

THE LAST DAYS OF BABYLON

A TIMETABLE OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY

"Everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the rooftops."

Mt.10:26-27

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To Marlene Davis

Who wanted to know, "What is Babylon?"

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 A Timetable of Biblical Prophecy

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Introduction

When the twentieth century first began, it was almost impossible to believe that the world could come to an end except by the direct and divine intervention of God. For the last forty years, it has been difficult to see how it can *survive* without that kind of intervention. One thing, though, is certain: the world will not end on man's terms. God has set a time for it, and before this time can arrive, all the prophecies have to be fulfilled and every vision has to be proclaimed. "Seventy weeks are decreed...for setting the seal on vision and on prophecy. " (Dn.9:24). Everything that is destined to be revealed must be revealed and everything that has been prophesied to happen must come to pass before the end can occur. No one wants to hear bad news, but God has decreed that the bad news of the world's end must be announced before it happens so that the people have a chance to repent and save their lives. Since scripture promised that God would never do anything without first warning the people through his prophets beforehand, we must take these visions seriously. "Does the trumpet sound in the city without the populace becoming alarmed? Does misfortune come to a city if God has not sent it? No more does the Lord God do anything without revealing his plans to his servants the prophets. " (Amos 3:7). For many years the majority of Christians have ignored the dialogue flowing around this subject, but the time has come when everyone must listen. The wicked are fitting their arrows to the string right now—sinking their shafts deep into silo's all across the earth. Only through the power of faith and prayer can we block any of the events which now loom so close ahead of us. A politically imposed religious imperialism is out of the question. Such regimes of the past were built within the conversion and faith of the people, not outside of it. The problem facing us today is spiritual, not political—our world has returned to the secular. It has gone back to Egypt. Fulfilling a great code in biblical prophecy the world has raised a mortally wounded Babylon up out of its deathbed. It is now again as it was in the past, so we must labor as the Apostles did. Prayer and powerful Gospel preaching are the only weapons that will work. Never has there been a

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time so in need of prayer; and never have there been so many capable of implementing such prayer—but most of these are asleep, unmindful of the alarm. This buzzing they hear around their heads, they dream, is simply the idle raving of madmen on self-appointed watchtowers. So instead of prayer, they fantasize investment strategies and sleep on. But the threat is no illusion. Vigorous prayer today is vital and it must be united and cut across all denominations. That is why the following pages treat all Christians, regardless of church affiliation, as having equal authority under God. Many might take exception to this, finding such tolerance alarming. But it is imperative; for if we are to have any hope at all of blocking the events that have begun to pour down on us, we must put away our differences and all come together as equal brothers and sisters in a united front of prayer in Jesus Christ. We need to use all the power God has given us and we must direct that power, not at each other, but at our real enemies—the warmongers and hucksters of that vaunted, and now reborn colossus which the Bible calls 'Babylon the Great', and which we know as the secular world.

Prophecy reveals that a rebellion close to the End will spin out of the Great Revolt and pit Christian against Christian. Bringing God into disrepute, this warfare between the churches will help solidify the world's anger against faith. And the divisiveness that drives it will short-circuit the powerful faith network that mutual prayer could have brought against Satan and his secular world forces. There is no need for such hatred. The end of the world is going to involve all churches everywhere at the very same time. That end will impact everyone, almost identically, and without regard for any differences. There is only one End and the Jesus Christ who returns at its conclusion will be for everybody—the final proof that God has no favorites. By showing Jesus in such an ecumenical way, some of this book's tenants tamper with major barriers churches have used for centuries to try to divide God's people from one another. In order to remove these barricades it has been necessary to sweep away certain time-honored traditions that underpin much of the dissension. Unfortunately, this housecleaning will not please the lords of the flock—especially those who rule the churches in ways that try to promote strict and uncompromising separation. And so they may well call it heresy. Which brings us to the question of just what is, and what is not, heresy? It is a devastating term and seems to imply instant death. But heresy is a church term. It represents a theological difference of opinion. Therefore it is different in every church. While it can relate to salvation, often it does not. When the leaders of the Roman church decided that the Holy Spirit emanated from both God and Jesus together, the rulers of the Greek church considered that heresy and immediately severed all relations with Rome. As far as the Eastern church was concerned, the Holy Spirit came only from God—an idea

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the Romans considered heresy. Since Jesus is God the issue might seem moot, but even that thought is heresy to some. Arius was considered a heretic because he thought that God was greater than Jesus. Martin Luther considered the Pope a heretic and vice versa. The Greek Bible—the Bible of the apostles—is considered heretical in parts by many Christians. Jesus himself is considered a heretic by the Jews. Anybody who thinks or says anything that goes against a theological grain is a heretic. Therefore, all prophets are heretics. The real question, then, is not whether something is heresy, but whether or not it prevents salvation. What Luther and Calvin and the Pope and Joseph Smith all proved is that heresy, while it does have power to destroy, has even more power to save. The combined 'heresies' of these four individuals have led billions of people on earth to discover and accept God's one and only offer of salvation for man.

The mercy of Jesus Christ is so much greater than church rules and the opinions of men that it saves all of us the same—no matter what our church affiliation is. Yet there are boundaries to this salvation. Jesus himself is one. He said that we have to come to Him if we want to be saved because there is no other gate to eternal life. Another is baptism. Jesus said that we must all be baptised. Beyond that, there are really only two heresies that can hurt us—failing to repent according to the Gospel and committing blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Every church sees it differently, however. In the churches, the world seems to be filled with heresies: teaching evolution, eating pork, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, dancing, going to the movies, going to church on the wrong day, speaking in tongues, being too fat, belonging to the wrong congregation, or even wearing the wrong clothes, etc. In other words, disagreeing with the traditions laid down by this or that church. As a result, instead of the open love of Christ, what we see on earth is a sprawling Christian Church deeply divided among itself and rent on all sides by mutual distrust and petty animosities. Yet the Holy Spirit sees all these churches as a single family—as the scattered and hidden tribes of the one House of Israel. For this reason, the deepest prophecies of scripture cannot be understood until we see them in the very same way.

Few of us are geniuses and few of us are prophets, and even if we all were, Paul said that even the best prophets see into God's world only dimly and most of what they see is wrong anyway. (1 Cor.13:8-12). That means we are all heretics in one way or another. Any opinion we have about God is going to be seen as heresy by someone. This shows that God does not see heresy in the same way that we do. This is something Jesus tried to tell the Jews of Judea, but they crucified him because they did not understand. A deeply incisive, brilliantly educated religious system crucified Him for committing heresy, and He was God.

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The message should be clear. God does not mind us asking questions about Him or speculating about His world. And He doesn't mind that we make mistakes. All He wants from us is that we follow Jesus. That itself is the whole journey: our conversion into the Word of God. And because of grace, it is a journey where progress is seen by God as perfection. "Only the man who makes progress, as the blameless do, can be my servant." (Ps.101:2,6).

PART 1

THE COLLAPSE OF FAITH

"Is it not the will of God the Almighty that the laboring of the peoples should end in fire, and the toiling of the nations come to nothing?" Hab.2:13

1

Code of the Apocalypse

"The great day of God is near...near, and coming with all speed. How bitter the sound of the day of God, the day when the warrior shouts his cry of war. A day of wrath, that day, a day of distress and agony, a day of ruin and of devastation...a day of trumpet blast and battle cry..." Zeph.1:14-16

There is a single word in the Bible and it has continued, since the day it was first written, to electrify the world's complacency. That word is 'Armageddon'. It is not a secular term, nor does it appear in the Old Testament. It comes from Jesus Christ. Disdained and ridiculed by intellectuals and church members alike, it remains the greatest source of anxiety and consternation in the scriptures. That is because it is a warning that comes to us from the throne of the Creator. Issued from heaven, it carries with it the promise of early fulfillment, and it was delivered in stern and sober terms under a mandate that everyone on earth take careful note of its implications. As the greatest source of the fear of God, it is the second side of His double-edged sword. Jesus declared that He, alone, is the source of life. And all the prophecies in this book are built on His predictions and teachings. If Jesus is true, then the Bible's warnings are the most important spiritual bulletins any of us will ever hear. They tell us that we are in a war that we cannot see, and that our actions with respect to Christ's commands will determine our final fate—both on this rocky battlefield and in heaven. And all that any of us know about this battle comes by way of prophecy. During biblical times the office of the prophet was steeped in importance, forming one of the three governing branches of Israel's theocracy. But that office seems to have vanished in the Christian era. (Zech.13:2). It's disappearance, in fact, has been so complete there are many who question whether true prophets even exist in the Christian Church today. The Apostle's have said that they do. (1 Cor.14:1-4, 29-40; Rev.11:32). And there is a sentence in the Book of Daniel (Dn.12:4), which shows that not only do they exist, their final age is about to dawn. God locked a major reservoir of revelation into the scriptures by sealing the words of Daniel and binding them tightly shut until just before the earth was scheduled to pass away. What this action by God insures is that in the days leading up to the appointed End, an age of prophecy will suddenly appear in the world and because a part of it will come from God, no

one will be able to prevent it from happening. In order to understand this prophecy as it comes—and it has already started—we must first understand the Bible. Both Testaments of the Bible are connected to one another by common themes which contain all the mysteries of life. These puzzles are hidden in codes which the prophets have all contributed shares to complete. Going through the prophecies of scripture, we can piece these codes together and solve their hidden mysteries. The key to all the codes is Jesus Christ. Therefore, when each of these puzzles is placed against the Gospels, the secrets hidden within them, pour easily out.

