedek but real impartation of divine power and spirit, for Paul tells us in Heb 7v6,7:

"But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, **and blessed him that had the promises**. And without all contradiction **the less is blessed of the better**."

This impartation of divine power and spirit by Melchizedek upon Abraham was exactly the same thing that Paul was longing to do with the saints in Rome when he visited them; Melchizedek imparted a spiritual ministry gift to Abraham for the purpose of strengthening and establishing him. Rom 1v11.

It was because of this blessing that we read immediately after the account of Gen 14v18-24 in Gen 15v1:

"**After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision**, saying, Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward..."

The Lord (the pre-incarnate Christ, not only the Sent One (The Angel of The Lord, Heb "Yahweh Malak", Exodus 3v2,4,14, Isaiah 48v12-16, Zech 2v8-11, Mal 3v1, John 8v58) under the New Covenant, but also the Sent One under the Old Covenant as well, John 3v17) appears to Abraham in a vision and makes a Covenant with him saying:

"...Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

This visitation by Yahweh Jesus to Abraham was for the purpose of "strengthening his faith;" Rom 4v20 states:

"And at the promise of God did not stagger in unbelief, **but was strengthened in faith**, having given glory to God." (Young's Literal Translation)

"Was strengthened" is in the "passive voice" which indicates that it was this visitation by God that strengthened Abraham's faith, as Rom 4v3 (with Gen 15v6) states:

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

Genesis 15 was not the only time when Yahweh Jesus (and angels) visited Abraham and Sarah for the purpose of strengthening their faith (when it had failed with the passage of time), see also Genesis chapters 17 and 18.

In Gen 14v20, Melchizedek states:

"**And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand**. And he gave him tithes of all."

Melchizedek was fully aware that it had been God and God alone Who had given Abraham victory over the four kings. One of these four kings was Amraphel king of Shinar (Babylon), who has been identified as the great king and renowned law-maker Hammurabi, whose "Hammurabi Code" was a landmark in history, for it not only stated legal rights and responsibilities, it also fixed the rates of wages. There was also the great and famous Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Arioch king of Ellasar (Larsa), and Tidal king of Goiim, usually rendered as "nations." Gen 14v9,17.

Melchizedek was the one who had made "interventions with power" ("intercessions," Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), 1Tim 2v1) in the Heavenly places against the Devil and the powers of darkness; he had manifested divine power in the Heavens through the gifts of the Holy Spirit defeating the evil principalities and powers behind these four kings so that their power, strength and protection had been completely removed, so that when they went out to fight against Abraham they were unable to stand against him, and were routed by him. Melchizedek (and the priests of the Melchizedek order), like Abraham, also looked for a Heavenly city and like Elijah the prophet stood before the Throne of God in spirit. Melchizedek and the priests of the Melchizedek order were the real defence of Salem and the effects of the "interventions with power" made by them was felt far and wide around the middle east and beyond. It is also worthy of note that one of the most important functions of Melchizedek and the priesthood was to make "interventions with power" ("intercessions," Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), 1Tim 2v1) in the heavens manifesting God's great power against the powers of darkness and also against the wicked upon earth so that they actively restrained the powers of darkness, wicked people and wickedness in the world. This ministry is also operated by the New Testament Melchizedek priesthood throughout the whole of the Age of Grace and will have a vital place during the last seven years of this age and especially during the last three and a half years, which is the period known as the Great Tribulation, when the Devil and his angels will have been cast out of the heavens into the earth and God's restraint is removed completely from them, with the result that the manifestation of evil in the world will be

greatly multiplied overnight. It will be the responsibility of the Melchizedek priesthood to actively restrain the powers of darkness and wicked people in the world during the Great Tribulation so that the world is not totally destroyed before the Lord Jesus comes immediately after that three and a half year period. 1Kings 17v1, Dan 11v32, Matt 24v12,21,22, Luke 18v1-8, Acts 5v1-11, 12v20-24, 13v4-12, Eph 6v10-20, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Tim 2v1-9, Heb 11v13-16,39,40, Rev 7v14, 11v3-6, 12v7-14.

The priestly ministry operated and fulfilled by Melchizedek and the priests of this priesthood is exactly the same as that which Christ calls each believer in Him to exercise and fulfil; that is to rise up with Him into the Heavenly places and to defeat and subdue the powers of darkness, by binding the strongman and then to live in and occupy the Heavenly places in Christ, manifesting His power and love in the Heavenlies through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and being a blessing to the other members of the Family of God and the world about them; being watchful to the end that they do not become lazy and slothful, so that they are overcome by "the giants" in their Heavenly Canaan and are then expelled from it, like the Israelites of old. Judges 2v11-23, Deut 28v44, John 3v13, 17v24, 1Cor 12v7-11, Col 3v1,2, Heb 2v4, 1Pet 2v1-9, Rev 1v6 (RSV), 5v10.

The Lord Jesus was a prophet like unto Moses and also a priest like unto Melchizedek; Melchizedek (although called a priest in the Scriptures, he also had a full prophetic ministry, even as Abraham had, Psalm 105v9,10,15) had the same kind of spiritual walk and communion with Yahweh (the pre-incarnate Christ) that both the Lord Jesus and Moses enjoyed with God. Melchizedek had a Christ like character, he was meek and lowly and although a king, was completely devoid of all pride and love of power, position and wealth. Like the Lord Jesus during both His earthly and heavenly High Priestly ministry, Melchizedek was also a servant (Greek, "doulos" (Strong's NT:1401)) of all. One of the most important responsibilities of the Lord Jesus was to inspire His apostles and disciples to desire their own ministries and then to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), which has the same meaning as "entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793), "to make interventions with power, to affect a change") them into that ministry and this was also the case with Melchizedek. He also had the great responsibility of firstly inspiring the citizens of Salem (and any others who thirsted after the Living God) to desire to become priests in the order of Melchizedek and then to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) them through so that they entered into the heavenlies, conquered and subdued the powers of darkness and occupied their heavenly inheritance, so that they manifested God's power and spiritual gifts in the heavenly places and became channels of God's Love and Power in the world so that they might be a blessing to those around them. Like the Lord Jesus, Melchizedek was not content until each priest had entered into God's promised rest. Melchizedek, like Paul and Jesus, was able to watch other believers (including Abraham, whom he had watched on different occasions and prayed for) in prophetic vision and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) them through their difficulties by both strengthening them and changing their circumstances, this in turn had the result of perfecting the character, faith and patience of those whom he was praying for. Exodus 3v14,15, Deut 18v15-22, Psalm 110v4, Matt 4v19, 10v1-4, 20v20-28, Luke 22v24-27,31-34, John 8v58, 13v1-17, Acts 1v12-26, 3v22, 7v37, Rom 5v1-5, Eph 6v10-20, Col 2v1-5, Heb 4v1-10, 5v6,10, 7v17,21, 1Per 1v3-9.

Justification, since the time of the fall of Adam, has always been by faith, so Melchizedek and the priests of the Melchizedek order were all, like Abraham, justified by faith in the Living God. All Christians receive a definite call from their Lord to rise up with Him into their Heavenly Canaan to conquer, subdue and inhabit it, i.e. to act as priests with their Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, by making "interventions with power" ("intercessions," Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) in the Heavenlies to bind the strong man so that God's will is done upon earth and that they are a blessing to other Christians and the world about them. However many Christians, like the Israelites of old, when they hear this call prefer to disobey it and play it safe by staying in the Wilderness and indeed some of these do not even remain in the Wilderness but "return to Egypt" i.e., they die spiritually again and so become "twice dead." Even so the Melchizedek priesthood would have been made up of the inhabitants of Salem (and possibility from elsewhere) who thirsted after the Living God and who desired to be channels of His Power and Love in world. Just because they were inhabitants of Salem, they were not automatically members of the Melchizedek priesthood, there had to be a deep desire in them for this and a divine call to them from the Living God that they might then enter this priesthood, which performed the very same function in the world as the Melchizedek priesthood does under the New Covenant with the Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus at its Head; i.e., to be channels for God's Love and Power in the world. There is no mention that there was any kind of Temple at Salem for the Most High God and we see the informality of the meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek when they come together to worship the Living God and to thank Him for the great victory that He had given to Abraham. This kind of informal fellowship meeting is exactly the same as that practised by the Lord Jesus and His Apostles which was also carried on by the early Church in every part of the (Roman) world where the Name of the Lord Jesus was called upon right up until 313 AD when Constantine issued the Edict Of Milan (Toleration). It was this kind of informal fellowship meeting that enabled the Church to have continual revival right from the time that Christ started preaching the Gospel in late 26 AD/early 27 AD right up until 313 AD, at which time with the issue of the Edict of Milan, Constantine heaped wealth, power, position and prosperity upon the Church (It should be noted that it was the Devil that was energising Constantine, who was the sixth head of the Beast, to issue the Edict of Milan), which resulted in its loss of God's Presence and Power; which was the very same thing that happened to the Church at Laodicea. With the issue of the Edict of Milan, the Church started trusting in

their new found wealth, power and prosperity, which meant that they stopped seeking the Lord Jesus for His plans and purposes and His Presence and Power to carry them out. And so it is to this very day that the vast majority of Christians still think that they need money, political power and wealth to preach the Gospel instead of seeking their Lord for his Presence and Power so that they might preach the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven having it confirmed by mighty signs, wonders and miracles. Num 13v1-14v38, Psalm 42v1,2, Dan 4v30, Matt 6v9,10, 18v18-20, Mark 3v27, Luke 22v14-38, John chapters 13-17, Acts 2v16-21,26, Rom 15v18-21, 1Cor 11v17-14v40, Eph 2v1-3, Heb 2v1-4, 3v7-11 (with Psalm 95v7-11),16-19, 4v10, 7v25, 10v38, 11v1-40, 1Pet 1v10-12, 2v1-10, 2Pet 2v18-22, Jude 12, Rev 3v14-22, Rev 13v2, 17v10.

The reason for the demise of the Melchizedek priesthood in the period of time following Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek is quite simple; the kings and leaders of Salem failed to seek the Living God for a priestly ministry like their predecessor Melchizedek had had and also all the inhabitants of Salem also stopped seeking the Living God and desiring to be priests of the Most High God. This resulted in **ALL** the inhabitants of Salem backsliding and going into apostasy which also resulted in **ALL** of God's protection being completely removed, so that without man-made fortifications they became completely defenceless, with the result that the surrounding nations of Canaan would certainly have attacked them. A recent archaeological dig in Jerusalem discovered a twenty six foot high wall, which had been built by the Canaanite inhabitants and is dated around 1700 BC, which was a structure to protect the city's water supply and is described as the region's earliest fortifications. With the removal of God's protection from them because of their apostasy did the inhabitants of Salem build large fortifications to protect themselves against the danger from the surrounding nations? We don't read in Genesis 14 of what (if any) man-made fortifications Salem had. The next time we read in the Scriptures about Salem (after the meeting of Abraham with Melchizedek) is in Joshua chapter 10 (see v1,5), which took place in 1451 BC, it had been renamed Jerusalem (which signifies "a peaceful possession" or "a vision of peace") and was ruled by an Amorite, king Adoni-zedek (which means "lord of righteousness" and is synonymous with Melchizedek, "king of righteousness"), which was a title of the Jebusite kings. Adoni-zedek was most probably a distant descendant of Melchizedek, for it is difficult to see how Jerusalem had been conquered by the surrounding Canaanite nations and then the conquering king discarding his title and name and taking the name and title of the king whom he has conquered. Jerusalem is also mentioned in the Amarna letters which were written in the 14th century BC. (The Amarna letters (sometimes "Amarna correspondence" or "Amarna tablets") are an archive of correspondence on clay tablets, mostly diplomatic, between the Egyptian administration and its representatives in Canaan and Amurru during the New Kingdom. They are an important record of Egypt during a period of 15 to 30 years during the later part of Amenophis III's (1391-1353 BC) rule and the rule of Akhenaten (1353-1336 BC). The letters were found in Upper Egypt at Amarna, the modern name for the Egyptian capital of Akhetaten, founded by Pharaoh Akhenaten (1356 - 1336 BC) during the Eighteenth dynasty of Egypt. The Amarna letters are unusual in Egyptological research, being mostly written in Akkadian cuneiform, the writing system of ancient Mesopotamia rather than ancient Egypt.)

Seeing Is Believing!

The question that needs to be asked is, "what was revealed to both Abraham and Melchizedek at their informal fellowship meeting in the Valley of Shaveh in Gen 14v18-24?"

Previous to their meeting, God had shown Melchizedek the eventual demise of the Melchizedek priesthood because after his death no other person would arise as king of Salem who would thirst for the Living God and follow Melchizedek's example and seek the same kind of prophetic and priestly ministry that he had had. Because of this the great "interventions with power" (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) which Melchizedek had continually made were no longer happening, with the result that the Melchizedek priesthood would eventually die out and all the inhabitants backslide and go into apostasy. This is seen from what God says to Abraham in Gen 15v16:

"But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

Or as the New Living Translation" puts it:

"After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction."

The presence and prayers ("interventions with power" (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of Melchizedek and the priesthood in the land of Canaan hindered the slide of the surrounding nations from going speedily into apostasy and it was only after the death of Melchizedek that the decline started to speed up and then with the complete disappearance of the Melchizedek priesthood the progression to total apostasy (Note: "full iniquity" means "full disease," i.e., complete defilement of the flesh with even children being born with "social diseases", this is when God is forced to bring judgement upon such a people) progressed rapidly. The revelation from God of the complete demise of the Melchizedek priesthood after his death caused Melchizedek (and the priesthood)

great sorrow! Gen 15v16, Prov 14v34, Matt 5v13-16, 1Tim 2v1-8, Jude v7,8.

Before this incident in Gen 14v18-24, Melchizedek had already been shown the Cross of Christ, but not in full detail. It was at this informal meeting with Abraham that God showed Melchizedek that the "Promised Seed" of Abraham in Whom all the nations would be blessed was none other than the Lord of Glory Himself (emptied). That He would be born veiled in human flesh, the same kind of flesh that he himself had and would live a life of obscurity being despised and rejected of men because of His beautiful character and godly life which revealed their sin and darkness of being. He also saw that it was during this time of obscurity that He would be prepared for both His earthly and heavenly ministries and that His earthly ministry would surpass any other that had or ever would be sent forth by God. God also had shown Melchizedek that His earthly ministry would end with His horrific death upon the Cross (which type of death would have been unknown to him, as it was many centuries later (around the 6th century BC) that the Persians first used it and it was eventually adopted and used by the Romans) and then the most horrific suffering would then ensue when He would loose both His spirit (which would return to God) and His body (which would lie in the tomb for three days and three nights) and His soul would descend into Tartaros (the deepest part of the Abyss) where He would suffer the (birth) pangs of death (a torment of soul that was equivalent to the worst pain suffered in child birth). It was there in the Abyss where His soul would be made an offering for his sin and the sin off the world, that would result in the making of atonement and his (and the world's) redemption purchased. After atonement had been made, God would then quicken Him in spirit (i.e. give Him back His spirit that He had lost at His death and restore unto Him the glory, power and authority which He had with him before the incarnation) at which time He would proclaim as a herald His victory over Satan and the powers of darkness, sin, death, Hades to the evil angels that had been disobedient in the days of Noah, having left their first estate, created giant human like bodies (which they were not, because they were not inhabited by human souls but became the habitation of other evil angels) and mingled with the daughters of the sons of men to whom the children born where also inhabited by other evil angels (spirits). After He declared His victory to these evil spirits in prison, He then preached the Gospel to **ALL** the inhabitants of Hades, this included **ALL** the Old Testament saints and the ignorant and wicked dead (**NOTE:** It was after death that the Old Testament saints got saved). After this God would raise Him out from amongst the dead, giving Him back His earthly body, at which time He would lead **ALL** of those in Hades who had accepted the Truth which he had preached, into Heaven. Melchizedek also saw that it was on the day of His Resurrection that His High Priestly ministry would start and that the Melchizedek priesthood would be reinstated, this time with an exceedingly great glory and ministrations of the Holy Spirit. Gen 6v1-12, 12v3, Psalm 2v7, 16v8-11, 24 (all), 22v16,17, 110 (all), Eccl 12v7, Isaiah 26v14, 49v2, 53v3,9,10, Jer 31v31-34, Hosea 6v2, Joel 2v28-32, Jonah 1v17, Zech 12v10, Matt 12v40, 28v18-20, Luke 23v46, John 1v10, 3v19,20, 20v17, Acts 2v16-21, Rom 10v7, 2Cor 3v1-18, Gal 3v8, Phil 2v5-11, Heb 2v15-18, 4v15, 5v5,6,8-10, 1Pet 3v18-22, 4v6, 2Pet 2v4, Jude v6,7, Rev 1v7.

The question that arises is; with no more priests arising with the same kind of priestly and prophetic ministries like Melchizedek had and the demise of the Melchizedek priesthood, to whom was God going to raise up and use in their place, who could God use to be channels for His Love and Power into a needy world? Well, the answer is quite simple; God in His wonderful foreknowledge had already known from before the foundation of the world of the eventual demise of the Melchizedek priesthood after the death of Melchizedek, so in 1922 BC, God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans, Acts 7v2-4 states:

"And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran..."

