

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

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INTRODUCTION.

Since the first edition of this book was written in 1954, many significant world events have occurred, which indicate that our Lord's return is near. Mt.24v33. Most Christians agree that we are living in the spiritually perilous last days. 2Tim.3v1. Sadly, most Christians are ignorant about prophetic truth, either because they have received almost no teaching about it, or have been incorrectly taught and misled on the subject. Many are also ignorant about the armoury of spiritual gifts that God has provided for His Church for the extremely dangerous events that precede Christ's return. This ignorance is particularly dangerous in the light of our Lord's many warnings to, "beware," "watch and pray," and "take heed." Jesus warns us that the abounding iniquity of the last days will cause the "agape" love of many Christians to "wax cold." Mt.24v12. Lk.17v33. 18v1-8. In 1Tim.4v1., Paul also warns us; "Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." "Depart," is "apostesontai," the future middle of "aphistemi," "to withdraw, to go away, or fall away, to become apostate." See Lk.8v13. and Heb.3v12. In 2Thes.2v3., Paul uses the noun "apostasia," which means "falling away, rebellion, apostasy," to speak of the rebellion against God and apostasy caused by Antichrist's evil career.

The folly of making a fact of judgement a rule for prophetic interpretation.

Jehovah's Witnesses, and others, have made Num.14v34. Ez.4v6 and 2Pet.3v8., an excuse for changing the period of 1260 days in Rev.12v6., into a period of 1260 years, this is folly, for it makes a prophetic date meaningless, and has no warrant from Scripture. In Numb.14v34. and Ezek.4v6., the days are literal days, and the years are literal years. In 2Pet.3v8., Peter compares the many years of God's longsuffering with His tremendous judgements at Christ's return, Peter is certainly not stating a principle of prophetic interpretation. Ezekiel's symbolic act in Ezek.4v4-9., was certainly not a divine principle of prophetic interpretation, those who say that it is, prove their inability to rightly interpret the Scriptures. Ezekiel performed a symbolic act of 430 days (390+40), which represented 430 years of past sin for which God had decreed judgement. Those who twist prophetic facts like this, do it to their own ruin and shame. 2Pet.3v16-18.

In Numb.14v34., God states a fact of judgement, not a principle of prophetic interpretation; He decreed that the 40 literal days of unbelief and wandering would receive 40 literal years of judgement, until all those who were over 20 years of age had died in the wilderness. God had to prepare a new generation of believing hearts to conquer Canaan. Num.14v16,28-39. N.B.v29. The unbelief in the hearts of the people was produced by the carnality and idolatry that most Israelites had wilfully practised in Egypt, and which they were still guilty of practising in the wilderness according to Ezek.20v1-17. 23v3,8,19,27.. It was this wickedness that produced their evil heart of unbelief, and stopped them from entering Canaan. Heb.3v12,16-19.

The folly of interpreting prophetic fact symbolically.

To interpret the vital facts of the prophecy of our Lord in Mt.24., or any prophetic fact, as, "symbolical," is to

make nonsense of prophecy. People interpret prophetic facts symbolically, so that they can twist the facts, and make them mean what they desire. The literal interpretation must always be applied to a Scripture, before any figurative interpretation is attempted. God does use figurative language, symbols, or heavenly cartoons in the prophetic truth that He gives us in His Word, and He gives us great spiritual truth by these means. However, we should interpret prophetic truth, like any other Scriptural truth, the literal being interpreted as literal, and the symbolic as symbolic. When our Lord interpreted Dan.9v24-27. and 12v1-13., He interpreted them literally, as they were intended to be interpreted, and applied them to events concerning Jerusalem, Judea, and the Temple. The apostles had asked for prophetic facts, and the timing of those facts, Jesus gave them the literal facts and literal signs of His coming, not a confusing symbolic conundrum, muddle or maze. To make Mt.24., only apply to the Jews, is as dishonest an exposition as the symbolic interpretation put upon it by the Jehovah's Witnesses, and other false sects. It is a twisting and perversion of the Scriptures, which leaves the Church without any prophetic fact from the lips of Christ. A prophetic delusion is the only possible result from such a method of interpretation. 2Pet.3v16. 2Thes.2v11,12.

Some have, incredibly, gone to Dan.4. for information on Christ's second coming. This is total nonsense, for Dan.4v14,28-36., tells us that this was concerning Nebuchadnezzar, and was fulfilled in his time. No Scriptures about Christ's second coming have any links with Dan.4. Jesus directed Christians to Dan.9v20-27. and 12v1-13. for information on His second coming, not to Dan.4.. The only reason that people do not follow Christ's pattern of exposition, is because His lucid exposition of the Scriptures does not fit in with their prophetic delusions. The final period of 3½ years mentioned in Dan.7v25. 9v27. and 12v6,7., exactly matches the prophetic time scale mentioned Rev.11v2,3. 12v6,14. and 13v5.; as the period of 1,260 days or 42 months, or a time, times and a half time. Our Lord intends us to take these lengths of time literally, as all prophetic times were to be taken literally in the past. Gen.15v13-16. Jer.25v12. with Ezra.1v1. and Dan.9v1,2..

In the book of Revelation, where God means years He says years. Rev.20v2-7. Note the other periods of time mentioned in Revelation, the "five months" of Rev.9v5,10., and the thirteen months of Rev.9v15.. If we don't interpret these times literally, we end in utter darkness. Jesus intends us to interpret these dates as literally as the other prophetic dates of Dan.9v20-29. If we take the year for a day theory and apply it to Rev.12v6,14., we are left with a period of 1260 years from Satan being cast out of the heavenly places and the heavens cleansed, to the coming of Christ, which is clearly complete nonsense. Rev.12v13,14.

Our Lord's solemnly warns us that we must not misinterpret prophetic truth.

Jesus gave solemn warnings in Rev.22v19,20., about the serious consequences of adding to, or taking from, His prophetic truth. He looks upon addition to, and subtraction from, prophetic truth, as serious error, not as a matter of opinion. After reading many books on prophecy, I have come to the conclusion that our Lord's solemn warnings about the consequences of misinterpreting His prophetic truth, have not been taken seriously. We need to remember that Paul handed over Hymenaeus and Alexander for execution for wrong doctrine on prophecy concerning the resurrection and second coming of Christ. Paul said that their wrong doctrine was blasphemy, and ate like a cancer or gangrene; their false doctrine had overthrown the faith of some Christians. 1Tim.1v18-20. 2Tim.2v15-19. James.3v1. Jesus informs us in Mt.24v48-51., that the pretribulation rapture theory will likewise overthrow the faith of some Christians; for they will look upon the seeming delay of their Lord's coming, as a denial of the fact of His coming, and as a result backslide from the faith and join with the worldlings in persecuting and beating those who were once their brothers and sisters in Christ.

The perilous last days demand real spiritual preparation. Jesus warns us that we need to watch and pray and seek God for his spiritual armoury and a reserve of oil if we are to spiritually survive those evil times. Mt.24v44 to 25v13. Lk.18v1-8. 21v34-36. Christian leaders who teach that God's spiritual gifts to His Church have been withdrawn, and oppose and forbid their operation in their churches, are denying to Christ's Church the essential spiritual equipment that will enable Christians to survive the evil last days of this age. Jesus pronounced a "woe" upon teachers who take away "the key of knowledge," and hinder people from having an experience of God and His gifts. Luke.11v52. James.3v1. The gifts of the Spirit give us power for service and confirm the truth of the Gospel; they are the cutting edge of New Testament evangelism. Rom.15v18-21. The Holy Spirit's devotional gifts help to sanctify Christians and build the fruit of the Spirit in them, and are a necessary and vital divine aid to communion with God. 1Cor.14v1-5,12-20,31. N.B. v4,18. Ps.68v18. God is preparing us for the great day of Christ's coming, His gifts build "agape" love in the Church. 1Cor.14v1-5,39,40. Heb.2v4. God is pouring out His Spirit upon all mankind, just as He promised to do before the great and terrible day of our Lord's return. Joel.2v11,28-32. Acts.2v16-21.

In Joel.2v11,31., the word for "terrible," in "the great and terrible day of His coming," is "yaw-ray," which means, "to fear, to put in fear, to fill with dread." In Acts.2v20., "yah-ray," is translated by the Greek adjective "epiphanes," (only here in N. T.); and means "conspicuous, manifest, or notable" and comes from the verb "epiphaino," "to shine upon, to give light, to become visible, to appear." "Epiphaino" is used in connection with Christ's birth and first coming in Luke.1v79., and of Christ's coming to save us in Titus.2v11. and 3v4.. The noun "epiphaneia," "a shining forth," was used by the Greeks of the appearance of a god; it occurs six times in the New Testament, once concerning Christ's first coming in 2Tim.1v10.; and with Christ's second coming in 2Thes.2v8. 1Tim.6v14. 2Tim.4v1,8. and Titus.2v13.. Jesus has visited us and shone upon us in his triumphant redeeming humanity. As God the Word He will shine upon this world in the full glory and power of His majestic deity, and, with fierce righteous anger and justice, will cleanse creation of evil men and angels. Is.25v6-9.

34v1-8. 42v13-17. 63v1-6. 66v16. 2Thes.1v7-10. Rev.19v11 to 20v3.6. His second advent will be truly awesome and will produce overwhelming fear among worldly people. Jesus said men will swoon and be lifeless through fear, and will hide themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, and cry for the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from God the Father's face and the wrath of the Lamb. Lk.21v26. Rev.6v15-17. Paul warns us that this will be an awesome day even for Christians, for this is the day when the exam results of our lives are made known. Paul speaks in 2Cor.5v11., of "the fear of the Lord," as the motivating force for godly living in the light of that great day; he tells us how he laboured and acted from honour to be well pleasing to Christ at His judgement throne. 1Cor.1v8. 3v10-17. 2Cor.1v14. 5v9-11. Phil.1v10. 2v13,14. 1Thes.5v2. This will be a truly blessed day for Christians who are walking with the Lord and love His appearing. 2Tim.4v8. Titus.2v13. Abiding in Jesus saves us from shame at His second coming. 1Jn.2v28.

It was to be expected that the blessed hope of Christ's glorious return would be a subject of controversy among God's people, for prophecy has always resulted in controversy. Indeed, the Old Testament prophets were so controversial that most of them died for their prophecies. Do we stop preaching or discussing the truth of Christ's second coming because it is controversial? Of course not! All-important truth is controversial. On many occasions God the Father and Christ spoke strongly to God's people, and the false prophets among His people. Mt.23v13-39. Mk.3v5. In this study I have used strong words where I felt that I should do so. I have not done this because I enjoy controversy, but so that those who read this study may be informed and challenged to think about Christ's second coming. I am concerned that Christians should be brought back to study the Scriptures, instead of accepting man-made theories without question. In Acts.17v10,11. the Bereans were called noble-minded when they received Paul's doctrine with all eagerness of mind; and continually, carefully and exactly searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul taught was true. "Searched" is "anakrinontes," the present participle of "anakrino," "to examine, to sift, to make careful and exact research as in legal processes." Let us imitate them.

W. H. Turner. July 14th. 1998. Revised again September

11th 2003.

PREFACE TO THIS FOURTH EDITION.

It is certainly high time for Christ's Church to awake out of sleep.

The attempt to broker a peace treaty between Israel and the Arabs, warns us that we are approaching the end of the age. Wars and rumours of wars, and catastrophic natural disasters, also inform us that our Lord's return is near.

Paul sums up the attitude that we should have in these last days in Rom.13v11-14..

"Besides this knowing the critical hour and strategic season ("ton" 3588, "kairon" 2540, the critical period and strategic time, not "chronos" 5550, ordinary time), that **it is high time now for you to wake up out of your sleep** ("egeiro" 1453). For now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed. v12. The night is far spent, the day is almost here. **Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour and weapons** ("hopla" 3696) **of light.** v13. Let us walk (Paul uses "walk." "peripateo" 4043, 33 times) decently, becomingly, properly and honestly ("euschemonos" 2156), as in the day; not in rioting ("komois" 2970, plural "revellings.") and drunkenness ("methais" 3178, plural, "drunkennesses."); not in immorality ("koitais" 2845, plural) and wantonness ("aselgeiais" 766, plural); not in strife ("eris" 2054) and jealousy ("zeloo" 2205). v14. But **put you on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for indulging the flesh, to gratify its desires and lusts."

I here quote from my Preface to the Fifth Edition, of my book on, "The Baptism and Gifts of the Holy Spirit."

The world situation has become noticeably much darker, however, the ministry of Jesus through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, is a complete answer to the gross evil that is in the world today. Gifts of healing and other mercy gifts, have a mighty and powerful evangelistic appeal, and today are bringing millions of people to accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

The protective and judgement gifts of God that were manifested in the lives of Moses, Elijah, and other prophets, and the New Testament apostles, are going to be indispensable in the last days of this age. The Two Witnesses of Rev.11v1-13., the last great prophets of this age, will manifest these gifts in their ministries, and stand resolute and invincible against the Antichrist and his armies for 1,260 days. They manifest the ultimate in gifts of judgement. The Christian group which is represented by the woman of Rev,12v1,2,6,14-17., experiences mighty gifts of supernatural transport, provision and protection, an army that tries to attack them suffers the same fate as the sons of Korah, the ground opens, and swallows them up. Numb.16v1-35.

It is good to know that God has given to His Church the necessary Divine equipment to restrain and bring judgement upon militant godless religious groups, and unbelieving implacable secular authorities. We read in Acts.12v1-25., that after the apostle James was executed by Herod, the earnest prayers of the Christians brought about the miraculous release of Peter, and the death of Herod, God smote Herod, and he was eaten up by worms. We also read in Acts.13v6-12., that the judgement of God on Elymas the sorcerer brought a sense of awe on the people who saw it, and caused many to accept and believe in Jesus. Acts.13v6-12. The God of Moses and Elijah will manifest Himself in great acts of judgement on the irreconcilable wicked, and mighty acts of delivering and defensive power for His Christian Church in the last days of this age.

We read in Is.28v21., that God's acts of judgement are His "strange work" and His "alien task," a God of love desires to give mercy gifts of love, blessing and healing, but in the last days, the great evil in the world and the oppression of mankind will make God's judgement gifts both necessary and indispensable. The last days will culminate with the awesome judgement of the great day of God Almighty, when in one day God cleans up, and wipes out evil from the world. Ps.2v1-12. Is.24v19-24. 42v13-21. 63v1-6. Zech.12v8-10.13v8,9. 14v1-15. 2Thes.1v5-11. Rev.6v12-17. 16v20,21. 19v11-21. 20v7-15. 21v1-8.

We read in the New King James Version of Isa.26v9. "With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." The Revised Standard Version translates Isa.26v9., "My soul yearns for thee in the night, and my spirit within me earnestly seeks thee. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." Those who earnestly seek God can find that God's justice and judgements are dispensed in the world through their prayers, and the gifts He has given.

We rejoice that when our Lord Jesus returns His judgements will make the world a happy place to live in. This blissful state is recorded in Isa.32v1,16-18. "**Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.** v16. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. v17. **And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.** v18. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." (KJV)

In Rev .22v20. Jesus states, "Surely I am coming quickly." "Surely," is the strong affirmative "nai," "Yes indeed! verily. Jesus promises that He will return quickly, "tachu," 5035, without delay, soon, suddenly, speedily. Let us earnestly pray for that day and cry with all our hearts, like the apostle John, "Come Lord Jesus." Until that day comes, let us seek our dear Lord Jesus for His precious gifts of both mercy and judgement, for they have been purchased for us through the shedding of His precious blood, and they have a vital part to play in the life of Christ's Church in these last days.

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Rev.22v7. "And behold, I come quickly. **Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.**" (ASV)

Rev.22v12-14. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. v13. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. v14. **Blessed are they that wash their robes,** that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." (ASV) See. Titus. 2v13.

1. THE PURPOSE OF THESE STUDIES ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

A. To give a Scriptural examination of the doctrine of Christ's second coming.

Many believe the glorious truth of our Lord's second coming, and joyfully look forward to this wonderful event; however, few have really studied it for themselves, preferring to rely on the opinions of others. I write this book to persuade and encourage Christians to study and meditate on the Scriptures concerning our Lord's return, for themselves..

B. To prove that Christ returns, and the Church is caught up after the great tribulation.

This states that the gathering up of the Church to Jesus at His return takes place after the great tribulation, and before His millennial reign. This post-tribulation rapture viewpoint is called by some "Historic Premillennialism," for it is the historic view of the Church. Unfortunately, many Christians have not even heard of this point of view, and many more have only a superficial knowledge of its Scriptural basis. In some cases this is because they have had no material to base their studies on. I hope that these brief notes may remedy this in some measure.

C. To correct the following erroneous doctrines on the second coming of Christ.

1. Amillennialism.

Amillennialists teach that Christ's Millennial kingdom extends from the time of His resurrection from the tomb, to the time of His second coming at the end of this age. Amillennialism in reality means "no Millennium;" it denies the fact of the future literal thousand year reign of Christ, and spiritualises the great Old Testament prophecies concerning Zion and Jerusalem, and applies them to the Church. The future prophecies of the glorious Millennial reign of God, when war and sin are banished, are applied to this present war torn evil world, and spiritualised in a totally ambiguous and incomprehensible form. Amillennialists also state that Satan has already been bound; this is not only flatly contradicted by the Scriptures, but also by our present day great increase in satanic manifestations and occult activities, and rapidly deteriorating world-wide moral depravity. The Scriptures clearly state that the Millennium starts at the end of this age, not at the beginning; as can be seen by the promises, which have been given in the Scriptures to both Israel and the Church.

When the Millennium comes the Scriptures say the following will take place.

- a. The righteous dead are raised. Rev.20v4-6. Is.25v6-9. Dan.12v1-3.
- b. Jesus will reign gloriously from Jerusalem; Is.2v1-3. 24v23.; because of this all roads will lead to Jerusalem.

Many highways designed and possibly built by God will converge on Jerusalem. Is.11v16. 19v23-25. 35v7,8.
 c. The effect of Christ's reign is peace, righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. Is.32v1,16-18. 62v8. The violence, wars, and moral depravity in the world today, manifest the reign of Satan.
 d. Longevity is restored. A 100 year old is looked upon as a child. Is.65v20-25. Children play in Jerusalem. Zech.8v4,5.
 e. The restoration of the blessings of Eden. Deserts blossom as the rose. Is.35v1,2,6,7. 55v12,13. There will be abundant fruitful harvests as the result of a divinely created plentiful water supply and wonderful sunny weather by a miraculous increase of the suns power. Is.29v17. 30v23-26. 32v15. 41v17-20. 51v3. Joel.3v17,18. Ezek.47v1-12 with Zech.14v8. Jesus will domesticate wild animals and take the ferocity out of them. Is.11v6-10. 65v25. Rom.8v18-23. N.B. v20. When Jesus comes down, with His people to reign; His presence will bless us with Eden again. Is.51v3.
 None of these events have taken place, and so the Millennium cannot have started.

2. Postmillennialism.

Postmillennialists teach that the world will improve, and almost everyone will be converted, and evil will be rooted out by the Gospel agencies. They say Christ's second coming will take place after he has reigned in a spiritual way for 1,000 years; the last resurrection, the final judgement, and God's eternal kingdom will follow these events. Our Lord and Paul completely disagree with this doctrine, for they teach that the world will get increasingly worse, and will be in gross spiritual darkness when our Lord returns. Mt.24v12. 1Tim.4v1. 2Tim.3v1-13. Our Lord's feet stand upon the Mount of Olives before the Millennium starts. Zech.14v1-4. Acts.1v9-12. Rev.14v1.

3. Pretribulationism.

Pretribulationists teach that Christ will come for His Church before the great tribulation at a secret coming. We will prove that this is untrue and the Scriptures teach that there will be no any moment pretribulation secret coming of Christ, or a secret rapture of the Church; and that this doctrine only originated about the year 1830.

Dr. S. P. Tregelles writes in a footnote on page 35 of his book, "The Hope of Christ's Second Coming:"

"I am not aware that there was any definite teaching that there would be a secret rapture of the Church at a secret coming, until this was given forth as an 'utterance' in Mr Irving's Church, from what was there received as being the voice of the Spirit. But whether anyone ever asserted such a thing or not, it was from that supposed revelation that the modern doctrine and the modern phraseology respecting it arose. It came not from Holy Scripture, but from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God, while not owning the true doctrine of our Lord's incarnation in the same flesh and blood as His brethren, but without taint of sin. After the opinion of a secret advent had been adopted, many expressions in older writers were regarded as supporting it; in which, however, the word 'secret' does not mean unperceived or unknown, but simply secret in point of time. Thus in a passage of Milman: -

"Even thus amidst thy pride and luxury, O Earth, shall this last coming burst on thee,
 THAT SECRET COMING OF THE SON OF MAN: When all the cherub-throned clouds shall shine,
 Irradiate with His bright advancing sign, When the great Husbandman shall wave His fan," etc.

The third line was taken up as if it taught the new doctrine of this secret coming; whereas the whole passage (even if it had any theological value) teaches a coming in power, glory and publicity, in contrast to that which is private: so, too, as to other writers, whose words were sometimes used. Sometimes from a hymn being altered, writers appear to set forth a secret rapture of which they have never heard, or against which they have protested.

In 1863 I heard it publicly and definitely maintained, that the secret coming is the second one promised in Scripture, and that the manifest appearing of our Lord is His third coming. Many seem to think this who do not say so in definite words. But a third coming is something very different from His coming again." **End of Tregelles quote.**

Edward Irving and Margaret Macdonald.

In 1830 Edward Irving was defrocked from the Church of England because his superiors believed that his doctrinal beliefs and preaching on the sinfulness of Christ's nature, was heretical. Irving set up his own church, which he called "The Catholic Apostolic Church," but which others called "The Irvingites." In his congregation there was a Scottish girl called Margaret Macdonald; and in one of his services she went into a trance and gave some prophecies. In this trance she said that she saw the people of God going up in the air to meet the Lord. From this "revelation," Irving preached that the Church would be raptured and miss the great tribulation. Irving went over to the conferences in Ireland at Powerscourt, near Dublin, and preached this doctrine. Ironside, who writes in support of the doctrine of the pretribulation secret rapture of the Church, states that this "blessed doctrine" came to light in the Powerscourt conferences in Ireland in the 1830's. Mr Robert Baxter, a principal leader in this movement, published the doctrine of a secret coming of Christ everywhere he went, and it was quickly received. This view was also adopted by J. N. Darby, and it has been earnestly maintained by many who have studied his writings. Scofield wrote this doctrine into his notes in His Scofield Bible, and Larkin drew some charts; and the doctrine infiltrated into the brethren movement. However, Tregelles, Newton, George Muller, and many others, rejected the revelation and doctrine as unscriptural. They realised that Margaret Macdonald's

"revelation," had brought into the Church a false doctrine, which was previously unknown in Church history, and was a direct contradiction of the Scriptures.

Jerry Brewer wrote in the magazine "Victorious Life," that the pretribulation rapture teaching came into existence through this young, about fifteen year old Scottish girl Margaret Macdonald, from a "personal revelation," which she claimed was based only upon Scripture, between February 1st. and April 14th. 1830, in her hometown of Port Glasgow in Scotland.

The claim that the early Church Fathers taught an imminent pre trib rapture is without any foundation.

Scholars say that pre-trib writers have misquoted and corrupted the evidence from some early Church Fathers to strengthen their weak arguments. Post-trib writers have quoted these very same authors and Church Fathers to illustrate that the early Church was post-trib! Some pre-trib authors and scholars have even acknowledged that the early Church was entirely post-trib. The translation of a supposed sermon by Ephraem the Syrian, an Orthodox priest, is attributed to Pseudo-Ephraem, i.e. False Ephraem, because no one has been able to verify that the real Ephraem wrote the text, or that it was authentic. The date has been estimated between 374 and 627 A.D. Some scholars say it is an invented bogus history. When pre-trib expositors have to depend on such weak evidence, and misquote the Church Fathers, and twist the Greek texts, they destroy their credibility.

In 1585 a Spanish Catholic priest named Francisco de Ribera wrote a 500 page commentary on Revelation, in it he said that Jesus was to return for his Church some 45 days before His coming in glory at the end of the Great Tribulation. In 1812, a Jesuit priest, Emmanuel Lacunza, published a book in Spain, which was entitled, "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty," under the pseudonym of Rabbi Juan Josaphat Ben-Ezra. He also stated that Jesus would return for His Church, 45 days before Christ's coming in glory. (Lacunza may well have used this pseudonym, because in 1767 the Jesuits were expelled from Spain for brutality.) These certainly do not teach a pre-trib rapture of the Church.

Lacunza's **book was translated into English, and published in London in 1827, by the Rev. Edward Irvine, the founder of The Catholic Apostolic Church, whose followers are known as the Irvingites.** One of his followers was the young 15-year-old Scottish girl, Margaret MacDonald, who in 1830 supposedly gave a prophecy that Jesus would return for His Church before the Great Tribulation. Some say that Irvine made this the basis of his theory of the pre-trib rapture of the Church.

In 1740 a young Baptist named Morgan Edwards wrote an essay for a class studying Bible prophecy concerning eschatology, in which he expounded his theory that Jesus would return for His Church before the Great Tribulation. This essay was later published in Philadelphia in 1788. However, his views were not accepted, or given any credibility by the Church.

After considering the evidence we can well see why Tregelles said that the pretribulation view of Christ's return was unknown in Church history before 1830. See Kim Warner's "Post Trib Research Center." His website is, www.lasttrumpet.com.

Corrie Ten Boom wrote in the Logos magazine, that those who teach that the Church will escape the great tribulation are the false teachers that Jesus warned us to expect in the latter days. She said that most of these teachers had little knowledge of what is already taking place across the world, for in countries, which she had visited, the saints are already suffering terrible persecution. Corrie states that the Christians in China were told: "Don't worry, before the tribulation comes you will be translated, raptured." Then there came a terrible persecution; millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later Corrie heard a bishop from China sadly say, "We have failed, we should have made the people strong for persecution, rather than telling them, that Jesus would come first." Turning to Corrie he said, "You still have time, tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes; to stand and not faint." Corrie states, "I feel I have a mandate, a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world, that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in training for the tribulation." **End of quote.**

Oswald J. Smith said, "For a true child of God it is not a question of preference but of truth. Does God's Word say so?" Why then rebel? Is not His plan best? Besides what difference does it make so long as we are ready. Spiritual preparedness is the only important factor after all. I wonder if we have been lulling the Church into a false security. Can it be that we have been preaching an easy escape? Ought we to prepare the Church for the greatest of all ordeals? Should not her teaching harden her for the fire of the great tribulation? What kind of soldiers are we training? I am afraid that we have been very guilty and that God will certainly hold us responsible for the type of Christian our preaching is producing. We need men and women today of the martyr spirit. The test of the inquisition is coming again, and woe betide the premillennialists who are not ready. The Church must be purified in the fires of persecution. I have heard many people today make the following statement, 'Surely a loving God would not let His Church go through the great tribulation?' Well might I remind you of something, just who do we think we are, the Christians of the United States? My Christian brothers in China, Russia, and around the world have suffered much for the cause of Christ." **End of quote.**

Until 1830, the Church almost unanimously taught that Christians would go through the great tribulation. Up to

this time, the Christian leaders and scholars of Church history, from every shade of doctrinal opinion, believed and taught that Christians will be on earth during the period known as the great tribulation. You have to ignore the teaching of the Church throughout Church history, and twist the Scriptures a great deal, to believe that Christians will not have to go through the great tribulation.