Completing an examination of scriptural prophecy begun in the first volume, this book focuses on the key subjects of biblical prophecy as they relate to the last days of Christ's harvest on earth. The divine millennium of Christian rule in the world is now in the process of collapse—undermined by a 'Great Revolt' against that rule. This is a religious rebellion that has been quietly in progress since the earliest days of the Church—but which has suddenly, in this last century, broken loudly to the surface and now involves vast numbers of people all across the globe. It's explosive acceleration in the last few years has catapulted us onto the doorstep of the terminal warnings of scripture. (2 Thes.2:2-12). If this revolt continues, the collapse of western civilization must be considered imminent. Just how this 'collapse' will progress as far as the Bible is concerned is discussed in the following chapters, each of which chart important aspects of the final moments of history as specified thousands of years ago in the pages of scripture. By examining the cryptology involved—both in the New Testament and in the Old Testament—it is possible to decipher, not only what is being said, but to determine how each vision relates to all the other codes and prophecies that surround it. It is important to know these relationships because bible prophecy revolves around essential patterns, which, when understood, allow us to better know God and comprehend His plan for us. God intended that we search for these patterns and understand them, because it is this understanding that protects us from being led astray by charlatans. While the first volume in this examination dealt primarily with the olive branch of Christ's sacrifice and treaty (which facilitated our escape from Satan's rebellion, and our reconciliation with God), this manuscript starts with the world's revolt against God's armistice, and follows a rapidly deteriorating sequence into the bowels of the Wrath which that rebellion has intitated. Just behind all this decreed destruction lies the Day of Examination when we shall all be brought up before heaven's tribunal to answer for the way in which we have lived our lives. The emerging patterns in scripture show that we live today in the looming shadow of the millennium's collapse. We live in a time of revolt and armies. The signs of the times are shouting their own, "*Mene, Mene, Tekel and Parsin*" (Dn.5:25-

28), and the message translates that our world has now arrived at the portal of the promised oblivion, and unless there is a major turn back to faith, and very soon, it will pass through that opening with no way back. The churches must stop condoning the rush to worldliness which has begun to envelop our times, and return to preaching the truth. Lukewarm in their faith and in their enthusiasm for Christ, too many ministers now preach a religious veneer that condemns obsession with Jesus. These potentates of religion have fallen victim to their own preoccupation—a desire to separate themselves from the harsher realities of Christ while embracing the humanistic agenda dictated by the community of Babylon. There can be little question that the Bible's Prostitute, the mortally-wounded maid Babylon, is back with us again. She has been reborn from her deathbed where she lay for almost 2000 years, and even people within the church have participated in her resurrection. Unwitting agents in her reappearance on earth, most men of the cloth no longer speak about the end of the world or the grave penalty for sin. Under the growing ridicule of God's enemies, many have fallen silent about the Gospel's rules or the burning lake of sulphur that awaits the wicked. This brings us back to the most graphic code of all—Armageddon. The churches have allowed this word to become a joke on earth. Yet, that word, coming, as it does, from the throne of heaven, gives certain proof that the discipline of God far exceeds our own.

The code of the Bible is at its most transparent when it talks to us about God's imminent Judgment and the fiery termination of our planet. We try to ignore the fact that a field of worms lies silently waiting just beyond our lives, its mouth open widely, and only a speeding car away. Every day it gathers people up—eventually consuming everyone who passes by this way. Even those who live to old age, look back at their lives with sheer astonishment at the shortness of its term. Peggy Lee gave voice to this discovery when she sang, "Is that All There Is?" It was a song to shake the godless. Apocalyptic events are very real, palpably close and only heaven's saved evade their finality. There is only one escape in life from death and those who find it, find a treasure of incalculable value. Those who ignore it, lose everything—no matter how much in this world they might have gained. Taking the side of Babylon, they have chosen badly and failed their chance at life. The Bible has a very important message for us from God and it is essential that we discover what it is and follow it as carefully as we possibly can while we still have the chance. It is a message about living forever—about never having to die. That message is hidden in the code of Jesus, and it follows the template of Moses. It is all about mercy and love, peace and compassion and kindness toward others. There is nothing in life that is more important than that we break this code and assimilate its secret into our soul by putting into practice in our own lives its message, while placing behind us everything that monopolized our attention beforehand.

According to scripture, we are Satan's prisoners of war—held for ransom in a battle between the devil and God. To show this captivity, and our escape from it, most of the stories of the Bible are woven around two major incarcerations of the House of Israel. The first is the captivity of Egypt and the second is the captivity of Babylon. The release of God's people from these two imprisonments is celebrated in the same week of the year—with each of the two Houses of Israel celebrating a different escape. 'Passover' is the feast celebrating the escape of the Hebrews from the land of Egypt. 'Easter' is the celebration of the hidden House of Israel's escape from the land of Babylon. The two are closely related. When God raised up Moses to lead the twelve tribes of Israel to the Promised Land, He warned them that His kindness was not unconditional. They had to be good. Moses told them that if they sinned and refused to obey God's covenant, all twelve would be torn out of the Promised Land and scattered to the farthest ends of the earth—to a place scripture calls 'Babylon'. This warning meant that the covenant which God made with the House of Israel through Moses could be terminated if the people abandoned the commandments. They did. And as promised, the Mosaic covenant was rescinded by God and His people were sent out of Judea into an exile that extended to the farthest corners of the earth. Although this second exile evolved in stages over several hundred years, the day that it was formally consummated occurred on a dark friday afternoon in Jerusalem when Jesus was lifted up on a cross and crucified. Israel had rejected the good. The old covenant was instantly dissolved, and in its place a new covenant appeared. (Jer.31:31-34).

As a part of this new covenant, God raised up out of crucifixion a 'branch' from David to shepherd the people, not just out of Babylon, but out of death itself, leading them back to an eternal Jerusalem in the kingdom of heaven. This 'branch'—this 'Son of David'—was Jesus Christ, and the flight of the refugees from out of Babylon was the 'ingathering from dispersion' that Jeremiah had long ago predicted. (Jer.23:3-8). This is why Easter has replaced Passover. It is because Jesus Christ has replaced Moses. The exodus from Egypt didn't work so God created another exodus in its place which couldn't fail. And both journey's were part of a single plan. From the beginning there was only Jesus. God had created Passover specifically to point to Jesus Christ and to mankind's rescue from the captivity of sin. The escape of the House of Israel out of Egypt had not led them out of sin. Still subject to sin, they were still subject to death. And this was the whole point. Only in the destruction of death could anyone be free from the penalty of sin. And that is exactly what Jesus did on the cross and through his resurrection. He destroyed death forever. Not for everyone, but only for those who choose to accept his death as their own. Once we are marked in his death by baptism in his name, we are freed from the penalty of the

Law which demands our death and which rules this world in death. In this single act we escape the sword of Babylon. But we must not remain here. There is another sword coming. The Spirit of God caused scripture to say, "Those who have escaped Babylon's sword must leave that place". (Jer.51:50). This is because a great destruction is coming against Babylon. This destruction points to the end of Satan's world. Evil and righteousness cannot coexist. Wherever the two meet there will always be Armageddon. God proved this by forming our universe in matter and anti-matter, two substances that explode catastrophically when they come in contact with one another. When God sent Jesus into the world, He declared war on the world. But before God launched that war He structured a peace treaty (Christ on the cross) to give anyone who wanted to escape with their lives a chance to do so. But there is nothing casual about this opportunity. It is short-lived and it is urgent. And there are no alternatives.

Babylon is a doomed civilization living its last hours in raucous disdain for the things of God. And the time for its destruction, long predicted in the scriptures, has now arrived. This is the 'Wrath'—the time of terror scripture says will plunge the planet into unprecedented violence and consume all its works in fire—a fire so vast that not only will it bring the earth to an end, but the entire universe as well. It will penetrate so deeply into creation that even the spiritual world of the soul will not be able to evade it. This means no one can escape what is coming simply by dying. Even the unprotected souls will be destroyed in the catastrophic Wrath that has now begun to unfold, and that is why we have to leave Babylon and follow Jesus Christ. The only way out of this world—the only way to escape being consumed in the destruction of this world—is by the path that Jesus created for us to follow. This path is the Gospel he preached. And it leads to the kingdom of heaven—a place God has put so far away none of the catastrophes coming against this world can impact there. It was not enough for the Israelites in Egypt to simply paint the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their houses so that the Avenger would not kill their children. They had to get away from those houses and follow Moses out of Egypt. And the same applies to us today. We cannot remain a part of Babylon after we are baptised in the blood of Christ. We must follow the path he prescribed. There is very little time left for our flight. The purple shades of evening are gathering now everywhere we look. And when the night comes, so will the fire. Everything on this earth will disappear in flames. That is why we cannot flee to anyplace on the face of the earth. Our journey has to be one of conversion into righteousness—a spiritual journey into the kind of compassion and mercy taught by the lord of creation when He walked through the fields and plains of Galilee.