However, Abraham's kindred came with him and they dwelt in Haran until 1921 BC when Terah, Abraham's father died, after which the Lord spoke again to Abraham, Gen 12v1-3 (with Acts 7v4,5) states:

"...Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Abraham was obedient to this call and journeyed to the land of Canaan and it was here in the land of Canaan that God prepared Abraham for his priestly and prophetic ministries that would see him and his spiritual seed in the coming centuries being the replacement for Melchizedek and the Melchizedek priesthood as channels for God's Love and Power into the world. The spiritual seed of Abraham would be those justified by faith and who were seeking a Heavenly City, just as Abraham was, those who would rise up with Yahweh (Jesus), fight their way into the heavenly places, conquer and subdue the powers of darkness and occupy their heavenly Canaan; manifesting God's Love and Power in the heavenlies and upon earth through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, bringing healing, deliverance and blessing to a needy world and people of God. This kind of priestly ministry, which Paul refers to as "God's rest" in Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 (see esp. Heb 4v3), was available in God right from the time when He had finished re-establishing

the creation in the time of Adam and Eve and was participated in by Abel, Enoch and Noah (and perhaps others) before the flood. Some of those who would join Abraham in this wonderful priestly ministry would be Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and many others, both in the Age of Promise (God ceases to deal with all mankind (as He had done in the Age of Stern Justice) and gives a glorious promise of universal blessing through Abraham and his in response to faith. Gal 3v6-9. This is ended by a family, now grown to a nation, forgetting and neglecting these promises, where upon the Lord gives them the Law) and the Age of Law (God gave a perfect code of Law to the Jews, such as the world had never seen, so that the heathen realising its superiority might desire to join themselves to Israel and enjoy its perfect happiness. Israel however, constantly rebelled and forsook God and broke His Law, and cast away their privileges and rights, and preferred the cruelty and emptiness of heathendom to God's Law); this arrangement continuing right up until the Promised One came, Who, after being hidden away at Nazareth for thirty years and having fulfilled His earthly ministry, was crucified, descended into the Abyss, where He purchased redemption for **ALL** His free-will creatures (both angelic and human), preached the Gospel to all the inhabitants of Hades (after having been quickened in spirit), was raised out from amongst the dead receiving again His earthly body and leading all those who had embraced the Truth (at His preaching in Hades) into Heaven, then giving spiritual ministries and gifts unto the Church and re-instating the Melchizedek priesthood being appointed by God as its Great High Priest (after the order of Melchizedek). John 17v4, Eph 4v7-16, Col 1v20, 2Tim 1v10, Heb 4v1-3,6-10, 5v5,6 chapter 11 (all), 1Peter 3v18-22, 4v6.

And so because God (by His foreknowledge), was fully aware (from before the foundation of the world) of the eventual demise of the Melchizedek priesthood after the death of Melchizedek, with all the inhabitants of Salem and the surrounding nations eventually going into apostasy, He was then able to make the following covenant and promise to Abraham in Gen 15v1-21:

"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but **he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.** And he said unto him, **I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.** And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, **Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.** And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. **But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.** And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, **Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."**

A most important bit of information in this passage in Gen 15 is in v16, which states:

"...for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

Once the iniquity of the Amorites was filled full, then God would bring judgement upon the Egyptians, bringing His people out of Egypt so that they might then enter Canaan and conquer the nations of it, and in this way God would bring judgement upon the apostate nations of Canaan. In the nations of Canaan we see what full iniquity is really like, in that although **ALL** the nations trembled and quaked with fear at the thought of fighting against the God of Israel, there was absolutely **NO** repentance of any of them, they simply suppressed their great fear and went out to fight against the God of Israel. From **ALL** the nations in Canaan, there was only one person and her extended family who were saved from God's judgement through Israel and that was Rahab the prostitute. Rahab the prostitute got saved and in amongst the people of God by faith, marrying a prince (Salma/Salmon) of the tribe of Judah and getting into the lineage of Messiah. Faith can open doors even when divine law has shut them! Deut 20v16,17, Joshua 2v9-11, 6v1,17, 2Chron 2v11,12, Hab 2v4, Matt 1v5,6, Luke 3v31,32, Heb 11v31, James 2v25.

The full iniquity of the nations in Canaan in the first half of the 1500 century BC will be exactly the same as the total apostasy that will fill the whole earth at the time of Our Lord's Second Coming. The same kind of conditions that

caused the Lord to bring judgement upon the nations of Canaan (through Israel) will also prevail upon the whole of the earth during the last three and a half years of this age and will be the cause for the Lord Jesus to bring judgement upon the wicked at His Second Coming. Like the wicked nations of Canaan suppressing their fear and fighting against the Lord of Glory; we will see exactly the same kind of thing from the wicked when the Lord Jesus appears in Glory (at His Second Coming), Antichrist and his armies do **NOT** repent, but instead suppress their fear and prepare to fight against their Creator, even thinking that they can defeat Him with their nuclear missiles and other weapons of mass destruction. However, Antichrist and his armies will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming, being consumed by the breath of His mouth. Psalm 2v1-6, Dan 8v23, Zech 14v12, Matt 24v12, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 6v12-17, 19v11-21.

The total apostasy that existed among the nations of Canaan at the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt (in 1491 BC) was exactly the same as that which immediately preceded the Flood (which Ussher dates as 2349 BC) in the days of Noah (when every thought of men was only evil continually, and violence filled the whole earth. Gen 6v5-13). As, at that time, in 1491 BC there were also giants in the land of Canaan, evil spirits infiltrating mankind by taking upon themselves fleshly bodies, which though outwardly similar to human bodies were basically different (genetically) from those of mankind. 1Pet 3v19,20, Jude v6. These were the "giants" of Scripture, these giants are called: The Nephilim, Gen 6v4, Numb 13v32,33. The Anakim, Deut 1v28, 2v10,11,21, 3v11,13, 9v2, Josh 11v21,22, 14v12-14. The Emims, Deut 2v10,11. The Zamzummins, Deut 2v19-21. The Rephaim, Deut 2v11,20, 3v11,13, Josh 12v4, 13v12, 15v8, 18v16, 2Sam 21v16,18,20,22, 1Chron 20v4,6,8. The valley of the giants, Josh 15v8, 18v16. etc. Goliath and his compatriots were evil angels in flesh, the sons of the giant. 2Sam 21v15-22. The children that were born to the giants did not have souls and spirits given to them by God, they became the abode of other evil spirits; these products of Satan's biological engineering will not be resurrected, for in Isaiah 26v14, we read the "dead," who are "deceased" (Hebrew is "rephaim" (Strong's OT:7496) "giants") will not be resurrected by God. When Michael and his angels cast the Devil and his angels out of Heaven into the earth, and God's restraining hand is removed from the Devil and his evil hosts, then the Great Tribulation ensues, with the result that these evil angels that have been cast down into the earth will again mingle with the seed of men, which will result in giants once again upon the earth. Dan 2v43, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v7-17.

The Destruction Of Sodom And The Cities Of The Plain Of Jordan.

We read in Genesis 13v13:

"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly."

This Scripture is referring to a date of around 1921 BC, about twenty four years before it's destruction in 1897 BC; Sodom (Hebrew, "Cedom" (Strong's OT:5467) which means "scorched" or "burnt," i.e., volcanic or bituminous) and the other cities of the plain were even then, renowned for their wickedness, so one has to wonder why Lot (which means a veil or covering; also note that there is no record of the birth or death of Lot in Scripture, so we cannot work out at what age he died) decided to go and live there. When Lot and Abraham separated, Abraham gave Lot the first choice as regards where he would go and live, Gen 13v10,11 states:

"And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other."

It was not only a plentiful supply of grass and water for his flocks that caused Lot to choose to go to the plain of Jordan, but the desire for city life, where life in its living would be so much easier than that of living in tents, so Lot departed from Abraham and went to live in Sodom, no longer looking upon himself as a "sojourner in the land of promise," but actually as living among the inhabitants of the land. Heb 11v8-16. But all this came with a very high price, in that life in Sodom almost destroyed him completely, even as it did his wife, two daughters, sons in law and possibly grandchildren. Although Lot is called "that righteous man" (Greek, "ho dikaios" (Strong's NT:1342), "dikaios" meaning, just, meet, right (-eous)) in 2Pet 2v8, he (with his wife and two daughters) actually had to be taken by the hand and brought out of Sodom because they "lingered," Gen 19v15,16 states:

"And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. **And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.**"

"And while he lingered" is in Hebrew, "Wayitmahmaah," which is from "mahahh" (Strong's OT:4102) and means "to question or hesitate, i.e., (by implication) to be reluctant, delay, linger, stay selves, tarry."

We can see just how true the words of 1Pet 4v18 are, which state:

“And if it is difficult even for a righteous man to be saved, what will become of irreligious men and sinners?”
(Weymouth)

Although righteous, Lot certainly was quite “carnal,” not wanting to leave the wealth, power and position he had found in Sodom and only getting out of Sodom by the skin of his teeth. He certainly was not looking for a heavenly inheritance, like Abraham and Sarah were; neither is he mentioned in Hebrews 11 in the portion dealing with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Sarah as looking for one and because he was not looking for a heavenly inheritance, neither did he exercise any kind of priestly or prophetic ministry as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Sarah did. Indeed, Lot finally ended up in a cave filled with fear, getting drunk and having sexual relations with both of his daughters. The example of Lot really shows just how spiritually destructive seeking wealth, position and power can be to a believer; with Lot the Word of God certainly was choked with the cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and brought no fruit to maturity, even as the seed that fell among the thorns. However, with Abraham, the Word of God was received with a good and noble heart and he was diligent to keep the received Truth, bearing fruit with patience, even as the seed that fell upon good ground, springing up, and yielding a crop a hundredfold. Abraham sought first the Kingdom of God and all things were added unto him, humbling himself under the mighty hand of God and being exalted in due time and casting **ALL** his cares upon Him, in the full knowledge that He was always thinking about him and watching everything that concerned him. Lot is he who is saved but as through fire suffering the loss of everything, while Abraham is saved with glory, having an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of God. Gen 19v1,9,30-38, Matt 6v25-34, Luke 8v4-15, 1Cor 3v12-15, 1Pet 5v6,7, 2Pet 1v11, Jude v23. (**Note:** God’s judgement upon Sodom and the other cities of the plain was a strange and alien act for Him to do, for God’s great desire is **ALWAYS** that of to save and bless and it is only as a last resort, when His free-will creatures refuse to repent and leave Him no other choice that He is forced to bring judgement upon them to preserve the purity of the flesh. Isaiah 28v21, Hosea 11v1-12, 1Tim 2v4, 2Pet 2v6-10, 3v9, 1John 4v8,16, Jude v7,8).

The Lord Jesus states in Matt 11v23,24:

“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.”

In this very enlightening Scripture the Lord Jesus makes known that the people of Capernaum were in a worse moral and spiritual condition than those of Sodom at the time of its destruction by Yahweh. If the Lord Jesus had done the same mighty signs, wonders and miracles in Sodom, the people would have repented and Sodom (and the other cities of the plain) would not have been destroyed by brimstone and fire from heaven and would still be in existence in the day when the Judge of all the earth became incarnate. One of the things that was revealed by the ministry of the Lord Jesus was that immoral people repented at the mighty signs, wonders and miracles far quicker and in vastly greater numbers than the hardened religious hypocrites that had been produced by the unscriptural man-made traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. So often the response of these hardened hypocrites to the wonderful miracles of the Lord Jesus was that they became filled with hatred and rage with a strong desire to kill Him. However, when the prostitutes and sinners saw these miracles they repented in droves, having fully revealed to them the character and works of the welcoming God of Love. Matt 9v9-13, 11v19, Luke 4v16-30, 7v36-50, 15v11-32, John 15v18-25.

Another example of a notorious immoral city like Sodom is the Greek city of Corinth located on the isthmus which joins the Peloponnesus to the mainland of Greece; such was its terrible debauchery that its name even served to coin an expression that became famous for corrupt practices: “Corinthianize” means to practice prostitution. It was the Greeks that invented the term, to “Corinthianize,” which meant to live an immoral life and to call a young woman “a Corinthian” meant she was an immoral person. (The name “Sodom” (i.e., “sodomy”) has also been taken and used to refer to sinful immoral practises as the name “Corinth” was and in the thirteenth century AD started to be used in the English and French languages to denote (amongst other things) the sexual act performed between homosexuals. The etymology is as follows: it is from the Anglo-French “sodomie,” sexual intercourse between men, from Old French, from late Latin “Sodoma,” Sodom). Paul, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, lists the characters of some of the persons who became believers in the Living God, the Lord Jesus, when he preached the Gospel to them by the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven, compelling them to believe in the Risen Saviour by the mighty signs, wonder and miracles that He did through him (Rom 15v18-21, 2Cor 12v11,12, 1Pet 1v10-12), 1Cor 6v9-11 states:

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Paul spent about two years at Corinth (the population during Roman times could have exceeded four hundred thousand people), from 53 AD to 54 AD (Acts 18v1,9-11,18). The principal deity worshipped in the city was Aphrodite

(identified by the Romans with Venus), Corinth was devoted, or dedicated thus to the goddess of love, or licentious passion; and the effect may be easily conceived. The temple of Aphrodite was erected on the north side or slope of the Acrocorinthus, a mountain about half a mile in height on the south of the city, and from the summit of which a magnificent prospect opened on the north to Parnassus and Helicon, to the eastward the island of Aegina and the citadel of Athens, and to the west the rich and beautiful plains of Sicyon. This mountain was covered with temples and splendid houses; but was especially devoted to Aphrodite, and was the plaque of her worship. Her shrine appeared above those of the other gods; and it was enjoined by law, that one thousand beautiful females should officiate as courtesans, or public prostitutes, before the altar of the goddess of love. In a time of public calamity and imminent danger, these women attended at the sacrifices, and walked with the other citizens singing sacred hymns. They were supported chiefly by foreigners; and from the avails of their vice a copious revenue was derived to the city. Individuals, in order to ensure success in their undertakings, vowed to present to Venus a certain number of courtesans, which they obtained by sending to distant countries. Foreign merchants were attracted in this way to Corinth; and, in a few days, would be stripped of all their property. It thus became a proverb, "It is not for everyone to go to Corinth." The effect of this on the morals of the city can be easily understood. It became the most frivolous, dissipated, corrupt, and ultimately the most effeminate and feeble portion of Greece. Even with this terrible debauchery rife in it, the Lord Jesus was able to say to Paul in Acts 18v9,10:

"...Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."

The Lord Jesus saw by His foreknowledge the multitudes of Corinthians who would repent of their sin and believe in Him as the Risen Saviour because they were compelled to believe by the mighty signs, wonders and miracles that He did through His servant Paul, 2Cor 12v11,12 states:

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. **Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."**

When Paul wrote the 1st Corinthian epistle in the spring (before Pentecost) of (probably) 57 AD from Ephesus (1Cor 16v8), he was able to say of the Corinthians in 1Cor 1v7 "...that ye come behind in no gift..." and this was in spite of the carnality and immorality of quite a lot of them. 1Cor 3v1-9, 5v1-5, 11v23-31. The effect of Paul's first epistle on them was very substantial, for we read in 2Cor 7v11 (which was written six months later in the autumn of 57 AD in Macedonia (probably Philippi, 2Cor 2v13)):

"For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

The result of Paul preaching the Gospel to the Corinthians has had long lasting effects, indeed almost two thousand years on, (unlike Sodom), Corinth still exists to this day! We can see then that the words of the Lord Jesus in Matt 11v23,24 not only hold true for Sodom but also for Corinth as well and indeed it is a principle that holds true for any city that repents. The other cities that the Lord Jesus refers to in Matt 11v20-24, Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum have all but disappeared today. Bethsaida is not even marked upon a modern map today, Capernaum is simply a name marked on the map but with no dwellings etc., and Chorazin, identified as Khirbet Kerazeh, which became uninhabited by the 3rd Century AD, is just a ruin; during the days of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus, Chorazin was a prominent city. The inhabitants of these three places refused to repent having been given the full light and full revelation of the character and works of God through the mightiest signs, wonders and miracles ever done in human history because of the unscriptural man-made traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees that had filled their minds and imprisoned them in great darkness so that they simply didn't want to repent, being so hardened in sin. The Lord Jesus also says of Sodom in Matt 11v24:

"But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

These words of the Lord Jesus clearly indicate that at the Great White Throne judgement there will be amongst those who's names are written in the Book of Life a number of the inhabitants of Sodom (and the other cities of the plain). These very same persons were amongst those who received the Truth from the Lord Jesus, Whom, after having made atonement and quickened in spirit, preached the Gospel to **ALL** the inhabitants (Old Testament saints, the ignorant and wicked dead and evil angels) of Hades. Those who repented and received the truth, He then led into Heaven so "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh (which would take place at the Great White Throne judgement), but live according to God in the spirit (i.e., live in God's presence in Heaven)." Isaiah 6v9,10, Matt 13v10-17, Acts 2v22-32, Rom 10v7, 2Cor 2v16, Eph 4v7-16, 1Pet 3v18-22, 4v6, Rev 22v11.