Many Christians have come to wrong conclusions about the second coming of Christ because their thoughts have been dominated by intuition, speculation, escapism, and the opinions of men. Many Christians decide what they will believe before they have properly studied the Scriptures; and read the Scriptures with a closed mind, and with a determination to make them fit their theories. Persecuted Christians in other countries are not helped by the escapist prosperity Gospel theology that has corrupted affluent Western Christianity; such theology fails to be appropriate, helpful, realistic, or Scripturally true. This dangerous theological escapism destroys the faith of those who are called upon to suffer for the truth. Those who "dig deep," and come to their doctrinal conclusions by a diligent and unbiased study of God's Word, and welcome and obey the truth they find, will have foundations that are built on solid rock, and which will stand secure in the vehement floods and storms of life. Lk.6v47-49. Those who preach a pretribulation secret rapture of the Church and return of Christ, not only weaken themselves for the last days, they also put themselves amongst the false prophets of the last days. 2Pet.3v15-18. James.1v18-25.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING.

1. The Scriptures place great emphasis upon the second coming of Christ.

It has been said, "There is more Scriptural authority for Christ's second coming than for all the other doctrines of the Bible put together." This statement soundly condemns the lack of interest shown by far too many of God's people today towards this vital subject. The silence of most preachers on the theme of this blessed hope of the Church gives cause for great alarm, particularly when the signs of the times indicate that the coming of Christ is near. What we believe regarding this subject will matter a great deal in the not so distant future. The lack of interest in Christ's second coming is a sure sign of a loss of first love for Jesus, and a spiritual apathy and lethargy among the people of God. Someone who noted the longing for Christ's coming and the zeal for this truth in the first part of Church history, wrote, "It would have been deemed a kind of apostasy not to have sighed after the day of the Lord." Those who have neglected the subject of our Lord's second coming should repent and meditate afresh upon this blessed hope that purifies. 1Jn.3v3.

2. The Scriptures warn us to take the subject of His Second coming very seriously.

God warns us that judgement will fall upon those who misinterpret the book of Revelation and add to, or take away, its prophecies. Rev.22v18,19. An added secret rapture means an added judgement upon those who teach it. The subject of prophecy demands a teachable spirit, diligent study and trembling at the Word of God. 1Tim.4v14-16. 2Tim.2v15. Is.66v2.

God has already executed preachers for wrong doctrine on the Second Coming of Christ.

In 1Tim.1v19,20., we read that Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme. We learn from 2Tim.2v16-18., that Paul did this because they had overthrown the faith of some Christians, by saying that the resurrection and the second coming of Christ had already taken place. Paul said their wrong doctrine ate like a canker and gangrene, and they died for their dangerous heresy, executed by the operation of God's judgement gifts through Paul; just as Peter had executed Ananias and Sapphira with those same gifts. Acts.5v1-11. Note in Acts.5v11., how "great fear fell upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things." The deaths of Hymenaeus, Philetus, and Alexander, show how serious and dangerous it is to misinterpret prophecy.

In Mt.24v48-51., Jesus warns us that if Christians believe that His second coming and the rapture take place before the great tribulation; then, when it does not happen, their faith will be overthrown, and they will say, "My Lord delays His coming;" and as a result go and live bad lives. Will the Lord Jesus feel any more tolerant of such faith destroying teachers and teaching, than He did of Hymenaeus and his false doctrine? Our Lord reveals the striking fact that these people will blame God for a delay, rather than examine and question their own doctrine. Let us be very careful what we teach about our Lord's second coming.

We can always find the truth if we really want to.

The Bible is not so badly written that we cannot find the truth; if that were so we should rename the Bible, "Man's Word," instead of "God's Word," and give up the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures. We can absolutely rely on the Holy Scriptures, for God has made the cardinal truths of the Gospel perfectly clear for the sincere seeking heart. Unfortunately, however, the glorious truths connected with the second coming of Christ, like many other truths, have suffered at the hands of teachers, who for a variety of reasons have held down the truth. Truth has been perverted by pride, laziness, mercenary motives, false reverence for the traditions of men, and seeking the praise of men rather than the praise of God. Fear of suffering for the truth, or being thought unorthodox has blinded the minds of many to the truth.

The sin of being a teacher that tickles people's ears. 2Tim.4v1-4. James.3v1.

The false prophets of Israel and Judah painted a rosy picture when God said the future was very black. If we tickle people's ears with the things they want to hear; we will have to answer to God for such expediency. Those who preach wrong doctrine on the second coming of Christ are numbered amongst the false prophets by

the Lord. Mt.24v21-27. The penalties imposed by God will be proportionate to the effect of the false doctrine on Christians. In 1Cor.3v9-15., Paul warns us that Christian leaders, workers, and preachers can have all their works burned up, and be saved so as by fire. Let us prayerfully examine ourselves to see if there is any wicked way in us. Mt.7v15-23. 24v45-48. Mk.7v7-13. Jn9v34. Acts.20v30. 2Pet.2v3. 1Cor.4v1-5. 2Cor.2v17. Gal.1v10. 2v2. Eph.4v14. Phil.2v19-22. 1Tim.6v3-5. 2Tim.4v3,4. Titus.1v11. Heb.5v10-14. 1Pet.5v2. Jer.28v1-17.

The above Scriptures show us the great spiritual danger we are in if we think that we can treat the Word of God lightly. The mind has to be disciplined like the body; there is no place for intellectual laziness among Christian leaders. We are to worship God with all of our mind, as well as our heart, soul, and strength. Heb.5v11-14. Acts.17v10-12. 2Tim.2v14-26. N.B. v15,24. We need to wait upon God for the light that He alone can give. Gal.1v11,12. 1Cor.2v7-16. We should work out our sermons with fear and trembling as well as our salvation. Phil.2v12,13. Many who have repented of their sins, need to repent of their sermons. The Lord has not only a complete record of our actions, thoughts and words; He also records the intents of heart behind our actions, thoughts and words; and one day we will have to give an account of the thoughts and intents of our hearts, as well as every idle and untrue word. Mt.12v34-37. Heb.4v12. 2Cor.5v10. We need to keep our minds malleable and open to receive truth from wheresoever and whosoever it comes. Let us think before we speak and realise fully the words, "My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgement." James.3v1.

God does not expect babes in Christ to investigate and interpret truth without mature Christian aid.

God has set in the Church ministries whose work is to bring us to the same mind on all points of doctrine, that is, "the mind of Christ." 1Cor.1v10. 2v6,14-16. 3v1-4. Eph.4v7-16. A carnal mind and slothfulness will result in us remaining in permanent spiritual babyhood, when we should be mature teachers of truth. 1Cor.3v1-4. Heb.5v10 to 6v12. False teachers who try to mislead God's people on important doctrines render the work of teaching and training God's babes more difficult. 2Pet.2v1. Bible teachers should not insist on people accepting their own brand of theology, they should rather enable their hearers to understand the Scriptures for themselves. In the day of battle, the only truth that we can fight effectively with, is the truth that we have made our own, and is a part of our soul and experience.

3. CHRIST'S SECOND COMING IS AT A SET TIME, NOT AT ANY TIME.

Some Bible students state that at any time in history, the Church could have been caught up to heaven, and they believe that this can still happen at any moment. It is very difficult to understand how Christians can believe this after studying the Scriptures. Jesus said His return would be at an appointed time, and after many prophecies and signs have come to pass.

1. Jesus told Peter that he would die an old man. Jn.21v18-23.

In 2Pet.1v14,15., Peter reminded his hearers that our Lord had said that he would die when he was an old man, and stated in his second epistle that this was about to happen; he wrote this epistle in about A.D. 67 or 68. Peter also warned his hearers not to expect things to happen too quickly, for with the Lord, "a thousand years are as one day;" however, when the Lord fulfils the promise of His coming and returns, in one day He will do the work of a thousand years, "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years." Ps.90v4. with 2Pet.3v8-13. Peter was probably martyred at Rome in about A.D. 68.

2. Jesus said Jerusalem and the Temple had to be destroyed and Israel scattered among the Gentiles.

On several occasions our Lord prophesied that Jerusalem and the Temple of his time were going to be destroyed; this prophecy was fulfilled in A.D. 70. Mt.23v37-39. 24v1,2. Lk.19v41-44. 21v20-24. Christ also prophesied in Lk.21v24., that Israel was going to be scattered among the nations and then regathered to Palestine, this, as Jesus indicated in His parables, was obviously going to take "a long time" to come to pass. Mt.25v19. Lk.20v9. Jesus will return at a set time appointed by God

"The Times of the Gentiles," mentioned in Lk.21v24., take a long time to be fulfilled. They are the periods of time during which God has allowed many different nations to have empires, and to exercise authority and power over a period of many years. This has been a long-term purpose of God and has already lasted several millenniums. These "Times of the Gentiles," probably started at the Babylonian captivity, when God's purposes for Israel had been frustrated by their sin; and Christ said that these Gentile times will continue right up to His second coming. These Gentile times are designed to expose the hearts of men and break their pride. On judgement day "every mouth will be stopped, and all the world will become guilty before God," not only by the exposure of personal sin, but also by the exposure of national sin. The wickedness and misuse of power of every nation, and their failure to rule justly, righteously and in love, will be exposed and revealed to all. Rom.3v19.

Our Lord said His second coming would be "after a long time."

In His parable of the pounds in Lk.19v11-27. N.B. v11., our Lord warned His eager disciples of this long delay before His second coming and told them not to expect the kingdom of God to "immediately appear." In the parable of the vineyard Jesus again warned His disciples that it was going to be "A LONG TIME" before the murdered beloved Son, "the stone the builders rejected," was going to return to become "the head of the corner." Lk.20v9-18. N.B.v9,17.

In Mt.25v19., in the parable of the talents, the Lord again states of Himself, "AFTER A LONG TIME the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." In James.5v7,8., James exhorts his persecuted fellow-Christians to exercise "long patience" in waiting for the second coming of Christ; just as the husbandman waits for the harvest with "long patience" as well as "eager expectation." "Long patience," is "makrothumon," the present active participle of "makrothumeo," "to patiently endure, to have long patience." Our Lord waits patiently for that day. Heb.10v13.

We read in Rev.14v12., almost at the end of the great tribulation, that to overcome Antichrist, Christians will need to manifest "the patience of the saints." "Patience" here is the noun "hupomone," which speaks of endurance under trial, the same word describes the triumphant fortitude that Jesus manifested when he "endured the cross." Heb.12v2,3. Patience and endurance are fruits of Spirit that we need to manifest in our lives in connection with our Lord's second coming.

3. The Gospel had, and still has, to be preached to every nation.

Christ Himself states, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and THEN shall the end come." Mt.24v14. 28v19. Acts.1v8. Mk.16v15. Many of these nations have only been discovered in recent years. This preaching is through life as well as lips. Jesus is the light of the world, and He has told us that He desires His Church to reflect His glory and be the light of the world also. Jn.8v12. with Mt.5v14-16. The fulfilment of this task has brought much tribulation upon the Church, from the people of the world, who have loved darkness more than light because their deeds are evil. Jn.3v19-21. The sufferings of the Church in the Great Tribulation will only be what it has suffered down the centuries through trying to preach and live the Gospel. Indeed, it is not possible to suffer any more than untold millions of God's children have suffered for preaching Christ and His truth. God will certainly not take the Church out of the world in its hour of greatest need and leave billions of needy souls in darkness and despair without the light and hope of the Gospel. This is totally alien to the spirit of the cross. The Scriptures state that Christians will be preaching and dying for Christ and His Gospel until the day of His coming at the end of the great tribulation. Mt.24v13,14,29-31. Acts.2v20,21. Rev.6v9-11. 7v13-15. 11v3-7. 12v17. 13v7. 14v12-20. 15v2,3. 16v6. 17v6. 18v24. 19v2. 20v4-6. etc.

4. THE SIGNS OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

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 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." Mt.24v33. Lk.21v28,31. Though the day of the Lord will come as a thief upon the worldling and unlearned carnal Christian, Paul states in 1Thes.5v1-4., that it will not come as a thief upon Christians who know prophetic truth and are walking in the light. Mt.24v3,29,32-36. 25v13. Mk.13v28,29. Lk.21v25,26.

It is obvious from comparing Matt.24, Mk.13. and Lk.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 Mt.24v15. and Mk.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 Lk.21v24., the equally important prophecy, that after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, 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.

1. 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. Mt.24v5,11,24,25. 2Thes.2v3-12. Rev.12v7-12. 13v1-18. 16v13,14. 1Jn.5v19. Eph.2v1-3. 3v10. 6v11,12. 2Cor.4v4. Jn.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. Mt.24v37. Christians will have to walk with God, and put on the whole armour of God, to stand in these evil days. Eph.6v10-20. Lk.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. Mt.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. Mt.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. 2Thes.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. 2Thes.2v3,4.

2. A Worldwide Persecution of Christians.

In Mt.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 2Thes.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 2Thes.2v3., is "apostasia," and could be translated as "rebellion, revolt, or apostasy."

A.T. Robertson comments on "apostasia" in 2Thes.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.2:15 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 2Thes.2v3,8. Paul gives Antichrist three dreadful names. In 2Thes.2v3., Paul calls him "the man of sin," "ho anthropos tes hamartias," (and "hamartias," "sin," is the reading of most manuscripts; "anomias," "lawlessness," is the minority reading"). In 2Thes.2v3., Antichrist is also called "the son of perdition," "ho huios tes apoleias," which is the identical phrase used by Jesus in Jn.17v12., to describe Judas. In 2Thes2v8., 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.

3. 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.

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

In Mt.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"). 2Thes.2v8,9.

"As in the days of Noah." A major cause of this lawlessness is 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.6v5-13. This moral degeneration was also caused by evil spirits infiltrating mankind by taking upon themselves fleshly bodies, which though outwardly similar to human bodies were basically different from those of mankind. 1Pet.3v19,20. Jude.v6. These were the giants of Scripture. These giants are called:- The Nephilim, Gen.6v4. and 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 Is.26v14., we read the "dead," the Hebrew is "rephaim," "giants," will not be resurrected by God.

Ethnic conflicts. This lawlessness will also be seen in the hatred, conflicts and wars between ethnic groups, as our Lord said in Lk.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. Mt.24v7-9,21,22.

b. 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 Lk.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 Tit.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 Lk.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 Lk.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. 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, Exod.7v11., and Elymas withstood Paul. Exod.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.

4. 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. Mt.24v6,7. Lk.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. Mt.24v15,21,22.

5. 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. Mt.14v7. Lk.21v25. Zech.14v5. Rev.6v5,6. 16v18-20.

6. The Gospel has to be preached to all the world before the end can come. Mt.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.

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

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

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

Since I wrote the first edition of this book over fifty years ago, there has been a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Christians of all denominations. 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.

9. Scoffers of the coming of Christ. 2Pet.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. Ps.1v4-6. 2v1-12.

10. 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." Mt.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.

11. 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 Ps.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.**

When I read these articles in 1958 I thought that this was possibly the Temple that was going to be desecrated by the Antichrist; however, at that time I did give the following cautionary note in my book, "Let us wait and see, some say that another Temple is planned." These were wise words; events and **further knowledge have convinced me that this is NOT the temple that Antichrist will desecrate. Where will this desecrated Sanctuary be situated? Three possibilities come to mind.**

a. 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 A.D. 70, 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 in A.D. 70; 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.**

b. 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, Ex.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 2Thes.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.**

c. 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? I ask the same question today that I asked in 1958. 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 (Is. 48v2.) under foot, "patesousin," the future active of "pateo," here it means to trample with contempt, as in Lk. 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. Mk. 11v17. Jesus states in Lk. 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 Mt. 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.

12. 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. Mt. 24v15. Paul corrected the wrong ideas of the Thessalonians with the same truths. 2Thes. 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 prince of the covenant," the Antichrist.

Jesus also states in Mt. 24v21. that the 3½ years of great tribulation spoken of in Dan. 12v1,6,7., will follow this desecration of the sanctuary. In 2Thes. 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 Daniel. 9v20-28.. 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."

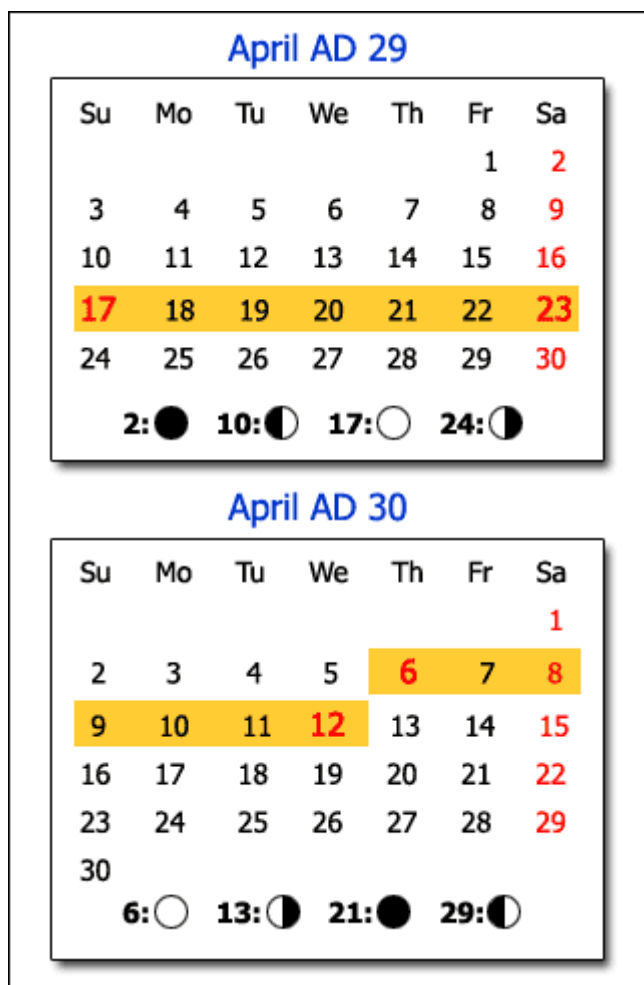
The second coming of Christ is to take place seven years after "the prince that shall come," or "the king of the North," as he is also called, makes a treaty with Israel. Dan. 9v26,27. 11v40. Jesus said that the period of seven years that is mentioned in Dan. 9v27., was yet in the future, and that this 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 B.C.**, on the evidence of Thucydides and Eusebius. This would give a date of **454 B.C.** For the commandment being proclaimed, and according to Daniel's prophecy, Jesus would die at Jerusalem 483 years later. So 454 B.C. plus 483 years brings it to A.D. 30, for as B.C. 1 to A.D. 1 is one year, this would make it A.D. 30, not A.D. 29.

S. P. Tregelles says that Jesus died in A.D. 29 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 A.D. 29; for his division of the

seventy Heptads differs from mine, and he did not regard A.D. 29 as the date of the crucifixion of our Lord." **End of Tregelles quote.**

However, others think that the Lord Jesus was crucified in A.D. 30, 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 A.D. 29, 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.. Tragelless and Ussher obviously had recourse to some kind of Jewish calendar, so one wonders if this calendar for A.D. 30 could really be their calendar for A.D. 29. 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 A.D. 29, or A.D. 30, almost certainly in A.D. 30, on Thursday, April 6th., Nisan 15th., not on Friday, for **according to Mt.12v40., Jesus was raised from the dead "after three days and three nights."** See "the third day," "after three days," etc., in Mt.16v4,21. 17v23. 20v19. 27v40,63,64. Mk.8v31. 10v34. Jn.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 Mt.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. Mt.24v32,33. Paul reminds the Thessalonian Christians of this fact in 2Thes.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." Mt.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."

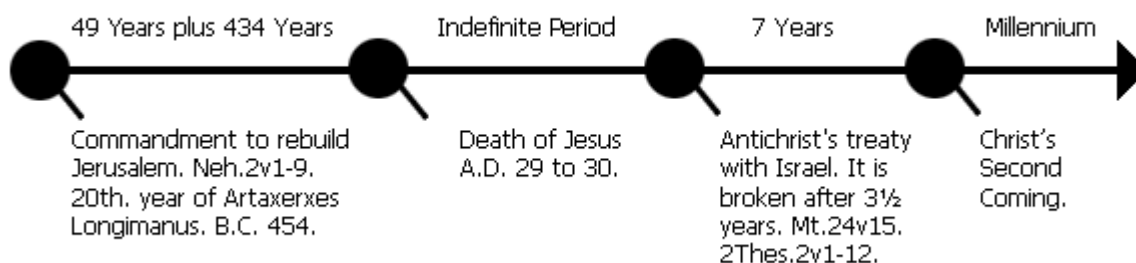
Jesus informs us that when the King of the North, Antichrist, breaks the treaty and puts his image in the holy place in the temple at Jerusalem, we have 3½ years to go to the coming of Christ. The King of the North could

be the head of Russia, 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. We shall have to wait and see which one of these three fulfil the prophecy; time and world events will make it clear. Mt.24v15,16,21,29-31. 2Thes.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 A.D.70., 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. Mt.24v21,29-31. Mk.13v19. The great tribulation ends with the destruction of the armies of Antichrist around a devastated Jerusalem. Lk.17v37. Rev.17v16-18. 18v1 to 19v21. 2Thes.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. Lk.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. 1Pet.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. 2Pet.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.

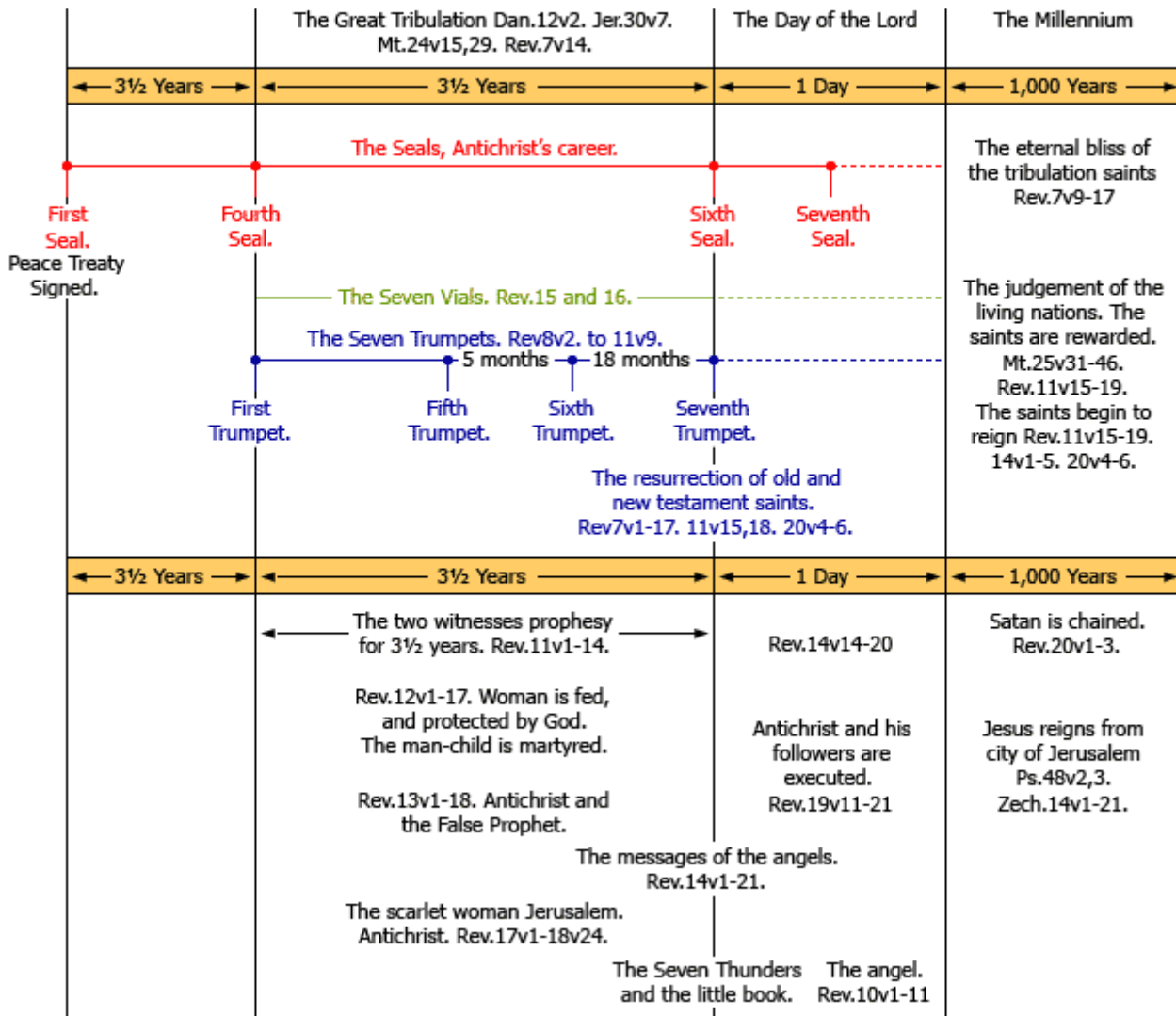
CHART OF DANIEL'S 70 WEEKS OF YEARS. Dan.9v20-27.



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.



5. WILL THE CHURCH GO THROUGH THE GREAT TRIBULATION?

1. Can Christ come at any moment without any predicted signs preceding His Advent?

The Scriptures teach that Jesus will not return until certain signs have come to pass, however, some teach that Christ can return at any moment without any prior signs taking place, we will now show why this view is not correct.

a. Does "Coming as a thief," mean "an any moment coming?"

Some take Christ's coming "as a thief in the night," to mean that He will secretly return without any prior signs. However, Paul writes, in 1Thes.5v2., that Christ's coming "as a thief" will bring "sudden destruction" on the wicked, "and they shall not escape." Peter also states, in 2Pet.3v10., that Christ's coming "as a thief" will be "with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." Hardly a secret coming! Christ's coming will be "as a thief" to the wicked, it will certainly be a fearful unexpected shock to them. In 1Thes.5v2-4., Paul tells us that the day of the Lord will come upon the world as a thief, but it will not overtake us as a thief. Christ's coming will surprise the world, but it will be no surprise to the watching informed Church. Lk.21v34-36. 2Pet.1v19. 3v2,10-15. Paul states that the Church will still be on earth, when Christ comes to destroy Antichrist, not taken to heaven years before in a secret rapture. 2Thes.1v5-11. 2v1-12. Jesus warns us that lack of watchfulness and prayer, ignorance of the Scriptures, and a carnal worldly life will have serious consequences in the last days, and can lead to apostasy. Lk.21v34. Mt.24v42-51. 25v1-30.

b. Christ's second coming was a day only known to the Father.