2

The Great Revolt

*"It cannot happen until the Great Revolt has taken place and the Rebel, the Lost One, has appeared."
2 Thess.2:3*

The faith we see today on earth is the remnant of an engine that has powered the entire millennium. It is a faith that has fundamentally altered the course of history by bringing into the heart of mankind rules of compassion, mercy, gentleness and peace. Doing so it has changed the course of human destiny. But only for a time. According to Paul, the world's faith is destined to end in a Great Revolt—a revolt which will see Jesus and his message thrown out of both power and favor, allowing the violent and sinful principles of this world once more to move back in. The millennium has a fixed time-frame, and at its end the Bible tells us that a mortally wounded Babylon must re-emerge from its grave and seduce all the nations, returning them to the darkness of Satan's delusion. (Rv.20:7-9). It is this 'power of deception' that Paul said would descend on the earth in the last days because of the people's rebelliousness. Its divine purpose, he stated, is to lead astray all who are in love with wickedness. (2 Thes.2:12). The events unfolding around us today give dynamic witness that Satan's final deceit is actually taking place now. (Rv.20:7). If the trend continues, scripture is clear: it will bring the terrible Rebel Himself—the ultimate proof that the millennium has come and gone and that these really are the last days of temporal creation. The revolt Paul predicted relates to the world's break with the teachings of Jesus Christ—especially with the inner message of His teachings. It is this insurrection, long festering, that has so dramatically exploded to the surface in our own century, bringing down a power of Christ that has ruled the earth for almost 2000 years—a gentle supremacy that Daniel calls "the power of the holy people". (Dn.12:7). While many look at the world today and say that nothing has changed and that the religion of Christ goes on just as it always has in the past, they are seeing only the outer shell—and not even much of that. In a flurry of compromises with paganism—compromises which have stunned those who still remain faithful, the Christian reign in Babylon has begun to break apart. Leading this dissolution, faith (the inner power of Christ's religion) has been the first to crumble. That is why, today, we can see a parallel to the kind of revolt Jesus found when He first arrived in Palestine. The Judea

that Jesus appeared to was intensely religious, but there was little love associated with this zeal and that is why He told them that most of the people there were facing spiritual death. To counter this revolt, Jesus preached a baptism of repentance. (Mt.4:17). He told the Jews that they could save themselves only by changing their ways—by converting from sin into the righteous behavior of the Gospel. This was something they refused to do. They remained altogether religious, but they would not accept Christ or change their behavior. Just as prophecy foretold, Jesus had come to a people in revolt. The intensity of that revolt was underscored a few years later when, in their rebellion against Rome, the divided Jewish forces spent almost as much time killing each other as they did Romans. Rejecting the way of peace, they were hurled into exile, still clinging to their rebellion. The rest of the world reacted differently, however. While the Messiah was being rejected by His own people, just the opposite occurred when Jesus was preached to the world. There He was accepted. (1 Tim.3:16). Hearing His voice, much of Babylon changed its ways and started trying to keep the Gospel's commandments. Fueling this conversion, the ruling authorities of the world began promoting Christ and Christian principles throughout their respective empires. As a result, pagan Babylon suddenly became a Christianized Babylon. Babylon became messianic, and for a long time it remained that way. Governmental promotion of Christ persisted throughout much of the world from the time of the Roman empire all the way up to the twentieth century. Because of this promotion, the people of the world were encouraged to worship at the throne of God's Son; and as a result the planet swelled with acts of righteousness and compassion. Not everyone accepted these changes, of course, but so many did that throughout the entire period there was an underlying aura of conversion and repentance, and the call to it was broadcast everywhere and accepted by so many that it seemed it would last forever. Now, of course, we can see that such optimism was wrong. Jesus was correct again, the reign of God on earth would be short.

Little noticed by the legions of faithful has been the world-wide Christian explosion that has flooded the planet with churches over the last two millenniums, championing Jesus Christ. Hateful infighting has blinded most Christians to the significance of this phenomenon; and it has helped to erode its progress and tear it apart as well. Especially in the latter part of this century. For almost 2000 years, the world's most powerful leaders actively supported the Gospel's preaching—actually demanded its preaching. This intense proselytizing changed the nature of human civilization—bringing a great part of it into line with Christian principles and causing much of the civilized world to convert to Christ. Government promotion of Christ ushered in a new era on earth—an era of Christian rule. It created a moment in history in which the proclamation of Christ's message to the world

became an international political priority—a priority of such intensity that world history became structured by it. During these years, the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus was not just tolerated, it was mandated by almost every political leader in the western world. In fulfillment of the scriptures, the pagan world fell at the feet of Jesus and worshipped him. So much so that many fundamentalists today are embarrassed by the excesses of that worship. What we find now, however, is just the opposite. As more and more people in the world join the pagan rebellion, there has been a major shift toward downgrading Christian tenets in favor of upgrading the philosophies of those who oppose God. This has not been a small movement. Our secular courts, for instance, have ruled against public postings even of the Ten Commandments. The world has grown so far away from the principles of the Bible in recent years that this holy book is now considered antique. To many, its words sound like a foreign language from another age. The fact that so many Christians have joined hands with this rebellion is a graphic illustration of the extent of paganism's return.

This is the Revolt. The trashing of the Gospel. Scripture teaches that the only way to hold back the wrath of the last days is to stick close to the 'Testimony' of God. (Num.1:53). According to the Bible, any nation or person abandoning the Gospel (the Tabernacle of God's Word) after having once vowed to keep it, will be struck by increasing misfortune and (if this travail initiates no repentance) finally end up by being destroyed completely. Disregarding this admonition, the nations of Babylon have spurned the teachings of Christ and have begun to champion the superficial gods of commerce and pleasure in His place. This has turned the conversion of the past centuries around—precipitating a vast mutiny which has become increasingly visible all around us. Nowhere are these changes more noticeable than at the seat of government where the people normally look for leadership and guidance. There, pushed by a growing groundswell of secular influences, all the values of the Christian past are being swept aside and replaced by pagan substitutes. Whether it be an attempt to take God out of the schools, out of the government, or even to remove Him from a country entirely, the power driving all these moves is the same. The push to atheism that enveloped the once Christian nations of Russia and eastern Europe in the earlier part of this century were a part of this same process. There the populations were plunged into spiritual darkness by communistic secular governments bitterly antagonistic to God. Today, eastern forces have virtually eradicated Christianity from the fertile crescent, further extending a growing anti-christian cloak throughout the Middle East. The forces against God have become so influential that in the United States, even prayer is considered hostile to the political process.

While it seems to have exploded to the surface in just the last few years, the world revolt against Christ is part of a continuum which began a long time ago. This movement, in fact, has deep roots in the Renaissance. This was an intellectual movement that developed in Italy in the early 14th century and quickly spread from there all through Europe. The word itself means 'rebirth'. It stands for a re-awakening within western civilization to the cultural models of antiquity. Those models were pagan. As the movement spread, it quickly evolved into secular Enlightenment. In retrospect, this return has proved to be the 'mortal wound' starting to heal—delineating the initial phases of the rebirth on earth of pagan Babylon. It is not presented this way in the literature because the historians are, themselves, a part of this rebirth. Seeking to free mankind from the repressive moral restrictions imposed by the Church, these historians have painted a picture of an illiterate world wrapped in the shroud of an era which they call the 'dark ages' suddenly peeking out to see the modern light of intellectual humanism. These images have nothing to do with a discovery of Jesus Christ. They all relate to a world in the throes of re-awakening to the fact that there might be something else beyond Christ. The so-called 'dark ages'—the previous thousand years—marked a time of great Christian evangelism and conversion throughout the world. So they were not dark according to God. They simply lacked the intellectual and materialistic trappings of secularism and worldliness. The spin, however, has reversed the images. That is why we now glorify the Renaissance and speak derisively about the spiritual dominion that preceded it—an era, though dark to the world, which produced spiritual giants like Francis of Assisi and St. Patrick of Ireland. Jesus said that what is exalted by men is an abomination in the sight of God. His words speak to us of an upside down world in which all our mortal equations are just the reverse of heaven's. As the light of antiquity began to spread again in the world, the nudity of the Greek and Roman past began to reappear in the statues and paintings of the Middle Ages. Shakespeare and Chaucer appeared. And there came upon society a fascination for rationalism, pleasure, license, money, fine clothes and all the other trappings that follow garish and godless living. It was Babylon reborn. For this reason, it marked a time of great warfare within the Christian community. Battling the humanistic influences of this era, the Church had to battle itself, because the spirits of self-indulgence and secular intellect that were unleashed by this rebirth found their way deep into the hearts of many church leaders. Trying to counter this materialistic and secular invasion into its realm, the Church became hard-framed and authoritarian. People like Martin Luther arose. They brought a new age of prophecy to the Christian world and infused it with a powerful return to faith. Impacting Protestants and Catholics alike, their moral influence revitalized the Church. And the battle lines these important Christians formed were so strong they have remained in place ever since. Countered by a resurgence of faith in the world, and buoyed

by the discovery of an America far distant from Europe's spiritual battlefields, the forces of Satan were slowed down. As a result, the spiritual war spawned by this era progressed, but at a much reduced pace, in slowly eroding combat down through the ensuing centuries—to our own age. And it is here, in just the last few years that the tide of battle has dramatically and suddenly shifted in favor of Satan and his warriors. And in this latest assault, the lines of Christian defense, receding since the days of the Renaissance, are now showing every sign that they are about to give way entirely. The rule of God in the world has seemingly come to an end. The history of this movement shows that what the world has termed 'Enlightenment' has proved to be rebellion in disguise, and it has dramatically clouded the Son and brought us the night sky of Satan. Unless there is a universal return to faith, and soon, the 'dark ages' of immorality that were brought to life in the European cultural revolution seven centuries ago will soon touch the nadir that scripture has foreseen for it.