The divine visitation of Yahweh (Jesus) and the two angels (Gen 18) to Abraham and Sarah (to strengthen their faith,

Rom 4v20) occurred in the year 1897 BC, Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek having taken place in 1912 BC, so a time of fifteen years had elapsed between these two epochal events. Another question that needs to be asked is what had become of Melchizedek during these fifteen years; was he still alive or was he dead? As already mentioned there is no record of either Melchizedek's birth or death, so no concrete statement about the time of his death can be made. However, one would have thought that the Lord surely would have told His great servant Melchizedek (if he was still alive) on what He was planning on doing to Sodom and the cities of the plain if He found out on going down to visit them for Himself that the outcries against them were true. But, instead of reading about any kind of divine communication taking place between the Lord and Melchizedek on this matter, we find it rather taking place between the Lord and Abraham. This turn of events would strongly suggest that Melchizedek had indeed died by this time and that Abraham had taken a place before the Lord (in spirit) similar to that which Melchizedek had exercised. Abraham at this time stood before the Judge of all the earth in spirit, having been taken into the heavenly places by his Lord (the preincarnate Christ); conquering and subduing the powers of darkness and occupying these same heavenly places and manifesting God power and love in the heavenlies and upon earth by manifesting the gifts of the Spirit. Abraham was now at this time (1897 BC) exercising a priestly (and prophetic) ministry like that which the Melchizedek priesthood exercised under Melchizedek. The spiritual seed of Abraham (both Old and New Testament believers), that is, those who followed the same example of his life, faith and works, would also carry out the same kind of priestly ministry that Abraham had exercised (the New Testament believers as members of the Melchizedek priesthood under the Lord Jesus as their Great High Priest), that is entering into God's promised rest by rising up into the heavenlies with Yahweh, conquering and subduing the powers of darkness, occupying the heavenly places and manifesting God's power in the heavenlies and upon earth through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Gen 20v7, John 8v39, Rom 4v1-25, Gal 3v5-9,11,29, Heb 11v1-40, James 2v14-26.

Gen 12v3 states:

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Although this Scripture, "...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," has its primary fulfilment in the Lord Jesus, it also has another secondary fulfilment in the spiritual seed of Abraham, both Old and New Testament believers, who by entering into God's promised rest and making "interventions with power" (Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783), "proseuche" (NT:4335)) for kings and all who are in authority (so that people may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence) and who are also channels for God's love and power into a needy world to be a blessing to those around them by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Exodus 19v5,6, Isaiah 8v18, Mark 16v14-18, 1Tim 2v1-8, Heb 2v4,13, 4v3,10, 1Pet 2v1-10.

Yahweh Jesus, Is Not Only The Author And Perfector Of The New Testament Believer's Faith, But Also The Old Testament Saint's As Well! (Heb 12v2, James 2v21-23 with Heb 11v1-12v1)

Isaac was born in 1896 BC when Abraham was a hundred years old and it was twenty five years later (by Archbishop Ussher's dating) in 1871 BC (Gen 22v1-19) that God tested Abraham by directing him to the land of Moriah (Hebrew, "Mowriyah," (Strong's OT:4179), which means "seen of Jah" or "the shown of Yahweh," i.e., the manifestation or appearance of Yahweh. Some commentators say that the name of "Moriah" is used proleptically with reference to Yahweh's appearance to Abraham in Gen 22v11-18 and to David in 2Cor 3v1, however, I think that it was already named "Moriah" due to the fact that it was in the immediate vicinity of Salem and we can be sure that the Lord certainly had appeared to Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God.) were he was to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering on a certain mountain that God would show him. By the time of this epochal event, Abraham had been a believer in the Living God ("Eel Shadaay" ("El Shaddai"), "God All-sufficient" (Gen 17v1 with Exodus 6v3)) for fifty one years and it is here (in Gen 22v1-19) that we see the final trial of his faith that would bring his faith, patience and character to perfection. Fifty one years earlier, Yahweh Malek (the pre-incarnate Christ, Exodus 3v14,15, John 8v56-58) had appeared to Abraham (who at that time worshipped idols, Joshua 24v2,3) in Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him glorious promises, which Abraham believed because he had a born again experience; God the Holy Spirit (knowing that he would receive the Truth) had quickened his dead spirit which enabled him to believe the word of God and be obedient to this call to leave Ur of the Chaldeans. **Note:** Abraham's ability to believe the wonderful promises that God spoke to him was simply as a result of being quickened in spirit, Abraham's faith was a result of a living spirit, it was **NOT** the cause of it; his ability to believe the word of God was a wholly gracious act of God, due to his spirit being born again. John 3v1-21, 1Cor 2v6-16, Eph 2v1-10. Over the coming years God gave Abraham further manifestations of Himself and revelations of Truth which Abraham received and believed; these revelations and manifestations increased and strengthened Abraham's faith in the Living God, which had the effect of taking his faith from one level of belief to a higher one, or as Paul describes this process in Rom 1v17, "'by" faith "unto" faith." As Abraham received and believed the word of God and was obedient to it the process of sanctification was taking place and as he sat in His Presence communing with the Living God, beholding His beautiful character Abraham was transformed (Greek, "metamorphoo" (NT:3339), which means, "to change into another form") into His image from one degree of glory to another by the Spirit of Yahweh. Isaiah 28v10, John 17v17,19, 2Cor 3v16-18. From before the

foundation of the world, God had seen what Abraham would become through His mercy, grace, strength and blessing; He saw Abraham's faith brought to perfection, He also saw when Abraham and Sarah's faith waned and so at those times He would come and visit them to strengthen them. The meek and lowly pre-incarnate Christ, the God of Love would come alongside them and gently put their faith back on track, it was His gentleness that made Abraham (and Sarah) great. Psalm 18v35.

Paul, when writing the epistle to the Hebrews states in Heb 11v17:

"By faith Abraham, **when he was tried, offered up** Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son..."

"...When he was tried, offered up..." is in Greek "peirazómenos proseneénochen." The full sense of the statement is missed in the King James Version. The meaning is that "while the trial is yet in progress," Abraham "hath already offered up" his son, before the trial has come to an issue, by the act of his obedient will, through faith in God.

Abraham's "offering up" of Isaac in his mind immediately God spoke to him (Gen 22v1,2) was because Abraham believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead and restore him to life, as God had already said to Abraham in Gen 21v12, "...in Isaac shall thy seed be called." (This feast occurred in 1891 BC when Isaac was five years old). Abraham's belief in the Resurrection was due to the fact that he had seen and had the full revelation from God of Christ's birth, life, ministry, crucifixion, descent into Hades, the preaching of the Gospel to all it's inhabitants, the deliverance of **ALL** those who received the Truth of it (including **ALL** the Old Testament saints), His Resurrection and Ascension and the leading of **ALL** those delivered from Hades into Heaven which was accompanied by a great triumphal choral from the angelic hosts, His sitting down on the Throne of His Father at His right hand and the beginning of His High Priestly Ministry after the order of Melchizedek on the day of His Resurrection. Abraham was fully assured that because the Promised Seed (Messiah) would be raised from the dead, that he, Sarah and Isaac and all the rest of humanity would also be raised from the dead (at the first and second resurrections) and be judged by the "Judge of all the earth," the man Christ Jesus (The Promised Seed). (Isaac also believed in the Resurrection and had initially been told by Abraham (and Sarah) all the Truth pertaining to Christ's birth, life, ministry, death upon the cross, descent into Hades, preaching to its inhabitants, His Resurrection and the delivering of all those in Hades who had received the Truth by being taken into Heaven. Isaac also received confirmation of the Truth from the Lord as he grew in wisdom and spiritual strength and was given more revelations regarding the Promised Seed. Gen 26v2-5,24). And because Abraham had seen and had revealed to him the full Truth regarding Messiah, The Promised Seed, His birth and life etc., this was also further confirmation that if he offered up Isaac to the Lord as a sacrifice, God would raise him up from the dead, because he had already seen the fulfilment of the promises regarding the Promised Seed in prophetic vision. Also, the fulfilment of God's promise in the birth of Isaac was a tremendous miracle and boosted both Abraham and Sarah's faith greatly because of the simple fact that both "were as good as dead," and the fulfilment of the promise regarding the birth of Isaac also fully confirmed that the rest of God's promises regarding Isaac would also be fulfilled, i.e., "...in Isaac shall thy seed be called." So, because of Abraham's full confidence and belief in Yahweh, the Most High God and His promises, he did not hesitate but was obedient to God's command. Abraham instantly knew and recognised that it was the Lord speaking to him when He said to him (in Gen 22v2), "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest...and offer him there for a burnt offering." There was absolutely no doubt in his mind Who was speaking to him, because Abraham "by reason of use had his senses exercised to discern both good and evil;" he was so used to sitting in his Lord's Presence and communing with him continually that he knew His voice as well as or even better than Sarah's. Gen 3v12, 18v25, 14v18-24, Psalm 24, John 8v56-58, Acts 2v23-31, 17v31, 1Cor 15v22,54,55, Eph 4v8-10, Heb 2v15, 5v5,6,14, 11v12,17-19, 1Pet 3v18-22, 4v6.

Gen 22v2,12,(16), states:

"...Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest...seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

Bishop Warburton states the following on the sentence, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest:" "The order in which the words are placed in the original gradually increases the sense, and raises the passions higher and higher: Take now thy son, (rather, take I beseech thee Naa',) thine only son whom thou lovest, even Isaac."

When Abraham and Isaac left the two young men at the camp to go to Moriah to worship, Isaac made the following observation (Gen 22v7):

"...My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

So even at this point in time Isaac was still unaware that Abraham's intention was to slay him and offer him up to the

Lord as a burnt offering. Abraham's reply to him was (Gen 22v8):

"...My son, God will provide himself (a) **The** lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together."

The correct translation should read "the lamb" and not "a lamb." "The Lamb" that Abraham had in mind here was none other than The Lamb of God Himself, the Lord Jesus, slain from before the foundation of the world, Who would make atonement by the shedding of His blood and thereby take away the sin of the world. John 1v29, Eph 1v7.

It was most probably between verses 8 and 9 that Abraham revealed to Isaac what Yahweh had commanded him to do and it is by what Isaac did **NOT** do (i.e., he did not flee), that we know that he must have consented (albeit reluctantly) to let his father sacrifice him. This kind of obedience by Isaac reveals to us the great revelation that he already had at this time of the birth, life, ministry, death (by crucifixion), descent into Hades, Resurrection, Ascension and the beginning of the High Priestly after the order of Melchizedek on the day of His Resurrection of the Promised Seed in Whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed and because of His Resurrection, all the rest of mankind (including himself) would be resurrected; like Abraham, Isaac also fully believed in the Resurrection and that God was able to (and would) raise him from the dead. In the sacrificing of Isaac it was also clearly revealed to them both the penalty of sin, i.e., the wages of sin is death and the soul that sinneth it shall die and that it was essential for the Promised Seed to make atonement for their sin (and indeed for all) or else they (nor anybody else) would (or could) enter into the Heavenly City that they had seen afar off and embraced, confessing that they were pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. Psalm 2v7, 16v8-11, 110v1,4, Isaiah 53 (all), 58v6, 61v1,2 Ezek chapter 18 (all), Hosea 6v1-3, Zech 12v10, 13v7, Matt 1v1, Luke 3v23-34, 4v18,19, Rom 3v23, 6v23, Heb 2v14,15, 11v13.

During this trial of Abraham's faith, he and Isaac experienced to a degree (up to the time when Abraham was about to slay Isaac) the same kind of great turmoil, anguish and suffering of heart, soul and mind that God the Father and the Lord Jesus (also the Holy Spirit) would each experience and go through as the epochal time of the Cross approached and when the Lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world was actually offered up as a sacrifice to make atonement for the sin of the world by the shedding of His blood, which would open the Kingdom of Heaven and bring in the New Covenant. Matt 26v26-28,36-46, 27v45,54, Luke 9v27-36,51, John 1v29, 19v34, Heb 2v15, 5v7,9v12, 11v40, 12v24, Rev 5v6, 13v8.

Abraham also saw and fully believed in the true humanity of Messiah, he knew that He would not be some kind of Docetic phantom (nor that which was taught by Cerinthus or that found described in the Apocryphal Gospels); the destructive heresy that the Gnostics (being energised by the Devil) would later introduce in the late 50's early 60's AD into the Church, which has continued in the Church right up to the present time in the guise of Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin (Please see the study, "The Disastrous Effects Of The Doctrine Of Original Sin" which can be found at www.truthforthelastdays.com for a more in-depth study on this destructive heresy) and indeed will be most prevalent during the last seven years of this Age (of Grace), especially during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, causing many of those who believe it to backslide and go into apostasy during those last three and a half years (of this Age). The apostle John writes in 1John 4v1-6 the following:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: **And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.** Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. **They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.** We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

Abraham knew that Christ, The Promised Seed, was none other than the Seed (promised by the Lord to Eve) Who would bruise the head of the serpent, the One Who would be called in Isaac, in Whom **ALL** the nations of the earth would be blessed. As Abraham raised the knife to slay Isaac he also saw in vision Christ hanging upon the Cross (which would occur at Golgotha (which means "The place of a Skull") just six hundred metres away to the west (or if the position given by Gordon is accepted, one thousand metres NNW, below which in a cave called "Jeremiah's Grotto", the Ark of the Covenant was found by Ron Wyatt, see the article, "The Ark of the Covenant, Has It Been Found" at <http://www.prophetic.net/arkcov.htm>), one thousand nine hundred years later on Thursday, 6th, April 30 AD. Tradition states that the actual position on Mount Moriah where Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac is where the Brazen Alter stood in the Inner Court of Solomon's Temple, the Post Captivity Temple and Herod's Temple, which was immediately in front of the building that housed the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place (where now stands the Dome of the Rock (the Mosque of Omar). It was also at this location that the Lord (Yahweh Jesus) appeared to David. As Abraham saw the Promised One hanging upon the Cross, the full extent of the great pain, sadness and suffering that God the Father was experiencing filled his heart and being (albeit greatly filtered, as he would not be able to bear it). At the same time, Isaac also saw Christ hanging upon the Cross and it was Christ's suffering (mental, physical and

emotional) that filled Isaac's soul and being, this also being filtered as well. This great act of obedience by Abraham and Isaac spoke to God and the preincarnate Christ (God the Word) of the fearful day when for the redemption of the world He would actually watch His Beloved Son suffer and die upon the cruel cross amid the jeers of the wicked. Gen 3v15, 17v7, 21v12, 2Chron 3v1, Isaiah 53v7,8, Matt 24v12,45-25v13, Luke 3v22-38, John 8v56-58, Gal 3v16, Eph 2v1-10, Phil 2v5-11, Col 2v8-10, Heb 2v16, 2Pet 2v1-3.

However, just as Abraham was about to plunge the knife into Isaac, Yahweh Malak (the preincarnate Christ) called to him from heaven telling not to lay his hand upon him or to hurt him in any way. This great act of obedience by Abraham had demonstrated to all that Abraham did indeed fear the Lord (Gen 22v12) and had placed Him first in his life, so that he fulfilled the first and greatest commandment of all (Mark 12v30 with Luke 14v25-33):

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

Over a period of fifty one years (1922 BC - 1871 BC), the preincarnate Christ (Yahweh Malak, i.e., Yahweh Messenger) had brought Abraham's faith to perfection (Heb 12v2 "finisher," Greek, "teleiotes" (Strong's NT:5047), which means "to bring to the goal" and hence "completeness" or "perfection") so that he was called "the friend (Isaiah 41v8, Hebrew, "'ahab" (Strong's OT:157), which means "loved" or "to have affection for," the Greek word used in James 2v23 is "philos" (Strong's NT:5384), which mean "dear" or "fond") of God." The Lord had formed a Christ like character in Abraham during this time and he had reached a spiritual maturity like that which Melchizedek had demonstrated forty one years earlier (in 1912 BC) when they met in the Valley of Shaveh (Gen 14v18-24) after Abraham's great victory over the four kings, which had been given to him by the Lord through Melchizedek's "interventions with power" ("intercessions," Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)). The Fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance) had also been fully formed in Abraham's character and was constantly observed by others as being continually manifested in the everyday life of this meek, humble, godly and prayerful person. Like Elijah of old, Abraham stood before the Throne of God in spirit in the full knowledge that he stood in His Presence in the Throne Room of heaven, beholding the Throne of God, the rainbow around it, with Seraphim above, the twenty fours Elders on twenty four thrones around it and the seven Spirits of God (who are the seven great Archangels) before the Throne, the sea of glass and the hundreds of billions of angels around it and the great activity of the Trinity (revealed by the mighty thunderings, lightnings and voices proceeding from the Throne) as They tend and care for Their creatures and creation. Abraham knew that this was the City that God had prepared for him (and the rest of those who had called upon the name of the Lord and had entered into God's rest), the place where he would spend eternity (the Millennium and the Ages of Ages) with Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and all the rest of God's saints of all Ages. 1Kings 22v1-28, Isaiah chapter 6, Ezek chapters 1 to 3, Gal 5v16-26, Heb 4v1-3, 5v5,6, 7v25, 11v8-40, Rev chapters 4 to 5.

With the sacrifice already accomplished in his heart, he had fully satisfied the requirements of God (Heb 11v17), so with Yahweh Malak's intervention, Abraham lifted his eyes and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket, which he offered in sacrifice, regarding it as a substitute for his son, directly provided by God Himself for a burnt offering (Septuagint, "eis holokarpoosin"). The burnt offering was the greatest of all sacrifices, and consisted in the immolation of a male victim, either a sheep or goat of a year old; a bullock of three years old sometimes; and, more rarely, a young pigeon or turtle dove. It was always placed entire on the altar, and consumed in the fire. Lev 1v4. It has been remarked that the ram offering as a burnt-offering in Isaac's stead, was a figure of Christ crowned with thorns and hanging on the Cross. Christ is typified by both: His Death and Resurrection were represented: the one by the ram and the other by Isaac on Mount Moriah to Abraham, who "was glad that he might see His day; and he saw, and did rejoice." John 8v56, Rom 5v8, 1Tim 1v15.

With God providing the ram for Abraham to offer as a burnt offering instead of Isaac, he called the name of that place, "Yahweh-yir'eh," which means not only "The Lord Who provides," but more fully, "The Lord Who see and provides," Gen 22v14 states:

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

The wonderful members of the Trinity; our Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit have not only seen **ALL** of our needs from before the foundation of the world, **BUT** has also provided for each and every one of those needs from before Creation, absolutely nothing ever takes our wonderful God by surprise. Although Abraham knew the name "Yahweh," for he called the name of the place where God provided a sacrificial ram by the name "Yahweh Jireh," he could not invoke it on the basis of a covenant relationship, as Exodus 6v2-4 reveals:

"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers."