Some say that our Lord's words, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only," teach that the coming of Christ can occur at any moment. Mk.13v32. Mt.24v36,42. They ignore the fact that these verses are in a context of signs, which specifically state

that our Lord's coming is at a preordained time. Mt.24v32,33. Mk.13v28,29. Jesus said that when these signs come to pass, we shall know that his second coming "is near, even at the doors." Mt.24v33. Jesus tells us that we will know the year of His coming by the fulfilment of certain specific signs, and mentions the prophecy of Daniel as a Scripture proof of this fact. We read in Dan.9v27., that Christ will return 3½ years after Antichrist breaks his treaty with Israel. During His humanity Jesus said that He did not know the day of His second coming; however, since His exaltation and glorification He undoubtedly knows the day and time of His return. The phrases, "must shortly come to pass," and, "the time is at hand," in Rev.1v1,3. and 22v10., must be interpreted in the light of God's eternal being, to whom a thousand years is as but a day, as Peter warns us in 2Pet.3v8. Ps.90v4.

c. Watching for His coming does not mean an any-moment coming.

Some would say that such exhortations as "look for," "watch," "wait for," and "be ready," which are addressed to the Christ's apostles, indicate that Christ taught them to expect His second coming at any moment in Church history. In fact the very opposite is true, Christ taught that some of the signs that He foretold would take a long time to come to pass. It is just as possible to eagerly look for, wait for, and be ready for events that are far off, as it is to be ready for events in the immediate future. In 2Pet.3v13., Peter exhorts us to look for a new heaven and a new earth, however, though both Heaven and Earth are renewed at our Lord's second coming, this does not occur in its fullness until the end of the Millennium. Is.65v17-25. Rev.21v1. The Scriptures clearly tell us that Christians are to look for the glorious appearing of Jesus, not a secret any-moment coming. Lk.12v36. 21v27,28. Phil.3v20,21. 1Thes.1v9,10. with 2Thes.1v7-10. Titus.2v13.

d. Christ's sure coming, not His immediate coming, is our purifying hope.

Some say that if you do away with an any moment return of Christ, you do away with a great incentive to holiness and comfort. However, going into the presence of God by death is an any moment possibility for every believer, and so we should live accordingly. It is not the immediate coming, but the sure coming of Christ that is a purifying hope, and the fact that we will have to give an account of all of our Christian life, not just our condition at His appearing. 2Cor.5v8-11,15. We do not live righteously just because Jesus might come at any time and catch us misbehaving, but because He loved us and died for us, and we love Him in return, and love to keep His commandments. Jn.14v21-24. If we love Jesus we want to please Him and not be ashamed of our life when He returns. 1Jn.2v28,29. The coming of Christ is a great comfort to believers, not because we will miss the great tribulation, but because we shall see our dear Lord Jesus face to face, and be with Him forever. The last days will be so dark, that Christ's coming will be an even greater comfort and hope, because we know our Son of righteousness will rise with healing in His wings and will destroy the world's gross darkness. Mal.4v1-3. Titus.2v13.

2. The early Church did not expect Christ to come at any moment.

We have already considered some of these facts, however, further consideration will help to engrave them on our memories.

a. Our Lord prophesied and told Peter that he would die a martyr's death as an old man. Jn.21v18,19.

In 1Pet.1v14,15., Peter reminded his hearers about our Lord's prophecy of his death. Paul also told Timothy that he was expecting to die for the faith. 2Tim.4v6-8. So both Peter and Paul were expecting to die, and not be raptured before death. Jesus could not return until Peter and Paul had died, and the many other signs, which He predicted would precede His coming, had come to pass.

b. Jerusalem and the Temple had to be destroyed and the Jews regathered as an independent nation.

Their holy of holies had to be rebuilt to fulfil Lk.21v20-24. This would obviously take a considerable time.

c. The parables of Christ inform us that His return would take place after a considerable interval.

Jesus said in the parable of the talents that, "after a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." Mt.25v19. And in the parable of the pounds Jesus expressly gave this parable to correct the wrong idea "that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Lk.19v11. Our Lord also said that the wheat and the tares will be gathered at the harvest at "the end of the age," He said the tares are gathered first and destroyed before the kingdom gathering of the saints. Mt.13v24-30,36-43. Jesus said "at the end of the age: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire." Mt.13v47-50.

d. The commission to go and teach all nations obviously has not been fulfilled even today.

Jesus tells us that this must occur before His coming. Mt.24v14. 28v18-20 Mk.16v15. Jesus cannot return at any moment, for the Scriptures state the very opposite, they say that specific signs like this must come to pass before He returns.

3. Is the second coming of Christ a secret coming, and is the rapture secret?

a. The amazing distortion of the Scriptures by the pretribulation rapture advocates.

When commenting on Matthew 24, one of the leading pretribulation rapture writers, states that the Church has been raptured "possibly between the eighth and ninth verses of this chapter." This is a truly amazing twisting of the facts, for in Mt.24v26,27., Christ emphatically warns His disciples against the teaching of a secret coming. The only kind of second coming of Christ revealed in the Scriptures is a coming in glory. Titus.2v13. There is no

other kind of coming either suggested or stated. The doctrine of a secret coming and a secret rapture stands in direct contradiction to the Scriptures.

S. P. Tregelles, in His "The Hope of Christ's Second Coming," writes on pages 63 to 65.

"Our Lord has promised that He will return in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and that then He will send forth His angels to gather His elect. The secret advent doctrine teaches that He will come privately, and that then He will raise His sleeping saints and change the living, taking them up to Himself a good while before His manifestation.

The Scripture warns the saints of perilous times, and of evils in the latter day before the coming of Christ. The secret advent theory maintains that no such events can be known as would interpose an interval between the present moment and the coming of the Lord.

The Scripture speaks only of Christ's second coming, until which He remains at the right hand of God the Father. The secret advent is a notion entirely opposed to this; for it represents our Lord coming in a private manner to take the Church to meet Him, and then at a future period (according to some, a long interval) coming in glory; and this some call His third coming.

The Scripture teaches the Church to wait for the manifestation of Christ. The secret theory bids us to expect a coming before any such manifestation. Our Lord says that the wheat and tares shall be together in the field until the harvest. The doctrine of the secret rapture affirms that at some time considerably before the harvest, all the wheat shall have been removed, leaving only tares. Our Lord bids us look for certain signs, and use them in our watching. The advocates of the secret advent contradict this, saying that the signs are not for us.

The Scripture tells us that the 'first' resurrection of the saints will be when the Lord has come forth as the conqueror, and that those will share in this resurrection who have suffered under the final Antichrist. The teachers of the secret doctrine say that the resurrection of the present Church will take place long 'before the first resurrection,' and before the manifestation of Antichrist.

Is it not surprising that men with their Bibles in their hands, can be led to adopt a theory of doctrine which not only adds to Scripture, but contradicts it at all points? This is just the simple and natural consequence of the acceptance of the one leading addition to Scripture, that there shall be a secret coming of the Lord, and a secret rapture of His Church.

When Christ distinctly states a truth, it might have been expected that at least those who profess to be His believing people would receive those words as conclusive; and thus it might have been thought that those only who avowedly reject His authority would deny the force of what He said. Now our Lord has expressly taught us that His coming shall not be secret: He has told us this, not only by saying that it will be manifest, but also by warning against any supposition of secret coming as suits some of the 'Jewish' notions. After speaking of the unequalled tribulation, He says, 'Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders: insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightening cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.' Mt.24v23-27. No man with these words in his Bible, ought to accept the doctrine of any secret coming without feeling that he is casting off, in so doing, the authority of the Lord; for this is done, virtually, when the warning of Christ is treated as if He had taught the very reverse, and as if He had charged us to believe what, in reality, He says shall never be, and against the supposition of which He warns us." **End of Tregelles quote.**

b. If Christ's coming is secret, how do we know that it has not happened?

If the coming of Christ is a secret coming, what proof have the secret rapture advocates that it has not already taken place? Thanks be to God, we are not left to such uncertainties, Peter tells us that the Scriptures are a sure guide to the second coming of Christ. 2Pet.1v19. However, if someone substitutes a secret coming for the glorious appearing of Christ, the prophetic Word of God becomes no guide at all, and even Christians may well ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?"

c. The correct interpretation of the Typology of Noah and Lot.

Some teach that Enoch, Elijah and Lot prove that the Church will be saved from the great tribulation. Our Lord clearly teaches the very opposite of this in Lk.17v26-30.; the flood that destroyed the world and the fire that fell and consumed Sodom, are used as pictures, not of the tribulation, but of the day of the Lord that follows that great tribulation. Christ uses these Old Testament characters as illustrations of truth, not as types, they are used to illustrate known facts, not to produce supposed facts. Christ stresses in Lk.17v22-37., that the day the saints are raptured is the day of God's wrath on the wicked, "they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, **until the day** that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.-- -The **same day** that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. even thus shall it be **in the day** when the son of man is revealed. In that day, --- in that night --- one shall be taken and the other shall be left." The day that shall burn as an oven is the day that the Son of righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings. Mal.4v1-3.

d. Paul corrects the confused Thessalonians.

The Christians at Thessalonica were confused about the Lord's return, they thought that the rapture, "our gathering together unto Him," and the day of the Lord were at hand. 2Thes.2v1-12. They feared that they were in the terrible last days because of the dreadful persecution they were suffering. 1Thes.2v2,14. If there was to be a pretribulation rapture, here was the time for Paul to state it; but Paul does not give the slightest hint of such a doctrine; in fact he says the very opposite. Paul gives specific signs that would show them that the day of the Lord was at hand; the great apostasy, the revelation of Antichrist and his desecration of the holy of holies, and his destruction by Christ at His coming. 2Thes.2v1-12. Paul only spent three weeks at Thessalonica during his first visit there, so extensive teaching was not possible, and this is perhaps why they went astray on the doctrine of Christ's second coming. Acts.17v1-10. N.B. v2.

4. The day of Christ and the day of the Lord are the same event.

Some people say that the day of Christ and the day of the Lord are two different events, the first being the coming of Christ for His people, and the other being the revelation of Christ to the world at later date in judgement. This theory is quite unfounded, as they are both speaking of the same event. The folly of laying such an emphasis upon the difference of these two phases is seen when one considers such phases as, "that ye may be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ." 1Cor.1v7,8. 1Thes.3v13. 2Thes.2v1. In the epistles of Paul the words "Christ" and "Lord" are used interchangeably, as reference to any concordance will show. See Eph.1v3,10,12,20. 3v6,17. 4v15,20 with Eph.2v21. 4v17. 5v8. 6v1,10,21. In the Scriptures "the day of the Lord" refers to Christians standing before the judgement seat of Christ. 2Cor.1v14. 1Cor.5v5. See 2Cor.5v9-11. The day of the Lord, the day of Christ's glorious appearing, is the hope of the Church and the day when Christians are judged and rewarded. Titus.2v13. Mt.24v30. 25v31. with 16v27 Lk.9v23-26. Rev.11v15,18. 1Cor.3v10-15. 4v1-5. 2Cor.5v8-11. See also 1Cor.1v8. 2Cor.1v14. 2Pet.3v12. Phil.1v6,10. Rev.1v7.

Christ warned us not to believe in a secret advent and secret rapture, He tells us that He will not return until He comes in His power and glory. Mt.24v24-27. Lk.17v23,24. 21v8. Mk.13v21,22. Jesus sits at the right hand of His Father until He comes to destroy the wicked, there is no prior visitation years before for His saints. Ps.110v1. with Mt.22v41-45. Acts.3v20,21.

In the light of these Scriptures, can anybody say that the day of the Lord and the day of Christ are different events? The proof is conclusive that they are interchangeable synonymous phrases speaking of the same event.

5. The secret rapture doctrine is preparing the way for false prophets.

Many Christian leaders have ignored the solemn warning of Christ that we must not look for a secret advent. Jesus warns us that it is false prophets who will teach that He will return secretly. Mt.24v23-27. The doctrine of a secret advent is a false doctrine that is preached by the Jehovah's Witnesses, and it is preparing the ground for even worse false prophets. Some false prophets of the last days will possess great satanic power, and show so many signs and wonders to substantiate their claims, that they will deceive many. Mt.24v23-31. Jesus tells us not to believe a secret coming because His coming will be as visible as a lightening flash, and His coming will be with power and great glory. Mt.24v23-31. The fulfilment of Acts.1v11., is a coming in glory. Rev.1v7-12. 14v14-20. Zech.14v4. We rise to meet Christ as He descends to set up His Kingdom and judge the earth. The Greek word for "meet" in 1Thes.4v17., is "apantesis," it occurs in three places in the New Testament, in 1Thes.4v17. Mt.25v1,6. and Acts.28v15., and in all three cases the people concerned went out to meet someone, and then returned with the person they went out to meet.

Christ taught that He would come in glory for His saints at the end of the great tribulation, when Antichrist's armies sack and surround Jerusalem like an evil brood of eagle vultures. Mt.24v27,28. Lk.17v22-24. 30-37. Rev.17v16 to 18v24. Our Lord Jesus gave His disciples the signs that would occur before His coming in glory, both He and His disciples only knew of one coming, as did Paul and the apostle John. 2Thes.2v1,8. 1Jn.2v28. 3v2. Rev1v7. Those who apply the teachings of Christ in Gospels on His second coming to the Jewish nation, leave the Church of Christ without any teaching from Christ as to what they may expect at the end of the age regarding His second coming. It is the utmost folly to say that Mt.24. Lk.17. and 21. and Mk.13. are accounts dealing with unconverted Jews.

It is a tragic fact that many Christian leaders have readily accepted doctrine on Christ's second coming that is directly opposed to the Scriptures, and came into being through Margaret MacDonald's false prophecy. In 2Thes.2v1-8., Paul warns us that Antichrist must first be manifested and sit in God's Temple and claim that he is God before Christ can return, and that Christ will come for His own and destroy Antichrist at the same time, and warns us not to believe any teaching that tells us otherwise. 2Thes.1v5-11. How sad it is that many Christians have ignored Paul's warning and have been deceived by a false prophecy.

N.B. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place after the day of the Lord.

When is the marriage supper of the Lamb? Some confusion has arisen as to when the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place, however, Is.25v6-9. and Rev.19v1-9., tell us quite plainly that the marriage supper of the Lamb takes place after the wicked are destroyed on the day of the Lord and the Millennial kingdom is set up. The Scriptures make it quite plain that the day of the Lord is a day of judgement, at the end of the great tribulation, which ushers in the Millennial kingdom. Is.2v12. 13v6,9. 34v8. Joel.1v15. 3v14. Amos.5v18. Zeph.2v2,3. Zech.14v1-21. 2Pet.3v10. It is the time when the Lord comes for His people, and gives rewards to

Christians. 2Thes.1v6-10. Rev.11v15,18. Mt.16v27. Lk.9v23-26. Paul says that it is at the day of Christ that he expects His reward. Phil.2v16. 1Cor.3v10-15. 2Cor.5v9-11. The day of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the hope of faithful Israel, as well as the hope of the Church.

Oswald Smith, in his book, "God's future Program," sums up the argument against an "any moment" rapture of the Church: "Then when I remembered that the death of Peter, his prediction of corruption and apostasy after his decease, the death of Paul, and many other events had to occur before the rapture, my "any moment" theory took wings and flew."

6. JERUSALEM'S HOLOCAUST IN A.D.70 WAS NOT THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

There is a dual fulfilment of our Lord's prophecies in Mt.24. In Mt.24v3., the apostles asked two questions, "Tell us, when shall these things be? The destruction of the temple. And, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?" Whereas, Lk.21v6,7., (like Mk.13v2-4.), only mentions the stones of the temple being torn down, and both Luke and Mark omit Christ's statement on the end of the age; Luke records the question, "Master, but when shall these things be? And, "What sign will there be when these things come to pass?" The prophecy in Lk.21v20. of "Jerusalem surrounded by armies" was fulfilled in A.D. 70.; whereas, in Lk.17v37. the destruction of Jerusalem by Antichrist at the end of the age, is likened to a carcass, which is surrounded by eagle vultures picking at the bones of a carcass. The abomination of desolation and the period known as the great tribulation were not fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70., for the following reasons.

1. In A.D. 70 the abomination of desolation took place after the burning of the Temple.

The abomination of desolation and the great tribulation were not fulfilled in A.D. 70. Josephus states the Temple was destroyed by fire before it was defiled by sacrifice to the Roman standards and gods, and the Emperor. Philip Schaff writes in his "Church History," Vol. 1. page 398; that **after** the fire, that the Romans planted their eagles on the shapeless ruins, against the eastern gate, and offered sacrifices to them, and proclaimed Titus, "Imperator," with the greatest acclamations of joy."

Josephus tells us in "Wars," Book 6. Chapter 4, paragraphs 4 to 7, that Titus did not want the temple to be destroyed, and with a loud voice ordered the soldiers to quench the fire, but they did not hear what he said with the distraction and noise of battle. Josephus writes that Titus "was in no way able to restrain the enthusiastic fury of the soldiers, and the fire proceeded on more and more, ... and thus was the holy house burned down, without Caesar's approbation." End of quote.

2. The Jews could not flee from Jerusalem after the destruction and desecration of the Temple.

It was impossible for the Jews to flee from Jerusalem after the destruction and desecration of the temple by Titus, for Titus built a wall around the city and closely guarded it. If the Christians had applied the prophecy of the abomination of desolation to the events of A.D. 70, and waited for the desecration of the temple, it would have meant the death of them all. Christ, therefore, so that none of his disciples would misinterpret His prophecy, warned certain "approved men" in Jerusalem of the approaching disaster, just before the start of the war in A.D. 66, and commanded them to leave Jerusalem and go to Pella in Perea.

The Church historian Eusebius lived about 260 to 339 A.D., and was the Bishop of Caesarea." On page 75 of the translation of "The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus," by the Rev. C. F. Cruse, in his 1892 edition, in Book 3, Chapter 5. "The whole body, however, of the Church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella."

Our Lord's brokenhearted weeping over Jerusalem in Lk.19v41-44., contradicts the conclusion of Eusebius, that Jerusalem's destruction was God's punishment of the Jews for rejecting Christ. Josephus was an eye witness of these events, and he writes in his "Wars," Book 6, Chapter 5, paragraph 4.: that the Jews perished by the miseries which they madly and voluntarily brought upon themselves; many of the wise men were deceived in their determination to misinterpret and misapply to themselves an ambiguous oracle that, at "about that time one from their own country should become governor of the habitable earth." Josephus applies this to Vespasian, who was appointed Emperor in Judea by the armies there.

Schaff's "Church History," page 402, says, "Eusebius puts the flight to Pella before the war...four years before the destruction of Jerusalem." Epiphanius says the Christians at Jerusalem went to Pella after Christ warned them of the approaching siege, and in another place he states that an angel told them to flee to Pella. So it appears that our Lord personally, and through angels, warned of the destruction of Jerusalem, just as he did over the destruction of Sodom. Gen.18v16-33. 19v1,12-29.

3. Neither Vespasian nor Titus remotely resemble the Prince of the Covenant.

Neither Vespasian nor Titus made a covenant with the Jews; there was no 7-year period, no break after 3½ years, nor anything that could fulfil the abomination of desolation of Dan.9v24-27. and Rev.12v11.. The Jews themselves stopped the sacrifices, not Titus. Schaff tells us in his "Church History," Vol. 1, page 397, "The daily sacrifices ceased July 17th, because all hands were needed for the defence." On page 398 he states the temple "was burned on the tenth of August, A.D. 70."

4. The Prince of the Covenant is destroyed by Jesus at His second coming.

The prince of the covenant "shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." Dan.8v25. He is thrown into the lake of fire. Rev.19v20. Jesus destroys Antichrist at His appearing. Mt.24v30. 2Thes.2v8,9.

5. The dead will be raised at the end of these 3½ years.

This is definitely stated in Dan.12v2. Is.25v6-9. 1Thes.4v13-17. 1Cor.15v50-53. Rev.11v15-18. and 20v4-6.. Jesus gathers His elect after the great tribulation, with the sound of a great trumpet. Mt.24v31. with 1Thes.4v16. and Is.27v13.

6. Everlasting righteousness is brought in at the fulfilment of this prophecy. Dan.9v24.

Everlasting righteousness will be brought in, and prophecy will be sealed up, and transgression finished, when the prophecies of the Millennial kingdom are fulfilled, and God's reign of righteousness begins. Is.32v1,17. Rev.10v7.

7. The death of Jesus did not fulfil the cessation of the daily sacrifices. Dan.9v27. 11v31.

The Jewish rituals and sacrifices continued after the death of Christ. Heb.8v4. Jesus died 483 years after the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem; the last 7 years and the abomination of desolation is in the future until the prophecies are fulfilled.

These historical and prophetic facts refute the conclusion that the Jerusalem Church fled because they saw the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy of the abomination of desolation. The flight to Pella partly fits Lk.21v20-24., but it in no way fits in with the prophecy of the abomination of desolation and the great tribulation as recorded in Mt.24v15-31. and Mk.13v14-27..

THE AMAZING SIGNS GOD GAVE TO WARN JERUSALEM OF HER DESTRUCTION IN A.D. 70.

The Jews having rejected Jesus, their true prophet and Messiah, were deluded by a great number of false prophets. Josephus tells us in "Wars," Book 6, Chapter 5, paragraphs 2,3,4, that they refused great signs and warnings from God of their impending doom and believed their false prophets, and that not one escaped with their life who had obeyed a false prophet's proclamation "that God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance."

Josephus continues: "Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend, nor give credit, to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation; but like men infatuated, without either eyes to see, or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them.

(1) Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet that continued a whole year.

(2) Thus also before the Jew's rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus (Nisan, April), and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which light lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskilful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it.

(3) At the same festival also, an heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple.

(4) Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner (court of the) temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Now those that kept watch in the temple came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and, not without great difficulty, was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared, that the signal foreshowed the desolation that was coming upon them.

(5) Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the one-and-twentieth day of the month Artemisius (Jyar, May), a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared; I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding cities. Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the high priests were going by night in to the inner (court of the) temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, 'Let us remove hence.'

(6) But what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus (the son of Ananias according to Eusebius), the son of a plebeian and an husbandman, who, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast, whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the temple, began to cry aloud, 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!' This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet did not he either say anything for himself, or any thing peculiar to those that chastised him, but still he went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon our rulers, supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator: where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, 'Woe, woe, to Jerusalem!' And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him, Who he was? and whence he came? and why he uttered such words? he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him.

Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow,- 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' Nor did he give ill words to any of them that beat him every day, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months without growing hoarse or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, 'Woe, woe to the city again, and to this people, and to the holy house!' And just as he added to the last,-'Woe, woe to myself also!' there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the same presages, he gave up the ghost." **End of quote.**

Josephus well sums up the loving purpose of God's warning signs at the start of paragraph 4. "Now, if any one consider these things, he will find that God takes care of mankind, and by all ways possible foreshows to our race, what is for their preservation; but that men perish by those miseries which they madly and voluntarily bring upon themselves."

7. WHAT IS PAUL TEACHING IN 2THES.2v1-12.?

This is one of the most important Scriptures for determining when the second coming of Christ will take place, so it deserves special attention. In 2Thes.2v1., Paul is certainly not appealing to the Thessalonians "by" the coming of the Lord, as the Authorised Version seems to state, he is stating the subject about which he is going to write. The Authorised Version has translated the Greek word "huper" as "by," but it is the only place in the New Testament where it is translated in this way. Paul "earnestly entreats," ("erotomen," the present active indicative), the Thessalonians to take heed to the doctrine concerning the second coming of Jesus. Where Paul appeals to Christians, "by the mercies of God" and "by the name of our Lord Jesus," etc., Paul uses the Greek word "dia," that is "through." Rom.12v1. 1Cor.1v10. 2Cor.10v1. 5v20. Most translators make it very clear that Paul is stating the subject, which he intends to consider.

The Abbot Smith Lexicon states, "In a more colourless sense, it equals 'peri,' for, concerning, with regard to: Rom.9v27., 2Cor.1v6. 8v23. 12v8. Phil.1v7. 2Thes.2v1.." A.T. Robertson makes a similar comment on 2Thes.2v1.. "'Huper' originally meant over, in behalf of, instead of, but here it is used like 'peri,' around, concerning as in 1v4; 1Thes.3v2; 5v10, common in the papyri (Robertson 'Grammar,' p.632)."

Young's Literal Translation translates, "in regard to the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Revised Standard Version, "Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet Him."

These translators make it clear that Paul is stating the subject, which he is trying to clarify and clear from misconception. The Thessalonians thought the great tribulation had come, because of how they were suffering, Paul told them that it was not so, and warned them not to accept any supposed revelation, message, or letter, that the day of the Lord was at hand; and, like his Lord, told them that the following unmistakable signs and events that must take place before Christ can return.

- a. A great falling away, and a powerless imitation of true Christianity. Mt.24v12. 1Tim.4v1-5. 2Tim.3v1-17.
- b. The coming of the Antichrist with "the workings of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." 2Thes.2v9.; and the placing of His image in the holy place "topo agio," Mt.24v15.; in the sanctuary, "naon," the innermost part of the Temple. 2Thes.2v4. Our Lord and Paul both state that His second coming cannot take place until Antichrist and the accompanying signs are manifested. Jesus destroys Antichrist with the brightness of His coming, "parousia." The use of "parousia" in connection with Christ's coming to destroy the wicked, deals the death blow to the argument that "parousia" is used for Christ's coming to His people in a secret presence and rapture.

The Greek word "parousia" is used to speak of the actual presence of a person, the Corinthians expressed

contempt for Paul's weak bodily presence. 1Cor.16v17. 2Cor.7v6. 10v10. Phil.2v12. In the Hellenistic Greek, "parousia" was used as a technical word describing the arrival of an Emperor, King, or famous person into a town or province. It was also used to describe the invasion of a new and conquering general or power. In the New Testament the word "parousia" is used mainly in connection with the second coming of Christ, it tells us that King Jesus is coming to reign in power and glory. "Parousia" is used in connection with the second coming of Christ in; Mt.24v3,27,27,39. 1Cor.15v23. 1Thes.2v19. 3v13. 4v15. 5v23. 2Thes.2v1,8. James.5v7,8. 2Pet.1v16. 3v4,12. 1Jn.2v28. In 2Thes.2v8,9., Paul uses the word "parousia" to describe both the coming of Christ and the coming of Antichrist, and Paul states that the evil presence of Antichrist will be destroyed by the brightness and glory of Christ's presence. Even as the world will see and know of the presence of Antichrist, they will see and know of the presence of Christ. The "parousia" of Christ is linked with the day of the Lord and the destruction of the wicked. 2Thes.2v1,8. 2Pet.3v4,12. See Zech.14v4-12. with Acts.1v10-12. Mal.4v1,31. with 25v31,41. Luke.17v22-27. 2Thes.1v6-10. 2v1-12. 2Pet.3v1-14. Jude.v14,15. with 1Thes.4v14. Rev.6v12-17. 19v1-21. That the "parousia" of Christ is His coming in glory is also proved by the fact that it is used in Mt.24v27., in connection with the glorious coming of Christ. See Appendix.