Immersed in immorality, and driven by insatiable greed, humanity has renewed its love affair with this world and all the vices that it vowed to reject. But this secular world is the 'Babylon' of scripture (1 John 2:15-17), and to return to it is to court certain death. Because the Bible is clear. The return of paganism is the last reprise. This revolt, Paul warned, signals the final curtain. No one can study the history of the planet over the last 2000 years and not see the immense impact Jesus had on the affairs and conduct of the people and governments of the past. Until our century, throughout much of the civilized world—especially the western world—the life of the populace was dedicated to Christ. The paintings, the music, the politics, the morals, even the governments and their rulers reflected this dedication. In fact, the Gospel of Christ had a profound impact on the formation of the United States just 200 years ago. But all that has now changed. While our coins still say "In God we trust" on them, what we have witnessed in the last 40-50 years is an overwhelming erosion of this faith. The numbers themselves have not changed significantly, but the faith behind these numbers has shifted dramatically. Except for an isolated few, most children growing up today, even most Christian children, receive little education about God—either at home or in school. The zeal that marked past worship is now evaporating. It is the disappearance of this enthusiasm which proves the inner death of faith. While it is still possible to point at large exceptions to this trend, measured against the 1.8 billion who are said to fill the world's Christian ranks, even these exceptions become miniscule. With Christian's and their standards increasingly subject to attack by pagans now displeased with them, the whole moral code of society is in the process of change. This is not a phenomenon unique to American culture, the entire planet has been swept up in it. Mutinying against the Gospel's message and morality, the world has embarked on Satan's course—a godless dash

for money and personal pleasure. The abandonment of moral responsibility associated with this new course is reflected not just in our thinking, but also in our political processes. Abortion is in, the right of the unborn child is out. Big business is in, the economics of generosity out. Secular education is in, Christian teaching is out. Homosexuality and lesbianism are in, family values are out. It goes on like this right down the line—a pagan conversion that has left fewer and fewer behind to, as Ezekiel stated it, "deplore and disapprove of all the filth practiced in the city". (Ez.9:4).

Paul predicted that all this would happen—that the last days would be ushered in by a Great Revolt against Jesus Christ—essentially, the same kind of rebellion that now envelops us. What we are witnessing today is the sudden escalation of the world's rejection of the path of Christ by the very people and governments who were once the greatest champions of His cause. And it is this change of heart that characterizes the world's new course as a rebellion. It is a revolt that has seen Christianized Babylon revert, in fits and spurts, back to its pagan roots. The staggering successes of this insurrection—especially over the last 50 years—gives certain warning that the messianic history of Babylon has touched the moment of its end. There can be little question that these changes constitute the rebellion that Paul predicted because we can look back over all the years since Christ was first preached on earth and not find anything like them in the Christian past. The movies and songs being produced today have almost no Christ message in them, and more often than not, they offer blatant endorsements of Satan instead. Teachers are encouraged to talk about Jefferson and Marx and their principles in school classes, but are forbidden to talk about Jesus and His. With God removed from the public eye, the idea of sin itself has been brought into serious question and more and more people every day reject the concept completely. The images that society flashes to our children are filled with sexual debauchery and murder—pornographic material as evil as the mind can make it has been made theirs for the asking. Immorality that the world of today accepts as 'normal' or 'enlightened' behavior would bring gasps of disbelief to the Christian world of a few years ago. People today exchange partners like changing clothes, discarding children and families to grab onto the 'good life', and they do not even see these actions in terms of sin. While there are still strong pockets of Christian faith in some areas, these are becoming more and more isolated and increasingly subject to ridicule. Most people have little sense of history and so they have almost no concept for how vast the religious changes are which have occurred in western society during this century. Although these changes in focus may seem 'normal' to those who are living through them, anyone with even a casual knowledge of the Christian past can see how profoundly the nature of the world has been changed by them. They have healed the mortal

wound and rebirthed Babylon. While there are many who insist that these changes are not so bad, all the signals say just the opposite—the signs of scripture show us a God about to turn out the lights. The world could not have taken the giant steps toward Armageddon that we have seen in this century unless all the elements of Paul's predicted revolt were not already well underway.

In the middle of this century when the time for open assault had arrived, a woman appeared in court. Wrapped in the momentum of the age, she cried out against Christ and the government of the United States took her side. In that instant, the collapse became official. That decision, we have since discovered, pitting as it did democracy against Christ, produced a dramatic lurch by the world away from the millennium of Christian rule and toward a renewed destiny with the godlessness of the past. Ratified by all other nations rebuilding their governments in the name of democracy, that edict proved a kind of final straw, because it shattered the shield of grace which has long protected the Christian world from disaster. We can see that fractured shield reflected in the terrible events which immediately followed the Supreme Court's rejection of God in the public agenda. Just five months after those judges issued their decision, John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. And a few months after that, the United States met its own kind of Dallas in the Gulf of Tonkin. The world had taken the reins. The blind were leading blind. Kennedy, for example, had made, not just Americans, but the whole western world believe in themselves—that they could do anything—be anything. But he did not champion God. We have since discovered that his personal life was a moral abyss. His lead pointed nowhere. If there is any common thread tying these events together (in addition to their singular moment in time), it is imbedded in the concept that God is our protection and that by abandoning Him, we have precipitated the terrible consequences of scripture's wrath. What we can be and what we are going to be, are infinitely tied to our personal relationship with the ethics of God. Empowered by governments that have grown increasingly pagan, and financed by executives and administrators who have discovered big money in glorifying Christian disobedience, doctrines promoting faithless behavior now permeate all parts of our society. Immoral propaganda is incessantly preached by singers and novelists, and glorified non-stop by television and movies.

The Revolt Paul predicted has grown so powerful that it now pervades every issue in today's society. In fact, secular influence has become such a strong force in our lives, we are often unaware of its power to coerce our thinking about God. In this country, for instance, we strongly advocate the principle of separation of church and state. But what does

this mean? Jesus is church and Babylon is state. So what we are actually advocating is the separation of Babylon from Christ. The Great Revolt in the last days is exactly the same kind of separation. Jeremiah proved this when he said, "We tried to cure Babylon, but she has got no better. Leave her alone and let each of us go to his own country." (Jer.51:9). The separation of Babylon from Christ, then, is the death of Babylon. This separation is the Revolt made official. Anyone who doubts what has happened has only to try to speak about Jesus or God in any public schoolroom in this country. In a Stayskal political cartoon, a child in a public school classroom began to give his report, "My paper is about God...", which caused the teacher to rear back in shock, until he finished, "...zilla." The teacher breathed a huge sigh of relief. This happened in a cartoon, but it accurately reflects a condition that now exists in almost every city in our country. And since this is the current state of affairs in the United States—a country founded with Christ and Christian ethics in mind—what about the rest of Babylon?

3

Before Judgment, A Time of Warning

"Take care not to be deceived," Jesus said 'because many will come using my name and saying "I am he" and, "the time is near at hand". Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened for this is something that must happen but the end is not so soon.' " Lk.21:8-11

The warnings that now surround us have been placed here for our salvation, not for our destruction. Scripture's admonitions tell us that while we still have time to make our peace with God, that time is running out. In a short while it will be too late. The Day of Armageddon which the Bible talks about is coming. In our own lives, it might arrive today and it could come tomorrow. Jesus told us to be constantly prepared because He promised to come into every life, and at a time of least suspect. Christ's words show us that there are two ends in scripture—two Armageddon's. One arrives the moment we die and the second will occur later when the world dies. Like bookends, they are identical as far as we are concerned. But there is a difference between them. If there were not, Jesus would not have told us that "the end is not so soon" in the quotation that leads this chapter. While our own end could be imminent, the earthly end will not occur until the pre-ordained conditions for it have all been met. These are events defined by Jesus principally in the Books of Matthew and Luke. They show us that what is much closer to us than the end of the world is an event the Bible calls the 'wrath'. The wrath is a violent hostility on earth that has been fore-ordained by the Gospel, and which many Christian's call the 'tribulation'. It is being held back by the reign on earth of Christ's church. The reign of the Church is not a political governance. It is a spiritual rule—a rule of the heart that began building at the time of the Apostles and quickly swept across the civilized world, capturing the entire Roman Empire in its grasp only 300 years after it was launched. For almost 2000 years it has kept the world focused on the star of Bethlehem. But with Christianity's rule now in shreds, and the hearts of the world hardening against it, the hoofbeat's of the wrath's minions can be heard in the prophet's voices as they gather at the portals of the coming century. Broadcasting the far-off clattering of those horsemen is what current prophecy is all about. This time of Anger that is approaching is not the end of the world. Nor is it the judgment. Nor does it come from

God. It comes, instead, as a result of a penalty written into the law of creation. It comes from sin. Natural law precedes the judgment because God wants to save the world, not destroy it. For this reason, God has surrounded sin with a harmful aura. Little by little, because of its presence, correction occurs by natural order, admonishing those who pursue a wicked course, so that the destination of that course might be altered by change. The tribulation is the worst and final part of that natural correction. No right-minded Christian would go out on a busy freeway and begin to play handball thinking that faith will block the speeding cars. God has made it plain that we are not to put Him to the test with respect to nature's rules. If we touch a hot stove it will burn our hand. But as painful as that wound might be, there is no judgment in the burn. It happens as a result of natural law. If we stand in a room full of sneezing people, chances are we will get sick. The rules of nature make it so. If we have been inoculated with a flu vaccine, perhaps we won't get sick. This, too, is the result of the laws of nature. These conditions follow laws built right into the schematic of the creation.