"Known," in Hebrew is "yada" (OT:3045), which speaks of an experimental relationship, they did not have the right of covenant invocation of the Divine Name, until it was given to Moses under the covenant of the Law. God appeared unto Abraham (Isaac and Jacob) as "El Shaddai," i.e., "God Almighty," see Gen 17v1-27 (esp. v1).

In the second half of Gen 22v14, it reads:

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: **as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.**"

There are different opinions as to what "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" means, however I think it would be best paraphrased as "**In the mount of Yahweh, He shall see and provide.**" "In the mount of Yahweh," is a reference to the Temple that would initially be built by Solomon on Mount Moriah with the Brazen Alter being placed on the spot where Abraham was prepared to slay Isaac and where the spiritual seed of Abraham would come to offer their sacrifices before the Lord in His Temple, with the full assurance that Yahweh Jireh would not only have seen **ALL** their needs from before creation, but would also have provided for each and every one of them. It also has a fulfilment that when the very One Who was speaking to him, two thousand years later, would empty Himself (of His Power, Glory and Divine perfections) and "become" (Greek "egéneto" from "ginomai" (Strong's NT: 1096) flesh and walk on the very same ground where Abraham had been prepared to slay his dearly beloved son Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering unto the Lord. The True Lord Himself would suddenly come to His Temple and manifest the Glory of His Father, by doing mighty signs, wonders and miracles to meet the great needs of the lost House of Israel to whom He had been sent by His Father, fulfilling what the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees had failed to do for centuries (to be channels for God's Love, Power and Presence to flow through so as to bring deliverance to the nation of Israel). Isaiah 35v5,6 (with matt 11v4-6), 40v3-5, 49v3, 58v6, 61v1,2 (with Luke 4v18,19), Mal 3v1-3, Matt 1v1, 15v24, 21v12-17, Phil 2v5-11, Heb 2v16.

This covenant name is also available to the Christian to invoke and call upon, indeed **ALL** the wonderful covenant names of Yahweh are there for each and every individual Christian to call upon and use. They are Names that bring God's Power, Presence and Love into **ANY** situation and need of each individual believer, indeed these wonderful names can also be called upon and invoked (by the believer) to bring blessing and deliverance upon the worldling and unbeliever as well. Under the Old Covenant it was through the shedding of the blood of the Passover lamb (which was a "type") that brought **ALL** of these covenant names to the Old Testament saint for them to use, however, the New Testament saint is under a far better covenant made through the shedding of the precious blood of the Dear Lord Jesus, Who is the True Lamb of God without spot or blemish, slain from before the foundation of the World. Rom 4v16, 2Cor 1v20, Gal 3v29, Heb 8v6, 9v10,18-28, 1Pet 1v19,20, Rev 13v8.

Even as God planned and provided for our salvation from before the foundation of the world, even writing in the Lamb's Book of Life before Creation (by His wonderful foreknowledge) the individual name of all those who would call upon The Name for salvation by accepting the mighty sacrifice that He would make upon the Cross; even so has He also provided for **ALL** and **EVERY** need for every one of His dearly beloved children from before time began for all eternity. Rom 8v32, Eph 2v1-10, 3v9-11, Phil 4v19, 2Tim 1v9, Rev 13v8, 17v8, 20v4-22v21.

God's character and His covenant names are vitally linked and interconnected. Exodus 34v6,7 with 3v14,15.

Exodus 3v14,15 states:

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

Jesus revealed and used, all the covenant names of Yahweh during His earthly ministry. The divine Name, the tetragrammaton, was God's covenant name with Israel, as set forth in the Old Testament. The sacred name of "Yahweh," or "Jehovah," depending on which form you prefer to use, comes from the Hebrew verb "to be," as Exodus 3v14,15, states. "I AM THAT I AM" is in Hebrew, "EHYEH ASHER EHYEH;" Hebrew scholars have stated that "EHYEH ASHER EHYEH" means, "I AM WHO I AM, AND WHAT I AM: AND I WILL BE, WHAT I WILL BE." The name "EHYEH ASHER EHYEH" and its context can mean, "I will be with you **ALL** the time, in **ALL** situations." However, it means more than that, rather, "**I will be with you at all times, and in all situations, to be what I AM to you.**" God comes to make His abilities, love and power available to us when we call upon His covenant names. The name of "Jehovah" or "Yahweh," encapsulates the meaning of the great name of God, "EHYEH ASHER EHYEH," "I AM THAT I AM," and manifests the eternal availability of God's love and power. The name of Jesus has been given to us, it is covenanted to us by His own shed blood, and when we call on His name, He comes to give us what we need, His Name carries all the Divine love, power and presence of the covenant names of God. Exodus 34v6,7.

All The Covenant Names Of Yahweh Are Given To Us In The Name Of Jesus.

Yahweh Elohim. The Lord our God. Deut 6v4, etc. This manifests the Trinity, Gen 1v26. "And God said, Let **US** make man in **OUR** image, after **OUR** likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth." Elohim is plural, it is used to describe the plural evil Gods of the Canaanites, and the demon powers behind them. Exodus 20v3. In order to try and deny this obvious reference to the Trinity, heretics, like "Jehovah's Witnesses," have tried to prove, but without any success, that "Elohim" is, "The plural of majesty."

Yahweh Adonai. Our Sovereign Lord. Gen 15v2,8. Often with "Lord of Hosts." Isaiah 34v15, 10v23,24, 22v5,15, 28v22.

Yahweh Rophi, or Yahweh Rapha. The Lord our Healer. Exodus 15v26, Isaiah 53v4, Matt 8v16,17.

Yahweh Jireh. The Lord will see and provide, or equally correctly, The Lord will appear, or be seen. Gen 22v8-14. It was a place in Jerusalem, later called Moriah. God provided His Lamb in Jerusalem, on the cross at Golgotha. Matt 27v33, Mark 15v22, Jn.19v17.

Yahweh Nissi. The Lord our Banner and Conqueror. Exodus 17v15. The battle cry of Moses, 1491 BC. The uplifted hands of Moses, and the invoked Divine Name, defeated the Amalekites; Moses built an altar to commemorate this victory.

Yahweh Tsabaoth. The Lord of Hosts. 1Sam 1v3. This battle cry of the saints occurs 281 times in the Old Testament. Psalm 46v7,11. Our Lord said He could **CALL** for "twelve legions of angels," in Matt 26v53, it was part of His normal practice in His ministry to the multitudes. It seems Elisha also invoked the name of Yahweh for angelic help, and got it, for he says in 2Kings 6v15-18, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." David beat Goliath by calling on the name of Yahweh. 1Sam 16v45.

Yahweh Shalom. The Lord our peace. An altar erected by Gideon about 1256 BC. Judges 6v24. Gideon's act and expression of faith. It was also the Aaronic blessing on Israel; it brought physical, spiritual and material peace, blessing, prosperity and well-being. Numb 6v22-27. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." John 14v27. He gives us the peace of Heaven.

Yahweh Shammah. The Lord is present, or there. Ezek 48v35. The promised future kingdom presence.

Yahweh Mekaddishkim. The Lord our Sanctifier. Exodus 31v13, Lev 20v8, 21v8, 22v9,16,32, Ezek 20v12. etc.

Yahweh Ra-ah or Rohi. The Lord my Shepherd. Psalm 23v1.

Yahweh Tsidkenu. God our Righteousness. Jer 23v6, 33v6. Christ's atonement justifies us. Rom 5v1,2, 1John 4v9,10.

Yahweh Hoseenu. God our covenanted Creator. Psalm 95v6, Heb 3 and 4. Praise and worship give victory over foes.

Yahweh Elyon. The Lord Most High. Psalm 7v17. Supreme in love and power, he reigns in perfect justice over all.

Yahweh Eloheenu. The Lord OUR God. Psalm 99v5,8,9. OUR God of joyful fellowship and worship. Acts 1v14, 2v1.

Yahweh Elokeka. The Lord THY God. Exodus 20v2,5,7. The eternal God with whose name we encourage each other.

Yahweh Elohay. The Lord MY God. Zech 14v5. MY eternal God of personal encouragement.

The Covenant Names Of Yahweh That David Called On, And Proved. 2Sam 22v1-4, 14v22, Psalm 18.

Yahweh is my Rock, The God of my rock. Yahweh my Shield. Yahweh my Salvation. Yahweh my Saviour, Thou savest me from violence. Yahweh, Who gave David victory over the giants and his other enemies. 2Sam 21v15-22, 22v1-3. Yahweh my Refuge, Yahweh my High Tower. Yahweh my Fortress and my Deliverer.

David proved that the Divine Name could be invoked at all times and in all situations; this was the reason for his victories. We see from 2Sam 22v1-3, 14v22 and Psalm 18, that David took God at His Word and called upon, and proved, the Divine Name in defence and deliverance. Solomon realised the source of his father's victories, he had

seen David prove the power of the invoked Covenant Names of God, and invoked and proved them personally for himself, he wrote in Prov 18v10, "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower ("migdol," "a great tower"), the righteous runneth into it and are safe." The Covenant Names of God are weapons of power and love for the children of God to use, they are all available to us, and are included in the Name of Jesus. Invoke His Covenant Names at all times, into all your situations, and He will be there to be to you, what He is, and what His Names declare Him to be. 2Cor 1v20.

After Abraham offered the ram as a burnt offering to the Lord (instead of Isaac), Yahweh Malak spoke to him a second time from heaven in the following manner (Gen 22v16-18):

"...By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

The phrase "in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed" is used by Paul in Heb 6v14, which he writes as, "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee," which is stating that the Lord renews the promise made in Gen 12v1-3, but this time with an oath. The phrase "blessing I will bless," and "multiplying I will multiply" is a Hebrew mode of expression to denote emphasis or certainty indicated by the repetition of a word; compare Gen 14v23, Exodus 8v10, Joel 3v14, Judges 5v30, 15v16. Paul then goes on to give the reason why God confirmed his promise to Abraham with an oath (Heb 6v17-20):

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things (*God's Promise and God's Oath, both unchangeable*), in which it was impossible for God to lie, **we might have a strong consolation**, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

We can see here that God wanted to leave no doubt in the mind of Abraham or his (spiritual) seed (the Old and New Testament saints) as to the sureness of His Promise (which is a heavenly inheritance and ruler ship in the eternal kingdom, Rom 4v13, Heb 11v40), Wuest makes the following comment on Heb 6v17:

"The word "wherein" refers to the entire previous clause. The idea is "in accordance with this universal custom." Since the oath has this convincing power among men, God disregards the insult implied in man's doubting His Word, and condescends to human infirmity, confirming His Word by an oath. The word "willing" is the translation of "boulomai" which speaks of a desire that is based upon the reasoning faculties as over against "thelo", a desire that arises from the emotions. God, facing human infirmities, was minded to do thus and so.

The word "immutability" is the translation of "ametatheton." The word is from "metatithemi." "Tithemi" means "to place," and "meta" prefixed refers to a change. Thus, the compound word means "to change place," thus "to transpose" two things, one of which is put in place of the other. The derived noun "metathemenos" means "a turncoat." The Greek letter Alpha prefixed to the word makes it mean the opposite to what it meant originally. That is, God will not change His position as to His promise. Having made the promise, He will stand by it. He is not a turncoat. He will not change His position as to His promise, because that promise rests upon His counsel, and that is "ametatheton" also, immutable. The word "counsel" is the translation of "boule," which word is allied to "boulomai" "to desire, which desire comes from one's reason." The Triune God in council convened brought forth this counsel to the effect that the soul might find a sure refuge in the Lord Jesus. This counsel is immutable.

The word "confirmed" is the translation of "mesiteuo" which means "to act as mediator between litigating or covenanting parties, to accomplish something by interposing between two parties." A "mesites" is a sponsor or surety, so "mesiteuo" comes to signify "to pledge one's self, to give surety." God placed Himself between Himself and the inheritors of the promise. Expositor's quotes Delitzsch as follows: "God descended, as it were, from His own absolute exaltation, in order, so to speak, to look up to Himself after the manner of men and take Himself to witness; and so by a gracious condescension confirm the promise for the sake of the inheritors"; and Davidson, "He mediated or came in between men and Himself, through the oath by Himself."

The word "promise" is preceded by the definite article in the Greek text, pointing to a definite, particular promise defined in the context. It is the promise to Abraham and his posterity found in verse 14."

Translation. *In (accordance with) which God more abundantly desirous of demonstrating to those who are inheritors of the promise, the immutability of His counsel, interposed with an oath.* (End of quote)

Our heavenly inheritance (which we receive at the Lord's Second Coming when we are judged by Him and our position

in the Eternal Kingdom is fixed) is preceded by living in the heavenly places with the Lord Jesus (during our time upon earth), by having defeated the powers of darkness, expelling them from the heavenlies and then occupying them. Also being watchful that we do not become slothful and get expelled from the heavenly places, we should manifest God's Love and Power in the heavenlies through the gifts of the Holy Spirit by "making interventions with power" ("intercessions," Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), 1Tim 2v1) to thus change circumstances and bring deliverance into the situation for which we are praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), which has the same meaning as "entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793), "to make interventions with power, to affect a change") for.

The promise of a heavenly inheritance and (possible) ruler ship in the eternal kingdom (if we "win" the right to rule with the Lord Jesus, even as He had to "win" that right) and it being confirmed by God's oath, gives the believer an anchor of the soul which is "both sure and stedfast," which enters within the veil (i.e., into the Holy of Holies). So, the believer having been taken into the heavenly places by the Lord Jesus during their earthly lifetime, has a foretaste of what life will be like "within the veil" (after they enter into their heavenly inheritance having been judged by the Lord Jesus at The Second Coming) as they also stand before God's Throne in heaven (in spirit) having entered "behind the veil" (into the true Tabernacle not made with hands) through the shed blood of Christ. Matt 25v14-30, John 3v13, 17v24, Rom 8v17, 1Cor 3v11-15, Phil 2v5-11, Col 3v1-11, Heb 8v1,2, 10v19,20, 12v18-24 (esp. v22, "**But ye are come unto mount Sion** (what is referred to here is a **PRESENT** reality and **NOT** something future), and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem..."). The believer who obeys God's voice to enter into His rest is taken by the Lord Jesus (in spirit) into the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem during their earthly lifetime as a result of believing the Truth, it is **NOT** something they have to wait until their death to experience, but is a present reality during their lifetime. It is God's great desire that **ALL** His dearly beloved children obey His call to enter into His rest, so that He might take each and every one of them into the Heavenly City in spirit and then into Heaven proper at either their death or by being raptured at the Second Coming of Christ, however, because of laziness, unbelief, cowardice, slothfulness etc., very few of God's children are obedient to this call and so they, like the first generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt, either remain in a barren wilderness or return to Egypt (i.e., backslide and go into apostasy). Psalm 95 (all), Isaiah 66v2, Matt 5v3, Heb chapters 3 and 4 (all), 5v11-6v2,

This is also what Abraham (Isaac, Jacob and Sarah) experienced during his (their) lifetime.

The Signs Of The Second Coming Of Christ.

The Scriptures give a very graphic description of the terrible evil conditions that will be upon the earth during the Great Tribulation, they will be as such as has never been before, even since the beginning of the world. Dan 12v1, Matt 24v21.

Our Lord promised specific signs that would indicate the near proximity of His return.

Jesus never said that He could return at any moment without any warning; indeed, He told us the very opposite, for He clearly stated that there will be specific signs of His coming. When Jesus said that we shall not know the day or the hour of His coming, He also said that we shall definitely know the season (the week) of His coming by the signs that He has given to us. When these specific signs come to pass, we are told, "look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh," and "the kingdom of God is at hand," and that His return "is near, even at the doors." Matt 24v33, Luke 21v28,31. Though the day of the Lord will come as a thief upon the worldling and unlearned carnal Christian, Paul states in 1Thess 5v1-4, that it will not come as a thief upon Christians who know prophetic truth and are walking in the light. Matt 24v3,29,32-36, 25v13, Mark 13v28,29, Luke 21v25,26.

It is obvious from comparing Matt 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, that our Lord's answer to the apostles question about the signs which would precede Jerusalem's destruction and His second coming, has been greatly condensed. In Matt 24v15 and Mark 13v14, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark both record our Lord's reference to the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet. Dan 9v27, 11v31 and 12v11. Luke's Gospel does not mention the abomination of desolation, or refer to Daniel's prophecy; however, Luke alone records, in Luke 21v24, the equally important prophecy, that after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the Jews would be led captive into all nations, and that Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. It appears that Matthew and Peter, did not understand the significance of these words and so did not include them in their recollections of Christ's ministry, (Peter was the real author of Mark's Gospel, Papias tells us that Mark wrote down Peter's recollections of the ministry of Christ). Luke probably had "The Times of the Gentiles" explained to him by his companion Paul, who had these things revealed to him by our Lord. Gal 1v11,12, Eph 3v1-8. The times of the Gentiles started when Judah was taken into captivity to Babylon, and will finish when Jesus returns to set up His kingdom. The Scriptures tell us that the following signs will indicate the near return of Jesus, and the setting up of the kingdom of God.

Numerous False Prophets and Deceivers.