Who is the restrainer of 2Thes.2v7.?

The restrainer is undoubtedly God, for though "that which restraineth" in verse 6, is the neuter "to katechon; in verse 7 Paul uses the masculine "ho katechon," "He who restrains." "Katechon," is the present active participle of "katecho," "to hold down, to restrain." Only God can exercise this continuous active restraint on the powers of darkness. Some have suggested that the neuter is used in verse 6 because the Greek word for "spirit" is neuter. Paul had to use the neuter to speak of the impersonal restraining power of God, whereas in verse 7 Paul is speaking of the person of God who manifests that power. "Taken out of the way," is "genetai," the aorist middle subjunctive of "ginomai," Paul speaks of that future point of time when God removes His restraint off the plans of the powers of darkness. This certainly does not mean that God's presence leaves the earth. Ps.139v7-10. God has promised that He will do mighty acts of power in the world, right up to the day of the Lord at the end of the great tribulation. Acts.2v17-21.

God is exercising a restraining influence on the powers of darkness, He only allows them to go so far with their evil plans, however, God is going to remove this limiting influence for a few years at the close of the age, and that is what is referred to in 2Thes.2v7.. God allows this manifestation of evil because everyone has to see the folly and horrific end of following Satan and His plans, and the wisdom of God's loving purposes. To this end God allows the Devil to have his way in the world for 3½ years and the world ends up smashed and broken, and with it the proud claims of man and Satan, that they can live and manage without the Creator's wisdom, guidance and grace. To say that the removal of the restraining influence of God, is the removal of the Holy Spirit from the world altogether, is in direct contradiction to the teaching of the Scriptures. The two witnesses are doing mighty works of power, many of God's saints are doing mighty exploits, and many people are saved and kept during the great tribulation, all by the power of the Holy Spirit. Rev.11v3-12. 7v14. Dan.11v32. These miracles can only be performed by God, and prove conclusively His active presence in the world. Jn.3v27. 16v7-11. Those who say that the Church is raptured and taken to Heaven, and the Holy Spirit is taken from the earth during the great tribulation, have to explain how with no preachers and no Holy Spirit, and in a world dominated by Satan, the world has its greatest revival!!! Acts.2v17-21. Mt.11v25,26. John.6v44. Rev.7v14.

There can be no doubt that in 2Thes.2v1-12., Paul is teaching that Christ's second coming is preceded by the career of Antichrist and the great tribulation, no other interpretation is possible without Paul's words being mangled and distorted beyond all recognition. Let us read these Scriptures in the fear of God, and be prepared to accept their very clear teaching.

8. IS IT UNKIND OF GOD TO LET US TO GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION?

Some Christians become afraid when they learn of the horrific events of the great tribulation. This is the real reason why people prefer to believe the theory of a secret advent of Christ and a secret rapture of the Church before the great Tribulation. One exponent of this doctrine has said, "If the Church is to pass through the tribulation, then farewell blessed hope, then welcome the coffin, then thrice welcome the undertaker." This attitude springs from several false assumptions:

1. The false assumption that the great tribulation is the wrath of God.

Some Christians say that the great tribulation is the wrath of God, so on the basis of 1Thes.5v9., "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ," they say Christians may be quite sure that they will escape going through the great tribulation. How unscriptural this reasoning is will be seen from the following facts. In Rev.7v9,14., God says that there will be a great number of Christians who will not only be in the great tribulation, but will come through it in glorious victory. God says that He will allow "a great multitude, which no man could number of ALL nations" to go through the great tribulation. How dare people say that God will not let His saints go through the great tribulation, when God has already said that He will. Dan.7v21,22. 11v35. Rev.6v9-11. 12v4,11,17. 13v7,10. 14v12,13. 15v2. 20v4.

N.B. The great tribulation is the result of Satan's wrath, not God's wrath.

We read in Rev.12v12., that the great tribulation is caused by the wrath of Satan, who knows that he only has a short time of freedom before he is put in God's prison, Hades. Rev.12v7-17. 13v7. God allows the career of Antichrist in order to reveal the horrific end of sin, and the malevolent and destructive nature of Satan. and the folly of going his way. Only God can give true pleasure, joy and happiness. Mt.24v15-22. Jn.10v10.

2Thes.2v7,8. Rev.9v11. 11v18. 1Pet.5v8. Is.35v10.

The wrath of God will be poured out on the wicked during the great tribulation through the ministry of the two witnesses and others, or directly by angelic action. But these judgements will only come on the wicked, God's people are sealed and safe from them as they have always been in the past. The faithful Israelites were safe from God's judgements upon the wicked, in Egypt, the wilderness, and Canaan. Rev.9v4. 11v36. Numb.11v1-3,33,34. 16v1-3. 28-35,49. Ezek.9v3-6. God has power over His plagues, they don't fall on the saints, and even the wicked can escape them by turning to God in real repentance. Rev.16v9. The vials of the wrath of God appear to be poured out during the last weeks or months of the great tribulation. There is the final great act of judgement on the great day of the wrath of God. Is.42v13-15. 63v1-6. Rev.6v16,17. 11v18. 14v9,10,19. 15v1,7. 16v1. Some have suggested that the great tribulation and the day of the Lord are the same, however, a comparison of Mt.24v29,30. with Acts.2v20., proves that this is incorrect, the great day of God's wrath is a single day. The Christian is safe from the wrath of God, but not from the wrath of wicked men, as our Lord has warned us. John.14v30.

Some say that it is no comfort to look for Christ's return, if His Church is to expect great tribulation before it. This is foolish, for the greater the extent of the darkness, the greater will be the comfort that our Lord's coming will bring. Paul informs us that the day when the saints are comforted by Christ's return and find rest from their persecutors, is the same day that our Lord punishes the wicked with everlasting destruction from His presence. 2Thes.1v5-10. 2v8. Titus.2v13. In Lk.17v26-30., Jesus emphasises this same point, when He states that His persecuted Church will be delivered on the same day that Antichrist is destroyed, just as the day of Lot's deliverance was the day of the destruction of Sodom.

2. That God would not let His children suffer so.

God has always allowed His people to suffer tribulation, temptation and trial, because they purify and perfect faith. and "we are to arm ourselves by recognising this fact." Heb.11v35-38. 1Pet.4v1. James.1v2-4,12. 1Pet.1v3-7. Rom.5v3-5. Christ's Church has been warned that it can expect persecution for Christ's sake, and it is our glory and privilege to suffer for Him, for, "If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him." 2Tim.2v12. 3v12. See Jn.15v19,20. 16v33. 17v15. Acts.5v41. 14v22. 2Cor.1v7. 1Thes.1v4-6. 3v3,4. Phil.1v29. 3v10. 1Pet.4v13. 2v19-24. Jesus said that faith in Him would bring death, suffering and persecution upon Christians, in addition to the normal suffering that comes upon men and nations. Jesus rebuked Peter, when Peter rebuked Him for saying that He must suffer and die, Jesus said Peter was thinking like men. Mt.16v22. Mk.8v31-38. What of the glorious company of martyrs of whom our Lord was the leader? John Wesley says, "Some have computed, that, from the year 1518 to 1548, fifteen millions of Protestants have perished by the Inquisition. This may be over charged; but certainly the number of them in those years, as well as since, is almost incredible. To these we add innumerable martyrs, in ancient, middle, and late ages." The Scriptures and Church history prove that God does allow His people to suffer at the hands of evil men. In the great tribulation the Church again has to endure suffering for Christ's sake. However, we read that because God loves His children, He will limit the length of the great tribulation, "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Mt.24v22.

N.B. The early Church Fathers expected the Church to suffer at the hands of Antichrist.

Mr. G. Ladd in his book, "The Blessed Hope," writes, "Every Church father who deals with the subject expects the Church to suffer at the hands of Antichrist." Ladd cites amongst others, The Didache, (early 2nd Century), Justin Martyr, (A.D.150), Irenaeus, (A.D.115-202.), Tertullian, (A.D.160-240), Lactantius, (Late 3rd. early 4th. Cent.), Hippolytus, (3rd.Cent.). Certainly the early Church fathers do not support the pre-tribulation advent and rapture theory.

Those who make Paul's statement in 1Thes.5v9., "For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ," as one of their main proof texts for Christians being raptured before the great tribulation, have clearly twisted the Scriptures. Paul is dealing with the truth of salvation from sin, and how we can escape from the wrath of God by repentance and a holy life. 2Pet.3v16. 1Thes.1v10. Paul, like our Lord, warns us to be watchful lest we should be led away with the error of the wicked, like the evil servant of Mt.24v48-51., and share in his punishment. The fact that people have to resort to such texts proves the weakness of their arguments.

In spite of the fact that Jesus said that the prophecies concerning the events at the close of the age do not start until Rev.4v1., some use Rev.3v10., to prove the Church is going to be delivered from the great tribulation by a secret advent and rapture. There is no proof that "the hour of temptation," is the great tribulation, or that "keep thee from the hour of temptation," means the rapture. Indeed, it is a fact that this was spoken by Jesus to meet the local circumstances at Philadelphia in John's time. When people are driven to confirm their viewpoint with texts like this, texts which have nothing whatever to do with Christ's second coming, it shows the weakness of their arguments.

3. Does Luke.21v36. teach that Christians will escape the great tribulation?

The Authorised Version of Lk.21v36., "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man:" has been used to prove that we will be raptured before the great tribulation. However, careful study shows that it teaches the very opposite, and proves that Christians will not escape FROM the great tribulation, but they can only come

THROUGH IT and OUT OF it by watching and praying.

The Majority Text reading of Lk.21v36., "that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things," "hina kataxiiothete ekphugein tauta panta," occurs in A, C, D, R, Theta, f13, the Byzantine manuscripts, the Latin, the Syriac, the A.V., and T.R.. "Accounted worthy," is "kataxiiothete," the aorist passive subj. of "kataxiio," "to account worthy of." 2Thes.1v5. Acts.5v41.

The Critical Text reading, "hina katischusetete ekphugein tauta panta," "that you may prevail to escape all these things;" is supported by Aleph, B, L, and Psi. "Katischusetete," is the aorist active subjunctive of "katischuo," "to have strength against;" or, "to be strong or powerful against;" from "kata," "against;" and "ischuo," "to be strong or powerful, to prevail." Rotherham follows the Critical Text reading and translates Luke.21v36., "But be watching at every season, making supplication that ye may gain full vigour to escape all these things that are about to be coming to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." The Revised Standard Version follows the minority Critical Text reading and translates Lk.21v36., "But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." May we take heed to His warning. 2Thes.2v3. Mt.24v12.

No matter which Greek reading we may prefer, both the Majority Text and Critical texts read "ekphugein," the aorist active infinitive of "ekpheugo," "to escape out, to flee out of." "Ekphugein" is made up of two Greek words, "PHEUGO," which means, "to flee or escape," and "EK," which means, "out of." Both the Greek word "EK," "out of," and "APO," which means, "from;" are frequently translated "from," and they are very close in meaning to each another. However, the difference between them is that "APO" suggests that there is a starting point from without; whereas "EK" suggests a starting point from within; "out of," must first enter before it can come out. Sometimes "EK" can be said to have much the same meaning as "APO," the context must decide what is the best rendering. However, from the use of "ekpheugo" in the Scriptures, we can definitely say that it signifies NOT an escaping FROM the great tribulation by never entering it, but an escaping OUT OF it after entering it, this is shown in the following places where "ekpheugo" is used.

- a. "Ekpheugo" is used in Acts.16v27., to describe the escape of prisoners out of prison.
- b. "Ekpheugo," is used in 2Cor.11v23., to describe Paul's escape out of Damascus.
- c. "Ekphugein," the aorist infinitive of "ekpheugo," is used in Acts.19v16., of the escape of the seven sons of Sceva out of the house, when the demon-possessed man attacked them.
- d. In 1Thes.5v3., Paul emphasises the destruction of the followers of Antichrist with a strong double negative, "ou me ekphugosin," "they shall certainly not escape." See Rom.2v3. Heb.2v3. 12v25. Paul reveals that Antichrist's followers will be saying "peace and safety" in the final hours of the great tribulation, after their victory over the two witnesses and the armies of the West. Their exultation and joy, and their feeling of safety and security, ("asphaleia," only here and Lk.1v4., where it is translated "certainty"), disappears at Christ's return, when they are suddenly and completely destroyed by the Lord Jesus.

No matter which of the two Greek readings of Lk.21v36. we accept; Christ was certainly not teaching that Christians would escape the great tribulation by a secret advent or secret rapture before it started. Indeed, Jesus tells us that the very opposite is true, and solemnly warns us that we will need great patience and faith, and a life of real watchfulness and prevailing prayer to spiritually survive these times. Lk.18v1-8. Rev.14v12. 13v10. Heb.6v12. Mk.13v13. Lk.21v12-19. Mt.24v12,13. N.B. "endureth to the end." In Mt.24v44 to 25v13., our Lord warns us that Christians who are not prepared for the evils of the great tribulation will apostatise and go back into the world. Jesus exhorts us to prepare for these evil last days, and warns us that the lamps of those who have no reserve of oil for the dark last days, will go out.

4. Who are the elect of Matthew 24v22,24,31. and Mark 13v20,22,27.?

Some have foolishly stated, that the mention of "Judea" and "the Sabbath" in Mt.24v16,20., shows that Mt.24. was addressed to the Jews, and not Christians. They say this because Mt.24v30., is undoubtedly a coming in glory, and to admit that it. was addressed to Christians would destroy the pretribulation advent theory, and so the argument was advanced that Mt.24. was not addressed to the Church. In Mt.24v20., Jesus gives specific warning signs to Christians who will be in Judea in the time of Antichrist. The fact that Mt.24v20., speaks of people who are willing to listen to Christ and willing to flee on the Sabbath, proves that it is not addressed to strict Jews, who would do neither. Only Christians would take heed to the words of Christ. Jews will certainly not obey a prophet they do not believe in.

Is Matthew 24 addressed to the Church of Christ, or the Jews?

Jesus gives the answer in Mk.13v37., "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." By giving this command to His apostles, Jesus instructs all His Church. The apostles were Israelites, but they were the apostles of the Church, and Jesus spoke to them in this capacity, as Christian believers. If Mt.24. is not to be looked upon as applicable to Christians, because it is "Jewish," who is to decide what is Jewish and what is Christian? The Gospels are, with a few exceptions, a record of Christ's ministry to Israelites, but they contain His vital teachings for His Church. The epistles of Peter, James and Hebrews are written to Jews, are we to set these aside? Never! They contain indispensable Christian truth. Was the New Covenant of Mt.26v28., just for the Jews, because it was only spoken to the apostles? Of course not! it is for every believer in Christ Jesus.

The refusal to recognise that the truths of Mt.24. were addressed to the Church, has driven some to utter folly in their reasoning, it is reported that some have even looked upon the Lord's prayer and the Lord's Supper as "Jewish ordinances," and not applicable to the Church of Christ. If Mt.24. was spoken to the apostles as Jews and not as Christians, how were they to know it? How shall we know what New Testament Scriptures apply to us? What use would these prophecies be to Jews who do not believe in Christ? It would be very strange if the earnest warnings of Christ in Mt.24., Mk.13., and Lk.17 and 21., were not addressed to Christians, but to Jews who have no faith in Christ. How can those who say that Mt.24. was written for Jews, use Mt.24v36,42. as their major text to prove that Christ may come at any moment for His Church? What kind of Scripture expositor uses a chapter which states that the coming of Christ is preceded by very clear signs, and warns against a secret second advent, to prove that there is a secret advent and rapture of the Church without those signs? Particularly when its advocates say that Mt.24. is addressed only to the Jews, and not to the Church. The pretribulation rapture theory has become widely accepted because Western Christians are unwilling to suffer persecution for Christ's sake. Heb.11v25. As someone has said, "It is an interesting fact that the pretribulation rapture theory did not arise out of a suffering Church. It has come out of a Western civilisation that has been the most comfortable and pleasant in the whole history of Christianity."

Some have said that the Church was not founded until the day of Pentecost; however, this can be shown to be wrong by many passages of Scripture. The apostles were converted before Pentecost; their names were "written in heaven," Lk.10v20.; they were "clean," Jn.15v3.; and they belonged to God. Jn.15v3. Pentecost was not the time when they were saved, they were rejoicing in their salvation before this, Pentecost was the time when they received the promise of the Father to His children, the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Lk.24v49,52,53. Christ said the Law and the prophets were until John, the age of grace and truth started when Jesus started His ministry. Mt.11v13. Lk.16v16. Jn.1v17. It is nonsense to say that Mt.24. was not spoken to the Church, because the Church did not exist until the day of Pentecost; God gave many promises that belong to the Church to the Old Testament prophets, many centuries before the day of Pentecost.

The facts and context prove the elect of Mt.24 are Christians, and that Mt.24. is addressed to Christians.

- a. The elect are Christians who are all over the world, and preaching the Gospel to all the world. Mt.24v14.
- b. The elect are Christians who are hated, persecuted and dying for Christ all over the world. Mt.24v9,16-20. Mk.13v9-13.
- c. The elect are Christians who are looking for Christ's return and are warned about false Christs. Mt.24v13-27. Lk.21v19,28.
- d. The elect are Christians who are gathered by angels, for we know from Is.65v15-21., that the Israelites, who are scattered throughout the world are gathered, not by angels, but by the Gentiles, who bring them to Jerusalem as an offering to God.
- e. We read that Mt.25v1. begins with a "Then," connecting it with Mt.24v44-51.; Jesus said the subject is the kingdom of Heaven, not the kingdom of Israel. The parable of the ten virgins is a parable on the truth stated in Mt.24v42-51., the good servant who follows Jesus faithfully to the end of the great tribulation, and the evil servant who backslides into the world in those dark and evil days. The good servant and evil servant appear to be Christian leaders, whose work is to give correct truth at the end of the age. The good servant faithfully fulfils his task, whereas the evil servant has the incorrect idea that His Lord has delayed His coming, and as a result loses faith and lives an evil life, and is cut in sunder by His Lord. The virgins appear to be Christians who again had wrong ideas about their Lord's return, probably through wrong teaching, and had not prepared for the darkness of the last days. This is a very definite Christian truth, which is addressed to all of the Church of Christ.
- f. Jesus warns us that Christians will have to persevere in prayer or they will faint and lose their faith in Him. Lk.18v1-8. Jesus speaks of an elect who are crying day and night for deliverance, and of a God that will avenge the sufferings of His elect at the hands of the wicked. This is certainly not the kind of language that we would expect if we are sure to miss the tribulation. Those who endure as far as the rapture are those who have prayed and not fainted, but many will backslide, and Jesus warns us, "and when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Lk.17v34-36. 18v8. Mt.24v12,13. Rev.13v10.16v15.

Paul states in Rom.11v5,6., that people have to believe in Jesus to receive the "election of grace." Paul was heartbroken that most of Israel were blinded by unbelief, and in becoming enemies of Jesus and His Church,. were "broken off" from their promises and election, Rom.9v31-33. 10v3,21. 11v7-10,20,28. However, in Rom.11v25,26,28., Paul states that the promises given to Abraham and his faithful seed will be fulfilled. The Jews are beloved for their forefather's sakes, and God will keep His covenant promises to faithful Jews. Exod.3v14-16. God gave the Israelites His word, and godly Jews are loved and precious to Him; and when they are presented with a sign-attested Gospel they often respond to the truth in Jesus. God has always given the Jews time to consider His Word, and has invited them to reason with Him. God welcomes scarlet sinners, both Jews and Gentiles, with sweet forgiving reasonableness. Is.1v18.

We see from Acts.10v1-48. N.B. v34,35., that, "In truth God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." Cornelius was justified on an Old Testament basis, and he was loved, acceptable, and precious to God, even before He heard the Gospel; and so are godly Jews. Paul states that there is now no difference between Jew and Greek, the elect consists of those who call on the Lord to save them. Rom.10v8-14. N.B. v13. Mt.1v21. In Christ, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal.3v28. No one can be among the New Testament "elect" unless they believe in Jesus as Saviour. Jn.6v37,45,53. 8v24,42. 1Thes.1v4. 2Pet.1v10. 1Jn.5v9-13. 1Pet.1v9-12.

Some have stated that Mt.24. and Thes.4v13 to 5v5. are different events, one speaking of a coming in glory and the other speaking of a secret rapture. However, though their aim was different, Mt.24. was given to show the signs of Christ's coming and the end of the age, and 1Thes.4v13 to 5v5. was given to comfort and challenge the relatives of departed believers, they are both speaking of the same event, they both use the same descriptive language, they speak of angelic powers, a great voice, a great trumpet, the clouds of heavenly glory, and the elect being gathered and caught up to meet their Lord. I agree with Sidlow Baxter, on pages 219, 220 of his, "Explore the book," that the parallels between 1Thes.4 and Mt.24., are irresistible to an honest mind. Both have angels, voice, trumpet, clouds, and gathered congregating saints. What kind of Bible interpretation can take exactly the same phrases and symbols, and teach a glorious public coming in Mt.24, and a secret coming in 1Thes.4v13-18.? It proves that 1Thes.4v13-18. does not teach a secret rapture. With Baxter, I exhort Bible students to test doctrines by the Scriptures, and appeal for Christian love in studying such doctrines. Our study of Mt.24. has made it absolutely clear that it is addressed to the Church of Christ, and that there will be a post-tribulation advent of Christ and rapture of the Church.

9. WHEN WILL THE RESURRECTION OF CHRISTIANS TAKE PLACE?

Paul informs us in 1Thes.4v13-18., that the resurrection immediately precedes the rapture. In 1Cor.15v51-54., Paul states that the transformation and glorification of our earthly bodies takes place almost instantly, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet," Therefore, as the resurrection and rapture of the Church take place in a matter of seconds or minutes, if the time of the resurrection can be accurately fixed, the exact time of the rapture of the Church can be fixed at that time too. The Scriptures unanimously state that the resurrection will take place after the great tribulation. In.1Cor.15v54., Paul writes that death will be swallowed up in victory at the resurrection; this promise is quoted from Is.25v7,8., and states that this will occur at the time when the Lord begins to reign, and Israel is restored to her land, and receives the Millennial promises, and takes pride of place in the world. The wicked are also said to be judged at the same time. Is.26v19-21. Dan.12v1,2. Rev.19v1 to 20v6.

There are three resurrections stated in 1Cor.15v23,24..

The resurrection of Christ has already occurred, the Scriptures clearly state that there are only two general resurrections, and they have yet to take place. Jn.5v28,29. Rev.20v4-15.

1. Christ the first fruits.

The partial resurrection of many Old Testament Saints when Jesus was resurrected in Mt.27v51-53., was an act of mercy from God to give absolute proof of the resurrection of Christ. The Jews did not see the resurrected body of Jesus, but many of them saw the resurrected bodies of many saints, probably some godly relatives or people they knew, and they noised abroad what they had seen and heard. This created an enormous stir and was a major reason for the revival on the day of Pentecost.

2. "They that are Christ's at His coming."

In Rev.20v4-6., this is referred to as "the first resurrection." At this resurrection the faithful saints of Israel come to life as well as Christian believers. Ez.37v1-28. Hosea.13v14. Dan.12v1-3. Is.24v21. 25v7-9. 26v19-21. 1Thes.4v13,14. This is called the resurrection of the just, Lk.14v14.; and the resurrection of life. Jn.5v28,29. Paul states that the resurrection of all Christians will take place at the last trumpet, and the transformation of their bodies will take place in the twinkling of an eye. 1Cor.15v51-53.

In 1Thes.4v13., Paul speaks of the bodies of Christians as being "asleep;" our word "cemetery" is derived from the Greek "koimeterion," which means "sleeping place." The Christians who have died are in no sense asleep, they are enjoying the glories of paradise in the presence of God in heaven. Jn.11v25,26. 2Cor.5v1-10. 12v1-4. Rev.2v7. 6v9-11. 21v2. 22v2. The souls of the saints will return with Jesus and will be clothed upon with glorified bodies at the resurrection. 1Thes.4v14-16. The resurrection and the rapture are so closely linked in time, that to fix the time of one is to fix the time of the other.

N.B. It must be remembered that though the wicked do not come before Christ for judgement at the first resurrection, they are judged in the sense that they are weighed and found wanting and not worthy of that resurrection because of their wickedness. Jn.12v48. The public judgement of the wicked does not take place till 1,000 years later at the Great White Throne judgement, the wicked are resurrected for this judgement. Lk.20v35. Phil.3v11. Heb.11v35. Rev. 20v5,6,11-15.

3. "Then cometh the end."

This is the second general resurrection, and is called the resurrection of damnation, it occurs at the end of the

Millennium, just prior to the Great White Throne judgement, this is in contrast to the first resurrection, the resurrection of life. Jn.5v28,29.

a. THE FIRST RESURRECTION WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE LAST TRUMPET. 1Cor.15v52.

This can only be the seventh trumpet of Rev.11v15.. The word "last" means last, so trumpets must sound before it, and none sound after it, if it is the last trumpet. What other trumpets can these be but the seven trumpets of the book of Revelation? Some have made this last trumpet anything but the last, by saying that it sounds before the seven trumpets of Revelation.

In Rev.11v15., God says that at this seventh trumpet, "The kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." To confirm that the resurrection takes place at this seventh trumpet, verse 18 says, "thy wrath is come AND THE TIME OF THE DEAD THAT THEY SHOULD BE JUDGED," and that at this time the saints are rewarded. The seventh trumpet of Rev.11v15., is the "great sound of a trumpet" of Mt.24v31., "the trumpet of God" of 1Thes.4v16., and "the great trumpet" of Is.27v13.. It is necessary to state that the seven trumpets of Revelation are in chronological order. Rev.8v13. 9v12. It is also essential to note that the vials are not poured out after the trumpets have finished, but that they also finish on that great last day, the day of the Lord, as do the trumpets and the seals. This can be proved to be true from a comparison of the following Scriptures. Mt.24v27-31. Acts.2v19-21. Rev.6v12-17. 11v15-19. 16v12-21. with Zech.14v1-21. N.B. v1,4,5.

b. THE FIRST RESURRECTION WILL OCCUR JUST BEFORE THE SAINTS BEGIN TO REIGN..

The Scriptures state that ALL Christians will be resurrected and receive their glorified bodies in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet, at the first resurrection, on the last day, at the end of the great tribulation. 1Cor.15v51-54. Is.25v8. Phil.3v20,21. Some do not accept this and say that the first resurrection covers several years and has several stages. This directly contradicts Rev.20v4-6., which states that the resurrection takes place at the start of the Millennial reign of Christ. It is folly to say that there is a resurrection of Christians that takes place several years before the first resurrection. To say that first does not mean first, makes words devoid of any meaning and worthless.

c. THE FIRST RESURRECTION WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE LAST DAY. John.6v39,40,44,54. 11v24. 12v48.