Just as real are the spiritual laws that govern the hot stoves we cannot see. The Bible tells us what these objects are and warns us of their presence. They are red hot spiritual objects which the Gospel calls sins. Their searing heat comes from the fact that intense physical manifestations always surround them: calamity, violence, hatred, wars, famine, disease, poverty, even natural disasters. Prophecy exists to alert people to the presence of those harmful objects and to guide the people of God around them. Every prophecy in the Bible exists for such warning. In times like these where the spiritual toxins are multiplying, the job becomes more critical and so there are more voices. But there is a caution here. The faithful minister works for salvation, not for judgment. And that salvation comes only from Jesus Christ. Any minister or prophet who speaks of the world's end and suggests that they have a secret formula for safety is a liar. Those who followed Jim Jones to the jungles of Guyana or David Koresh to the plains of Waco made this discovery too late. Jesus said that many would come using his name and saying that the 'time was at hand' (for the end) and He warned us not to follow them. In the 1840's a Baptist writer named William Miller claimed that the world would end in 1843. It didn't. Undaunted, he said it would happen in 1844. He was wrong again. When the earth was scheduled to pass through the tail of Halley's comet at the turn of this century, many preachers warned that the world would end when the two collided. Nothing happened. The Jehovah's Witnesses have claimed several dates for the end of the world and all have come and gone without incident. Christians have been warned by God Himself to turn away from such declarations. (Lk.21:8). No one knows the time or date of the end. But there are signs of its approach. When Jesus cautioned against

the preachers of the end times, He was not telling us to ignore books of scripture like Ezekiel, Daniel or the Book of Revelation. These writings, inspired by God, are filled with the signs of all that is coming. God put them there so that we can read them and watch their prophecies come to life. And as each of their predicted events occur, we are reminded that, while there is still time to renounce the sinfulness of our lives, that time is quickly running out. These signs are not meant to lead us out of our church or send us scurrying into some other church. Crying out for our repentance, they beg us to pay more attention to our own church—to take more seriously the Gospel we have already heard. *"Whether you turn to the right or the left, your ears will hear these words behind you, 'This is the way, follow it'."* (Is.30:21). God had Isaiah use the words 'behind' us to show that these are Sunday school words—a Gospel message from our past—one that we first heard as children. It proves that the current signs of an ending world are God's louder plea to ears that are growing increasingly deaf. And because that deafness has multiplied sin, the universe is about to kick in with its own warnings. This is not idle talk. The Bible has communicated the future to us in clear, and unequivocal terms. Our responsibility is to hear these words and make the conversion that will prevent this future from being fulfilled in our own time.

Scripture teaches that lawlessness will cause the destruction of the world. *"So lawlessness will bring the whole earth to ruin and evil-doing bring the thrones of the mighty down."* (Ws.5:24). This is because the universe that God has created works on the side of righteousness. *"God will arm creation to punish his enemies; he will forge a biting sword of his stern wrath, and the universe will march with him to fight the reckless."* (Ws.5:17-21). These verses, and many others like them in scripture, prove that creation has within itself the power to react antagonistically to sin. And it is because nature has been fore-armed during its creation to counter godless behavior in this way that we are able to observe and predict relationships between sin and the diseases, pestilence and other disasters which follow it. *"Because their foolish and wicked notions led them astray into worshipping contemptible beasts, you sent hordes of mindless creatures to punish them and teach them that the instruments of sin are instruments of punishment."* (Ws.11:15-16). We live today in a time filled with severe warnings from heaven. Most people, of course, do not believe this. Few draw any correlation between sinfulness and the disasters which follow such behavior. *"'God sees nothing,' they say...You most stupid of men, think this over and learn some sense. Is the inventor of the ear unable to hear? The creator of the eye unable to see? The punisher of the pagans unable to punish?"* (Ps.94:7-10). When we view the current world and all the plagues that have arisen within it, it is clear that these words were written for us and for our times: *"And indeed your all-powerful hand—the hand that created the world from*

formless matter—did not lack the means to unleash a horde of unknown beasts, newly created, full of rage, exhaling fiery breath..." (Ws.11:17-20). God did not send the newly created plagues of this century to torment wrongdoers; there is a day scheduled for that in the future. Rather, these pestilences are a result of sin, they are not the punishment of sin. They come in the same way that a drunk driver kills innocent people, or in the way that lawlessness will one day bring the whole earth to ruin. It is a rule of the kind of nature that God has created. A nature that obeys God's rules to the letter. In God's creation, law and order go together. Righteousness brings health and life, but sin manifests disease and death. This is programmed right into nature itself so that it happens naturally. *"Creation is maintained by your rulings."* (Ps.119:91). Outside of these rulings, creation comes apart, and chaos takes its place. We saw this happen in the time of Noah, during the flood.

Because of sin, everyone has to suffer—good and bad alike. In the same way that the the sin of the drive-by shooter snuffs out the life of the innocent child, it is sin that is going to bring the whole world to destruction. The diseases and plagues that we have had to bear, as bad as they are, are only warnings of something much worse to come. This is what Christ came to warn us about—not just the terrible wrath about to consume the future, but the time of judgment and fire which will follow it. God does not have to wait or give us this warning. It is only because of His great mercy that He has held back the tribulation of the last days to give us this window of escape. He has it within His power to sweep all mankind off the earth with a single breath right now. Therefore, the reproofs which come now are designed to bring us all into repentance, not to destroy us. *"But even without these, they could have dropped dead at a single breath, whirled away by the breath of your power. But no, you ordered all things by measure, number and weight."* (Ws.11:21). *"You are merciful to all, because you can do all things and overlook men's sins so that they can repent."* (Ws.11:24). *"Little by little, therefore, you correct those who offend; you admonish and remind them of how they have sinned so that they may abstain from evil and trust in you, Lord."* (Ws.12:1-2). In the end, however, the Bible says that these warnings will not be heeded. In the last days, we are told, the people of the world will harden their hearts against God and refuse to see Him in nature's reprisals no matter how harsh and disastrous they may become: *"Men were biting their tongues for pain, but instead of repenting for what they had done, they cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores."* (Rev.16:11). With great restraint, God has held the reign of terror back, but instead of seeing His mercy in the current calm, most of the world's people have mistaken Christ's offer of peace as a sign that the world will go on forever just as it is. *"Well, where is this coming? Everything goes on as it has since the Fathers died, as it has since it began at the creation."* (2 Peter 3:4). That is

why so many people today can look at the Revolt raging around them and not see it. To them, the carnality of our age—the sex, the bathhouses, the pierced nipples, the nudity, the bestiality and the drug obsessed rock stars are simply stages in a continuum they feel can go on forever without end. With booming drums, crashing cymbals and flashing lights, the cathedrals have been replaced by casino's. Satan has hypnotized the world into thinking that the fate of Sodom and Gommorah were for another age and no longer apply. Is there a point where behavior becomes so abhorrent to God that He simply pulls the plug? That is what the Bible says. The scriptures teach that catastrophe and sin are directly related—that evil-doing will bring this world to an end so final that the debris of its existance will be reduced to mere fragments floating in space (Is.24:19). Fortunately that End is not now. But the only reason why a gap in this relationship now exists, the Bible says, is because God wants to save those who would be saved. *"The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises...he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways."* (2 Peter 3:9). But His patience has a limit. *"The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, and the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up."* (2 Peter 3:10). Today there is little question that we are severely testing that limit. The spiritual conversion of Babylon which the apostles generated 1900 years ago has all but vanished. In its place are all the graphic images and wanton misconduct of a world gone completely and immorally mad.