Many Scriptures reveal to us the reality of the powers of darkness and their increased activity through false prophets in the last days. Dan 10 (all), Matt 24v5,11,24,25, 2Thess 2v3-12, Rev 12v7-12, 13v1-18, 16v13,14, 1John 5v19, Eph 2v1-3, 3v10, 6v11,12, 2Cor 4v4, John 14v30, 8v44. The actual rulers of the world are evil angels working through wicked men; and even as the increased activity of evil angels in the time of Noah brought a speedy and terrible decline in morality and righteousness, and an alarming increase in lawlessness and iniquity, so it will be in the last days of this age. Gen 6v1-8, Matt 24v37. Christians will have to walk with God, and put on the whole armour of God (Please see Appendix I: The Whole Armour Of God), to stand in these evil days. Eph 6v10-20, Luke 21v36. Satan is the cause of the great tribulation, it is his expulsion from the heavenly places to the earth that causes the great tribulation, and appalling wickedness in the world, and great woe and sorrow for the whole earth. Matt 24v8,15-22, Dan 12v1 with Rev 12v7-12.

Jesus warned us many times of the danger of being deceived by the false prophets of the last days. He warns us that some of them will even claim that they are Christ, and do miracles to substantiate their claims, which will almost deceive the very elect, something which is already happening in our day. Matt 24v11,24. Many Christians cannot give a Scriptural answer to the lies of Modernists, Spiritists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and other sects and cults. **Be warned; there are even greater deceivers to come.** Many of the false prophets of the last days will not only be preaching error, they will be killing those who are preaching the truth. The most evil of all these false prophets will be the final Antichrist, who will do great lying miracles by Satan's power to deceive the wicked. Rev 13v1-3,12-15, 2Thess 2v7-12. The False Prophet will give a counterfeit demonstration of fire from heaven to prove Antichrist's claim to deity; this was the very thing that Yahweh did through Elijah at Carmel to prove that He, not Baal, was God. 1Kings 18v24-26,36-40, Rev 13v13,14, 2Thess 2v3,4.

A Worldwide Persecution of Christians.

In Matt 24v12, Jesus said that Christians will be hated and persecuted by all nations and this will result in the love of many Christians "waxing cold." In 2Thess 2v1-4, Paul informs us that Christ cannot come before the manifestation of Antichrist, and warns us against being deceived by any teaching that tells us otherwise. Paul uses the strong verb "exapatao," "to deceive," with the double negative "me tis, medena," to emphasise his warning; "Do not let anyone deceive you in any way." Paul warns us not to be gullible and states that Antichrist and "the falling away" must come "first," "proton." The "falling away" of 2Thess 2v3, is "apostasia," and could be translated as "rebellion, revolt, or apostasy."

A. T. Robertson comments on "apostasia" in 2Thess 2v3.

"Except the falling away come first ('ean me elthei he apostasia proton').--- 'Apostasia' is the late form of "apostasis" and is our word apostasy. Plutarch uses it of political revolt and it occurs in 1Macc 2v15 about Antiochus Epiphanes who was enforcing the apostasy from Judaism to Hellenism. In Josh 22v22 it occurs for rebellion against the Lord. It seems clear that the word here means a religious revolt and the use of the definite article ('he') seems to mean that Paul had spoken to the Thessalonians about it. The only other New Testament use of the word is in Acts 21v21 where it means apostasy from Moses. It is not clear whether Paul means revolt of the Jews from God, of Gentiles from God, of Christians from God, or of the apostasy that includes all classes within and without the body of Christ. But it is to be first ('proton') before Christ comes again. Note this adverb ('proton') when only two events are compared (cf. Acts 1v1)." End of quote.

A.T. Robertson has certainly stated the truth when he says that "apostasia" here may be speaking of a rebellion and apostasy from God both inside and outside of the Church. The final Antichrist is the major cause of apostasy at the end of this age. In 2Thess 2v3,8 Paul gives Antichrist three dreadful names. In 2Thess 2v3, Paul calls him "the man of sin," "ho anthropos tes hamartias," (and "hamartias," "sin," is the reading of most manuscripts; "anomas," "lawlessness," is the minority reading"). In 2Thess 2v3, Antichrist is also called "the son of perdition," "ho huio tes apoleias," which is the identical phrase used by Jesus in John 17v12, to describe Judas. In 2Thess 2v8, Antichrist is called "the Lawless One," "ho anomos." Note that each time the definite article "the" ("ho") is applied to him, this signifies that he is both the greatest threat to mankind, and the most evil of all mankind. There will be a general rebellion against God over all the world during the great tribulation, but the persecution of Christians will be particularly ruthless and severe in the countries under the control of Antichrist, or in countries that have sympathy with him, and many Christians will die for their faith in these countries.

Abounding Lawlessness and Iniquity.

The spiritual conditions in the world are already alarming and the Scriptures tell us that they will get much worse. God's Word has foretold with perfect accuracy the abounding iniquity, and moral corruption and degeneration of national and home life in these last days; these prophecies are being fulfilled before our very eyes.

Our Lord warns of the flood and fullness of lawlessness in the last days.

In Matt 24v12, Jesus states that "because the lawlessness (anomia) is **FILLED UP**, the 'agape' love of most will grow cold." The prevailing climate of lawlessness and spiritual darkness will cause the "agape" love of most Christians to grow cold. The words, "lawlessness is filled up," are probably from the prophecy of Dan 8v23, which states that Antichrist will be manifested, "when transgressors are come to the full." We see from Gen 15v16, that the Amorites and other dwellers of Canaan came under divine judgement when their iniquity came to the full. Woe to the world when it comes to the same fullness of evil. The world will become lawless on a local, national and international scale. The Antichrist being the very worst of lawbreakers is called "ho anomos," "the Lawless One;" our Lord will destroy him by the brightness of His coming ("parousia"). 2Thess 2v8,9.

"As in the days of Noah."

A major cause of lawlessness in the last days will be a greed, which results in escalating crime and violence on a world scale, just as in Noah's day, when every thought of men was only evil continually, and violence filled the whole earth. Gen 6v1-13. This moral degeneration was also caused by evil spirits (referred to as "sons of God," Gen 6v2,4 with Job 1v6, 2v1, 38v7) infiltrating mankind by taking upon themselves giant fleshly bodies, which though outwardly similar to human bodies were basically different (genetically) from those of mankind. 1Pet3v19,20, Jude v6. These were the "giants" of Scripture, these giants are called: The Nephilim, Gen 6v4, Numb 13v32,33. The Anakim, Deut 1v28,2v10,11,21, 3v11,13, 9v2, Josh 11v21,22, 14v12-14. The Emims, Deut 2v10,11. The Zamzummins, Deut 2v19-21. The Rephaim, Deut 2v11,20, 3v11,13, Josh 12v4, 13v12,15v8, 18v16, 2Sam 21v16,18,20,22, 1Chron 20v4,6,8. The valley of the giants, Josh 15v8, 18v16. etc. Goliath and his compatriots were evil angels in flesh, the sons of the giant. 2Sam 21v15-22. The children that were born to the giants did not have souls and spirits given to them by God, they became the abode of evil spirits, these products of Satan's biological engineering will not be resurrected, for in Isaiah 26v14, we read the "dead," who are "deceased" (Hebrew is "rephaim" (OT:7496) "giants") will not be resurrected by God. It is when Michael and his angels cast the Devil and his angels out of heavenlies into the earth, and God's restraining hand is removed from the Devil and his evil hosts, that the Great Tribulation then ensues, with the result that these evil angels that have been cast down into the earth will again mingle with the seed of men ("daughters of men," Gen 6v2), which will result in giants once again upon the earth. Dan 2v43, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v7-17.

Titus Flavius Josephus in his volume, Antiquities (Book 5.2.3) writes the following regarding the Rephaim:

"For which reason they removed their camp to Hebron; and when they had taken it, they slew all the inhabitants. There were till then left the race of giants, who had bodies so large, and countenances so entirely different from other men, that they were surprising to the sight, and terrible to the hearing. The bones of these men are still shown to this very day, unlike to any credible relations of other men. Now they gave this city to the Levites as an extraordinary reward, with the suburbs of two thousand cities; but the land there to belonging they gave as a free gift to Caleb, according to the injunctions of Moses. This Caleb was one of the spies which Moses sent into the land of Canaan. They also gave land for habitation to the posterity of Jethro, the Midianite, who was the father-in-law to Moses; for they had left their own country, and followed them, and accompanied them in the wilderness."

Ethnic conflicts.

This lawlessness will also be seen in the hatred, conflicts and wars between ethnic groups, as our Lord said in Luke 21v10, "Nation will be lifted up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; "egerthesetai **ethnos epi ethnos**, kai basileia epi basileian." Jesus warns that these are but the first travelling pains of the end of the age, much worse is to follow. Jesus said the appalling events of the great tribulation will be a threat to the survival of mankind. Matt 24v7-9,21,22.

In 2Tim 3v1-17, Paul describes the appalling moral and spiritual corruption of the last days.

Paul says the last days will be "perilous times," "kairoi chalepoi," that is, grievous, hard, difficult and dangerous times. Paul then goes on to describe the moral degeneration that will make the last days perilous.

Paul warns us that people will be lovers of evil and haters of God and good.

2Tim 3v2. "Lovers of self," "philautoi," Paul tells us that men will become utterly self-centred, selfish lovers of themselves.

"Covetous," "philaruroi," only occurs here and Luke 16v14, see 1Tim 6v10. Covetous lovers of money.

v4. "Lovers of pleasure," "philedonoi," which only occurs here, "rather than lovers of God," "philotheoi," which also only occurs here. Men will put worldly and sensual pleasure in the place of God, and will prefer and love pleasure more than God.

Paul warns us that people will have arrogant and violent hurtful attitudes.

2Tim 3v2. "Boastful," "alazones," only here and Rom 1v30. These are empty pretenders, who to impress others, boast and brag, and magnify themselves, and so greatly exaggerate their achievements, that they go beyond the boundaries of truth.

"Proud and haughty," "huperephanoi," from "huper," "above," and "phainomai," "to appear," so it means "to appear above others," that is, puffed up in pride, and arrogant in thought and conduct, in common parlance, "stuck up."

"Blasphemers," "blasphemoi," biting abusive and hurtful speech from bitter hearts, they will rail at, and speak evil of people. Paul uses it in 1Tim 1v13, where he calls himself a former blasphemer, when he persecuted the Church.

2Tim 3v3. "Implacable trucebreakers," "aspondos," describes one who is hostile and irreconcilable, and who rejects terms and a truce with others.

"False accusers and slanderers," "diaboloi," from "diaballo," to throw, so to make accusations, malicious slanderers, scandal-mongers and promoters of lies and quarrels, in the hope of personal gain. The Devil is so named because he is the chief slanderer; his whole life is taken up with accusing men to God, and slandering God to men. Rev 12v9,10.

"Incontinent," that is, "without self-control," "akrateis," only occurs here, they are dissolute and have no power and control over their tongues, appetites, actions and lives.

"Fierce," "anemeroi," from the privative "a," and "hemeros," tame; so it means untamed, fierce, savage and brutal.

"Despisers of those that are good," "aphilagathoi," it only occurs here, compare Titus 1v8 and Phil 4v8. These despisers hate those who are good, and actively oppose good people and good laws, and make laws that are hostile to righteous people.

2Tim 3v4. "Traitors," "prodotai," only here and Luke 6v16 and Acts 7v52, it speaks of treachery, betrayal and abandonment.

"Headstrong," "propeteis," which only occurs here and Acts 19v36, it speaks of a rushing and falling forwards, a hot-headed person ruled by emotion and passion, who is hasty and reckless in speech and actions.

"Puffed up and conceited," "tetuphomenoi," the perfect passive participle of "tuphoo," literally to fill with smoke, the perfect tense shows a settled state of puffed up pride, self-importance, and conceit.

Paul warns of juvenile delinquency and breakdown of home relationships.

In 2Tim 3v2, Paul warns that children will be disobedient to parents, "apeithes," it speaks of a refusal to listen even to reasonable arguments, and total rebellion. v3. Homes will lack family love and natural affection, "astorgos," a breakdown of family relationships, and lack of love between kinsfolk, parents and children. v2. People are unthankful, "acharistoi," only here and in Luke 6v35, where it speaks of people being ungrateful to God for his daily innumerable kindnesses; here in the context of home relationships, as is unholy, "anosioi," only here and 1Tim 1v9, a negative and "hosios." True holiness begins at home.

Paul warns there will be a false religious form of godliness, without the reality of true inner godliness.

In 2Tim 3v5, God gives Paul an insight into the condition of the organised Christian Church in the last days. God told Paul that many religious leaders will only have a pencilled outline, "morphosin," of truth, an outward religious form without true inner "morphe" of true religion and godliness, and they will deny the power of God. "Form," is "morphosin," is also used in Rom 2v20, where Paul speaks of a Jewish religious form without spiritual reality.

"Having denied" is "ernemenoi," the perfect middle participle of arneomai," the word speaks of a practice of denial, rather than a purely intellectual rejection and denial of God's power. The perfect tense shows the settled continual state of opposition to God. Paul directs Christians to turn away from such churches and Christians. In the instruction "from such turn away," "turn away," is "apotrepou," the present middle imperative of "apotrepo," "turn yourself away from," a strong verb, which gives the thought of avoiding and turning away in horror. The present tense shows the continuous nature of this command.

Paul reveals that these religious charlatans will insidiously and stealthily seduce "silly little women," and take them emotionally captive at spear point, "aichmalotizontes." The diminutive, "little women," "gunaikaria," is used to express, not affection, but contempt, and describes women laden with many lustful cravings. These women are led into licentiousness under the guise of religion. These evil religionists have completely corrupt minds and withstand the truth, like the sorcerers of Egypt, Jannes and Jambres, withstood and opposed Moses, Exodus 7v11, and Elymas withstood Paul. Exodus 7v11. ("Anthistemi," to stand against, to oppose, is used in both 2Tim 3v8 and Acts 13v8.) Paul warns us that there will be both immorality in religious leadership, and a floodtide of sensual occultism in the last days.

World-wide wars, hatred, strife and unrest.

Our Lord's warning of wars and rumours of wars and ethnic strife is a perfect description of the international situation today. The reports of ethnic wars, revolutions, and strife among the nations, dominate the news headlines. Matt

24v6,7, Luke 21v25,26, Dan 11v25. God's Word is coming to pass. The collapse of the Soviet empire has brought even more instability to the world situation. **The brittleness and fractures in the feet of iron and clay of Nebuchadnezzar's image, reveal that the break-up of empires is a necessary forerunner to our Lord's coming.** Jesus warned us that the wars of the great tribulation will be the worst that mankind has ever known. Rev 6v1-8, 9v13-21, Matt 24v15,21,22.

Natural catastrophes: famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and great storms.

Since the fall of man there have always been these natural disasters in the world, however, they are occurring today on a far greater scale than has ever been known before. The Scripture tells us that they will increase even more in the last seven years of this age. Matt 14v7, Luke 21v25, Zech 14v5, Rev 6v5,6, 16v18-20.

The Gospel has to be preached to all the world before the end can come. Matt 24v7.

This totally refutes the false teaching, that the early church taught that Christ could return at any moment, the evangelisation of the world was obviously going to take a considerable period of time. Many of the tribes and nations were unknown to the early disciples and have only recently been discovered. In Rev 7v9,13,14 we read of a great number of people out of every nation, kindred, people and tongue, who will come out of the great tribulation with a triumphant faith. They obviously experience great privation from the description given in Rev 7v15-17, but the great grace of God is sufficient under all circumstances. We read in Rev 14v6,7, that an angel will preach "the everlasting gospel," "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Another angel follows this and informs the nations of divine judgement upon "Babylon." A third angel warns the nations that those who continue to follow Antichrist will end in the lake of fire. This angelic preaching occurs in the last few hours of the great tribulation, just before our Lord returns to reap the harvest of the earth, and judge the wicked. Rev 14v8-20.

Signs in the heavens. Luke 21v25,26,31, Acts 2v19,20, Rev 6v12-17.

These Scriptures demand a literal fulfilment, and they will be fulfilled in the great tribulation.

A great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2v15-21.

There has been many outpourings of the Holy Spirit since the great outpouring at the beginning of the 20th century, this outpouring of the Holy Spirit will continue right up to the great and terrible day of the Lord. Acts 2v16-21. God will give great power to His Church, they will be given gifts of mercy and grace to confirm the Gospel, and also mighty gifts of judgement to protect God's children and judge the wicked. The wickedness of the great tribulation will make these judgement gifts vitally necessary. Rev 11v5,6,10, Acts 5v1-11, 13v6-12, Dan 11v32,33.

Scoffers of the coming of Christ. 2Peter 3v3-14.

The increase of scepticism is a sure sign that we are in the last days, and that our Lord's return is near. These scoffers wilfully deceive themselves that the God who has made the world, and who has judged it before, will not keep His promise of judgement on the wicked, and the establishment of a world of peace and purity after that judgement. Many scoffers today hide behind a false materialistic intellectualism, they unsuccessfully try to prove that the Scriptures are unscientific and unreliable. We see in Rev 6v12-17, how this chaff will react when Christ returns in all His glory. Psalm 1v4-6, 2v1-12.

The ability of man to destroy the world.

Jesus said, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." Matt 24v22. This Scripture could not be fulfilled until man had weapons that could destroy the world. Jesus returns to save a shattered world from utter destruction, and to "destroy them which destroy the earth." Rev 9v13-21, 11v18. The possession of nuclear weapons, nerve gas, bacteriological weapons, and other terrible means of mass destruction, proves to us beyond all doubt that the coming of the Lord is near. The great tribulation is due to the terrible wars that occur in the final 3½ years of this age, the armies of East and West confront one another in the last and most terrible war of all history.