Jesus taught that those who believed in Him were to be raised from the dead at the first resurrection on the last day. This "last day" is the day of the Lord, or as it is also called, the day of Christ. These phrases denote the last day of this age, the great and terrible day of the Lord, when the Lord Jesus sets up His kingdom upon earth. It is the last day of five things.

A. The mystery, that is, the gracious plan, of God Rev.10v7. Eph.3v9-11.

The word "mystery" does not mean mysterious, but rather the secret plan of God, which He has made known unto His children. The world does not think that God has got any plan at all, but He has always had a very complex and wonderful plan, "the plan of the ages," and at the coming of Christ this plan will have been completed. Eph.3v10,11. God has planned to put Heaven and earth under faithful loving rulers, these He has found in His Son Jesus and His faithful brethren and the faithful angels. The Lord has also to fulfil His promise to the faithful Israelites, that they should have an earthly inheritance. Both of these things will come to pass on the last day when the seventh trumpet sounds, God's plan will then be finished. Rev.10v7. Dan.9v24. This is the day that God is waiting and longing for, He can then start and bestow upon His children all the riches of His grace, the pleasures and joys that will last forever. During the ages of ages we shall be astonished again and again at the blessedness of the glorious plans that God has for His children. Heb.10v13. Eph.2v6,7.

B. The mystery, that is, the evil plan, of Satan. 2Thes.2v7. Rev.2v24.

Satan and his angels are doomed to Hell forever because of their impenitence and wickedness. Sin has destroyed their characters, and they only find pleasure in causing misery and destruction. They are filled with a murderous hatred of God and man, and their only desire is to hurt and damage God and mankind as much as possible before their final ruin. The Devil's kingdom is ruled by the most fierce and most powerful evil angels, it is a kingdom of violence, hatred, suspicion and every evil work. The only thing that binds these evil angels together is a common hatred of God, and that which is good. God has restrained these evil beings from their plans of destruction in the past, they have only been allowed to go so far, but during the last 7 years, and particularly in the last 3½ years, they will have their plan fulfilled. They will stage a mock kingdom of heaven upon earth, a kingdom of death and destruction, which brings terrible misery and suffering upon mankind. God will allow this to take place in order to show to all the horror of sin, and the folly of preferring Satan's evil rule to His gracious rule. God will destroy this evil plan of Satan at the seventh trumpet on the last day. Jn.8v44. 10v10. Rev.11v18. 6v1-17. 12v12. 20v1-3.

C. The times of the Gentile nations. "Hou plerothosin kairoi ethnon." Lk.21v24. Rev.11v1,2.

This appears to have begun with the Babylonian captivity of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar, and will end with the destruction of Gentile power at the coming of Christ. Dan.2v31-45. During all this time, Jerusalem has only known temporary periods of freedom from foreign rule, like the one she is at present enjoying, and even now her sacred Temple area has the Mosque upon it, which was built by Caliph Omar in the 7th. century, and so it is being "trodden down of the Gentiles," ("pateo" 3961, to trample underfoot, and treat with contempt) and it appears will continue to be so trodden under, "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." Lk.21v24. (In Heb.10v29. the strengthened form "katapateo" 2662, is used to speak of the even more serious sin of trampling under foot the Lord Jesus) The rule of Jerusalem by foreign powers will only cease when Christ returns to reign.

"Kairoi," "times," is used to show these are special divine times and epochs which are ordained by God, and prove that, "The Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He will." Dan.4v17,25. The times of the Gentiles is the period when God has allowed Gentile nations in sequence to have empires and rule large areas of the world, and for much of this time Israel has been subjugated under Gentile nations. The sinfulness of these nations and their leaders has allowed Satan to dominate and control them, as we can see from the seven heads of the beast in Rev.13 and 17.. God has allowed these Gentile nations to have empires in order to reveal their hearts and break the pride of the Gentiles by their total failure to produce justice and the desired happiness of their subjugated nations. This will demonstrate that without God's loving rule, sin will dominate and happiness will be impossible and all will fail. The appalling misery, carnage and destruction brought about by Satan and Antichrist will demonstrate the fearful end of evil, and break the pride of man. It will be obvious that man cannot manage to rule the world without the grace of God. The nations entering the Millennium will realise the wisdom and righteousness of God's ways, and also be willing to learn from the despised Jew. Zech.8v23.

When we consider the plans and purposes of God we are left in wonder and amazement at God's unsearchable wisdom. When Jesus comes returns He will terminate the times of the Gentiles, the age of grace, and the fullness of the Gentiles.

D. The fullness of the Gentile nations. "To pleroma ton ethnon." Rom.11v25,26. 15v16,18.

The apostle Paul says, "I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery ... that blindness in part is happened to Israel, UNTIL the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Rom.11v25,26. In Rom.11v25,26., Paul is quoting and explaining the prophecy of Is.59v16-21.; which confirms that the fullness of the Gentiles and the times of the Gentiles finish at the same time, the day when Christ comes to set up His kingdom and judge the wicked. The fullness of the Gentiles is the time when Christ returns and the purpose of God in calling out Gentile believers into Christ's Church is completed. Eph.1v22,23. 2v11-22. Acts.15v14. 1Cor.12v12,13. In Rom.15v16., Paul writes of "the offering up of the Gentiles," "he prosphora ton ethnon." Paul looks upon himself as a minister ("leitourgon," someone who performs a public service, and particularly a religious service), who is ministering the Gospel, ("hierourgounta," to serve as a priest, to work in sacred things, particularly of sacrifices), and he sees his sanctified Gentile converts as a pleasing and acceptable offering to God. This is the "obedience of the Gentiles," "to hupakoen ethnon," which Paul refers in Rom.15v18..

The blindness of the Israelites will continue until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in at the close of the age, when Christ appears in His glory to deliver the godly seed of Jacob. If the Church were to be removed before the great tribulation it would make nonsense of Paul's statement in Rom.11v25,26., that Israel experiences a "blindness in part until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in;" for Israel is almost completely deceived and corrupted by Antichrist and experiences her time of greatest spiritual blindness during the great tribulation. The fullness of the Gentiles takes place on the same day that the times of the Gentiles closes, the same day that Jesus, "The Deliverer," comes out of Zion and sets up His kingdom on earth, this is when "the fullness of Israel" starts, and the reproach of Israel is taken away. Rom.11v12. Which, according to Is.25v6-9., is when the marriage supper of the Lamb, the resurrection, and the binding and execution of Satan and his angels occurs. "The fullness of the Gentiles" is a major part of the divine purposes for this age of grace.

E. The age of grace. John.1v14,17. Gal.1v3. Rom.1v1-5 5v1,2,15,20,21.

The age of grace commenced at the first coming of Christ and will continue right up to the day when Christ comes to judge the wicked as Peter is careful to make quite clear. Mt.11v13,14. Lk.16v16. Jn.1v17. 2Pet.3v9,10.. Acts.2v19-21.

Many people accept Christ and are kept by Christ in the great tribulation, and opportunity for salvation is given right to the end of the great tribulation, an angel even preaches the Gospel right at the very end of the age. Rev.7v14. 14v6,7. The Church of Christ is assured of His presence right up to the close of the age of grace. Mt.28v18-20. 24v14. N.B. "then shall the end come." Mt.13 10. We know from Acts.2v16-21 and 2Pet.3v9,10., that the age of grace continues right up to the commencement of the Millennium on the last day. To say, as some do, that this "last day" is the rapture of the Church years before the Millennial kingdom is set up, is without any Scriptural foundation. There is a great multitude of Christians out of every nation who overcome the darkness of the great tribulation.

In the parables of the tares and the wheat, and the drag net, our Lord tells us that the age of grace will continue up to the start of the Millennial Kingdom. Mt.13v24-30. 36-43, 47-50. The wheat and the tares grow

together until "the end of the age," and at the same harvest the wheat and tares are gathered, not two different harvests. Jesus said that this is a parable of the kingdom of heaven, not of the nation of Israel, and He also states that the wheat are gathered by angels, as in Mt.24v31., again proving that they are speaking of the same event. Jesus tells us in Mt.11v11-13. 4v17,23. 13v11,17. and 16v18., that the Church age has superseded the nation of Israel. God is now calling people out of all nations into the Church of Christ, to inherit a heavenly kingdom. Lk.16v16.

The parable of the drag net also teaches that at the consummation of the age, there will be a severing of the wicked from the just; and again there is the same insistence that these events occur together. When the age ends, the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Mt.13v43. These parables make it quite clear that the close of the age of grace, and the commencement of the Millennial kingdom occur at the same time. Our Lord gives a solemn and striking warning of a furnace of fire. Jesus also tells how the wicked will react on this day, they will wail with remorse, but not with repentance, and they will gnash their teeth in bitter hatred and anger against God.

It is quite clear that the last day is the day when the age of grace is consummated and the Millennial kingdom is set up. There is also overwhelming evidence to convince the honest mind, that the resurrection of life, the first resurrection, occurs after the great tribulation on the last day, at the seventh trumpet, in a moment of time, and that the rapture follows immediately after it.

N.B. THIS RESURRECTION IS CERTAINLY NOT A SECRET RESURRECTION.

1. It will be accompanied with tremendous noise.

The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, there will also be the mighty voice of the archangel, and the great trumpet of God. 1Thes.4v13-18 Is.27v13. Mt.24v31. There are also mighty thunderings and great voices. Rev.19v6. 11v15.

2. It will be accompanied with tremendous glory and a blaze of light.

Christ coming will be as visible and more glorious than a mighty lightening flash; He will come with power and great glory.Mt.24v27. Lk.17v24. Is.24v23 1Tim.6v12. Millions of glorious saints and angels will accompany their conquering and glorious Lord. Rev.19v11-16.

3. It will be accompanied by a rocking heaven and earth.

Many Scriptures state that there will be great earthquakes. Is.24v18-20 Joel.2v30-32. Zech.14. all. Mt.24v29. 2Pet.3v10-13. Rev.6v12-17. 11v13,19. 16v18,20,21. Anyone who can make a secret rapture out of these Scriptures is straining both their imagination and the Scripture, and having heard someone use 2Pet.3v10-13., as the basis of a sermon on a secret rapture, I can assure you that some do try to manage this astonishing perversion of Scripture. I have never known anyone who has been able to explain away the fact that the first resurrection takes place after the great tribulation, at the seventh trumpet, on the last day. This is an unanswerable argument in favour of the post-tribulation rapture of the Church.

OUR CHRISTIAN WALK IN THE LIGHT OF OUR LORD'S RETURN.

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come... Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Mt.24v42-44. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day came upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all of them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Lk.21v34-36. "Therefore, my beloved brethren be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1Cor.15v58. "Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." 1Cor.4v5.

THERE IS NO PRETRIBULATION RESURRECTION OF THE CHURCH.

In Mt.24v29-31., Jesus states that the "parousia" will not take place until "immediately after the tribulation of those days." Paul writes in 1Cor.15v23,51-53., that Christ's coming, "parousia," takes place at the last trumpet of Rev.11v15-19., at the end of the tribulation. The martyrs killed by Antichrist in the great tribulation are partakers of the first resurrection at the start of the Millennium. Rev.20v4-6. 1Cor.15v23,24. Jn.5v25-29. Acts.24v15. This is confirmed by Dan.7v21,22,25., which tells us that Antichrist will make war with the saints and prevail against them, until the Lord comes to judge him, and the saints possess the kingdom. Jesus tells us in Mt.13v30-41., that tares and wheat are "both" to "grow together until the harvest;" and that "in the time of harvest" He "will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into My barn:" this is explained as "the harvest" at "the end of this age," when, "the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." Jesus promised to be with us, "unto the end of the age." Mt.28v20. Antichrist will be destroyed "with the brightness, "epiphaneia," of Christ's "Parousia." 2Thes.2v8. Christians who are being persecuted will rest at Christ's "Apokalupsis." 2Thes.1v7.

APPENDIX 1. THE RAM AND THE GOAT, ANTIOCHUS AND THE ANTICHRIST.

In Dan.8 we see the remarkable prophecy of the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire and its destruction by Alexander the Great, the Greek general. The vision of the Ram and the He Goat is followed by the warning of the career of Antiochus Epiphanes, through which God reveals the final Antichrist. The following facts give a better understanding of the book of Daniel.

a. Daniel is written in two languages, Chaldean and Hebrew.

Only a few parts of the Scripture are written in Chaldean (Aramaic) these are, Ezra.4v8 to 6v19. and 7v12-27.; one verse in Jeremiah, Jer.10v11.; and about six chapters of Daniel, Dan.2v4 to 7v28.; the rest of Daniel, Dan.1v1 to 2v3., and 8v1 to 12v13., are written in Hebrew. There is a good reason for this difference, the Chaldean portion from Dan.2v4. to 7v28., records events dealing mainly with Gentile rule and the times of the Gentiles. This would enable the Chaldeans to read these chapters in Aramaic, which was the popular language of that day. This was an effective evangelistic tract, which proclaimed the majesty of God to the Chaldeans, and also gave them a solemn warning of future tragic events in their history.

The Hebrew section of Dan.1v1. to 2v3. records the fall of Jerusalem and the deportation of the best of the Jews to Babylon, and the correct response to this by Daniel and his friends. The final section from Dan.8v1. to 12v13. deals with prophetic events connected mainly with Israel and their place in God's prophetic plan, and so it was also written in Hebrew. These Hebrew sections were veiled from the Chaldeans and seem to have been for Jewish eyes only. This veiling of truth from the worldling and indifferent is a divine principle; certain truths are only for seekers. Mt.13v10-17,34,35.

b. Daniel had waited for two years since his last recorded vision. The vision of Daniel 8 took place in the third year of Belshazzar's reign, so two years had passed by since he had seen the awesome vision recorded in Daniel chapter seven, which took place in Belshazzar's first year. Dan.8v1,2. with 7v1. Daniel had meditated and prayed for two years for light upon the vision of the last judgement and the world empires that would affect Israel, before God gave him the further information revealed in this vision. Visions like this are not called up to order, even by the greatest of prophets. This deep insight into God's mind and purposes, was only given to great prophets, who had walked with God, and meditated deeply on the truths of the Scriptures. Many books on prophecy are manifestly the opinions and tradition of men, and reveal that their authors have made little effort in prayer, research and meditation.

c. The book of Daniel is not written in chronological order.

It is important to realise that the chapters of Daniel have not been arranged in chronological order; the order in time of the events and prophecies is as follows 1,2,3,4,7,8,5,9,6,10,11,12. The revelations concerning the fall of Babylon in chapters seven and eight of Daniel were given before the actual fall of Babylon, which is, recorded Daniel chapter five.

1. GABRIEL ACCURATELY FORETOLD FUTURE INTERNATIONAL EVENTS TO DANIEL.

a. The method of revelation of the prophecy.

In Dan.8v20,21., Gabriel tells Daniel of the two kingdoms which would succeed Babylon. Daniel was not given this to him by a vision in the night as in Dan.2v19. and Dan.7v2,7,13,15.; nor by revelation to his prayerful mind as in Dan.4v19-27. and 5v17.. Gabriel instructs Daniel on vital prophetic truth in Dan.8v15-27., just as in Dan.9v20-27., and by an unnamed angel in Dan.7v16,23. 10v1 to 12v13.. Jesus gave Revelation to John by "His angel," which is possibly Gabriel. Rev.1v1.22v16.

b. God transports Daniel in vision to Shushan the capital of Persia.

Daniel was transported in space and time, into the future, to Shushan the capital of Persia, and given the prophetic facts about Medo-Persia; the next empire to succeed Babylon. This was the very place where Nehemiah and Ester were later going to live. Neh.1v1. Esther.1v2-5. 2v3-5. God proved He is "The Great I Am," and not limited by time, when He transported Ezekiel back in time from Babylon to Jerusalem before its capture and destruction by the Babylonians, and revealed the sins which had brought about the captivity. Ezek.8v3. Daniel could have been taken by God into the future, either in body or spirit; or given a vision as real as life, for with God all these are possible. Paul informs us in 2Cor.12v1-4., that he did not know if he was in the body or out of the body, when he was caught up to Paradise in the third heaven, but he experienced the glory and bliss of it, and had revealed to him "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter." Paul was forbidden to reveal the truths that he was told on this occasion, even to other Christians, they were for his own personal information and benefit. Anyway it was quite impossible for Paul to convey the glory, beauty and love of God's kingdom.

c. Gabriel reveals to Daniel that the two-horned ram represents the kings of Media and Persia.

God told Daniel that the higher of the two horns of the ram would come up last, and took Daniel to Shushan, the capital of Persia, to show that Persia would become the dominant power. This was not so when Daniel first went to Babylon, for the Medes dominated the Persians, until Cyrus the Persian reversed the situation, and Persia dominated the alliance. The description of Persia as a ram was very appropriate, for it was Persia's national emblem. Cyrus rapidly extended the Empire Westward and Northward, his son later extended it Southwards and conquered Egypt, and as Daniel saw, it was an irresistible force. Dan.8v4. God named Cyrus 150 years before he was born, and said that He had anointed Cyrus to take Babylon and free the Israelites, this

took place about 200 years after the prophecy. Is.44v28 to 45v6.

d. Gabriel informs Daniel that the Goat is Greece.

The description of Greece as a goat was very appropriate, for the goat was the national emblem of Macedonia. When Daniel received this prophecy; Greece was a disunited collection of competing and contending states. Alexander inherited the kingdom of Macedon at his father's death in B.C. 336; and united these states, and became their first king; he is the great horn on the goat. Alexander is often called "the Great," because of the astonishing speed, fury, and extent of his conquests, which Dan.8v5-8. accurately foretold.

e. The accurate fulfilment of Gabriel's prophecy of the break-up Alexander's Empire.

As Gabriel foretold, the horn was broken off in the greatness of its strength. Alexander was taken ill by an attack of fever, some say malaria, which was aggravated by his intemperate eating and drunken excesses, and this brought about his death at the early age of 33, in B.C. 323. Alexander's brother Philip Aridaeus, and his sons Alexander Aegus and Hercules, were murdered over a period of 15 months. With the death of his heirs, four of Alexander's generals divided his empire amongst themselves; opinions vary slightly on the exact division of the empire, but the following gives some idea of how the empire was divided.

PTOLEMY. Obtained the South; and ruled over Egypt, Cyprus and parts of North Africa.

SELEUCUS. Obtained the East; and ruled over Syria, Babylonia and Medo-Persia.

LYSIMACHUS. Took over the North, most of Asia Minor; and ruled over Thrace, Western Bithynia, Lesser Phrygia, Mysia, and Lydia, with the Meander as a boundary.

CASSANDER. Took over the Western European part of the empire; and ruled Greece and Macedonia.

God's prophetic revelations of the four horns in Dan.8v8., and four heads of the leopard in Dan.7v6., were accurately and completely fulfilled more than 200 years after Daniel prophesied these events.

2. THE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM VISION OF DANIEL EIGHT.

a. In Daniel chapter eight we have a double fulfilment of prophecy.

We have the prophecy of the overthrow of the Medo-Persian empire by Greece, and the growth and division of the Grecian empire, and the manifestation, out of part of that Grecian Empire, of Antiochus Epiphanes, known by some as "Epiphanes the Madman," like Hitler he was filled with a murderous hatred of the Jews, and killed 100,000 Jews on one occasion, and multiplied thousands more on other occasions. His evil career is recorded in the first book of Maccabees.

The little horn of chapter 7 arises from the fourth kingdom, the little horn of chapter 8 arises out of the third kingdom, and is referring to Antiochus Epiphanes; however, the prophecy has also a future fulfilment, for Antiochus is a type of the final Antichrist, both in actions and disposition. There was both a near and distant fulfilment of this prophecy, Gabriel's prophecy speaks of Antiochus but also leaps into the distant future to describe the final Antichrist. The double fulfilment of prophecy is a fact, as can be seen by the dual prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and its destruction at the end of the age in Lk.17v31. 19v41-44. 21v20-24. The prophecy concerning the betrayal of Jesus by Judas found its first fulfilment in Ahithophel, the counsellor who betrayed David. Ps.41v9. Jn.13v18.

N.B. Jerome states the Jews of his time expected a further future fulfilment of this prophecy.

Jerome, who was well acquainted with the Jews, because of His prolonged studies amongst them, states that the Jews of his time felt that this prophecy would have a further fulfilment in another king like Antiochus, who would arise in the future. Luther stated, "This chapter in Daniel refers to both Antiochus and the Antichrist." Jesus said "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," referred to events, which were still to be fulfilled in the future, not events which were already fulfilled in the past. Mt.24v15. Antiochus was a type and foreshadowing of the final Antichrist. We therefore, must study Dan.8 to correctly understand the Antichrist, and the end time prophecies.

b. The main burden of Gabriel's prophecy concerns, "THE TIME OF THE END."

Gabriel reveals that the prophecy concerning "the little horn" is to be fulfilled at the end of the age.

"Understand, O son of man; for the vision belongeth to the time of the end." Dan.8v17. "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in THE LATTER TIME of the indignation; for it belongeth to THE APPOINTED TIME OF THE END." Dan.8v19.

"And IN THE LATTER TIME OF THEIR KINGDOM, when transgressors are COME TO THE FULL." Dan.8v23. This is the very statement made by our Lord in Mt.24v12., "Because the lawlessness is filled up, the "agape" love of Christians will grow cold." Judgement will fall on the world as it did on the Amorites, when their iniquity came to the full. Gen.15v13-16.

"Shut thou up the vision; for it BELONGETH TO MANY DAYS TO COME." Dan.8v26. Jewish Bible.

The primary fulfilment of the prophecy of the "little horn" in Daniel eight is referring to Antiochus Epiphanes, but Gabriel indicates a secondary fulfilment at a more distant date in the future, and gives a vivid and gruesome picture of what we, and the Jews, can expect from the final Antichrist, the future "little horn" and beast of Dan.7v7,8,24-27..

3. GABRIEL'S DESCRIPTION OF "THE LITTLE HORN," THE FINAL ANTICHRIST.

A. "The little horn" will be "a king of fierce countenance," and proud words." Dan.8v23-25.

Antichrist, like many politicians, will hide his true personality and aims, and by skilful propaganda and deceitful image making, present himself as a peacemaker and a strong and confident ruler with all the answers. He will successfully deceive most people, but as soon as he has established a strong power base, his true power-loving evil nature will be manifested. Even then, many people will still feel that he has the answers, for this arrogant type of person often appeals to people, just as Hitler did to Germany. Antichrist, like Hitler, will be a captivating orator; he will have "a mouth speaking great things," and arrogantly "speak great words against the Most High." Dan.7v8,25. The little horn comes out of one of the four horns, which shows that the Antichrist comes out of part of the Grecian empire, which, by the way, did NOT extend as far as Rome.

B. Antichrist will be an occultist who "understands dark sayings." Dan.8v23.

The word for "dark sayings" in Dan.8v23., is "chiydah," (Strong 2420,) which means, "a puzzle, a trick, conundrum, dark saying, hard question, parable, proverb, oracle and riddle." "Chiydah" occurs 17 times in the Hebrew Old Testament.

a. In Judges.14v12-19. "chiydah" occurs eight times over Samson's riddle. The Philistine Lords threatened Samson's wife and her family with death if she did not find out the riddle, and so she coaxed the meaning of the riddle out of Samson.

b. In 1King.10v1. and 2Chron.9v1. "chiydah" is used of the "hard questions" that the Queen of Sheba tried Solomon with.

c. In Prov.1v6. Solomon states that one of his reasons for writing his book of proverbs, was to help people understand dark sayings, which are too profound to be understood by the foolish and simple.

d. In Ps.49v4. "chiydah" is used of a psalmist with a harp, singing a proverb and dark saying, which told the sad end of those who trust in riches; this was a riddle indeed to the greedy rich, but open truth to the children of God.

e. In Ezek.17v2. God likens Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh to two eagles and Israel to a vine. God warns Israel that there would be no hope of deliverance by aid from Pharaoh; there was no escape from the divine discipline of the Babylonian captivity, v1-24. The Lord finishes with a message of hope in v22-24., a very necessary mark of true prophecy.

f. In Hab.2v6. God makes a proverb and "taunting riddle" to the greedy and idolatrous in Israel.

g. In Numb.12v8. God uses "chiydah" to tell Miriam and Aaron of His normal method of revelation to most prophets in comparison to His face to face communication with Moses.

h. In Ps.78v2. Asaph uses "chiydah" to prophesy that Jesus would tell a lot of hidden truths and dark sayings in His parables, Mt.13v34,35., with the stated intention in Mt.13v10-17., of hiding divine truth from those who did not want to receive it, and revealing heavenly truths and mysteries to those who did. Jesus is the great revealer of the divine mysteries.

i. In Dan.8v23. God uses "chiydah" to state that the final Antichrist will "understand dark sayings." Some say that this refers to Antichrist's diplomatic cunning and deceit. However, its use in the above Scriptures proves that "chiydah" can mean more than diplomatic cunning, for Antichrist deceit is referred to in Dan.8v25., "through his policy also, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many." That "chiydah" here is speaking of more than diplomatic cunning is also revealed from the character and activities of Antichrist and his empowerment by Satan. The Scriptures tell us that Satan will give his power to Antichrist and dominate and direct his mind and actions. Dan.8v24. Rev.13v4. Antichrist revels in the power that flows from the supernatural knowledge that Satan possesses and gives to him. Satan's "dark sentences" give Antichrist power over men, as well as supernatural diplomatic deceit, and guidance in strategy in war.

Satan has long used the bait of false knowledge to fascinate and ensnare mankind; he used it to corrupt Adam and Eve; and has made morons of the wise and intelligent who try to explain away God as the great creator through false science and the theory of evolution. Gen.3v5-7. Rom.1v18-23. The fallen angels, who came and took upon them human form, and lived as men; are called, among other names, by the name "Nephilim." They are reported in ancient legends to have obtained influence over mankind, and worship as Gods, by their superior knowledge. An alternative name for the Nephilim, is "Rephaim," which means "healers," and in the Septuagint it is actually rendered as "iatroi," that is, "physicians," in Ps.88v10. and Is.26v14. Superior medical knowledge has always impressed mankind; when Satan is expelled from the heavenly places into the earth at the start of the great tribulation, he will undoubtedly make this one of his ploys to deceive mankind. The servants of Satan have always made the claim to superior knowledge. The Gnostics, the Theosophists, and other occult masters, claim that their knowledge is derived from supernatural beings. According to Rev.7v7-12.

and 13v42., after Satan is cast out of the heavenly places to earth, he gives his power, knowledge and wisdom to the Antichrist.

C. Antichrist will be possessed and energised by Satan. Dan.8v24.

Gabriel told Daniel that Antichrist's "power shall be mighty, but not by his own power." Dan.8v24. John on Patmos, over 600 years later, was told the identical facts, "the dragon gave him his power, and his throne and great authority." Satan shares his intellectual abilities and spiritual powers with Antichrist; he is the most powerful occultist of all time. It is out of the malevolent and sadistic mind of Satan that the horrors of the last days are conceived and brought into being. Antichrist, like Judas, will be possessed by Satan, and will bring to pass Satan's final evil plans. 2Thes.2v7. Both Judas and Antichrist are called "the son of perdition," because they love evil and are unwilling to repent. They have reached the ultimate in evil; Judas by betraying Jesus and fulfilling Satan's desire to kill Christ, and Antichrist by bringing Satan's plans to dominate and destroy the world into reality. Jn.13v27. 2Thes.2v3. God has not only revealed His wonderful plans for us, He has also told us about Satan's plans, the mystery of iniquity. Mt.13v11,16,17. Rev.10v6. Eph.3v10,11.