Is it too late to halt the process of disintegration? The Revolt can be changed. But only by prayer, repentance and conversion into the words of Jesus. And it can only happen individually, one by one—in the heart of each person. That, then, should be the message tirelessly and incessantly preached from every pulpit. But as of today few even know there is a revolt, let alone see a need to reverse it. Repentance is at the heart of God's message of salvation. The forgiveness that Christ offered to the world as its escape from the punishment of the wrath is structured in repentance: *"And so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins."* (Mk.1:4-5). The forgiveness that comes through repentance is accompanied by grace to increase its strength and durability. But the apostles have told us that grace is a variable. We can grow in it or we can fall out of it. Scripture carries a stern warning about this: the sword of catastrophe stands poised now, right over the top of the world. And the Bible shows that its destructive wrath is held back only by grace. Those who live in God are protected from the consequences of sin by God's grace, and their good lives make the envelope of grace stronger for all around them; but those who return to

their evil ways, deplete the store of grace and hasten the time of wrath. The grace that God has given us is a wall of protection for our journey in faith. *"When God guides a man's steps he may fall but never fatally, since God supports him by the hand."* (Ps.37:23). But God never meant grace to be used for apostasy. It is possible to fall out of grace completely. For the last 2000 years we have witnessed a world living in the grace of the forgiveness of God because a part of it believed in the message of Jesus: *"He was proclaimed to the pagans and believed in by the world."* (1 Tim.3:16). But as the world turns away from God, the same rules apply to it that have always applied to each one of us: grace diminishes and the time of wrath is hastened by the fall. That is why we see the end-time consequences approaching us with such great speed now. The Revolt is plunging the world into a fall from grace.

Obsessed with personal pleasure and a thirst for violence, Babylon has allowed the millennium of Christian rule on earth to fade away. And in that fade, the world we once knew is about to collapse. All the politics and all the weapons in the world are powerless to change what is coming. Prayer and faith renewal are the only armaments that can change the planet's new course. With the governments no longer ruling under the scepter of Christianity, the world reign of Christ is silently passing away. The nations of Babylon have a new kind of wisdom now and it has replaced their former faith. Through Satan's manipulation, these nations have joined in the Great Revolt, and in so doing, have given the devil the means to come back to power. His return is a momentous event in the chronology of the last days. John stated in his Book of Revelation that God had imprisoned Satan in an Abyss, chaining him there in order to create Christianity's rule in the world. (Rev.20:1-2). It was only this incarceration that allowed Christ's dominion over Babylon to occur at all. At the end of Christ's thousand years, John wrote, he must be released and allowed to return to the earth to deceive the nations and mobilize them all for war. (Rev.20:7-8). If the millennium has already occurred, and stands now, at its very end, then the fulfillment of this prophecy must also be at hand. The cleverness involved in the current deception—the fact that Satan has been able to convince even most Christians that the separation of Babylon from Christ is a good move—is a persuasive argument that he has left the Abyss already and is currently back in this world now. His capacity to deceive is so powerful that God had to lock him up in order to create Christian rule on earth in the first place. To see it all suddenly end so quickly is a convincing demonstration that he has returned. Satan has accomplished this deception even in the United States—a country founded in Christian worship and conversion. This shows that we are living at a very crucial time in history because it is our generation which is bringing the millennium to an end. Turning, instead, to secular

government, the nations of the Christian past have finally broken free from the yoke of Christ. And in that rebellion, the world rule of the Christian Church—a phenomenon almost 2000 years old—has been quietly laid to rest.. So while the generation of the Apostles produced the millennium by bringing the Gospel to world dominion, our generation has been responsible for destroying their work. Emboldened by a new-found wisdom, and chasing after the 'good life' the people of Babylon have pushed Jesus aside, allowing his rule on this earth to lapse—a 'rule' most of the world failed to see in the first place, and one often held up to ridicule by those who should have known better.

4

God Brings Knowledge to Nothing

"I shall destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing all the learning of the learned."

1 Cor.1:19

Jesus said that the world of God is the exact opposite of the world of men. What is highest here, He said, will be lowest in the kingdom of heaven, and what is lowest here will be glorified there. What the world exalts, Jesus said, is an abomination in the sight of God. Nothing is more revered in the society of Babylon than the possession of knowledge. But it is not a knowledge of God that drives our universities and powers the planet's intellectual hunger. It is the understanding of the elements of this doomed creation and all of its component parts that obsesses our study. We memorize, not the commandments of God, but the voices that have hallowed an understanding of physical creation and exalted the soul of Babylon. Hypnotized by a creation that is nothing more than temporarily charged particles vibrating in a vacuum of space and time—the captains who guide us dictate that this we should elevate, not the Gospel which rescues us from Satan's grasp. Because it has been skewed to enshrine all that is not God, the major battleground of faith, here, is knowledge. The more we know, the less we believe. It is no coincidence, then, that the collapse of faith which we now find spreading across the globe has coincided with the greatest explosion of scholarship the world has ever known. Satan coerced Adam and Eve by enticing them to eat forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge. Today their children have made that tree an obsessive feast. As a result, the consumption of Adam's fruit has become the most coveted endeavor in the modern world. This pursuit has risen to become the important element in modern society's measure of individual worth. Meanwhile, the values which Christ taught are increasingly shunned by community leaders. Much of this shift in the way we determine personal value in society has been spearheaded by the intellectual elite. For instance, the U.S. Supreme Court, perhaps the most august body in our government has decreed as illegal, prayer in school, and even ruled that a copy of the Ten Commandments be removed from a Georgia courthouse. These men and women constitute the most scholarly and influential minds in the country and stand as the moral fortress of the nation. The signal they

have sent to our citizens and children with their dictums is that the faith commanded by Jesus and the Bible is irrelevant to government and a prejudice that needs to be severely controlled. They have used a different argument, but the signal is the same. We are now watching a society grow up under this arrogant and godless influence and the visions are ominous. Many of these changes have occurred without protest from religious leaders. In fact, throughout history, church leaders have been among the intellectual world's staunchest advocates. That closeness has been severely strained in the latter part of this century. Now, with the sabres of warfare between church and state suddenly starting to rattle, the religious community has begun to polarize around issues quietly heralded by God's prophets from the beginning. Jesus predicted that this would happen—especially in the last days. *"I bless you, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do."* (Mt.11:25-26). Paul underscored Christ's prediction of academic blindness in his letter to the Corinthians, defining the wisdom of this world as foolishness to God, and the wisdom of God a mystery to the masters of this age. Both Testaments of the Bible have given such witness: *"The wisdom of its sages shall decay, the intelligence of its intelligent men shall be shrouded."* (Is.29:14). God Himself separated the camps of scholarship and faith and personally directed that they should oppose each other until the End. As a result, the frontal assault on faith that currently emanates from the intellectual community follows a plan fore-ordained by heaven. Satan's intellectual attack on Christ has expanded well beyond the ivy shrouded walls that once nurtured it toward maturity. It has been transported far out into the community—carried there by reporters and editors of great newspapers, the knowledgeable elite that guide our society, the managers of the media, judges, most politicians, and the leaders of almost every institution of respect and influence in our culture. Christians are painted as bigots; their stand against corruption interpreted as proof of sexism, racism, intolerance and intellectual inferiority by learned pagan propagandists whose voices have grown increasingly shrill and powerful in their opposition to the ways of God.

The correlation between secularism, the gymnasias (the ancient schools of the Greeks), and the modern universities of our time are interrelated, and they point to the changing nature of pagan worship. In the 2nd century B.C., when Antiochus IV Epiphanes built his Greek Gymnasium (university) in a commanding position close to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, it not only infuriated the Jewish priests, it mirrored the devil's attempt to compete against the message of God. Using Antiochus' bold confrontation, Satan launched this rivalry of competing wisdoms by trying to pit a pagan university against the Hebrew temple. (1 Macc.1:15). Anticipating the sophistication of Jesus' God (a God of Word),

Satan gave the pagans another kind of 'word' to worship—the vacillating word of human scholarship. With it he launched a worship of the world. The fact that a deep antagonism between faith and scholarship would first blossom under the direction of Epiphanes (one of the Bible's two archetypal images of the Beast) is, in itself, significant. The Book of Daniel shows that Antiochus IV Epiphanes forms one of the Bible's two templates of the Great Rebel to come. It is not surprising then (since these are a part of the last days), that Academia would use its prestige in our time to set itself against God and thereby imitate the 'gymnasia apostasy' that foreshadowed the grave sacrilege of Daniel's era. In Daniel's time, this confrontation led to a Jewish 'abomination of desolation'. In our time it will lead to the desolation of the entire world. It is further proof that Daniel's prophecies have finally come of age. As the conditions of Daniel's day replicate themselves once again in our own, we can see his words nearing their fulfillment. The Greek institute of knowledge that caused such controversy during the times he wrote about, stands once again on God's temple mount. This time, on His spiritual Mount. And it has risen to that position with insidious dispatch. Erecting on earth what has grown up to be a convincing monument to doubt, Satan has created a likeness of truth, and used its images to supplant the faith commanded by Christ. 'Truth', said Jesus, is the word of God—the Gospel of His Father. But the world's institutions advertise another 'truth' in its place. As proof of the effectiveness of this promotion, most now look to the university instead of God as the ultimate authority on earth. And the product that emanates from its walls is this world's knowledge—a faulty, secular, man-made 'truth' most of the world venerates as if it were divine. .