The growth of the nation of Israel and the desecration of the holy of holies of the Temple.

The state of Israel was established on May 14th 1948, a truly remarkable sign of the times. After being in the hands of the Romans, Moslems and Turks for many centuries, and then as a British Protectorate for about 30 years, Israel is now ruling herself again. This fulfils the prophecy of Psalm 102v16, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory."

On May 8th 1958, a building was opened in Jerusalem, which was called, "Hechal Shlomo," "The Temple of Solomon." This caused great interest in secular and Christian magazines throughout the world, I will quote from one of them:

"A new Temple has arisen in Jerusalem 1,888 years after the destruction of the Temple by the Roman general, Titus, reports the Rand Daily Mail's correspondent from Jerusalem. Called 'The Temple of Solomon,' it is the supreme religious centre of world Jewry. Most of the Chief Rabbis of the Western world, including the Chief Rabbi of Johannesburg, Dr. L. I. Rabinowitz, are coming to Jerusalem for its dedication and opening on May 8th (1958). The loftiest and most magnificent structure in Israel, the seven story domed 'Temple of Solomon'- built to overlook the ancient walls of Jerusalem and the 'wailing wall' of Herod's Temple, now in Arab hands; will house all the offices of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the Institute for Religious Studies, one of the biggest Biblical libraries in the world, a great hall for religious gatherings, and the most inspiring synagogue in Israel The Holy Ark of the synagogue is a 220 year old Italian masterpiece, a gift of the Jewish community of Padua, Italy. Building on this marble and olivewood religious centre began five years ago. One third of its cost of £3,000,000 was donated by Jewish communities throughout the world, and the rest by the Anglo-Jewish millionaire, Isaac Wolfson, who has also wide commercial interests in South Africa." **End of quote.**

Is this possibly the Temple that was going to be desecrated by the Antichrist; however, the following cautionary words apply: "Let us wait and see, some say that another Temple is planned." **Three possibilities come to mind.**

Could the abomination of desolation be in the Mosque of Caliph Omar?

This Mosque is on the original site of the Temple, could this be looked upon as the place where the abomination of desolation takes place? Antichrist could bring the whole Moslem world behind him, if, in one of their most holy places, he causes His image to speak and live, to prove that he is god. **It must be remembered that in 70 AD, the abomination of desolation, that is, the desecration of the Temple, took place after the temple had been destroyed by fire, not before,** when the Romans acclaimed their gods on the ruins of the Temple. As the abomination of desolation took place on the ruins of the Temple 70 AD; could this occur again on the ruins of the Temple? Is the mosque of Caliph Omar the place of abomination and desolation? **We will have to wait and see.**

Could the original holy of holies, long buried under the rubble, have been found?

In some places in Jerusalem there are sixty or more feet of rubble over the original ground where people walked in our Lord's time, it is possible that the original site of the Sanctuary of Herod's Temple has now been found under this rubble. The most holy place of the tabernacle in the wilderness, Exodus 26v31-33, was a small cube of 10 cubits (15 ft. square) The Jews have been digging tunnels under the Temple mount, without disturbing the ground above. The original Holy of Holies is supposed to have been in line with the eastern gate, this is, it seems, just to the side of the Mosque of Caliph Omar. The site of the original Holy of Holies may have been found now under the rubble of the Temple mount. The word "Temple" in 2Thess 2v4 is not "hieron," the whole of the Temple, but "naon," the Sanctuary, the innermost part of the Temple, into which only the priests could enter. Is it possible that all of the Temple does not have to be rebuilt to fulfil the prophecy? **Let us wait and see.** The rabbis used to stand in order of seniority outside the wailing wall, with the most senior nearest to the site of the Holy of Holies. Since the tunnels have been made under the mount, these senior rabbis have long since gone from view inside these tunnels. Have they found the site of the original Holy of Holies? **We will have to wait and see.**

The most likely possibility is that the Jews are going to build another Temple.

The Jews seem determined to build a Temple, and have much of the materials ready to build it, so this is a strong possibility. But where? Would the Jews desire to build their Temple on the old site? It has been dedicated to what they consider a false religion since Caliph Omar built the Mosque on the site of Solomon's Temple in the 7th century. Would the Arab nations allow the Jews to build a Temple next to a mosque, which is their second most holy place, and is sacred in their eyes? Is this likely after the hatred of recent years? **We shall have to wait and see.**

In Rev 11v1,2, the outer court is excluded from measuring, "Leave without," is "ekbale exothen," which literally means, "cast without," the aorist active imperative of "ekballo," is here used in the sense of exclude; John is told, "Do not measure it." John is told that for 42 months the Gentiles will contemptuously tread the holy city (Isaiah 48v2) under foot, "patesousin," the future active of "pateo," here it means to trample with contempt, as in Luke 21v24, where, Jesus uses "pateo" to state that Jerusalem will be "trodden under foot of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." In Rev 11v2, "the court," "ten aulen," is the uncovered outer court outside of the sanctuary. In Herod's Temple this outer court was marked off from the inner court, by "the middle wall of partition." Gentiles were not allowed into the inner court. Eph 2v15. This outer court had a house of prayer for the Gentiles. Mark 11v17. Jesus states in Luke 21v25, that it will be a time of great distress and anguish ("sunecho," only here and in 2Cor 2v4.), in a world that is in perplexity and has lost the way "aporos".

Our Lord's pronouncement upon these matters.

Israel had to become a nation and "the holy place" built before the prophecy of Dan 9v27 and Matt 24v15 could come to pass. Before the peace treaty, or "covenant" could be made with Israel, it had to be an independent nation, and before the covenant could be broken, the Temple, or at very least the holy of holies, had to be found or built. When our Lord was asked the sign of His coming, He gave the fulfilment of Dan 9v27 as the pre-eminent sign of His coming. Obviously the comment of the Lord Jesus upon the subject of His second coming carries the greatest authority and we should take the most earnest heed to it.

Antichrist making and breaking his covenant with the Jews.

When Jesus was asked the time of His second coming and the end of the age, He referred His disciples to the prophecy of Daniel concerning the abomination of the desolation. Matt 24v15. Paul corrected the wrong ideas of the Thessalonians with the same truths. 2Thess 2v1-5. Jesus said that His second coming could not take place until the holy place had been desecrated by Antichrist. Christ told His disciples that the temple that was then standing was shortly to be destroyed, but another sanctuary was going to be built, and it would be desecrated by "the king of the north," the Antichrist.

Jesus also states in Matt 24v21 that the 3½ years of great tribulation spoken of in Dan 12v1,6,7, will follow this desecration of the sanctuary. In 2Thess 2v4, Paul also informs us that Antichrist "sits as God in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God." "The temple of God," is "ton naon tou theou;" "temple," is "naon," the sanctuary, the innermost and holiest part of the Temple, which only the priests could enter into. The phrase, "ton naon tou theou," the Sanctuary of God, is used in 1Cor 3v17, by Paul of Christians. We are made holy ground by God's indwelling presence, and His wonderful mercy and grace. See 1Cor 6v19, Eph 2v21.

Jesus informed His disciples that His second coming could be accurately foretold by certain events taking place in Israel, and for His proof referred His disciples to the amazing prophecy of Dan 9v20-27. See also Dan 8v9-16,23-27, 11v31, 12v11. This prophecy informs us of the exact time of both the first and second comings of Christ. Gabriel told Daniel that Messiah would be "cut off" and "make reconciliation for iniquity," 483 years after "the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem."

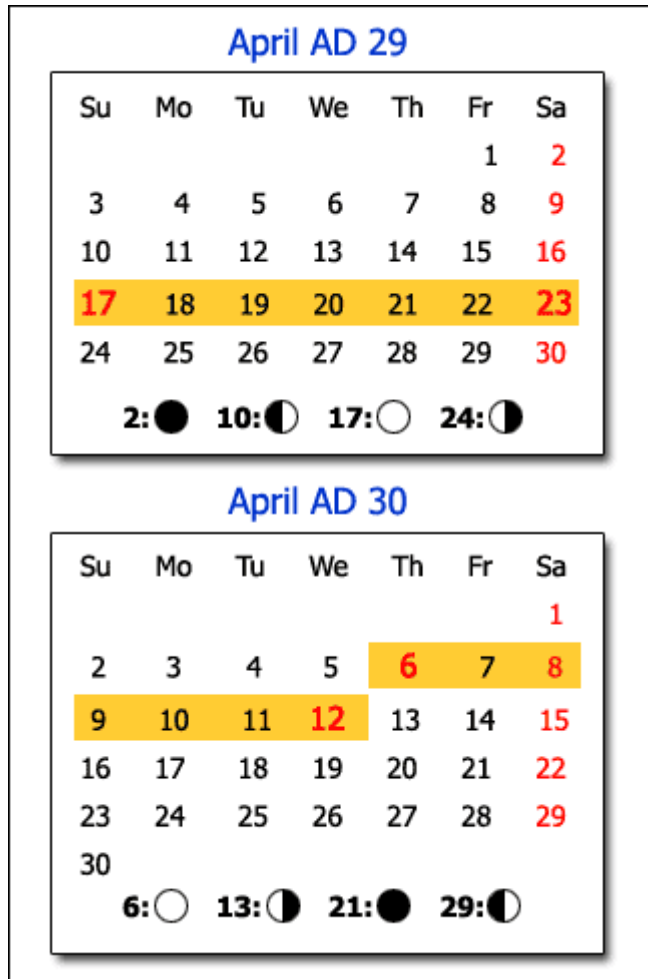
The second coming of Christ is to take place seven years after "the prince that shall come," or "the king of the North," as he is also called, makes a treaty with Israel. Dan 9v26,27, 11v40. Jesus said that the period of seven years that is mentioned in Dan 9v27, was yet in the future, and that this would result in His second coming and "the full end of the age," or as another translation puts it, "the conclusion of the age." Man's rule would finish and God's rule begin. After giving many signs that would indicate His coming, the Lord gives one specific sign that would date His coming, the making and breaking of Antichrist's treaty with Israel. The first "commandment" to rebuild Jerusalem was clearly seen and known by all, and the second "covenant," or treaty, will also be clearly seen and known by all, and Jesus exhorts us to keep our eyes open for it.

The first part of this prophecy was remarkably fulfilled, the commandment that brought about the building of the ruined wall of Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes Longimanus in the 20th year of his reign. Neh 2v1-8. Usher, after 37 years of consideration, dates the accession of Artaxerxes as the year **474 BC**, on the evidence of Thucydides and Eusebius. This would give a date of **454 BC** for the commandment being proclaimed, and according to Daniel's prophecy, Jesus would die at Jerusalem 483 years later. So 454 BC plus 483 years brings it to 30 AD, for as 1 BC to 1 AD is one year, this would make it 30 AD, not 29 AD.

S. P. Tregelles says that Jesus died in 29 AD in a footnote on pages 100 & 101 of his "Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel:" "In doing this we must remember that the birth of our Lord was about four years before the common era, so that the thirty-third year of His life, when He is supposed to have suffered, would correspond with the year twenty-nine of our reckoning. I believe this to have been the true date; first because of the day of the week on which the Passover commenced in that year; and also, because of the consuls of that year (the two Gemini) having been mentioned by several writers as those of the year when our Lord was put to death. This remark does not affect the instruction given us by God in this chapter; it is a point which I only notice for the removal of difficulties.....Ussher in thus laying down this date had no motive for bringing the space of 483 years from the 20th of Artaxerxes to 29 AD; for his division of the seventy Heptads differs from mine, and he did not regard 29 AD as the date of the crucifixion of our Lord." **End of Tregelles quote.**

However, others think that the Lord Jesus was crucified in 30 AD, and the following Jewish calendar would give considerable force to this viewpoint, as it fits the facts so well, as the first day of Passover Feast was on Thursday April 6th, Nisan 15th, and the last day of the Passover Feast was on Wednesday April 12th, Nisan 21. Whereas, according to the calendar of 29 AD, the first day of the Passover Feast was on Saturday April 17th, Nisan 15th, and the last day of the Passover Feast was on Sunday April 23rd, Nisan 21st. Tregelles and Ussher obviously

had recourse to some kind of Jewish calendar, so one wonders if this calendar for 30 AD could really be their calendar for 29 AD. The calendars of past history have often proved to be inaccurate, this calendar could be out by one year, the reader must weigh the evidence for themselves, and keep an open mind. Of one thing we can be sure, the crucifixion took place in either 29 AD, or 30 AD, almost certainly in 30 AD, on Thursday, April 6th, Nisan 15th, not on Friday, for **according to Matt 12v40, Jesus was raised from the dead "after three days and three nights."** See "the third day," "after three days," etc., in Matt 16v4,21, 17v23, 20v19, 27v40,63,64, Mark 8v31, 10v34, John 2v19, 19v42, 1Cor 15v4, Eph 4v9,10. Jesus was raised from the dead in the night of the third day. Christ's enemies, sadly, unlike Christ's disciples, remembered well that Jesus promised that He would be raised from the dead on the third day. Compare the following Jewish Calendars.



So we can see that there was a quite remarkable literal fulfilment of the first part of the prophecy of Dan 9v20-27; and in Matt 24v15-31 the Lord Jesus tells us that there will be a literal fulfilment of the prophecy of Dan 9v27, and that this will be clearly seen by all. Matt 24v32,33. Paul reminds the Thessalonian Christians of this fact in 2Thess 2v1-5. The desecration of the holy of holies at Jerusalem by Antichrist will inform us that the second coming of Christ and the millennial kingdom is only 3½ years away. Christ said that the day and hour of His coming was only known by the Father, but He definitely tells us that we shall know the year of His coming by Daniel's prophecy, and that when the signs He gave come to pass, His coming will be "near, even at the doors." Matt 24v33,36. The Jews should have known by the prophecy of Daniel the year that Christ was to die, and as soon as the treaty is signed we shall know the year of Christ's second coming. **Oswald J. Smith** writes about this, "we shall be able to say, "Thank God the hour has struck. Within seven years at the longest Jesus will return to reign."

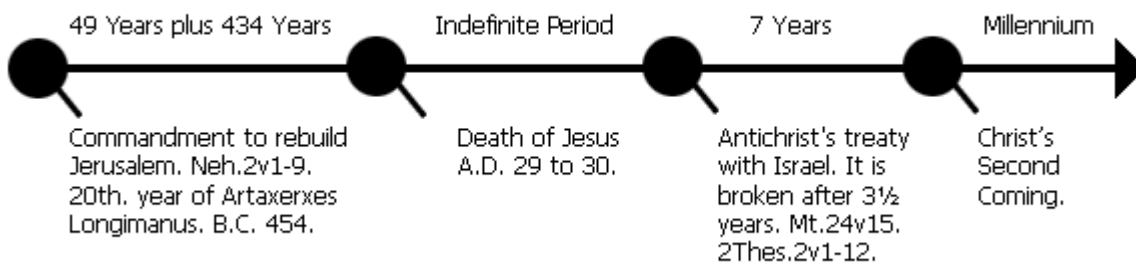
Jesus informs us that when the King of the North, Antichrist, breaks the treaty and puts his image in the holy place in the temple at Jerusalem, we have 3½ years to go to the coming of Christ. The King of the North almost certainly will be the head of Russia (at time of writing Vladimir Putin), for the great power of the beast would seem to demand a more powerful country than Syria, or Turkey; which are the other two possibilities (also note that the 7th Head of the Beast comes out of the 5th Head of the Beast, Syria, Dan 8v8,9,21-23, Rev 17v9-11.). We shall have to wait and see which one of these three fulfil the prophecy; time and world events will make it clear. Matt 24v15,16,21,29-31, 2Thess 2v1-4,8,9, Rev 13v14-18. Jesus tells us that when Antichrist breaks the treaty with the Jews, all Christians in Judea are to flee to the mountains for safety, just as they did in 70 AD, when this prophecy received a partial

fulfilment. The Scriptures call the period of 3½ years after the desecration of the Temple “the great tribulation.” Daniel, Paul and our Lord state that immediately after this period of great tribulation the Lord will return and set up His kingdom. Rev 7v14, Dan 12v1, Matt 24v21,29-31, Mark 13v19. The great tribulation ends with the destruction of the armies of Antichrist around a devastated Jerusalem. Luke 17v37, Rev 17v16-18, 18v1 to 19v21, 2Thess 2v8.

Jesus said that the overall picture of the conditions in the world just prior to His coming will be as bad as they were in the days of Noah and Lot. Luke 17v26-31. The expulsion of evil angels from the heavenly places into the earth results in a great increase in wickedness, and a wilful ignorance of the promised judgement of God. Gen 6v1-13, 1Peter 3v19,20, Rev 12v7-12. The wicked despise the riches of God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is trying to lead them to repentance and salvation. Rom 2v1-4,9, 2Peter 3v3-9, Jude v14-16. Many signs are now being fulfilled, they are a great warning to the Church that it is time to put on the armour of God, for no lukewarm Christian will stand in this evil day.

See the following two charts.