In Dan.8v10., we read that the little horn, "waxed great, even to the host of heaven, and some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them." The explanation of this is found in Rev.12v4., in John's description of the dragon, "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." In Job.38v4-7., God calls the angelic sons of God, "morning stars," and in Is.14v12-14., God says of Satan, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning!" God said that this fall was due to pride; "For thou hast said in thine heart, I WILL ascend into heaven, I WILL exalt my throne above the stars of God: I WILL sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds; I WILL be like the Most High." Satan led one third of the angelic hosts into evil.

After Michael and his angels expel Satan from the heavenly places, his fury will know no bounds, and this is the cause of the great tribulation. Rev.12v12. Antichrist is possessed by Satan and is given his authority, and fulfils his will, and so "his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power." Dan.8v24. Trampling upon the stars he casts down is certainly not the corruption of good angelic beings, or injury to them. It is almost certainly the "grievous bodily harm," and sadistic humiliation, that Satan inflicts on some of the stronger evil angels, in order to establish his authority over the rest of the powers of darkness, after his own humiliation at being cast out of the heavenly places. Satan, like some of the power-loving politicians of earth, keeps his authority over the rest of the evil angels, through fear and intimidation. Evil angels have to obey Satan, those who fail to do so, suffer Satan's personal anger and retribution.

D. Antichrist "shall destroy wonderfully" with Satan's power. Dan.8v24.

1. Antichrist, like Satan, is the enemy of mankind.

The Greek "Satanas," (Strong 4567) is derived from either the Chaldean (Aramaic), or the Hebrew "Satan," they both mean "adversary." Satan is the adversary and enemy, not only of the children of God, but also of all mankind; he only comes "to steal, kill, and destroy." Jn.10v10,11. Satan enables Antichrist to "destroy in an astonishing and wonderful way." He will be one of the monsters of human history, whose kingdom is built on the suffering and death of untold millions of people.

2. Antichrist "will destroy the mighty."

According to Dan.11v42,43., Antichrist's conquests will be:

a. Towards the east.

b Towards "the south." That is Egypt, Ethiopia and North Africa, and possibly to the oil rich states of the Middle East.

c "Toward the glorious land." See Ezek.20v6., where God calls Israel, "the glory of all lands."

3. Antichrist through "craft and by peace shall destroy many."

Antichrist will conquer by deceit and craft, by acting as a peacemaker. His treaties are soon broken; they are a means of making people drop their guard, so that surprise attacks will enable him to conquer. His armed forces, which enter countries under treaty, supposedly to protect those countries from their enemies, take over the lands he has made treaties with.

Satan has always hated the Israelites, and has moved evil political leaders, to persecute and kill them. Antichrist will fulfil Satan's desire to corrupt and destroy the chosen people, he starts his destruction of "the holy people," by political craft, and he will, "by peace destroy many;" this includes other nations besides the Jews. Dan.8v25. Antichrist "will confirm the covenant with many for one week (of years): and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Dan.9v27. When the final 3½ years are finished; "he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people." Dan.12v7. Antichrist brings another holocaust on the Jews; this is why Jesus tells Christians not to enter, and to get out of Palestine, during the last 3½ years of this age, just as He did in A.D. 70. Lk.21v20-24. It is "the time of Jacob's trouble," and "there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation even to that same time." Jer.30v3-9. Dan.12v1. Mt.24v21,22. Rev.7v14.

N.B. The time periods mentioned in Dan.12.

The period of time mentioned in Dan.12v11., is 1,290 days, which is thirty days longer than the 1,260 days

ministry of the two witnesses, and the woman's preservation by God in the wilderness. Rev.11v3. 12v6,14. We learn from Dan.12v6,7., that the period of the great tribulation and Antichrist's attack upon "the holy people," continues, "to the end of these wonders," for "times, time and half a time;" which we learn from a comparison of Rev.12v6 and Rev.12v14., is 1260 days. It is not likely that the sacrifices are stopped a month before Antichrist's image is placed in the sanctuary, because our Lord points to the abomination of desolation as being the sign to flee from Judea, not the stopping of the sacrifices. Mt.24v15,16. Antichrist, therefore, stops the daily sacrifice at the start of the last 3½ years, at his desecration of the holy of holies. This shows that the daily sacrifices are being made. Dan.8v12. 9v27. 12v11. Jesus restores them at His return. Is.66v20-23. Zech.14v16-21. Mal.3v1-4. Mt.24v15. 2Thes.2v1-4. Rev.11v1,2.

It, therefore, appears that the extra 30 days of the 1,290 days extends into the Millennium; Gabriel could well be stating that it takes a month after Jesus returns for the sacrifice and offerings to be restored, which Antichrist had removed. This extra 30 days could also have something to do with the regathering of the Jews to Palestine as well as the setting up of a priestly order. We read in Is.66v20-23., that the Israelites are brought to Palestine by the Gentile nations, "And they shall bring ALL your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of ALL nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. v21. And I will also take of them for priests and Levites, saith the Lord. v23. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." God orders the nations to bring all the Jews back into their land, and the nations obey Him, and come to worship the Lord.

The period of 1,335 days is 45 days longer than the 1,290 days, and those who reach the end of these 45 days are looked upon as "blessed." This infers that it is a period of separation and judgement at Christ's coming, and the setting up of the new divine order. Jesus told us that at His coming the people of the nations will be separated like sheep from goats. Mt.25v31-46. There is also the judgement and purifying of Israel. Zech.13v8,9. Mal.3v1-6. Jesus said in Mt.13v41-43., "The Son of man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity; v42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. v43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." The 30 days and 45 days make up a total period of 75 days, which makes us realise that the judgement of the nations is not rushed through, justice is not only done, it is seen to be done. Paul states that Christians will have a part in the judgement. 1Cor.6v1-3.

E. Antichrist comes out of one of the four parts of the Grecian Empire. Dan.8v9,23.

Some think that the prophecy of Is.10v5,12,24., concerning "the Assyrian," is referring to the Antichrist, but this could refer to the captivity under the Assyrians. However, there can be no doubt that in Dan.11v40., he is called "the king of the north," who "at the time of the end" makes a rapid advance into Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya.

THE PUZZLE AND PROBLEM OF THE 2,300 DAYS. Dan.8v13,14,26.

In Dan.8v13,14., a "holy one" asks, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" Another "holy one" answers and informs Daniel, "Unto two thousand and three hundred evening-mornings; and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Peter informs us that angels desire to look into prophetic truth, and God's plans and purposes for His children. 1Pet.1v10-12. This shows that angels do not know about, or comprehend, all of God's plans and purposes, and, like us, they have to depend on revelation from Him. They, like ourselves, often learn by the unfolding of events, and are taught God's manifold wisdom by His dealing with the Church. Eph.3v10,11. It is quite likely that the holy angel who asked the other "holy one," how long the sanctuary would be "trodden under foot," already knew the answer, and was asking the question for Daniel's sake, because the answer was directed to Daniel, "he said unto me." Dan.8v14. It is likely, that just as Paul had special insights granted to him by God, which were hidden from other apostles, some great angels, like Gabriel, have knowledge revealed to them by God about His divine purposes, which is not revealed to other angels. 2Cor.12v3-5. Gal.1v11,12. Eph.1v9-22. 3v1-11. Uniformity of knowledge in Heaven seems as unlikely as it is in the Church on earth.

Some state the treading down of the Sanctuary for 2,300 days in Dan8v13,14,26., refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, others equally confidently affirm that there is no such period in the time of Antiochus, and say it refers to Antichrist in the last days. We read that the sanctuary is to be "trodden under foot," for "two thousand three hundred evening-mornings" before the sanctuary will be cleansed; that is 2,300 repetitions of the evening and morning sacrifice. The phrase is unique, however, some say that Scriptures, like Gen.1v5., are significant, and tend to confirm that the "evening mornings" refer to 2300 days. Others think that the 2300 evening and morning sacrifices, represent 1150 days, however, no Hebrew reader would understand it in this way, nor would they make 40 days and 40 nights mean 20 days. **Leupold** states the 2,300 does not fit historical facts in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, either in the form of 2300 days, or 1,150, days, no matter how the facts and figures are juggled.

Wordsworth takes an opposite view and sums up the 2,300 in a comment on Dan.8v14., in his commentary on Daniel:

"In order to ascertain the sense of this prophecy we must consider to what it extends. It does not merely concern the taking away of the daily sacrifice, but that which led to it, viz. the sins of the Jewish rulers, especially the high priests Jason and Menelaus, and which is called 'the transgression of desolation,' i.e. the transgression which was the cause of the desolation of the sanctuary. According to the calculation used in the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse, where $3\frac{1}{2}$ years = 42 months = 1260 days, we find that 2300 days would be equivalent to 6 years, 4 months, and 20 days.

The Feast of Dedication instituted by Judas Maccabaeus at the cleansing of the Temple in the winter of B.C. 165 (1Macc.4.42-58. 2Macc.10.3-6. Josephus Ant. 12.11.), a little more than a year before the death of Antiochus, seems to be the 'terminus ad quem' or point to which this prophecy reaches, which ends with the words, 'then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed;' and the 'terminus a quo,' or point from which it is to be dated, would fall late in the summer of B.C. 171, which would nearly coincide with the profanation of the holy vessels by the traitorous High Priest Menelaus (2Macc.4.32,39), and the murder of the faithful High Priest Onias at Antioch (2Macc.433,34), and the commencement of the profane acts of Antiochus.

According to 1Macc.1.21 the persecution began in the 143rd year of the era of the Greeks and lasted to the 149th year, in which Antiochus died, 1Macc.6.16 (A Lapide), but the transgression began earlier than the 143rd year (1 Macc.1.11-15).

Therefore we may accept the interpretation of S. Jerome here, who says, 'Let us read the Books of the Maccabees and the history of Josephus, and we shall find six years of the desolation of Jerusalem, and three years of the pollution of the Temple by the erection of the statue of Jupiter, until the dedication by Judas Maccabaeus.' **End of quote.**

S. P. Tregelles puts the 2,300 days in the future, he writes on pages 104 and 105 of his commentary on Dan.9v27..

"And he (the prince who shall come) shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week.' In 'Remarks on Chapter 8' I sought to show that the horn spoken of in the two chapters is identical, and here again he appears to come before us; in fact, the allusion seems to be made to known circumstances about him. He makes a covenant with the multitude; that of course means the multitude of Daniel's people, they make a treaty with him and he with them. This takes place three years and a half before he causes sacrifice and oblation to cease, hence it is clear that they go on in his patronage for some time. This will, I believe, throw some light on the two thousand three hundred days mentioned in chapter 8.14. We find him here making a covenant for one seven years and breaking it at the end of three years and a half; and the removal of the sacrifice, etc., is so spoken of as to connect it with the breaking of the covenant. This tends, I think, to show that one thing done in the pursuance of this covenant had been the establishment of the temple worship. The period of the two thousand three hundred days is a few months short of the whole term of the seven years, enough being not included, it may be, to be allotted for those preparations which will be needful for the worship to be set up; then follows the time during which it is carried on under his auspices, and then follow three years and a half of distinct persecuting and blasphemous power." **End of quote.**

From this quote we can see that Tregelles believes that the 2,300 days is to be fulfilled by the final Antichrist.

G.H. Lang evidently feels the same for on page 117 of his book on "The Histories and Prophecies of Daniel," he writes:

"And surely those holy watchers feel more deeply concerned with that spot (the holy city) since the feet of the Son of God have trodden it, and near by His precious blood has reddened and redeemed the soil. How long, then, shall the desolation foretold last? When shall the great redemption take effect as regards this sacred spot? The answer is that the desolation will cover 'two thousand three hundred evening-mornings' and then the sanctuary will be cleansed. Pember remarks that, "The words of the angel in regard to the two thousand, three hundred days during which the Sanctuary and the Host are to be trodden under foot, are, perhaps, not so mysterious as they seem.

The literal Hebrew expression is not 'days,' but 'evening-mornings', that is to say, two thousand, three hundred repetitions of the evening and morning sacrifices - which proves that actual days of twenty-four hours are intended. And we should note, that seven full prophetic years would contain two thousand five hundred and twenty days; that is, that the time mentioned by the angel is two hundred and twenty days short of the seven years.

Now as we shall see when we consider the revelation of the Seventy Sevens, the Antichrist is to make a covenant with the majority of the Jewish nation for Seven Years, at the close of which period he will be destroyed by the appearing of the Lord, and the sanctuary will be cleansed. It would seem, then, that he will not tamper with the Sanctuary, until the two hundred and twenty-first day from the commencement of the covenant: indeed it is possible that the building of the Temple may not be completed at that time. Perhaps, the two thousand three hundred days may represent the whole time of his personal connection with the City and the Sanctuary. The actual suppression of the daily sacrifices will not take place, as we shall presently see, until three and a half of the covenant-period have passed by." **End of quote from G.H. Lang.**

Others, as we have seen, feel that there is no evidence for an accurate fulfilment of these 2,300 days in the career of Antiochus Epiphanes, and apply it to the final Antichrist. Wise men will search the Scriptures, and wait and see, and above all allow our Lord to spiritually prepare us for the evil last days of this age, and be prepared to overcome them.

APPENDIX 2. A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF DANIEL.10v1 to 12v13.

a. The Last Three Chapters of Daniel Contain a Single Revelation.

Each of the first nine chapters of Daniel deals with a single incident, subject matter or revelation, and so the chapter breaks are helpful. The chapter breaks in the last three chapters of Daniel are less helpful, for they are one revelation, the final revelation of God to Daniel; even though the angel departs in Dan.9v21., he returns to give the rest of the revelation.

b. This vision was given in the third year of Cyrus.

We read in Daniel nine that this vision occurred two years after Daniel had mourned and prayed after he had realised that the 70 years of captivity that Jeremiah prophesied in Jer.25v8-12., was over. Dan.9v2. From Ezra.1v1-4., we find that it was 2 years since Cyrus had made the decree permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem, only 49,697 availed themselves of the opportunity, the rest settled down in Babylon. Ezra.2v64,65. Neh.7v66. The lack of desire of the Jews to return to the land that God had promised them, and the opposition in the land by Rehum and Shimshai, gave Daniel great distress. He would not anoint himself, and cut himself off from all luxury, refraining from "pleasant bread," and gave himself to prayer, mourning and self-denial. Dan.10v3. Is.66v2. Amos.6v6,7. This sadness, concern, self-denial and broken-hearted prayer over other people's needs, is a mark of true love and spirituality. Lk.14v26-33.

c. Darius the Mede.

Darius the Mede was appointed ruler of Babylon by Cyrus immediately after Babylon was taken by the Persians and Belshazzar was killed in October of B.C. 539. He must not be confused with the later Persian king Darius Hystapes, who reigned B.C. 521 to 486, and was an absolute monarch. We read in Dan.5v31., that "Darius the Mede RECEIVED the kingdom," not "took the kingdom" as the Authorised Version states. From Dan.9v1., we find that Darius was "MADE king over the realm of the Chaldeans;" Cyrus put Darius in charge of Babylonia, while he ruled and supervised the whole of his empire. Darius was the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes. Dan.5v28,30,31. 6v1,28. 9v1. 11v1. Darius honoured the God of Daniel, and Daniel stood by Darius to strengthen him. At the fall of Babylon, Darius the Mede was 62 years old. Dan.5v31. It seems that Darius was Gubaru, (Gobryas), for the radical Arabic letters can be a translation of Darius and can mean "king, compellor, or restrainer." Persian kings appointed Medes as well as Persians to satrapies and command of armies. Gubaru is not to be confused with Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium, who was the general under Cyrus who conquered Babylon, and who, according to the Nabonidus Chronicle, died three weeks later.

Daniel never calls Darius the Mede, king of Media, or king of Persia, he is just called "king," for governors of provinces and cities were often called king. Darius had 120 satrapies under him. Gubaru is often mentioned in cuneiform documents during the fourteen years following Babylon's capture, as "Governor of Babylon and the Region Beyond the River," that is, the entire Fertile Crescent; the vast area of Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine and Babylonia. Darius ruled Babylon far better than his profligate successor, Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, who though a good general and administrator, was a drunkard and given over to unbridled passion. Daniel was the prayer warrior and spiritual giant that stood behind Darius, and also helped Darius in every practical way. Paul tells us that when loving hearts pray, world rulers are affected. 1Tim.2v1-8.

d. The vision came just after the Passover.

The vision came to Daniel "in the four and twentieth day of the first month," this was just after the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month Abib, later called Nisan; Ex.23v15. Neh.2v1.; and just after the feast of unleavened bread, from the 15th. to the 21st., of Abib. The memorial of Passover would further fuel Daniel's desire for the deliverance of his people. The vision came unexpectedly, as Daniel was by the river "Hiddekel," not the Euphrates, but the Tigris. Gen.2v14. The angel is not named, Daniel recognised Gabriel in Dan.9v29., so it seems that this was not Gabriel, but another of the seven "watchers and holy ones," the seven mighty archangels who stand before God. Dan.4v17,23. Zech.4v10. Rev.5v6. 8v2. Though the angel was not seen by the others who were with Daniel, they felt his awesome presence and quaked with fear and fled. Even Daniel was utterly overcome by the glory of the angelic presence, and had to be told not to fear, and had to be supernaturally strengthened in order even to speak. It is lovely to see that Daniel was greatly beloved by the angelic messenger, as well as by the Lord who sent him.

1. THE ANGELIC MESSENGER FROM GOD.

a. The angel had been hindered for 3 Weeks by the evil Prince of Persia.

In Dan.9v29., Daniel says that Gabriel looked like a man, and, like most angels, did not appear to have wings. Here in Dan.10v5., Daniel again says the person looked like a man, but he is a glorious angelic being, who states that he has been "sent" to Daniel, but had been hindered by the evil angelic principality over Persia. Dan.10v11-14. One of God's angels killed 185,000 of the Assyrian army in one night. 2Kings.19v35. Is.37v36. It is difficult for us, as human beings, to conceive or grasp the weapons or huge energies expended in these three weeks of angelic spiritual conflict, or to comprehend the suffering and conflicts that good angels endure

on our behalf. In Dan.10v21., the angel said that there was none that stood with him against the evil angelic princes of Persia and Greece except Michael, the angelic prince who guards Israel. This brings many questions to the mind. Where were the angelic hosts that Jacob saw at Bethel and Peniel, and also encompassed Elisha? Gen.28v12. 32v1,2,24-30. It appears that we shall have to wait till we arrive in glory for the answer.

The three week delay in answer to prayer through the opposition of these evil angels, shows not only the strength of their opposition, it also reveals the painful conflicts that good angels endure on our behalf, and the victories that they win for us by their love for us and their commitment to us. It is moving to see how the angel gently, compassionately and lovingly touched Daniel to minister life and strength to him. Dan.8v18. 9v21. 10v9-19. Isaiah had his lips purified to speak for God by divine power. Is.6v5-13. Jeremiah also was enabled to speak by the touching of his lips by the Lord. Jer.1v4-10. May our dear Lord touch our lips, and strengthen us to tell His truth.

Paul tells us in Eph.6v12,13., that these evil princes, "tas archas," dominate and give authority to the evil spiritual powers, "tas exousias," under them; and that these evil principalities and powers are the real world rulers, and are not to be confused with the less powerful evil spirits that possess people. Eph.2v1,2. God allows these evil spirits some measure of liberty of action in order to reveal what evil is like, but God puts severe restraints upon them and their activities, and He rules over all. 2Thes.2v7. Job.1v8-12. 2v5,6. Dan.4v17,25. The angel tells Daniel that he is leaving him to fight with Michael against the evil angelic prince over Persia, and his companion the evil angel over Greece. He promises to return and reveal to Daniel "that which is recorded in the book of truth." Dan.10v20,21.

b. "The Writing, or Book, of Truth." Dan.10v1,21. 11v2.

Daniel affirms in Dan.10v1., that the revelation he received was true. Zechariah found out that the words of Gabriel could be totally relied upon. Lk.1v18-20. After 3 weeks of prayer, mourning, and fasting, the angel came to Daniel and said, in Dan.10v21., "I will declare unto thee, that which is inscribed in the writing (or book) of truth." This statement proves that there are heavenly prophetic writings and books as well as earthly ones. God wrote the Law upon rock with His finger. Exod.31v18. Moses confirmed the fact that there are books in Heaven, when he referred to, "Your book, which You have written," and the Lord refers to it as "My book," in Exod.32v32,33.. This is obviously, "The book of life," which is spoken of in Phil.4v3. Rev.3v5. 13v8. 17v8. 20v12,15. 21v27. and 22v19; in which are recorded the names of the redeemed children of God. These names can be removed by wilful sin and apostasy. Ex.32v33. There are also books which record all the acts, thoughts, motivations, and intents of heart of all men and women. Rev.2v23. 20v12,13. Heb.4v12,13. 1Cor.3v10-17. 2Cor.5v15.

The angelic hosts are instructed in the prophetic purposes of God by "the writing of truth." This does not mean that God's will is irresistible, for God's foreknowledge does not imply automatic irresistible foreordination; divine covenants and blessings can be revoked because of wilful sin, and divine judgements can be cancelled because of repentance. Num.14v34. Ezek.18v1-32. 33v11-20. God, who is truth and reality, has written heavenly books full of truth, and has revealed His heart as well as His mind in His divine purposes. God's books are full of His love, and manifest His astonishing continual dedicated sacrificial care of His creation. His power and wisdom brings these loving purposes to pass.

c. The Purpose of the Angel's Coming. Dan.10v14.

The key phrase to the proper understanding of the angel's revelation is given in his words in Dan.10v14., "Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come." These chapters expand on the revelations given in the prophecy of the seventy weeks; God, as in Daniel chapters two, seven, eight and nine. concentrates on events leading up to the end of this age, when His enemies will be made his footstool; an event He is greatly looking forward to. Heb.10v13.

2. THE AMAZING ACCURACY OF THE ANGEL'S PROPHECIES.

a. THE ANGEL REVEALS THE NEXT FOUR PERSIAN KINGS. Dan.11v1,2.

Calvin thought these were, 1. Cyrus. 2. Cambyses. 3. Darius Hystapes. 4. Xerxes. This, however, cannot be correct, for Cyrus cannot be included, as the angel told Daniel that four kings were yet to arise and stand for Persia. So the correct list must read: 1. Cambyses. 2. Pseudo Smerdis. 3. Darius Hystapes. 4. Xerxes. More less significant Persian kings followed Xerxes, but the four Persian kings that the angel concentrates our attention upon, had epochal dealing with the Jews.

CAMBYSES. The son of Cyrus (the Ahasuerus of Ezra.4v6.) B.C. 530 to 522.

When Cyrus was killed in a war campaign of the North East frontier, Cambyses came to the throne. From the inscription on the Behistun Stone recorded by Darius 1st, otherwise known as Darius the Great, or Darius Hystapes; and from the accounts of Herodotus and others, we learn, with some variations, that Cambyses, in order to secure his right to the throne, had his brother Bardiya, (called Smerdis by Herodotus), secretly murdered. It seems that Cambyses was the "Artaxerxes," of Ezra.4v5-23., who upheld the objections of the enemies of the Jews, and imposed a ban on the building of the Temple. Haggai.1v4. Cambyses lived a drunken and profligate life, and enabled Satan to control him, and use him to oppose and hinder the work of God. The Temple building was hindered until the second year of the reign of Darius Hystapes. Ezra.4v24.

Cambyses invaded Egypt in B.C. 525 to subdue the revolt from his authority by Psammetichus 3rd., whose life he had previously spared. Cambyses defeated the Egyptian army at the battle of Pelusium, and the revolt was crushed with Great harshness; Psammetichus was executed and many temples were destroyed. Cambyses took the throne of Egypt as the first king of its 27th dynasty, taking the Egyptian royal name, titles and costumes, to obtain the Egyptian's favour, and organised Egypt as a satrapy of the Persian Empire. However, he failed to conquer Carthage, Ethiopia, and the oasis of Ammon in the Egyptians desert.

GAUMATA, THE PSEUDO SMERDIS. B.C. 522.

While Cambyses was returning from Egypt in 522 B.C., a Magian named Gaumata, inspired by his brother Magi Patizithes, usurped the throne, claiming that he was Bardiya, also called Smerdis, the brother who Cambyses had killed, and he gained a great deal of support from the eastern provinces. Cambyses died near Carmel in Palestine, many think by suicide, because of the bad news, others think that it was possibly by sickness, the details are not clear; he left no heir. Darius Hystapes overcame and executed the rebels and took the throne.

DARIUS 1ST. ALSO KNOWN AS DARIUS HYSTAPES, OR DARIUS THE GREAT. B.C. 521-486.

Darius Hystapes was a Persian officer of the same Archaemenian family as Cyrus by a collateral royal line; within a few months he had subdued the revolt throughout the Persian Empire, by violent means. Within two months Darius had killed Gaumata, the Pseudo Smerdis. The Median rebel Fravartish (Phraortes), was put on public exhibition after having his nose, ears and tongue cut off, and his eyes gouged out, and then finally impaled. Within two years Darius had defeated nine kings in nineteen battles, and had secured his throne and had consolidated the empire.

In B.C. 520, the foundation of the Temple was laid. Haggai.2v18. The Persian governor of Western Euphrates, Tattenai, challenged the right of the Jews to rebuild their Temple, after they had been encouraged to build by Haggai and Zechariah. Ezra.5v1-3. The Jews appealed to Darius, and stated that Cyrus had given Sheshbazzar (Zerubbabel) a written decree to build the Temple. The work on the Temple continued while this decree was searched for in the library at Ecbatana. Ezra.6v2. Darius, recognising in some measure Jehovah's person and power, then made his own decree and commanded Tattenai to provide financial aid to build the Temple from the income from the tribute from the western provinces. Ezra.6v6-12. With this material aid, and prophetic spiritual encouragement from Zechariah and Haggai (Zech.7v1 to 8v23.), in the fourth year of Darius, B.C. 518, the Temple was rapidly rebuilt and finished in the sixth year of Darius, in either February or March of 516 or 515 B.C. Ezra.6v15.

The haste of Tattenai to obey the decree of Darius is explained by the execution of 3,000 of the leading citizens of Babylon about a year before this decree. Many Babylonians had followed a usurper, who claimed the title of Nebuchadnezzar 4th., and took over Babylon. It took a long siege to recapture Babylon; the crucifixion of 3,000 of its leading citizens served as a terrifying warning to submit to and obey Darius. Ezra.6v11-13. The opponents of the Jews knew that their death was just as sure and certain if they disobeyed the decree of Darius to aid in the rebuilding of the Temple.

XERXES.