Scholarship, by itself, of course, is not the problem. God created the world, and so discovery should always lead *toward* God, not away from Him. The fault lies in the agenda of those who manage the way it is pursued, interpreted and dispensed. It is the sustained effort by most academic leaders to deny and discredit God that has driven the intellectual community to the foot of Satan's altar. In this procession we don't see the pagans of our time heading off to religious temples to offer animal sacrifices to their deity's anymore. Instead, we see them streaming to the universities and colleges to learn the secrets of this world's tree of knowledge. It is a ritual practiced everywhere, in every country of the world by everyone who wants to be a serious part of this world; and yet it is an indoctrination that almost always leads people away from God. That is because the potentates of all this scholarship—those responsible for examining creation—have pooled their data and determined that no divine intellect was involved either in creation's inception or its development. This after building a massive institution for a detailed examination of every

aspect of creation's dimensions. Promoting and defending a godless existence, these are blind guides who have culled through mountains of evidence and come up empty.

Knowledge alone is not a sin—it simply has no power to bring us to God. Some might try to argue this point, but God's word is a power unto itself; therefore it anoints us in its own truth—an anointing that education cannot improve. It is not knowledge that keeps a person from going bad, it is obedience to Christ. For every level of knowledge that exists there is a Satan to match. This means that righteousness cannot be improved by intellect. The perfect understanding of Jesus is unquestioning acceptance and obedience to what he said—complete and utter faith. As we have seen, all knowledge does is interfere with this process, because it brings question to faith. If knowledge were as perfect as faith, all questions would lead us to God, but our knowledge is *always* wrong, so the answers lead us astray. Because it is perfect and without error of any kind, the word of Jesus is a truth that can never change. By contrast, the truth that comes out of the schools changes constantly. Every textbook is outdated (and therefore false) the moment it is published. New knowledge has passed it by—and will always pass it by—through a process that will be repeated over and over again until the end, showing that human knowledge is always in orbit around truth but can never touch it. For this reason, a ten year old textbook is useless and a hundred year old one an object of ridicule. And a hundred years from now—if such a time were able to come—it would be the same all over again. Today's truth in this world will always be tomorrow's error. Yet it is Jesus who is rejected, while the errant scholarship is retained. So while knowledge has no power to lead us to God, it has a great power to lead us away from Him because it brings doubt to faith. (2 Thes.2:9-12).

Because *doubt* is the engine which powers its whole pursuit, human scholarship will always stand opposite faith. Knowing that past knowledge is wrong is the very thought that drives academic discovery. And knowing that the new discovery is wrong as well is the force that demands the search be continued. Knowledge learned then, is error learned. And because in this process all truths become subjective, error is institutionalized and glorified. For this reason, the university stands as a reverse image of the Church. In Jesus, truth is absolute. But in the university, truth is only error waiting to be corrected. Highlighting these reverse roles, the Spirit of God caused scripture to portray the two as women offering food to passersby: "*Dame Folly...sits at the door of her house, on a throne commanding the city, inviting the passers-by as they pass on their lawful occasions, 'Who is ignorant? Let him step this way,' To the fool she says, 'Stolen waters are sweet, and bread tastes better when eaten in secret.'*" (Pr.9:11-17). This 'secret bread' is the sacrificial food of today's

pagan world. It is stolen because it was taken from God without acknowledgement, and it is secret because it is dispensed, not to the world, but only to the chosen few. To those with just the right credentials. Those outside this circle are left out—most of them fated to a life of poverty and menial jobs because they have been excluded. The poor and the weak, then, are not only the institution's primary victims, they are even formed by its terms. This would seem acceptable in a society driven by competition and striving for intellectual perfection, but God did not make the world for these kinds of pursuits. Jesus did not want us at war with each other. God made the world so that we could all find Jesus and follow his commandments. Thus the rules of our society are a corruption of God's whole purpose. This corruption is why the Bible calls our social system 'Babylon' (Rev.17:5).

Just the opposite of the fare offered by 'Dame Folly' in the Book of Proverbs is the food of the Church: *"Wisdom has built herself a house, she has erected her seven pillars...she has laid her table. She has despatched her maidservants and proclaimed from the city's heights: 'Who is ignorant? Let him step this way.' To the fool she says, 'Come and eat my bread, drink the wine I have prepared! Leave your folly and you will live, walk in the ways of perception'."* (Pr.9:1-6). God did not call us to help build Babylon, He called us to build the kingdom of heaven instead. In this construction, only the commandments count. Knowledge is useless. To underscore this fact, Jesus said that God had hidden His truths from the 'learned and the clever'—hiding them from the schoolteachers and professors—and revealing them, instead, to 'mere children'. The Pharisees considered these children to be 'rabble' because most of them could neither read nor write, and none of them were academically trained: *"This rabble knows nothing about the Law—they are damned"*, the Hebrew educators proclaimed. *"Have any of the authorities believed in him?"* (in Jesus) *"Any of the Pharisees?"* (Jn 7:49). When Jesus ended the Mosaic sacrifices by revealing that God is 'Word', Satan followed suit. When God put a stop to animal sacrifices by making His 'words' the object of worship, Satan countered by making 'knowledge' the venue for his own worship. This change was obvious early in the history of the Church in its battle against Gnosticism. So while ancient worship hinged on animal sacrifices, modern worship focuses on truth and knowledge. And that is why we now see the academic system, more and more, becoming a major battleground in the war between God and this world. It is a battleground of spiritual food. On one side, the word of Jesus—the food of the tree of life, and on the other—the food of the tree of knowledge—a knowledge that Isaiah said, leads to nothing: *"...the past will not be remembered and will come no more to men's minds."* (Is.65:17).

Oblivious to such a fate, secular worship promotes man and the world as supreme, not God. It preaches the deification of Babylon—the deification of the prostitute. Its hidden truth has almost nothing to do with God's purpose on earth. That is why school is an open forum for the philosophies of Jefferson and Marx but discussion of Jesus is virtually forbidden. God is neither the focus nor the destination of the academic search. In fact, God is held up to such ridicule in school that most students are embarrassed even to mention His name in a classroom. Managed by the architects of commerce, the scholastic product relates specifically to commerce, so that the mark it stamps on us—the degree conferred—determines our ability to buy and sell. This is little different from the mark of the beast. But because it offers the world's most hallowed rewards—money, pride and power—'dame folly' has become the major rival to God on the planet. What this institution promotes and preaches is 'worldliness'—not just how to get ahead of others—but a love and appreciation for the monuments of this world: for money, knowledge, art, literature, music, science and so on. All the things that Jeremiah said are destined for the fire. Because the world has embraced all this statuary and glorified it in such hallowed terms, words like these surely sound heretical. But contrast this people's monuments with the words of the apostle John who wrote, "*You must not love this passing world or anything that is in the world. The love of the Father cannot be in any man who loves the world...*" (1 Jn.2:15). The deification of Babylon is death's side of the valley of decision. This is why Jesus told us we must break the bond which ties us to our worldly possessions. The only thing in life that has meaning, he said, is simple obedience to the teachings of God. "*Lord, my heart has no lofty ambitions, my eyes do not look too high. Enough for me to keep my soul tranquil...*" (Ps.131:1-2). There is peace in these words. Contrast that peace with the driving stress commanded by God's opponents. Instead of tranquility, the world teaches that we must strive to get ahead—to make something of ourselves—to offer our lives in the construction of monuments that glorify the world and its accomplishments. That the two ideologies are opposites is proved by Isaiah's quotation above—that everything this world is learning and striving for is going to disappear. Isaiah said none of it will ever be remembered. So even our great libraries have no future meaning. Intelligent scholars know that all their 'truth' is wrong, but they argue that it is *leading* somewhere. Yet, the Bible says that it is leading nowhere—that all the knowledge we now consider so sacred will disappear along with the cities and civilization it has built. When the world ends, it will all vanish, and when it is gone it will leave no trace of its existence behind. There will be no memory of it—no books—nothing at all. This is a truly astonishing revelation—a concept Jesus underscored when he said that the only thing that can survive the coming fire is righteous behavior.

Everything else, he said, is meaningless and leads to death. And that is why the writer of Ecclesiastes called it all 'vanity'.

Babylon depends on higher learning for its construction, but scripture clearly indicates that the kingdom of heaven does not. *"As your word unfolds, it gives light and the simple understand."* (Ps.119:130). Because pagan education has become such a god in our own time, most of us today cannot comprehend the fact that Jesus and most of his apostles had no schooling at all. Certainly no high school; not even grammar school. They held no academic degrees. In fact, when Jesus went to the temple and began to teach, *"the Jews were astonished and said, 'How did he learn to read? He has not been taught.' Jesus answered them: 'My teaching is not from myself: it comes from the one who sent me; and if anyone is prepared to do his will, he will know whether my teaching is from God or whether my doctrine is my own."* (Jn.7:14-17). Most of the apostles were like Jesus. Many could not read and a few possibly could not even write their names. Yet God had chosen them, not just as disciples, but as the very pillars of the Church itself. *"The city walls stood on twelve foundation stones, each one of which bore the name of one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."* (Rev.21:14). God did not structure His kingdom on such illiteracy by accident; and yet most Christian educators are convinced that such people today—those who are as unlettered as these apostles were—cannot possibly know much about God, let alone preach about Him. The educated people of Christ's time apparently felt the same way: *"Wisdom is better than strength, but a poor man's wisdom is never valued and his words disregarded."* (Eccl.9:16).