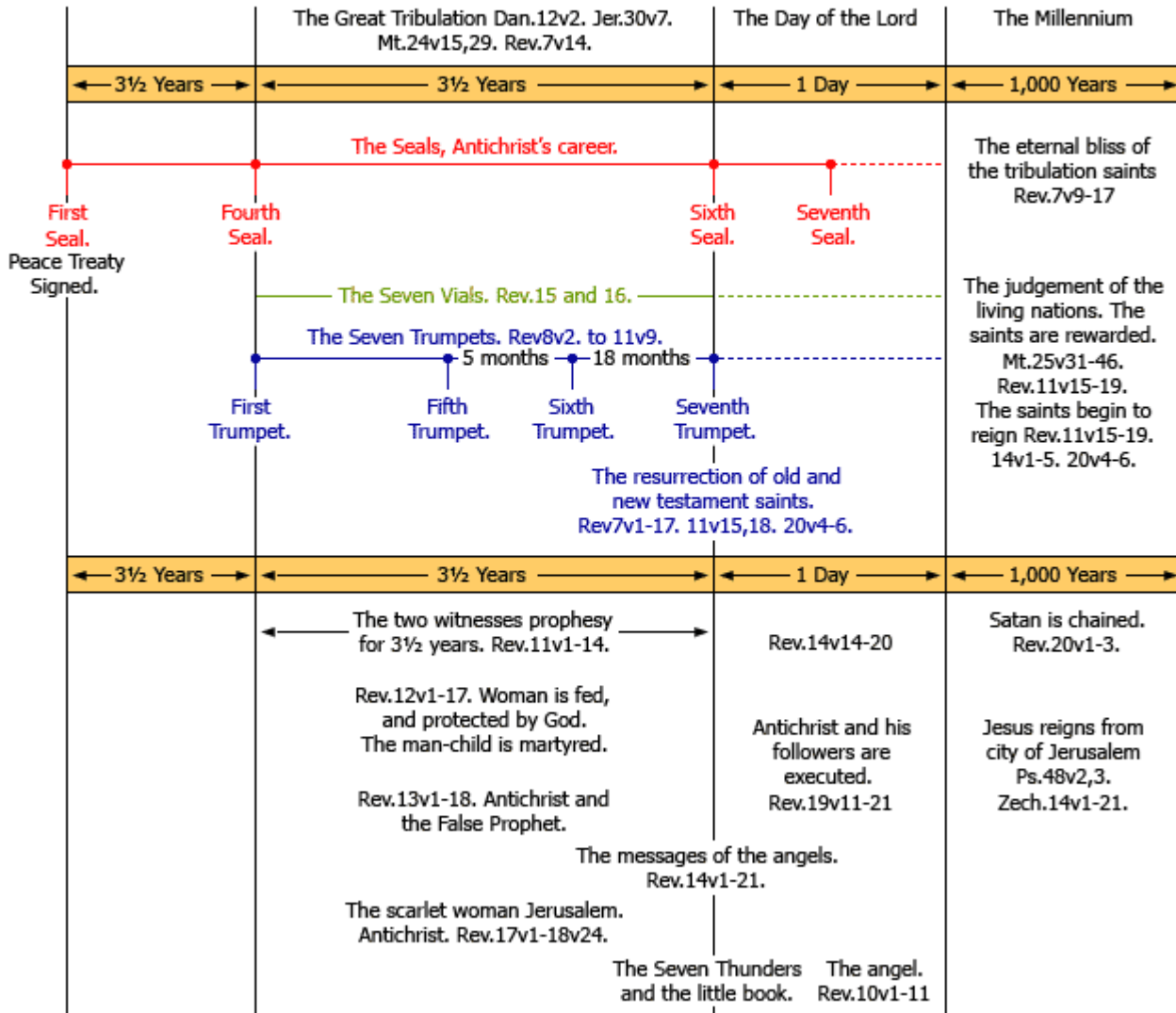
Chart Of Daniel's 70 Weeks Of Years. Dan 9v20-27.



The first six heads of the Beast of Rev 17v3,8-11, are six kingdoms that have conquered, ruled and tyrannised Israel and Jerusalem, during the 483 years of the prophecy of Dan 9v20-27. The first six kingdoms were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria, and the sixth one was Rome; the 7th head, the kingdom of Antichrist, is still to come.

THE LAST SEVEN YEARS OF THE PROPHECY OF Dan.9v20-27.

This chart looks at the 7 years of Daniel's prophecy from the information given in the book of Revelation.



The Operation Of The Melchizedek Priesthood In The Last Days Of This Age.

It has been the consensus amongst Christians for many centuries that they individually or collectively can do absolutely nothing to hasten the coming of the day of God. However, it is the complete opposite that is true, 2Peter 3v12 states:

"Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?" (NKJV)

"Hastening" is in Greek, "speúdontas," the present active participle (accusative also) of "speudo" (Strong's NT:4692), which means "to speed" i.e. urge on (diligently or earnestly); by implication, to await eagerly, (make, with) haste unto, to cause something to happen soon, to hurry up. Archbishop Trench, in his work "The Authorized Version of the New Testament" makes the following comment:

"...Hastening on;" i.e. "causing the day of the Lord to come more quickly by helping to fulfil those conditions without which it cannot come; that day being no day inexorably fixed, but one the arrival of which it is free to the church to hasten on by faith and by prayer."

Both "looking for" and "hastening" in the Greek are in the present continuous tense (active voice), which shows that each individual believer **MUST** keep praying (**Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793), both of which have the meaning, "to make "interventions" (with power) so as to**

affect a change in the circumstances.”) and watching for the signs of the Lord’s Second Coming to appear and to keep it up until He actually comes in great power and glory to destroy the wicked and to take His people home. Luke 17v20-18v8 (esp. 18v1), Luke 21v36 (RSV), Rev 5v1-14 (esp. v8), 8v2-6 (esp. v3,4).

With this in mind, each individual believer can by praying (Greek, “proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336) and “enteuxis” (Strong’s NT:1783), which mean, “to make “interventions” (with power) so as to affect a change in the circumstances.”) hasten the coming the day of God. The following seven **NB’s** contain the thoughts and great desires that are upon God’s heart at this present time that He is seeking His Church to pray (“proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336) and “entunchano” (Strong’s NT:1793)) into being and so to quicken the coming of the day of God.

NB1: As the last seven years (the 70th week of Daniel’s 70 week prophecy, Daniel 9v20-27) of this Age (the Age of Grace) rapidly approaches, especially the last three and a half years of this Age (the period known as The Great Tribulation, Dan 9v27, Matt 24v15-28, Rev 7v9-17), the Devil is busy endeavouring to put his evil servants into positions of power and authority; wicked people who will put the Devil’s and Antichrist’s evil plans into operation (which is to kill as many people (both believers and non-believers) and destroy as much as possible, before they themselves are destroyed at Christ’s Second Coming by being consumed by the breath of His mouth, 2Thess 2v8). It is during the last three and a half years of this Age, that the Mystery of Lawlessness (the Devil’s evil plan) will work fully; which will be the result of the Devil and his evil Angels being expelled from the Heavenly places by Michael and his Angels into the Earth, and God’s restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness being completely removed, hence The Great Tribulation will begin, which should be pointed out is due to the “great wrath of the Devil, because he knows that he has a short time,” and **NOT** the wrath of God. Rev 12v7-17 (esp. v 12), 2Thess 2v1-12.

The Devil will then proceed to put his evil plan (the Mystery of Lawlessness) into operation through Antichrist and other evil persons, whom he has put into positions of power and authority (Matt 4v8-10, Rev 13v1-10, 16v12-16), so it is **NOW** most vital, that we, the believers, are obedient to this most important injunction made by Paul in 1Timothy 2v1-8 (with Rom 13v1-7), to make “interventions” (with power) (“proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336) and “entunchano” (Strong’s NT:1793), 1Tim 2v1), (for and against) “for all men, for kings and all who are in authority,” that God will put honest, upright, wise, godly and compassionate persons into places of power and authority, and thwart the Devil’s attempts to put his own evil servants into these places; for it is the Most High Who rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He wishes, and sets over it the lowest of men. Daniel 4v17.

NB2: Rev 12v6,14 states:

“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...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.”

This group of specially prepared Christians (that flee from Antichrist in Jerusalem and the surrounding area) is definitely said to have a place prepared by God for them to escape to at the beginning of the Great Tribulation; it is **MOST** important that Christians should pray (Greek, “proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336)) **NOW**, for God to prepare the areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon (“the wilderness” that is referred to in Rev 12v14 and which are situated in the eastern part of modern day Jordan) to be ready to receive this “glorious woman” at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Christians firstly should invoke the following covenant names in the heavenly places over these three areas (and modern day Jordan), Yahweh Tsabaoth, the Lord of Hosts (1Sam 17v45, Psalm 46v7,11), and Yahweh Jireh, the Lord Who Sees and Provides (Gen 22v14), that these areas will know continuous angelic protection from this time forth, right up until the second coming of the Lord Jesus, but especially during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, and that **ALL** things will be **FULLY** “prepared” by “the Lord Who Sees and Provides” for His people. Secondly, Christians should also impart the divine benediction by using the priestly blessing of Numbers 6v22-27 upon Edom, Moab, Ammon and modern day Jordan. If Christians pray like this **NOW**, these areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon, will most certainly be **FULLY** prepared and protected by God, to receive His people at the beginning off the Great Tribulation, so that they are fed, kept, guarded and protected right up until the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, “...**which are the prayers (Greek “proseuche” (Strong’s NT:4335), “to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.”) of saints.**” 2Pet 3v12. (We see in Rev 4 and 5, the preliminaries in Heaven just before the seals are opened, that is, before the events of the last seven years of this Age start to come to pass (Daniel’s Seventieth prophetic week, Dan 9v27). The seven seals reveal Satan’s evil plans for the world during the last seven years of this age. Paul calls Satan’s plans “the mystery of iniquity.” (Please see Appendix II). 2Thess 2v7. The seals reveal the major catastrophic stages of the career of Antichrist from the time when he makes the covenant, until the great day of the wrath of the Lamb brings his evil career to a close. It is the “prayers of the saints” (Rev 5v7,8) that precipitates God the Father to invite the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of His right hand so as to loose the seven seals thereof to bring to pass the last seven years of this age. Dan 9v27, 6v1-17, 8v1)

NB3: We read in Matt 9v37,38:

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, **but the labourers are few**; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, **that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.**"

It is also most essential for Christians (especially those Christians in Israel) to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") **NOW** for God to raise up the Two Witnesses, and other Christians whom He will set in the Body of Christ with the same level of power and authority as the Two Witnesses. We **MUST** also pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) for God to give these "labourers" the same kind of power and authority that He gave unto the prophet Elijah (1Kings 17v1-21v29, 2Kings 1v1-2v11 Dan 11v32, Rev 11v3-6), and then to "send them forth into His harvest." It is also a necessity for us to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) for God to fulfil such prophecies and promises, as those stated in Rev 11v3-6 and Zech chapter 4, but especially the wonderful promise and prophecy that He spoke through His servant Malachi in Mal 4v5,6 (with Luke 1v17 and Matt 17v11):

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Christians **MUST** pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **NOW** for "last day Elijah ministries" to be set in the Body of Christ by God! Rev 5v8.

The number of "last day Elijah ministries" that God will be able to set in the Church will be directly proportional to the amount of praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) performed by the Church for God to set such ministries in it; i.e. the more the Body of Christ prays (Greek, "proseuchomai" (strong's NT:4336)) for God to set such ministries in the church, the **MORE** "last day Elijah ministries" will **actually be set in it by God!**

Behind every great prophet and prophetess, there has **ALWAYS** been someone behind the scenes, who has earnestly sought the Lord and prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) them into their ministry. Very often this is the result of the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of a godly loving mother or aunt; as in the case of Jeremiah, when his aunt, the great Old Testament prophetess, Huldah, was the person responsible for praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) him into his prophetic ministry as a young man. We can gauge the depth of her spirituality and prophetic ministry from the incident when King Josiah asked Hilkiah, the high priest, to inquire of the Lord as what should be done at that time, Hilkiah promptly went and sought out Huldah, and as soon as he had asked for the word of the Lord, Huldah was able to give it too him straight away. However, when the remnant of those left in the southern kingdom came and asked Jeremiah to seek the word of the Lord for them, it was ten days before the reply came from the Lord for them (which they didn't heed anyway); and so from this, we can see just how in touch with the Lord Huldah was and the depth of her spirituality and prophetic ministry! 2Kings 22v3-20 (esp. v14), Jer 1v1-19 (esp. v6), 32v7, Jer 42v1-22 (esp. v7).

NB4: Rev 12v1 (with Rev 12v2-17) states:

"And 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."

The vision of this glorious woman reveals to us one of God's major purposes for the last days. She represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation. It is a group of praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the Great Tribulation. This glorious woman reveals that part of the Church will be clothed with the fullness of God's power, and will be transported, protected and fed by God. **This group is a major part of God's answer to the mystery of iniquity, and it is one of many such groups, who operate in Israel and other parts of the world.**

Another of the desires upon the great loving Heart of our Heavenly Father, is the necessity for His people to get ready and prepared for the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation; however at the present moment in time, very few, if any, Teachers or Preachers in the Church are talking about these vital Truths, and when they do mention it, it is nearly always to state that the Christian does not need to be concerned about the Great Tribulation, because they will miss it, having been raptured before it starts. **I wish to state here and now, that those (so called) preachers and teachers who propagate such lies, the Lord Jesus plainly states are amongst the false prophets and teachers of the last days, and a severe judgement awaits them!** The Lord Jesus clearly states that His Second Coming will be visible to every eye, and will be with great power and glory, the elements melting with fervent heat,

which will be accompanied by the greatest earthquake that the earth has ever known! It is **NOW** vital for **EVERY** Christian (especially those Christians in Israel) to get close to the Lord Jesus, and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) that He will prepare His people into such groups (as represented by the glorious woman in Rev 12v1) in every country around the world, but **ESPECIALLY** in Israel! Dan 11v32, Joel 2v28-32, Zech 12v8, Matt 24v21-30,48-51, 28v20, Luke 18v1-8, 2Pet 3v10, James 3v1, Rev 1v7, 12v1-17, 16v18.

NB5: Psalm 2v8 and Rev 5v7 reads:

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession...**And he came and took the book** out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

The "He came and took the book," is the fulfilment of the "ask of me" of Psalm 2v8, it is when God brings to pass the prophetic events that will close the Age, and bring in Christ's kingdom. Psalm 2v8, Dan 2v44,45, 7v13.

It is most important for **ALL** believers to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") **NOW** that God will invite the Lord Jesus to come and ask Him for His inheritance and possession, so that He takes the Book out of His Father's right hand, so as to open the seven seals thereof to bring to pass the last seven years of this Age, so that the Father can then, at the end of these seven years, send the Lord Jesus to come and deal with the wicked once and for all, to take His people home and bring in everlasting righteousness by sealing up vision and prophecy and setting up the Millennium Kingdom. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, "...which are the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of the saints..." with Matt 6v9,10, "After this manner therefore pray (Greek "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) ye...**Thy kingdom come.**" (It is the "prayers of the saints" (Rev 5v7,8) that precipitates God the Father to invite the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of His right hand so as to loose the seven seals thereof to bring to pass the last seven years of this age. Dan 9v27, 6v1-17, 8v1) Dan 9v27, Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13 (esp. 11v2), 2Pet 3v12, Rev 11v15-19.

(The seven seals show the major stages in the career of Antichrist, from the covenant, to seven years later, when he and his evil system is destroyed on the great day of the Lamb's wrath. An angel asks who is worthy to rule the world after Antichrist has brought the world to almost complete ruin; the answer is only Christ and His faithful brethren. Rev 5v5,9,10, Rom 8v19. This age will close when Jesus has enough brethren to rule the Millennial kingdom with Him. Rev 14v1-5, 17v14, 2Pet 3v12. John's vision in Rev 4 and 5, was not a revelation of events in Heaven in the time of John, it was a vision of events in Heaven just prior to the last seven years of this age. When Jesus opens the seven seals, it starts the last 7 years of this age, and the mystery of iniquity. Dan 9v20-27.

Satan's plans are restrained by God, and even when the mystery of iniquity is allowed to have its final fling, God reigns and His kingdom will surely come quickly. All of Heaven's inhabitants are perfectly satisfied at Christ's worthiness to open the seals and receive the kingdom, and they rejoice that divine love will rule the nations, after the evil rule of men. John was heartbroken and wept because no one could open the book and loose the seals, but one of the elders comforted John and said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and loose the seals thereof." As God, Jesus was the source of David's family and the means of its sustenance, anchorage and strength; as a man He was the offspring of David. Isaiah 11v1,10, Rom 1v3,4, Rev 22v16. John looks for this Lion of Judah, but sees a Lamb as it had been slain. The most courageous act of the Lion of Judah was His death as the Lamb of God, this shows His courage and love more than all else. The title "Lamb" occurs 29 times in Revelation, but it is only applied to Jesus 4 times in the rest of the New Testament. John 1v29,36, Acts 8v32, 1Pet 1v19. Men often use mighty beasts and birds of prey as symbols of power, but God uses a Lamb to show the greatest act of courage, strength and love the world has even known; Calvary is the ultimate act of power and love. The Lamb of God is worthy to reign because of the sacrificial love revealed in His death upon Calvary.