Xerxes was the fourth king the angel mentioned in Dan.11v2., he obtained and lost great wealth through warfare. Xerxes, like many politicians, pursued wealth and power without any regard for people, he left an unenviable reputation for cruelty. Many expositors think that Xerxes was the husband of Esther. If this is true, Ester was a very brave woman to take on such a husband for the sake of the people of God. She deserves, and will probably get, a medal for valour. According to some evidence it seems that Xerxes was co-Rex with Darius from B.C. 498 to 486, when Darius put him in charge of Babylon, he was sole Rex from B.C. 485 to 474. See my notes on Xerxes in the evidence on the date of the start of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus.

Xerxes went on to "stir up all against the realm of Grecia," Dan.11v2., he spent four years gathering and training an army of over two million soldiers made up of contingents from almost fifty nations; then in B.C. 480 he invaded Greece. It took seven days and nights for his army to pass over the Hellespont on a double bridge made by boats. The Greeks withstood Xerxes in the famous battle at the straits of Thermopylae, but after victory there, Xerxes marched South and captured Athens. Themistocles had foreseen the danger from Persia and had increased the Athenian navy from 70 to 200 ships, and, still in 480 B.C., this fleet defeated the great fleet of Xerxes at the battle of Salamis. The insecure and capricious reaction of Xerxes to this defeat cost him dear; he put the admiral of the fleet to death, and this caused the remainder of his fleet to desert him. The brilliant foresight, strategy and leadership of Themistocles had altered the whole course of the war and Xerxes was finally defeated at the battle of Plataea around B.C. 479 to 478. After this battle many of his soldiers joined the Athenians, and attacked the empire of Xerxes. (The history of Herodotus finished at the siege of Lesbos in B.C. 478, Diodorus).

Themistocles became a national hero, but he offended the Spartans and they tried him and sentenced him to death in his absence, he fled to the Persians, who allowed him to live in style at Magnesia until his death, not long after visiting the court of Artaxerxes Longimanus. This flight of Themistocles to the court of Artaxerxes Longimanus is confirmed by Thucydides, who lived just after these events in Athens, the same town where Themistocles had lived. Charon of Lampsacus also confirms these events, he was alive at the time and still writing history even though he was an old man, having been born in 554 B.C. according to Suidas. Xerxes was

murdered in B.C. 474, and was succeeded by his son, Artaxerxes Longimanus.

b. THE ANGEL REVEALS THE EXTRAORDINARY CAREER OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

The angel moves on to speak of Alexander the Great, who reigned from B.C. 336 until his early death in 323. The angel omits mentioning Artaxerxes Longimanus, and several other Persian kings, and mentions the rise to power of Alexander the Great, who with a much smaller army, defeated Darius 3rd., at Granicus in B.C. 334; and at the decisive battle of Codomannus in November of B.C. 333, and the Persian empire came to an end at the battle of Arbela in B.C. 331.

c. THE ANGEL THEN GIVES A DETAILED PROPHECY ABOUT EVEN MORE DISTANT FUTURE HISTORY.

The amazing accuracy of the prophecies that were given to Daniel has caused major problems for those who do not believe in prophecy, they say it must have been written after the events took place. These unbelieving critics have falsely said that the book of Daniel was written between B.C. 167 and 160. The internal evidence of the book of Daniel is against their conclusions, and Ezekiel further disproves their unbelief, when he testifies that Daniel was a real person who lived in his time. Ezek.14v14,20. This is a prophecy from God's "Scripture of truth," and its accuracy is due to the fact that this Scripture, like all of the Scripture, is "breathed out by God," the God who reveals the future BEFORE it comes to pass. Dan.10v21. 11v1. 2Tim.3v15,16. Rom.3v2. Is.41v21,22,26. 43v9,10. 45v21. The accuracy of the prophecies of the major historical events between various kings of Syria and Egypt is beyond question. The prophecy goes at verse 21 to give another detailed revelation of the evil career of Antiochus Epiphanes. The accuracy of these prophecies was a great comfort to the people of God, when these events took place. They knew that God held their future in His hands and would bring them and their nation through, and deal with this evil man.

3. THE EXPOSITION OF DAN.11v5-45.

Two alternative expositions.

Some, like B. W. Newton in his "The Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms," and Pember in "The Great Prophecies of the Centuries Concerning Israel and the Gentiles," and others, state that Dan.11v5-33., is a detailed prophecy of the conflicts between Syria and Egypt from the division of Alexander's empire to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria. Then they say that in verses 34 and 35, the prophecy speaks of the time of the end, and reveals the final Antichrist. Others say that the details concerning the Antichrist start at Dan.11v36..

Dr. S. P. Tregelles in his exposition of the book of Daniel, gives the viewpoint that at Dan.11v5., the prophecy goes from the Grecian empire to the last days of this age, and that verses 5 to 20 reveal the political events that will lead up to the revelation of the Antichrist, and verses 21 to 46 reveal his evil career.

Both of these different views agree as to the meaning and fulfilment of the prophecies concerning Persia and Greece immediately after the time of Daniel and the return from the captivity. Both of these views also agree that Dan.11v34-45. speaks of the final Antichrist, and v35 of events continuing, "even to the TIME OF THE END: for it is yet for THE TIME APPOINTED." We also note that Dan.12v1. states that, "And at that time," which shows that at least the latter part of Daniel eleven is speaking of events concerning the final Antichrist. Jesus puts "the abomination of desolation" of Dan.12v11. into the time just prior to His return. Mt.24v14,15,29-31. Does "the abomination of desolation" of Dan.11v31. refer to Antiochus Epiphanes or the end time? or does it anticipate both events? Is the "covenant" and "holy covenant" mentioned in Dan.11v30-32., the treaty or covenant that Antichrist makes with Israel? If we have an open mind and heart we will know all the necessary facts, and need not fear.

The emphasis upon the Syrian Seleucid empire and Antiochus Epiphanes in Daniel eight and eleven, strongly indicates that Syria has a leading and important part to play in the last day events, and the rise of the Antichrist. The Antichrist comes out of the seventh and eighth head of the beast, Syria was the fourth heads of the beast, and Rome was the sixth. Rev.17v9-12.

4. THE REVELATION OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION IN Daniel 12.

a. The warning of the future holocaust for the world and Israel.

The angel reveals that the great tribulation will start when Michael "stands up;" this is the future expulsion of Satan and his angels out of the heavenly places by Michael and his angels at the start of the great tribulation, which is also described in Rev.12v7-12.. Jesus also quoted this prophecy of Daniel, when He warned us about the great tribulation in Mt.24v21,29., the angel in Dan.12v6,7., warns that this tribulation will last for 3½ years. Daniel was told twice that the words of the prophecy were to be "closed up and sealed until the time of the end." Dan.12v4,9. The Holy Spirit comes to illuminate the Church and explain these prophecies at the time of the end.

b. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."Dan. 12v4.

The angel prophesies of an increase of travel and knowledge in the last days. What did he mean? Some have suggested that the prophecy in Dan.12v4. of people running to and fro and knowledge increasing was a prophecy of the increase of travel and knowledge that we see in the world today, and give this as a proof that we are in the last days, and there may be some truth in this. However, as this statement is made in the same verse as the instruction to seal the prophecy until the last days, it has a specific reference to the knowledge of prophetic truth that was revealed to Daniel. This has been fulfilled in two ways in our day.

1. The excited diligent examination of prophetic truth.

There has been an excited and diligent perusal of prophecy in these last days by many Christians and Christian leaders. Many Christian expositors, some who lived long before our day, have stated that this would be a sign of the last days.

C.F. Keil says that in Dan.12v4., "many shall run to and fro," is used of going to and fro through a land in order to seek out or search, to go about spying, and is used in Zech.4v10., of the eyes of God; and states that it has the meaning "to search through, to examine, a book; not merely to "read industriously" (Hitzig, Ewald), but thoroughly to search into it (Gesenius)."

Other translators confirm this viewpoint, and say that "knowledge shall be increased," refers to the knowledge of prophecy in the last days. Darby translates this statement, "Many shall diligently investigate, and knowledge shall increase." Leupold states, "Many shall diligently peruse it, and knowledge shall increase." Tregelles suggests it means, "Many shall scrutinise the book from end to end." Fausset writes, "Many shall scrutinise it, running through every page."

2. The eager travelling to seek and find truth.

Many Christians have undertaken extensive travelling to find the answers regarding the interpretation of prophetic truth.

Bishop C. Wordsworth wrote on Dan12v4., over 120 years ago, in his 1871 edition:

"Many shall run to and fro: Rather, many shall diligently seek after and eagerly peruse the words of this prophecy. The Hebrew word 'shut' here used, signifies to traverse the sea, as merchantmen do in ships, in order to visit distant lands, and find merchandise there. Cp. Zech.4v10., "The eyes of the Lord which run to and fro." 2Chron.16v9.; and Amos.8v12., "They shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord." The consequence of this running to and fro is here expressed, 'knowledge shall be increased' in the 'latter days.' The world may boast of its own knowledge; but true knowledge can only be increased by diligent and eager perusal of God's Holy Word, especially of the prophetic Scriptures, in the latter days." End of quote.

In Dan.12v3., we are told, "And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." These are the words Jesus uses in Mt.13v43., "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Our Lord in His prophetic discourse to His apostles, says in Mt.24v45-47., "Who then is a faithful and WISE servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? v46. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. v47. Verily I say unto you, that He shall make him ruler over all His goods." It is vital to know prophetic truth in these days, lack of a correct knowledge of prophetic truth can lead to apostasy. Mt.24v48-51. See also Lk.12v42-48.. Some people and preachers feel that prophetic truth is the hobbyhorse of fanatics; our Lord took the very opposite viewpoint, He made it quite clear that the knowledge of prophetic truth is essential for survival in the last days. "Those who are wise" and tell the truth about these last days and illuminate and protect the Church with prophetic truth will receive our Lord's "Well done," and shine as the stars for ever. Dan.12v3. Mt.24v44-46. 25v1,14,21-23.

APPENDIX 3. THE FIRST YEAR OF ARTAXERXES LONGIMANUS IS B.C.474.

The decree of Artaxerxes in his 20th. year.

Most prophetic students would consider that the decree of Artaxerxes in the 20th. year of his reign in Neh.2v1., and Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem, fulfilled the start of the 490 years of prophecy that are mentioned in Dan.9v20-27.. Some have put this decree at B.C. 445; however historical evidence shows that B.C. 474 was the year of accession of Artaxerxes Longimanus to the throne, and B.C. 454 is his 20th year. It is difficult to make an accurate chronology of late Persian history, however, there are several important witnesses.

1. THUCYDIDES VITAL EVIDENCE ON THE YEAR OF ACCESSION OF ARTAXERXES LONGIMANUS.

Thucydides gives crucial evidence on the year of accession of Artaxerxes Longimanus. Anstey writes on pages 291 and 292 of his book, "The Romance of Bible++ Chronology:" "The truth is, there are no authentic records of the late Persian period in existence. The method of measuring time by means of Olympiads was not adopted till more than 60 years after the death of Alexander the Great. It was not used in the Parian Chronicle. A Chronology was framed by Eratosthenes and Apollodorus, and all the known facts of past history were made to fit into it. Hence discrimination is needed to enable us to separate what is really certain from what is a matter of opinion and conjecture.

The one event which Thucydides does mention in his brief and hurried summary of this unwritten period, is the flight of Themistocles, and just here at this very point which he does touch the chronology of this period, he is in flat contradiction to Ptolemy's Canon. Writing of the year B.C. 471, Thucydides says, Themistocles had been ostracised and was living at Argos. Lacedaemonians and Athenians sent officers to arrest him. He fled to the Corcyreans. They conveyed him to the neighbouring continent. The officers constantly enquired in which direction he had gone, and pursued him everywhere. He stopped at the house of Admetus the King of the Molossians, who protected him and would not give him up to his pursuers, though they pressed him to do so. And as Themistocles wanted to go to the King (of Persia), Admetus sent him on foot across the country to the

sea at Pydna (which was in the Kingdom of Alexander). There he found a merchant vessel sailing to Ionia, in which he embarked. It was driven by a storm to Naxos, but at length he arrived at Ephesus. Themistocles then went up the country with one of the Persians who dwelt in the coast, and sent a letter to Artaxerxes the son of Xerxes, who had just succeeded to the throne." **End of quote.**

Anstey states that this shows that Ptolemy's Canon is in error, for according to Ptolemy's Canon, in B.C. 471 Xerxes was in the 15th year of his 21 year reign, after which Artabanus reigned 7 months, and then Artaxerxes Longimanus came to the throne; this would have made Artaxerxes only a boy of 14 in 471 B.C., when Themistocles arrived in Persia, and according to Ptolemy, Artaxerxes Longimanus did not come to the throne until B.C. 464, seven years later.

Anstey continues: "This event is dated in Ptolemy's Canon 7 years later than the time at which it occurred. No blame attaches to Ptolemy for this. He did the best he could with the materials at his disposal. But real blame does attach to the modern scholar, who refuses to recognise a proved error, and continues to regard as an infallible guide, a table of reigns, which as regards this part of the Persian period, is incapable of verification, suspect as to its source and false in its facts." Quote ends.

So we see that after Themistocles had been accused and convicted of treason in his own country, Thucydides records that Themistocles fled to Persia when Artaxerxes had but "lately come to the throne." Thucydides Book 1 Chapter 137. Thucydides was in the best position to know about Themistocles for they both lived in Athens, and Thucydides was born about the time, or just after Themistocles death. Thucydides also lived during the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, for we read in Neh.5v14. and 13v6. of the thirty second year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus. According to Thucydides and Diodorus, Artaxerxes reigned forty years; this would be from B.C. 474 to 434: Usher would give a 51 year reign to Artaxerxes from 474 to 424 B.C.; whereas Clinton says he reigned from B.C. 464 to 424.

NOTE ON THEMISTOCLES.

Themistocles was an Athenian statesman and general. He developed the harbour at Paraeus and increased the strength of the Athenian navy from seventy to about two hundred ships to prepare for the threatened invasion by the Persians. In the seventh year of his reign, Xerxes and his Persian army invaded Greece; Themistocles persuaded the Athenians to trust in their naval power and strategically directed the battle at Salamis, and Xerxes was defeated; and Themistocles became a national hero. His success made him arrogant, and dangerous anti-Spartan intrigues caused him to be exiled for about five years. His intrigues against the Spartans continued, and the Spartans accused him of treason, and had him tried and convicted in his absence, in his own city of Athens, and obtained a sentence of death against him. Themistocles was forced to flee and after various adventures came to the court of the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus, and he was allowed to live in style at Magnesia until he died. The arrival of Themistocles at the court of Artaxerxes Longimanus, and the date of that arrival, is of critical importance in the study of the prophecy of the seventy sevens of Daniel.9v20-27., for it fixes the start of that prophecy.

NOTE ON THUCYDIDES.

Thucydides has been called the first and best of impartial and scientific historians. The date and manner of his death is unknown. Anstey says Thucydides lived from 471 to 401 or 396 B.C.; others say 460 B.C. or earlier. Thucydides was an outstanding Greek historian; he was born in Athens and was a member of the aristocratic family that included the great general and statesman Miltiades, and was connected with the royal family of Thrace, where he had an estate and some gold mines. Thucydides caught the plague in the great pestilence, which raged in Athens from B.C. 430 to 427 and was fortunate to survive it. In B.C. 424 he was elected "strategos," a military magistrate and general, and was stationed in Thrace and was given command of the fleet in the Thraceward region. In 422 B.C. Thucydides failed to prevent the capture of the important Thracian city of Amphipolis, when the Spartan general Brasidas took it through a surprise attack in the middle of winter. Thucydides was recalled, tried, and sentenced to an exile, which lasted twenty years.

Thucydides spent most of the twenty years of his exile in Thrace and was there for the rest of the war. Thucydides, like John Bunyan, made valuable use of his exile, he spent his time writing, travelling and gathering material for his remarkable "History of the Peloponnesian War." He did not return to Athens until the Spartans took it in 404 B.C. and peace was made. In his "History of the Peloponnesian War," Thucydides gives an account of the war between Athens and Sparta, but failed to finish the work, stopping his account of the events in the middle of 411 B.C.; more than six and a half years before the end of the war. (431 to 404 B.C.). He describes events leading up to the war, and in books 2 to 8, the war itself.

Thucydides stood alone amongst the historians of his day for historical integrity. Most of the classical historians were often careless and inaccurate in their histories, but Thucydides was remarkable for his meticulous critical historical research. Thucydides complained that his predecessor Herodotus included too many "mythical" elements and that his primary reason for writing was to please his audience; he also complains that other historians were unclear in their chronology. Herodotus, B.C. 484 to 424, Xenophon, about B.C. 430 to 437; and Ctesias, 5th. century B.C.; all lacked the accuracy and integrity of Thucydides in their histories, as Thucydides said of these chroniclers, "They cared only for popularity and took no pains to make their narrative trustworthy." This contrasted greatly with his own searching scrutiny of historical materials and strict adherence

to the facts. Thucydides writes, "As to the deeds done in the war, I have not thought myself at liberty to record them on hearsay from the first informant or on arbitrary conjecture. My account rests either on personal knowledge or on the closest possible scrutiny of each statement made by others. The process of research was laborious, because conflicting accounts were given by those who had witnessed the several events, as partiality swayed or as memory served them."

2. CHARON OF LAMPSACUS.

Was born 554 B.C., and was still writing history in B.C. 464 (Suidas). Charon of Lampsacus, like Thucydides, said that the flight of Themistocles to the court of Artaxerxes Longimanus took place in 471 B.C.; Ptolemy's Canon said that he was not king until seven years later. Anstey states that it is a fact that Ptolemy's canon is contradicted by competent witnesses at various points.

3. CORNELIUS NEPOS. About 100 A.D.

Was a Roman historian who lived about 100 A.D., he was a friend of Cicero and Catullus. Twenty-five of his short lives of statesmen and warriors have survived in his "De Viris Illustribus." He deals mainly with Greeks. Nepos supports Thucydides, he wrote: "I know that most historians have related that Themistocles went over into Asia in the reign of Xerxes, but I give credence to Thucydides in preference to others, because he, of all those who have left records of that period, was nearest in point of time to Themistocles, and was of the same city. Thucydides says that he went to Artaxerxes." **End of quote.**
Nepos, Themistocles, Chapter 9.

4. PLUTARCH. A.D. 46 to 120.

The Greek historian and philosopher Plutarch is famous for the literary beauty of his parallel biographies of great Greeks and Romans, in which he matched one against the other. The translations of these "Lives," by Thomas North became a source of some of Shakespeare's plays. Plutarch writes: - "Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus, say that Xerxes was dead, and that Themistocles had an interview with his son, Artaxerxes; but Ephorus, Dinon, Clitarchus, Heraclides and many others, write that he came to Xerxes. The chronological tables better agree with the account of Thucydides." Them. c. 27. **End of quote.**

5. DIODORUS THE SICILIAN. Of the first century A.D.

The Greek historian Diodorus places the death of Themistocles in B.C. 471. It is reported that after his arrival in Persia, Themistocles asked for his audience with Artaxerxes to be postponed for a year in order to learn the Persian language, so that he could communicate with Artaxerxes in the Persian language.

6. JEROME. A.D. 340 to 420.

Jerome translated into Latin the Greek "Chronicon" of Eusebius, only fragments of the Greek manuscript exist, but Jerome's translation is still extant. Eusebius was the first one to adopt reckoning chronological events by the hypothetical era of the Greek Olympiads, (four year periods beginning in 776 B.C.); and he, unfortunately, adapted historical events to his Chronology, instead of adapting his Chronology to events. The Chronology of Eusebius has been followed by all kinds of authors and determined the Chronology in Western Europe, till the time of Bede, and since, up to almost the present day. Eusebius puts the arrival of Themistocles in the fourth year of the 76th. Olympiad (76 times 4 = 304 taken from 776 = 472. So in the fourth year would be 473 to 472 B.C.

7. JAMES USSHER. A.D. 1581 to 1656.

Ussher was born in Dublin, and educated in Trinity College. He took holy orders in 1601 and in 1607 became Professor of Divinity at Trinity College, Dublin. In 1625 he became Archbishop of Armagh, purely on merit, and in 1634 Primate of all Ireland. Ussher was a great scholar, after a life-time of study he felt the evidence dictated that Artaxerxes Longimanus came to the throne in 474 B.C.; and as do other leading chronologers; Petavius, Vitringa 1659-1722. Ernst Wm. Hengstenberg, 1802-1869; writes in his "Christology of the Old Testament," Vol.2, page 395: "Kreuger--- places the death of Xerxes in the year 474 or 473, and the flight of Themistocles a year later." Ussher is one of several authorities who put the arrival of Themistocles in Persia in about 473 B.C., when as Thucydides records, Artaxerxes Longimanus had but "lately come to the throne."

Bishop William Lloyd took Ussher's Chronological dates and put them in the margins of his Lloyd's Bible, however he altered Ussher's date of the 20th. year of Artaxerxes Longimanus in Nehemiah.2v1., from B.C.454 to B.C. 445.

8. S. P. TREGELLES.

Writes an instructive footnote on page 100 and 101 of his "Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel."

"On the 20th of Artaxerxes.- Some have found a difficulty in making out the chronology of the seventy weeks, because they have thought that the time from the 20th of Artaxerxes to the crucifixion of our Lord would not fully accord with that marked out in the prophecy. If it had been so, it need have surprised no one; whatever be the result of the chronological calculations, the word of God is the same; we know that it is certain, and everything else must bend to it. But here I believe the difficulty to be wholly imaginary. It is true that we may find some from the date printed in the margin of our Bibles; but the history of this date, as it here stands, is

rather curious. Archbishop Ussher drew up a scheme of Chronology, which is commonly followed, rather from convenience than from its absolute correctness being supposed. About a hundred and fifty years ago Bishop Lloyd undertook to affix Archbishop Ussher's dates to our English Bibles; but IN THIS INSTANCE, he made a considerable alteration and substituted another date of his own, so as to adapt the reign of Artaxerxes to his own theory.

The date which stands in our Bibles for the 20th year of Artaxerxes is 446 B.C.- this makes the commencement of his reign 465 B.C.; but the authority of the best and most nearly contemporary historian will put the matter in a very different light. Thucydides mentions that the accession of Artaxerxes had taken place before the flight of Themistocles; this authorises us to adopt Ussher's date and place the commencement of the reign 473 or 474 B.C. This would give the date of 454 or 455 B.C. If we add to this the date of the crucifixion it will give us the exact period of the sixty-nine weeks. 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.

It is a great pity that Archbishop Ussher's date should in this particular case have been misrepresented: it was a point to which he had paid particular attention. About the year 1613 he lectured on the subject at Trinity College, Dublin, resting on the testimony of Thucydides. He then discussed difficulties connected with the supposed length of the reigns of Darius and Xerxes so as to adapt other events to this certain date. From October 1615 he corresponded at various times on the point with Thomas Lydiat (the scholar most familiar with such subjects of any in England), until 1643; and in 1650, after thirty-seven years of minute consideration, he published the result in his 'Annales Veritatis Testamenti,' where the date is 3531. This answers in Ussher's 'Collatio Annorum' to 474 B.C., or the third year of the seventy-sixth Olympiad. His judgement in 1613 seems to have been doubtful; but in 1617 he says, 'These things being laid together do show, that the expulsion of Themistocles from Athens fell no later than the beginning of the fourth year of the seventy-sixth Olympiad; to which time you (i.e. Lydiat) doubtfully refer the beginning of his troubles; how much sooner so ever, my opinion is, that at that time Themistocles fled into Persia, as Eusebius noteth, whose testimony I have no reason to discredit, unless I have some better testimony or reason to oppose against it. The year before that, which is the third of the seventy-sixth Olympiad, I suppose Artaxerxes Longimanus to have begun his reign: to whom as yet 'neosti basileuonta,' Themistocles fled, as Thucydides sufficiently proveth.' (Works, 15, p. 11). Ussher in thus laying down this date had no motive for bringing the space of 483 years from the 20th of Artaxerxes to A.D. 29; for his division of the seventy Heptads differs from mine, and he did not regard A.D. 29 as the date of the crucifixion of our Lord." **End of Tregelles quote.**

N.B. 1. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE FOR A 51 YEAR REIGN OF ARTAXERXES LONGIMANUS.

One cuneiform text, (reproduced by "The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, Series A: Cuneiform Texts," edited by H. V. Hilprecht, Vol. 8, Part 1, by Albert T. Clay, 1908, published by Department of Archaeology, University of Pennsylvania), is dated, "51st year, accession year, 12th month (of) Darius, king of lands." Darius 2nd succeeded Artaxerxes to the throne. This evidence is said to be "a scribal error," by some historians; who favour two other tablets, which they say refer to Artaxerxes "41st year, (and) accession year" of his successor Darius 2nd.

N.B. 2. XERXES APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CO-REX WITH DARIUS FOR SOME TIME BEFORE DARIUS DIED.

The Father of Xerxes, Darius the Great, made it quite clear that of his sons Xerxes was to be his successor. In a relief at Persepolis, Xerxes is seen standing by his father's throne, dressed in identical clothing to Darius, and with his head on the same level as Darius, and with his head on the same level as the head of Darius. The Persian kings insisted that in the pictures represented on royal reliefs, the king's head was always higher than the head of all others on the relief. This suggests that Xerxes was not only the appointed successor of Darius but also was Co-Rex with Darius for some time before Darius died.

Historical evidence shows that Xerxes was selected as crown prince and viceroy of Babylon about 498 B.C., and that a palace was completed for him in Babylon by about 496 B.C. See pages 215 and 216 of A. T. Holmstead's, "History of the Persian Empire;" and pages 80 and 100 of William Cullican's, "Medes and Persians." Some think that the evidence for a reign of 21 years for Xerxes is inconclusive, one piece of "evidence," a papyrus text from Assuan in Egypt, has the date "year 21, the accession year of Artaxerxes;" however Xerxes is not mentioned. In any case a co-regency in 496 B.C. would give a reign of 22 years to 474 B.C., which gives ample scope for the 21 year reign of Xerxes.

APPENDIX 4. THE GREEK WORDS GOD USES TO SPEAK OF CHRIST'S RETURN.

The Holy Spirit inspired the New Testament writers of the Scriptures to use three Greek words, "Parousia," "Epiphaneia," and "Apokalupsis," to describe the second coming of Jesus.

PAROUSIA. Is derived from "para," by or with, and "ousia," being, from "eimi," to be; and it speaks both of an arrival and a consequent personal presence of someone. "Parousia" occurs 24 times in the New Testament.

1. It is used of the arrival and actual physical presence of people.

1Cor.16v17. "I am glad of the COMING of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaiacus."

2Cor.7v6,7. "God --- comforted us by the COMING of Titus: and not by his COMING only."

Phil.1v26. "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my COMING to you again."

2Cor.10v10. "His letters, --- are weighty and powerful; but his bodily PRESENCE is weak, and his speech contemptible."

Phil.1v26. "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my COMING to you again."

Phil.2v12. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my PRESENCE only, but now much more in my absence." Paul uses "parousia" for his actual physical presence, and "apousia," for his absence.

2Pet.1v16-18. "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and COMING of the Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty." Our Lord was transfigured on the holy mount, after the manner of His "power and coming;" His face shone like the sun, and His raiment was as white as the light. Mt.17v2.

2. It is used of the coming and personal presence of the Antichrist.

2Cor.2v8,9. "Then shall the Lawless One ('ho anomos") be revealed,---whose COMING is after the working of Satan, whom the Lord will consume by the spirit of His mouth; **and destroy with the brightness ("epiphaneia") of His COMING.**" "Destroy" is "katargesei," the future active indicative of "katargeo," to render inactive, to abolish, to destroy, to annihilate. Jesus annihilates Antichrist by the brightness of His coming. See Isa.11v4. "and with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." For "consume," the Majority Text has "analosei," the future active indicative of "analuo," to loose, to dissolve, to depart; in Phil.1v23., Paul uses it of his own death and departure from life.

3. It is used of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mt.24v3. "Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy COMING?" v27. "As the lightening ----so shall also the COMING of the Son of Man be." v37. "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the COMING of the Son of Man be. v39. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the COMING of the Son of Man be."

1Thes.2v19. "What is our -- crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His COMING?"

1Thes.3v13. "To the end that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."

2Thes.2v1. "Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning the COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our **gathering together** unto Him." The noun "episunagoge," means, assembling, gathering together, collecting together, meeting; it only occurs in 2Thes.2v1. and Heb.10v25. The verb "episunago," to gather together, is used of people gathering together to meet Jesus in His ministry in Mk.1v33. and Lk.12v1., and of God's desire to gather Israel under His protection in Mt.23v37. and Lk.13v34.; and the gathering of the Church, the elect, at Christ's second coming, in Mt.24v31. and Mk.13v27.

These Scriptures totally demolish the arguments of the secret rapture theory. For at Christ's "Parousia" the saints will be raised from the dead, 1Cor.15v23.; and "as the lightening cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west: so shall the "Parousia" of the Son of Man be." Mt.24v27. We are told that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet of God," at Christ's "Parousia." 1Thes.4v15-17. In Mt.24v29-31., Jesus stated that the "parousia" will take place "immediately after the tribulation of those days." In 1Cor.15v23,51-53., Paul writes that Christ's coming, "Parousia," takes place at the last trumpet of Rev.11v15-19., at the end of the tribulation

EPIPHANEIA. Is derived from "epi," upon, and "phaino," to make light, let shine, throw light upon; and it means appearance, manifestation, shining upon; and is used 6 times only in the New Testament.

1. It is applied to Christ at His first coming.

2Tim.1v8-10. "God - has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the APPEARING of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

2. It is applied to Christ at His second coming."

2Thes.2v8. "The Lawless One--the Lord shall --- destroy with the BRIGHTNESS of His coming." Jesus destroys Antichrist "with the brightness, "epiphaneia," of His "parousia." 2Thes.2v8.

1Tim.6v13,14. "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the APPEARING of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2Tim.4v1. "Who shall judge the living and the dead at His APPEARING" and His kingdom."

2Tim4v8. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not me only, but unto all them also that love His APPEARING."

Titus.2v13. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious APPEARING of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

APOKALUPSIS. The use of "apo," "from," with "kalupto," "to hide," gives a meaning the opposite of hiding; "uncovering and unveiling;" when used of a person, it always denotes his actual appearance. It occurs 18 times in the New Testament.

1. It is applied to Gospel truth, spiritual illumination, and revelations from God.

Lk.2v32. "A light to LIGHTEN the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel"

Rom.16v25. "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you accordingly to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the REVELATION of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began."

1Cor.14v6. "If I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by REVELATION, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"

1Cor.14v26. "Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a REVELATION."

2Cor.12v1. "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and REVELATIONS of the Lord."

2Cor.12v7. "Lest I should be elated through the abundance of the REVELATIONS, there was given me a thorn in the flesh."

Gal.1v12. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the REVELATION of Jesus Christ."

Gal.2v2. "I went up (i.e. to Jerusalem; see Acts15v12.) by REVELATION.

Eph.1v16,17. "Making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and REVELATION in the knowledge of Him."

Eph.3v3. "How that by REVELATION He made known unto me the mystery."

2. It is the title of the book of Revelation.

Rev.1v1. "The REVELATION of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants (the) things which must shortly come to pass: and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John."

3. It is applied to the second coming of the Lord.

Rom.2v5. "Treasurist up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath and REVELATION of the righteous judgement of God."

1Cor.1v7,8. "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who will also confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameless (without accusation, uncharged, "anengkletous"), in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2Thes.1v6-8. "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus SHALL BE REVEALED ("en te apokalupsei," "at the apocalypse") from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God." Persecuted Christians will rest at Christ's "Apokalupsis." 2Thes.1v7.

1Pet.1v7. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the APPEARING of Jesus Christ."

1Pet.1v13. "Wherefore --hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the REVELATION of Jesus Christ"

1Pet.4v12,13. "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you... but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory SHALL BE REVEALED, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

4. "Apokalupsis" and "phaneroo" are used of the manifestation of the Sons of God at Christ's coming.

Rom.8v19. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the MANIFESTATION of the sons of God."

Col.3v4. "When Christ, who is our life, shall APPEAR (be manifested, "phanerothe") then shall ye also APPEAR (be manifested, "phanerothesesthe") with Him in glory." Jesus heads an awesome army of saints and angels on this great day.

1John.3v2. "Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear ("ephanerothe," the first aorist indicative of "phaneroo," to manifest, to reveal) what we shall be: but we know that when He shall APPEAR (be manifested, "phanerothe," the aorist passive subjunctive, as 1Jn.2v28.), we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

In Mt.13v43. a similar thought is made; "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." "Shine forth," is "eklampsousin," the future of "eklampto," to shine out, to shine forth. When "the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in His wings; ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of thy feet in the day that I shall do this, saith Jehovah of hosts." Mal.4v2,3. Like the rising sun scatters the darkness, so will Jesus and the sons of God drive away the darkness of Satan's and Antichrist's reign. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament." Dan.12v3. "As the sun when he goeth forth in his might." Judges.5v31. The Scripture states, "a fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." Ps.97v3-5. See Is.42v13-17. 63v1-6. Micah.1v3-5. Zech.14v4,5. 2Thes.1v5-11. Rev.19v11-21.

ALL THESE SCRIPTURES SPEAK OF THE SAME EVENT AND THE SAME TIME.

These Scriptures prove that the "Parousia," "Epiphaneia," and "Apokalupsis" of our Lord, are the same event., His "Parousia," or personal advent, accompanies His "Epiphaneia;" and His "Apokalupsis." The saints are gathered 2Thes.2v1.; raised from the dead 1Cor.15v23.; and presented blameless 1Thes.5v23.; at Christ's "Parousia." We are exhorted to keep the commandment unrebukeable until the "Epiphaneia." 1Tim.6v13,14.; and to look for it as our blessed hope. Tit.2v13. We are told to wait for the "Apokalupsis," when, if we abide in the light, we will be pronounced blameless 1Cor.1v7,8.; and our victories over trials of faith will be found unto praise and honour and glory 1Pet.1v7.; and great grace brought to us 1Pet.1v13.; and we will be glad with exceeding joy 1Pet.4v13.; and we will fully rest. 2Thes.1v7.

APPENDIX 5. DIVINE MYSTERIES AND EPOCHS. "MUSTERIA" AND "KAIROIS."

"MUSTERIA." MYSTERIES. Strong 3466.

Both the singular "musterion," and the plural "musteria," do not mean mysterious, as the English does, but secrets into which a person has to be initiated to know. They are derived from "mustes," "one initiated into the mysteries;" from "mueo," 3453, to initiate into the mysteries, to instruct. The verb "mueo" only occurs in Phil.4v12., "I have learned the secret, or been initiated into the mysteries." Both Jesus and Paul use "musteria," to speak of "secrets known to the initiated." Paul tells us that God's divine secrets are foolishness to the worldling. 1Cor.1v23-25. 2v6-16. 2Cor.4v3. The mystery religions of the east were secret societies, with secrets that were demonic in origin. The mysteries of the heathen are demonically inspired fables, "muthois." The Jews had fables too, and Paul warns us not to take heed to such fables, but to refuse them; 1Tim.1v4. 4v7. Tit.1v14., and warns that in the last days people will turn from divine truth to fables. 2Tim.4v4. In 2Pet.1v16. Peter affirms that he did not follow cunningly devised fables, but that he was an eyewitness, "epoptai," of Christ's majesty. ("Epopotai" was used of those who reached the highest level in the fables of the Eleusinian mysteries.) Peter says he experienced divine reality, not fables. Jesus in Mt.13v11,16,17., said God gives us the ability to understand, and experimentally know, "ginosko," God's mysteries.

The singular "musterion;" and the plural "musteria," mysteries, altogether occur 27 times in the New Testament.

Mt.13v11. "It is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom."

Mk.4v11. "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God,"

Lk.8v10. "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,"

Rom.11v25. "I would not, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery-hardening in part to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles as come in."

Rom.16v25. "According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now has been made manifest.."

1Cor.2v7. "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom.-9 eye has not seen.-10 But God has revealed them to us."

1Cor.4v1. "Stewards of the mysteries of God."

13v2. "And understand all mysteries, and all knowledge." 14v2. "Howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."

15v51. "A mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet."

Eph.1v9. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will."

3v3. "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery." 3v4. "May understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."

3v9. "To make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God

5v32. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

6v19. "Boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel."

Col.1v26. "The mystery, which has been hidden from ages and generations, but has now been revealed to His saints."

1v27. "The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory."

2v2. "to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ. v3. In whom are hid all treasures of wisdom."

4v3. "A door of utterance for the Word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains."

2Thes.2v7. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work, only He who restrains."

1Tim.3v9. "Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience." 3v16. "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness."

Rev.1v20. "The mystery of the seven stars."

10v7. "In the days of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God should be finished."

17v5. "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and-- abominations." 17v7. "I will tell you the mystery of the woman."

The New Testament uses "musterion," or "musteria," to speak of the following mysteries.

1. The mystery of the incarnation. 1Tim.3v16. "God was manifest in the flesh."

2. The mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven. Mt.13v11. Mk.4v11. Lk.8v10. 1Cor.13v2.

Asaph's prophecy in Ps.78v2., about our Lord's teaching in parables, is quoted in Mt.13v34,35.. Jesus said that He used parables to reveal truth to the seekers after truth; and to hide truth from the wilfully ignorant, who despised the precious truths that He told. Mt.13v10-17. We have to take heed to WHAT we hear, Mk.4v24, and HOW we hear. Lk.8v18. Paul said he was a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God. 1Cor.4v1. 1Tim.3v9. God's wonderfully wise mysteries are foolishness to the worldling. 1Cor.2v6-14.

3. The mystery of the Gospel.

The good news of mercy and forgiveness in Jesus. Eph.6v19. Rom.16v25,26. 1Cor.2v7. Col4v3. 1v28. "Him we preach."

4. The mystery of the full knowledge of God the Father and Christ Jesus. Col.2v1,2.

Here is a paraphrase of Col.2v1-5., "For I want you to know how greatly I strive for you, and what a great conflict I have on your behalf and for those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, v2. in order that their hearts may be comforted and encouraged, being knit together in love, ("sumbibasthentes" 4822, as in Col.2v19. **We read in Col.3v14., that love is the "sundesmos" 4886, that binds Christians together), and advancing towards an abounding wealth of the full assurance of understanding, so that they may finally reach the fullest experiential knowledge ("epignosis" 1922) of God's sacred open secret ("mysteriou" 3466), Christ..** v3. In Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored up, lie hidden, and are to be found. v4. I am saying this so that no one may deceive you with false reasonings and plausible arguments. v5. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."

What a wonderful prayer life Paul enjoyed! Paul's prayer life was directed by Holy Spirit inspired visions, for though he was absent in body from many churches, he was present in spirit, through the Holy Spirit's enabling. Paul was directed by vision to pray for Christians he knew, and others Christians he had never personally met. This is the zenith of prayer, but only a few reach this level of continuous Holy Spirit directed praying by vision. However, all Christians can experience, and usually have experienced, burdens for prayer being laid upon their hearts by God. Paul prayed for Christians to have a full knowledge ("epignosis" 1922) of God's greatest plan, salvation through Jesus, and the full revelation of Jesus to their souls. The Gnostics arrogantly professed to have all the answers and yet they denied the true humanity and deity of Jesus. The glory of Christ's humanity and deity, was Paul's answer to the Gnostics perverted knowledge ("gnosis" 1108"), and their "know it all" arrogance and pride, they had an appalling ignorance and perversion of the real truth about God and Jesus.

People who recognise the true humanity of Jesus are of God, those who deny His humanity are not of God.

The apostle John also writes against the Gnostics in 1Jn.4v2,3., he states, v2. "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, v3. and 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, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world." John states that those who deny the real humanity of Christ, are "not of God" and have the spirit of Antichrist. The Cerinthian Gnostics said the spirit Christ took over the man Jesus. The Docetic Gnostics said Jesus was a spirit being and not human. They were a real threat to the Church, and their false doctrines still plague the Church today, for some Christians say that Jesus was different in His physical makeup and blood to us. This is a satanic lie, for we read in Heb.2v17., **"Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren,** that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." It is an amazing fact that out of pure love for us, God the Word became flesh in order to save and redeem us. Is.7v14. Jn.1v14. Rom.1v3,4. Rom.8v1-4.

Christ's conquest over His humanity was glorious and real, and the Scriptures regarding Christ's humanity will be recognised and accepted by those who are inspired by God.

True Christians also recognise the absolute deity of Jesus mentioned in Is.7v14. 9v6. Micah.5v2. Is.44v6. 48v12. with Rev.1v8,17. 2v8. 22v13. etc. The confession of Jesus being our atoning Saviour, the Lord our righteousness, is equally as important. Is.53. Jer.23v6. 33v15,16. etc. The evil spirits that energise occultists and false teachers, force them to deny these vital and precious truths about Jesus that we rejoice in. It is sad that some Christians, who oppose the gifts of the Holy Spirit, fail to accept this Scripture, and say that Pentecostal Christians who believe in Christ's absolute Deity, true humanity, and atoning precious blood, are "Not of God," when this Scripture in Jn,4v1-6., says that we are.

The mystery of "the riches of the glory---of Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col.1v26-28. 2v9,10.

This had been previously hidden from ages and generations, but it is now revealed to His saints, both Gentiles and Jews. Gal.2v20. "In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him."

Paul states in Col.1v26,27., "The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now revealed to His saints. v27. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of

this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Jesus is "the mystery of God," now no longer hidden, but manifested and revealed to us, and Christ in us is the hope of glory. Paul again emphasises the completeness of believers in Jesus again in Col.2v9,10., "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; v10. and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."

Paul prays in Eph.3v14-21., that believers may experience the fullness of Jesus being within us, and know the immeasurable greatness of His love. We read in Eph.3v14-21. v14. "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, v15. from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, v16. that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, v17. that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, v18. may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, v19. **to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.** v20. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, v21. to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (NKJ)

This is an experimental full knowledge, ("epignosis,") of the Father and Son, which is the result of the full assurance of understanding and insight by divine revelation. This, includes, but is much more than a full exercise of our intellectual powers, it is the result of a God given "spirit of wisdom and revelation," mentioned in Eph.1v15-19. N.B.v17.

5. The mystery of the Church as the bride of Christ. Eph.5v32. See v28-33.

6. The mystery of the Church as the body of Christ.

Made up of Gentiles and Jews. Eph.3v1-11. Once hidden, but now revealed. Deut.29v29.

7. The mystery of the seven stars, the seven Churches in Asia. Rev.1v20.

8. The mysteries Christians speak when they speak in tongues. 1Cor.13v2.

When Christians speak in tongues, the Holy Spirit enables them to praise and magnify God. Acts.10v46. 1Cor.14v2,15-19. Note well v18.. Some Christians say that as Paul tells us in 1Cor.14v2. that speaking in tongues is addressed to God, all interpreted tongues should be addressed to God. This is shown to be wrong because.

a. They have failed to recognise the difference between tongues used for praise and prayer, and tongues as a ministry to the Church, as stated by Paul in 1Cor.12v30..

b. Paul states in 1Cor.14v3,5., that interpreted tongues are addressed to the Church and are equivalent to prophecy for Church edification, and contain divine mysteries.

c. Paul says, in 1Cor.14v20-22., that tongues can be addressed to men as a sign, when they understand the languages. This can bring quite remarkable evangelistic results, as on the day of Pentecost, when there were 3,000 converts through people from 17 nations hearing "the wonderful works of God" in their own languages. Acts.2v4-12.

9. The mystery of lawlessness. 2Thes.2v7.

God has restrained Satan's evil plans for the subjugation and destruction of mankind. The removal of God's restraint will result in the time known as the great tribulation. Dan.12v1-13. Rev.12v7-12. "None of the wicked shall understand, but the righteous shall understand." Dan.12v10. God's children know that this has got to happen to reveal that Satan's plans bring total pain, anguish and chaos to the world. The revelation of the mystery of iniquity is an essential part of the mystery of God.

10. The mystery of Israel's hardening until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. Rom.11v25.

We read in Zech.13v8,9., that two thirds of Israel will follow Antichrist and will be executed by Jesus at His return. Only a third survive, because Antichrist will kill the godly Jews who will not deny God, and follow him and worship him and Satan. Dan.11v32-35. 12v7.

11. The mystery of the harlot city, Babylon. Rev.17v5,7.

This is Jerusalem under Antichrist, the virgin city is called a harlot by God just as she was in Is.1v21.; God called her Sodom's sister in Ez.16v46,48,49,55.. She is said to have shed the blood of prophets in Rev.18v24., the unique sin of Jerusalem. Mt.23v30-39. In Rev.11v8., "The city, the great one," is said to be "where our Lord was crucified," Jerusalem is here called Babylon, Sodom and Egypt, because under Antichrist she resists God and is given over to idolatry and sexual perversion. Prophecy and history confirm the fact that Jerusalem is here referred to, for the six kingdoms; Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria and Rome, have ruled Jerusalem consecutively from the start of the times of the Gentiles up to Christ's death.

12. The mystery of God, and the first resurrection. Rev.10v7. 1Cor.15v50-53.

The prophets foretell a glorious kingdom of God on earth, this starts at the seventh trumpet, when the first resurrection takes place. Is.25v6-9. 1Cor.15v50-53. Rev.11v15-19. N.B. v18 "the time of the dead is come." 1Thes.4v13-17. Rev.20v4-6. John.6v39,40,44,54. 11v23,24. God longs for this day to come, He can start His wonderful plans for Israel and the Church; His plan of the ages. Eph.1v9,10. 2v7. 3v11. Jesus is expectantly

waiting until His enemies are made His footstool, and His great plans for His people begin. Heb.10v13.

KAIROIS, GOD'S EPOCHAL TIMES. 398 Wigram. Strong 2540 and 5550.

a. The word "kairos," means an epochal and strategic time; a critical niche in time.

"Kairos," is used to speak of such ordinary events as, "the time of the figs," in Mk.11v13.;" and of, "the time of harvest," in Mk.12v2., in our Lord's parable of the vineyard. However, "kairos" usually speaks of a divine epoch in time, a time of divine appointment and fulfilled prophecy; a time when God's will and purposes are fulfilled, and His mighty ways and acts are revealed. The plural, "kairois" speaks of epochal events in time; "chronos," speaks of ordinary chronological time.

b. The epochal times and seasons are in God's hands. Acts.1v7. 17v26.

Many types and prophecies in the Scriptures speak of a divinely ordained time of fulfilment. 1Pet.1v10-12. N.B. v11. See God's marvellous plan of the ages. Eph.3v11. Note God's appointed times of refreshing and revival. Acts.3v19. See 3.

1. God's strategically born children and servants.

a. The epochal time of the birth of Moses. Moses was born for a divine purpose, at a strategic time of God. Acts.7v20.

b. The epochal time of John Baptist's birth. John was a child of divine purpose; Gabriel told Zachariah that the promise of a child, which Zachariah did not believe, would be fulfilled as God had promised, at the strategic divine time. Lk.1v19,20.

c. The epochal time of our Lord's birth and ministry. In Gal.4v4,5., "when the fullness of time had come," "chronos" is used in the sense of "kairos," God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "The fullness of time," speaks of a special time appointed by God, a divine epoch. John Baptist and Jesus started and finished their ministries on prophetic time epochs. Is.40v3. with Mt.3v3. "Now after John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, v15 and saying, "The TIME ("kairos") is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel." Mk.1v14,15. Christ had come to fulfil the prophecies concerning Him. "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Lk.4v21. This was the epochal time of Israel's visitation and they closed their eyes to it and missed it, and went on to tragedy and genocide. Luke.19v41-44. v44 "Kairos."

2. The epochal time of our Lord's temptation by Satan in the wilderness.

Satan attacks us when we are most vulnerable to temptation, even Jesus experienced these attacks. In Lk.4v13., we read that Satan left Jesus until an opportune time ("kairos"), when he could tempt and test Jesus again. God restrains Satan, and he can only test us when God permits him to do so. 1Cor.10v13. Peter had one of these epochal trials of faith at Satan's hands. Lk.22v31-34. with 22v54-62. The early Church had epochal times of temptation from Satan by persecution. Acts.19v11,23. Special miracles brought special persecution.

3. The epochal time of temptation, backsliding and apostasy.

Our Lord uses "kairos" twice in Luke.8v13., to warn us, that some who hear the Gospel only "believe for a time," and in a time of temptation fall away." The decisions to serve or reject Jesus and the Father are epoch making decisions for eternal joy, or eternal judgement.

4. The strategic and epochal times of revival.

When John was cast into prison, God extended the ministry of Jesus by giving Him twelve ordinary men to be His apostles, it is twice said that this was an epochal time in our Lord's ministry. Mt.11v25. and 12v1. God the Father and Jesus rejoiced over these men, it was good in their eyes. Mt.11v25-27. See Lk.10v21-24. There are strategic times of visitation, revival and refreshing sent from the presence of the Lord. Lk.19v44. Acts.3v19. The day of Pentecost was such a time, when the type was fulfilled in divine and blessed reality. Acts.2v1.

5. The epochal time when Herod the tetrarch beheaded John Baptist. Mt.14v1.

When Jesus heard about Herod's murder of John and of his reaction to His ministry, He departed into the desert and fed the five thousand; He walked on the water; He healed multitudes of sick people; as many as touched the hem of His garment were made whole. Mt.14v1-36. N.B. v36. There was an extension of our Lord's ministry, and greater signs, wonders and miracles. Our Lord shows us that when great leaders die, we need not retreat, we can advance to even greater things in God.

6. The epochal time of the death of Paul and God's saints.

Paul says his death is the epochal time of his release to meet his Lord, a time of divine appointment. 2Tim.4v6. Phil1v21-23. 2Cor.5v6-8. 2Tim.1v10. Jesus has the keys of death and Hades. Rev.1v18. Jesus destroys the destroyer. Heb.2v14,15.

7. The epochal time of atonement and redemption in Christ.

God promised eternal life in Jesus before the ages began, or any creature was made; and at His appointed epochal time, God entrusted the former rebel and blasphemer Paul with the proclamation of these truths. Oh, the wonderful grace of God!! Tit.1v2,3. 1Tim.1v12-17.

In Rom.5v6. we read that in due time ("kairos") Christ died for the ungodly.

In 2Cor.6v2., we read, "I heard thee in "a ('kairos') time accepted,--now is the acceptable ('kairos') time of salvation." 2Cor.6v2. We are in the age of grace, the time of prophetic fulfilment of redemption truth. 1Pet.1v10-12. N.B. v11.

As we have seen, "the fullness of 'chronos' time," is used in the sense of "kairos," in Gal.4v4,5., to speak of the supreme epoch in the history of mankind, the atoning death of Christ. In 1Tim.2v6., the plural "kairos," is used to say that, the testimony to Jesus is to be given in due epochal times. Mt.12v31,32. Jesus spoke of the time of His death as "My time," in Jn.7v6,8. and Mt.26v18., both are "kairos."

8. The epochal "times of the Gentiles." Lk.21v24. Rev.11v2.

Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Lk.21v24. These times of the Gentiles started at the captivity in Babylon, and they will continue until the second coming of Christ. The pride of the Gentiles is being broken by the proven failure of all nations to rule righteously.

THE EVENTS OF THE EPOCHAL LAST DAYS.

a. The perilous times of the Last days. 2Tim.3v1. 4v3.

This is one of the signs of Christ Second Coming. Acts.1v7. Mk.13v33. Terrible signs and appalling world distress precede Christ's Second Coming. Mt.24v3-29. Antichrist will be revealed in his epochal time, but then he and Satan will only have a short time. Rev.12v12. Antichrist's coming is an epochal time of disaster for the whole world. 2Thes.2v6,7. Antichrist and Satan make the last 3½ years of this age epochal years of woe. Rev.12v9-12. "Kairos" is used three times in Rev.12v14, "times, time and half a time." God allows Satan to do his worst with the world, to expose Satan's evil character and the effect of his evil plans on mankind.

b. The strategic epochal time to feed people with prophetic truth.

Our Lord in Lk.12v54-56. called the multitudes hypocrites when they failed to discern the "kairos" time of their day. It was a "kairos" time of decision. Lk.13v1. In Lk.12v35-48. Jesus gives a warning of the necessity of Christian leaders to feed people with truth in the days before His coming, v42 is "kairos." In Mt.24v45-51., Jesus warns us that correctly interpreting prophetic truth will be a vital ministry at that epochal season, "kairos," v45. The parables of the servants and the ten virgins warn us of the effect of lack of truth and prayer. Mt.24v45 to 25v13.

c. The epochal time of the resurrection of the dead. Is.25v6-9. 1Thes.4v13-17. 1Cor.15v50-53. Rev.11v18. 20v4-6.

The time of rewards and the joy of being in our Father's kingdom. 1Pet.1v5.

d. The epochal time of judgement.

Herod was executed at one of God's strategic times. Acts.12v1.

Elymas the sorcerer was judged for a divinely appointed "kairos" period of judgement. Acts.13v11.

The time of judgement on demons and evil angels. Mt.8v29.

The time is come when judgement begins at the house of God. 1Pet.4v17.

The time of the harvest and the time of judgement. Mt.13v30. See 31-50. 25v30-46. Judge nothing before the "time." 1Cor.4v5.

e. The epochal "fullness of times," Eph.1v10.

The most epochal time for this world will be when the kingdom and rule of Christ take place at the fullness of "kairos" times; all other "kairos" times await this start of the eternal kingdom of God. Eph.1v10. The "time of reformation." Heb.9v10.

Conclusion.

We need to know the time we are in, and put on the armour of God. Rom.13v11. We need to redeem the "kairos" time because the days are evil. Eph.5v16. Col.4v5. We need to humble ourselves and God will exalt us in due time. 1Pet.5v6. The time is short. 1Cor.4v29. The time is at hand. Rev.1v3. 22v10.

NOTE:

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