The Lamb of God has not only redeemed sinners, but has made them kings and priests unto God as well, and the faithful saints will reign with Christ in the Millennium and eternity. Rev 5v10, 20v4-6, 22v3-5. Christ has won the right to reign, the Father has no favourites, He has "no jobs for the boys," those who rule will have to prove their worthiness to rule, even as Jesus has proved His worthiness to reign. Rev 3v21, 5v5, Phil 2v6-11, Rom 2v11, Acts 10v34, Heb 5v5-10, Dan 7v13,14. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

NB6: On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and said in Acts 2v16-21 (with Joel 2v28-32):

"...This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; **And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:** and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

The Lord Jesus, during the His Post-Resurrection ministry to the Apostles, had told them "I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," when He (the Holy Spirit) that was with them, would then enter them, which was the Baptism in the Holy Spirit that they would receive. Luke 24v49, John 7v39, 14v17, Acts 2v4,38. It was during the Post-Resurrection ministry that the Lord Jesus had instructed them regarding Joel's prophecy, that this was the glorious prophecy which referred to the "Promise of the Father" (i.e. power from on high), and that it was **vital** for them to tarry in the Upper Room, and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") this great prophecy and promise into reality. The Lord Jesus did not tell them the precise timing of when they would receive the Promise of the Father (this was because that if they had known, some of them might have just sat back and said, "well I don't need to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), God is going to do it anyway"), but simply said, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1v5. The Apostles were obedient to His command, and with other disciples (one hundred and twenty of them in all), they prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) Joel's wonderful great prophecy and promise into reality. Acts 1v14,15, 2v1-4. The great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was only a partial fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, which also had a fulfilment throughout the whole of the Age of Grace to encourage the Church to pray for revival, blessing, spiritual gifts and ministries from their risen Lord. 1Cor 12v7-11,28, Eph 4v7-16. Joel's great prophecy and promise has a final and complete fulfilment at the end of the Age of Grace, for it specifically says, "**it shall come to pass in the last days...I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...before that great and notable day of the Lord come.**" Even as the one hundred and twenty disciples in the Upper Room prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) Joel's wonderful prophecy and promise into reality on the Day of Pentecost, it is also **VITAL** for the Church to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **NOW** for God to pour out of His Spirit upon the Church and the world, i.e. "**upon ALL flesh.**" God's people need to claim the complete fulfilment of Joel's great prophecy and promise **NOW**, and **MUST** continue to claim the complete fulfilment of it right up until the Lord's Second Coming. There will certainly be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit when Daniel's Seventieth week starts, when Antichrist "confirms a covenant with many (including Israel) for one week," which also refers to the opening of the First Seal. Dan 9v27, Rev 6v1,2. Another and even greater outpouring will occur, when Antichrist breaks the covenant, and sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem (at the beginning of the Great Tribulation). During the last seven years of the Age of Grace, the Church and the world will know a time of the greatest worldwide revival that has ever been experienced, and **NOW** is the time for the Body of Christ to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) so that this great outpouring becomes a reality very soon, and also is **FULLY** experienced during the last seven years of this Age. Acts 2v16-21, Rev 5v8, 11v3-6, 12v1.

NB7: With the Devil and his evil angels being cast out of the heavenlies into the earth, and God's restraining hand being removed from them, the Great Tribulation then ensues. The responsibility for the restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked upon the earth, during the Great Tribulation, will be the Church's, and it will be through each individual believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), both of which mean, "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances."), that this restraint will occur. The amount of evil and wickedness that will be found in any society around the world during the Great Tribulation, will be inversely proportional to the amount of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) that the believers of that society will make, in other words, the more prayer and "interventions" (with power) that the believers make for their society in which they live, the less evil and wickedness will be manifested in it. Hence, as soon as Antichrist sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem and breaks the peace treaty with Israel, the Great Tribulation then ensues and these are the signs that the Christian should be earnestly watching for, so that as soon as they appear, the responsibility for restraint upon the powers of darkness, wicked persons and wickedness in the world will lie solely with the Church. It is at this time that each individual believer **MUST** start making prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) against the evil angels and wicked people upon earth to restrain their activities. When the wicked see Divine judgement falling upon other evil persons (which will be via the believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783))), many (although not all) will think twice before putting their evil desires into practice to hurt, harm or kill God's dear children, hence, the believer's prayers and "interventions" (with power) will actively restrain the wicked. It will be during the Great Tribulation that the last World War will occur (before the 2nd coming of Christ), and the desire of the Devil (through Antichrist) will be to smash the world completely, which Antichrist will do with vast conventional armies and limited exchanges of nuclear weapons. So, it is vital for Christians to exercise prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) **NOW**, so that they will be spiritually prepared for those terrible dark evil days, and can act as an effective restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked during the last three and half years of this Age, so that the country and society in which they live is not completely destroyed by Antichrist's armies and followers. Isaiah 26v9, Dan 9v27, 11v32,41, Zech 12v8, Luke 18v1-8, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Tim2v1-8, Rev 6v7,8, 9v13-21, 11v3-6,18, 12v13-17.

(Also NOTE: Another reason why God cannot let the last seven years of this Age (of Grace) begin to come to pass is

that the required number of overcoming Sons, who will replace the present world rulers (the Devil and the evil angels) in the heavenly places during the Millennium, must first be begotten, educated and tested; and so when God knows that this number is at hand, He will then invite the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of His right hand, so that He might loose the Seven Seals thereof; which will then bring to pass Daniel's 70th (prophetic) week, which will end with the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus when He comes in great power and glory (so that **EVERY** eye will see Him), to deal with the wicked once and for all, to take His people home and bring in everlasting righteousness by sealing up vision and prophecy. It will be when the six and seventh seals are opened and the seventh Trumpet sounds (these all occur on the last day of this age (the Age of Grace) at the Second Coming of Christ) that the "mystery of God" will be completed. (The "mystery of God" is God's plan to put both Heaven and Earth under the rule of His Son Jesus and His bride (i.e. the Church), and to fulfil upon the earth the promise made to Abraham and his seed, Israel, that they should inherit the earth. The inhabited earth to come is not again to be put under angels, but under Christ and His brethren who overcame.). The believer who accepts the call of their Lord, to rise up with Him into the heavenly places, to conquer and defeat the Devil and powers of darkness, so as to enter into and inhabit their Heavenly Canaan, will be exercising a priestly ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood (by manifesting God's great power and love to the worlding and Church through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, upon earth and the heavenly places), with Jesus as their Great High Priest (after the Order of Melchizedek). It is the Christians who are exercising a priestly ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood who will be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793), which mean "to make interventions with power so as to effect a change in circumstances.") for the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of the Father's Right Hand and so bring to pass the last seven years of this age. These Christians will also be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793)) for God to bring judgement upon the wicked who are persecuting and killing Christians during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation. These Christians are a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation; a group of praying people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the Great Tribulation. Some of these Christians will belong to a group of believers in Israel during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, who are represented by the glorious woman of Rev 12v1 (already mentioned in **NB2** and **NB4**), which reveals that part of the Church will be clothed with the fullness of God's power, and will be transported, protected and fed by God. This group is a major part of God's answer to the "mystery of iniquity," and it is one of many such groups, who operate in other parts of the world. It is these Christians who will be exercising a priestly ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood during the last seven years of this age (and even more so during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation) and who will be amongst those who will rule with Christ during the Millennium. (Rev 5v10, "...and hast made them kings and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.") Dan 9v20-27 (esp. v27), 10v13-21, 11v32, Matt 25v41, Mark 16v15-18, Luke 17v20-18v8, 19v11-27, 24v46-49, John 3v13, 7v37-39, 12v40, 17v24, Acts 1v4-8, 2v16-21, Rom 1v17, 4v1-25, 8v12-39, 1Cor 9v24-27, 12v1-14v40, 12v31, 15v50-54, Eph 6v12, Col 3v1,2, 1Thess 4v13-18, 2Thess 2v1-12 (esp. v8), 1Tim 2v1-8, 2Tim 4v8, Heb 2v4,5-13, 3v1-4v16, 7v25, James 1v12, 1Pet 2v1-9, 5v1-4, Rev 1v7, 4v1-5v14, 6v12-17, 7v1-8, 8v1,2-6, 10v1-11 (esp. v7), 11v15-19, 12v1,6,7-9,14-16, 14v1-5, 21v7.)

The believer, by praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) and making "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783)) as indicated in these seven NB's ("nota benes"), will surely "hasten the coming of the Day of God." 2Pet 3v12.

Also see the "Introduction" of "Jesus Prays For His Own" at: www.truthforthelastdays.com for a full study on the Greek words for the making of prayer.

Conclusion

We are now living during a time when God is about to let His hidden time bomb explode in human history, that is, He is about to let the "mystery of iniquity" work fully, the time when He removes His restraint off the Devil so that he can put his plan of evil into full operation having the desire to smash and destroy the world, mankind, but especially the Jews and Christians because of his great hate of God, love and righteousness. The "mystery of iniquity" begins to work somewhat more when Daniel's 70th Week (i.e., the last seven years of this age) starts (we will recognise this cardinal sign of Christ's Second Coming when he (Antichrist) confirms a covenant (peace treaty) with many (nations/parties, including Israel)), but works fully when Antichrist breaks the covenant (peace treaty) and sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem claiming that he is God. This signals the start of the Great Tribulation (the second half of Daniel's 70th Week) which Daniel, the Lord Jesus and Paul strongly warned God's people about to watch out for and be ready for, a time of great and terrible evil upon the earth, such as has not been experienced by the world since the beginning of creation, no, not even during the Pre-Adamic ages. For the Elect's (and mankind's) sake the Lord Jesus will shorten those days, for if He doesn't, no flesh would survive. With these facts before let us seek the Lord Jesus in a new and living way for a last day ministry from Him, to fill our minds with last day prophetic truth so that we have light in the darkness of those evil days and to get spiritually prepared for the terrible time ahead. Psalm 2 (all), Dan 12v1, 8v23, 9v27, 12v7, Matt 24v15-21,42,46-25v13, Mark 13v33,37, Luke 6v47-49, 21v34-36, Rom

13v11-14, Eph 6v10-20, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Tim 4v1-3, 2Tim 3v1-9, 2Peter 1v18,19, Rev 16v15, Rev 22v20.

Appendix I: The Whole Armour Of God.

To deliver the captives of Satan, we first have to have victory over him in our lives, we have to bind the strong man before we can spoil his goods. We have to overcome Satan by answering every lying temptation with the Truth, we have to put on **ALL** the armour of God. Matt 12v18-30, Mark 3v22-30, Eph 6v10-20. It is as follows: -

The belt of truth: A right knowledge of God's Word and Christian Doctrine.

The breastplate of righteousness: God's Word of Truth is applied to the life and it results in a practical holy life, the heart is kept pure, there is integrity of purpose, truthfulness, sincerity, genuine love and faithfulness.

The feet shod with the Gospel: An evangelistic fervour; a desire to extend God's kingdom and preach God's good news of forgiveness and peace.

The shield of faith: The 4 feet by 2 feet Roman type shield is spoken of here. A complete trust in God and His word at all times, can quench all Satan's flaming darts.

The helmet of salvation: A disciplined and pure thought-life. We think what God thinks, and weigh everything up in the light of God's Word and our salvation. False doctrines, impure thoughts, and worldliness are banished from the Christian mind. All is looked upon and judged in the light of an eternal future.

The sword of the Spirit: The ability to use God's Word against Satan and his children. This presupposes a knowledge of the Scriptures and essential Christian Truth.

Prayer: (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335) and "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783) which means "the making of interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances"). The spear, or bow and arrow? A vigilant, intelligent and persevering prayer life, for all the saints and the ministries that God has set in the Church. Rom 12v6-8, 1Cor 12v28, 14v15,18, Eph 4v8-11, 1Thess 5v17.

Appendix II: The Mystery Of God And The Mystery Of Iniquity.

The following is a synopsis of C L Parker's excellent commentary on the two mysteries mentioned in 2Thess 2v1-2 and Rev 10v7.

"There is something which is called '**The mystery of God**', which is only ended when the Lord returns at the seventh trumpet. Rev 10v7, 3v9-11, Rom 16v25,26. There is also a reference to '**the mystery of iniquity**' which was already working in Paul's day, but was hindered from completion by God until He was ready to allow it. The word 'mystery' does not mean mysterious, but simply a secret hidden from the outsider but revealed to the initiated, e.g. the secret teaching of Freemasons, which is only known to them. Thus both God and Satan have plans which are hidden from the man in the street, but are revealed to their own children. The Christian, of course, knows the truth, but the ordinary Spiritist is deceived by his master. Only a few know the deep things of Satan. Luke 10v24, 1Peter 1v10-12, John 15v14,15, Rev 1v1, 2v24, 2Thess 2v7.

The Mystery of God

The world does not credit God with any plan at all. To them it all seems a meaningless jumble without any particular purpose. Indeed, the world conceives of God as a fool who can't see His own kingdom. As a matter of fact, however, the intention of God is to put both Heaven and Earth under the rule of His Son Jesus and His bride (i.e. the Church), and to fulfil upon the earth the promise made to Abraham and his seed, Israel, that they should inherit the earth. The inhabited earth to come is not again to be put under angels, but under Christ and His brethren who overcame. Heb 2v5-13, Rom 8v12-39, Luke 19v11-27, Rev 21v7. There must therefore be begotten, educated and tested, a sufficiently large number of overcoming Sons to take the place of the present world rulers, i.e. Satan's angels, now in the first heaven but later to be cast out upon the earth, and finally into Hell. Dan 10v13-21, Rev 12v7-9, Matt 25v41, 1Cor 9v24-27, 12v31, Eph 6v12, 2Tim 4v8, James 1v12, 1Peter 5v1-4.

Now this depends not upon God but upon His children. If the Church was faithful, then the time would have been shortened, but unfortunately there have been centuries where the Gospel has hardly ever been preached at all, so hardly any overcomers have arisen as kings and priests. Therefore, the length of this period, though known to God, was not revealed to His sons lest they should be tempted to grow slack and say, 'the time is not yet,' or forget that the length of the interval depended on their exertions, and that they would hasten or retard the day of Christ or lose a

crown through carelessness. 2Peter 3v12, Rev 3v11. When, however, the Lord knows that the requisite numbers of overcomers is to hand, then He will stand aside and allow Satan to proceed with His plan. 2Thess 2v6-12.

The Mystery of Satan, 2Thess 2v7, Rev 2v24

Satan and his angels are already doomed to Hell for the ages of ages (because of their impenitence and wickedness) and therefore have no hope of success, or of establishing any successful kingdom upon earth. However, being filled with a murderous hatred of God and man, they desire to damage them as much as possible before their own final ruin. Therefore, during the last seven years of this age they will stage a kind of mock kingdom of Heaven upon earth, a Devilish parody of God's Millennial kingdom, even using God's city and Temple for this purpose. God will allow Satan to do this fearful thing for the following reasons amongst others.

a) To show mankind the madness of preferring Satan to Jesus, and thus bring them to repentance and a willingness to accept Jesus as Lord. This folly has wrecked the human race since Eden, but this fearful experience will bring to an end Satan's power of deception during the Millennium, his mask will be torn off and he will be seen for what he is, the enemy of man. Gen 2 all, Acts 3v14, Rev 13v7,10,15, John 8v44.

b) To show the Jews the madness of rejecting their Messiah, and so bring them to a willingness to accept Jesus as Lord.

c) To break the pride of the Gentiles by giving them an opportunity one by one, and finally all combined, to govern the world according to their own ideas so that any hope of happiness apart from God may be finally shattered by their own failure. This will make them willing to accept God's plan of learning about Him from the despised Jews. Zech 8v23. Following Antichrist will result in the complete collapse of society and bring the earth to the brink of destruction, from which Christ will deliver them at the last moment, so that the few remaining Jews and Gentiles will enter into the Millennium broken and shocked by the judgement of God. Zech 12 all, Isaiah 13v9-16. As were Noah and his family when they saw the ruin caused by the flood and obliged, and at any rate happy, to submit to the iron rule of Christ and His Brethren. Psalm 2 all, Rev 12v5, 2v27, 19v15.

Thus God will use this last plan of Satan to break the pride of man, and when this is accomplished will imprison Him until He has again need of him to test the inhabitants of the Millennial earth. The human race as a whole will have had an experience similar to that of the prodigal son, and will return to God only after the terrible experience of trusting the Devil, having learned to obey God by the things they have suffered. It is of first importance to remember that against God Satan has absolutely no power. No evil being, demon or man can do anything other than what God permits. 2Chron 18v18-22, Job 1v12, Matt 8v31, Psalm 76v10. Satan is wholly a tool in the hands of God to punish the wicked, to correct the righteous, 1Tim 1v20, 1Cor 5v5, to bring glory to the Sons of God, Eph 6v10-20, Job 1 and 2, James 1v12, to test the true character of everyone. Rev 20v7,10, Matt 4v1. Against us Satan only has the power that is given to him by God. Job 1 all. Against God he is helpless. Rev 20v1-3. God alone knows the length of this period of waiting, Matt 24v36, Mark 13v32, Acts 1v7, but God's children will know when the last seven years, and the Great Tribulation begins. Matt 24v15-22, Dan 9v27, 2Thess 2v1-12." **End of C L Parker's synopsis.**

God restrains Satan until the last 3½ years of this age, the time known as, "The Great Tribulation," when "the mystery of iniquity" will work. Even those days are shortened by God to protect mankind from Satan's plan to destroy mankind. Matt 24v21,22, 2Thess 2v7, Rev 12v12, Dan 8v24, 12v1-7. This explosion of evil and destruction is allowed, in order to show what Satan and his angels, and the effects of evil are like; and also show the justice and necessity of their eternal judgement, and confinement in everlasting chains of darkness, after the destruction of their bodies in the lake of fire. 2Peter 2v4,17, Jude v13, Matt 25v41,46, Rev 19v20, 20v10. Every mouth will be stopped by the awesome justice of God. Rom 3v19. The horrific carnage on earth produced by this awful manifestation of evil, produces a stunned and shocked silence in all the inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom. Rev 8v1. The happiness of the eternal "ages of ages" in the kingdom of God; depends on everyone in that kingdom, not only loving righteousness, but also hating evil with all their being. This manifestation of evil produces an eternal hatred of evil in the children of God; and permanently banishes evil from the kingdom of God.

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