Today, mesmerized by the influence of educators, we view as human failures anyone who stumbles in the academic process, and we are convinced that it is only through academic training that anyone can come to a full appreciation of God. That is why we look for college degrees and search the educational backgrounds to determine the measure of credibility our leaders should be given. Even our ministers and priests. Doing so, we often surround ourselves with Pharisees; because today, virtually no minister is allowed in a pulpit unless he has been properly credentialed in the temple of knowledge first. Yet not one iota of morality ever came out of school. We certainly cannot look to our doctors, lawyers, bankers and politicians for lessons in ethics. When we look to education for morality, we put our trust in a system guaranteed to fail. *"The race does not go to the swift...there is no bread for the wise."* (Eccl.9:11). Just the opposite, the more we know, the less we believe. *"Make no mistake about it: if any one of you thinks of himself as wise...then he must learn to be a fool before he can be wise. Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God."* (1

Cor.3:18). God crystallized this mandate when He called shepherders to witness to priests. Demonstrating the extent of God's ordinance, Paul declared, *"If it was God's wisdom that human wisdom should not know God, it was because God wanted to save those who have faith through the foolishness of the message that we preach...because it was to shame the wise that God chose what is contemptible by human reckoning. Those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen—those who are nothing at all to show up those who are everything."* (1 Cor.1:21-28). God will make these words come true because scripture cannot be rejected. (John 10:35).

God's truth and man's knowledge have been set apart by a divine decree—a decree which cannot be changed because scripture cannot be overruled. The separation between the two is the reason why Jesus is so lightly regarded in intellectual circles. And as recent events have shown, this rift even applies to Bible colleges. This should come as no shock to anyone, because the most scholarly and intellectual Bible college in the history of the world was in Jerusalem, but Jesus didn't go over there and select a single Apostle. Instead, he bypassed scholarship and went up to a lake in Galilee and sought out people of compassion—some fishermen, and a tax collector and a publican—people who, for the most part, were unlettered—people the school in Jerusalem had dismissed as ignorant. And, in effect he said to them 'I am appointing you as the new masters of my theology—you are to take over all the posts of those professors down in Jerusalem, and you are to tell all the people of the world about God in their place.' God did the same thing before Jesus came. Instead of going to the theological center to select finely trained scholars with brilliant religious minds, the Holy Spirit went up into the hills, to shepherds tending sheep, saying to them, 'I want you to go down to that University in Jerusalem and tell all those religious professors and their graduate students what my words *really* are.' Despite all their reading and writing and languages and all their credentials, God sent illiterate shepherds down to teach the divinity professors about their very own subject. The proof of this is that when we read about God today, we rarely read a single word that any of those scholars and professors in that Bible college in Jerusalem ever wrote! Instead, we read the words of the shepherds and fishermen, and of the tentmaker that God chose to speak to us in their place. Since this happened in the Old Testament and again in the New Testament, and is perpetuated by a divine decree in scripture issued by the mouth of God, can we doubt that it is any different today? The facts show us that it is not. We live in a time where knowledge has brought us to an understanding never dreamed of in the past—even our understanding of God. For almost 2000 years less than a handful of scriptural texts were known, but today, driven by the scholastic energy of our times there are hundreds of translations of the scriptures—many

going back to the very fabric of the original texts—bringing us to a knowledge of God far beyond anything known by our forefathers, and yet none of this has improved the world's faith. Which translation of the scriptures has created the best Christian for instance? Instead of creating better Christians, this explosion of holy knowledge has had no positive impact on the behavior of the world at all. On the contrary, amid this burgeoning spiritual understanding, the world has rejected Christ and tossed his words away on a scale never seen before.

We can only come to God through love—not by knowledge. Paul said, *"We all have knowledge; yes, that is so, but knowledge gives self-importance—it is love that makes the building grow."* (1 Cor.8:1). Knowledge goes with ego because it makes people think they are smarter than those around them. Love on the other hand does not come from knowledge, it comes from the heart. This is why Jeremiah, speaking of the new covenant through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit said, *"See the days are coming...when deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbor to try to teach neighbor, or for brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know God!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest—it is God who speaks—since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind."* (Jr.31:31-34). In keeping with this prophecy, Jesus called us to witness, not to teach. (Mt.23:10). In this world, where education has become a god and the university its secular temple, this difference has become, for most, incomprehensible.

5

The Handwriting on the Wall

"Then the he-goat from the West grew more powerful than ever, but at the height of its strength the great horn snapped, and in its place sprouted four majestic horns, pointing to the four winds of heaven."

Dn.8:8

Daniel was a Hebrew prophet who lived during the 70-year Jewish exile in Babylon several centuries before Alexander the Great or Antiochus IV Epiphanes were born. His most famous vision was his analysis of the 'handwriting on the wall' which mysteriously appeared in the palace of king Belshazzar the night before Persia attacked and brought the Babylonian empire to an end. A human hand suddenly appeared that fateful night, and to the astonishment of those assembled in the royal quarters, it began to write out a message on the palace wall. The writing read: *"Mene, Mene, Tekel and Parsin."* No one knew what it meant and so Daniel, a Hebrew Prophet known to have great powers of interpretation was called in to decipher the words. Daniel solemnly explained to the king that the hand they had seen was the hand of God, and the writing was a message of imminent disaster: *"The meaning of the words is this"*, Daniel told him, *"Mene: God has measured your sovereignty and put an end to it; Tekel: you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; Parsin: your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians."* (Dn.5:25-28). That very same night, the Chaldaean king Belshazzar was murdered, and the kingdom of Babylon fell into the hands of Darius the Mede, king of Persia. It is this 'handwriting' prophecy which really quantifies Daniel in prophetic history, because it makes us focus the writings of Daniel on the destruction of Babylon by the forces of the East. The Book of Revelation tells us that this is not just an element of the past, but is a critical event in our future—the plague of the sixth trumpet. The historical format of the prophecies, therefore, is not a concern to us. We can be assured of its spiritual accuracy because Daniel's book stands in a pre-eminent position in the Bible through the instruction of Christ (Matt.24:15-17). Moreover, it rests there in a state identical to its Qumran version, a writing of scripture which pre-dated Jesus. And that is all we need to know about its past.

Most Bible Scholars are convinced that a great many of Daniel's prophecies centered around the exploits of Alexander the Great and his immense but divided empire. Alexander was not the focal point of Daniel's visions, of course, but there are important things that the Holy Spirit wanted us to see in the Greek era which surrounded him. The quotation which leads this chapter accurately discusses Alexander's sudden death and the subsequent parcelling out of his empire into the four Greek kingdoms that replaced his rule. While a close relationship between Daniel's prophecies and these historical events exists, we must not forget that while it is history's purpose to explain the past, Daniel tells us the future. We should not confuse the two when we read his words. So while the historical counterparts are important, they should be studied only to add perspective to events that still lie in history's womb. Jesus has taught us that the ultimate meaning of Daniel's prophecies are deeply webbed with the future's end-times, and, in this respect, his words have powerful elements which seem to be unfolding now, in the twentieth century. And it is this aspect of his statements, now developing, that must command our primary attention. The probing of scholarship is not our concern. It changes with each shovelful of dirt and its discoveries have nothing to do with the consequences of any of these visions. Daniel's prophecy calls for a quest directed at 'the four winds of heaven' (not earth). The use of such an idiom implies diverse religious or philosophical leanings, not just differing political ideologies. We can expect to see both. Daniel has foreseen the destruction of Babylon. His book deciphers the handwriting on the wall, and its visions bring us into touch with the terrible warfare that lies under the hoofbeats of those four horsemen of the Apocalypse, the kings of the East. We have already shown that the life of Babylon was extended through a worldwide conversion into the Christian faith—a conversion which pre-empted Babylon and brought into existence a great Christian empire in its place. And suddenly in our time we are witnessing the reversal of this divine victory, and the rebirth from its fatal deathbed of the Babylon our early Christian fathers long ago put to rest. The political collapse of the Christian world, or any of its component nations (The U.S.A., for instance) could not occur unless a crucial spiritual fall took place within these nations first. God has promised to thwart this kind of disaster anywhere that His will is obeyed. *"Should anyone attack you, that will not be my doing, and whoever attacks you, for your sake will fall. I it was who created the smith who blows on the coal fire and from it takes the weapons to work on. But I also created the destroyer who renders them useless. Not a weapon forged against you will succeed. Every tongue that accuses you in judgment will be refuted. Such will be the lot of the servants of God, the triumphs I award them—it is God who speaks."* (Is.54:15-17). These words show that every conversion and every re-commitment to Christ will slow the new course of our planet and help to return the world to the faith of its past. That is why this

book exists—to urge everyone able to listen to recant their own secularization. This is the same reason why a vision of Mary has appeared in the middle of Yugoslavia; and the message preached there is no different than ours. Mary has informed those visionaries in Medjugore that this is the last time she will appear on earth before the end—i.e., this is her last visitation before Armageddon. In light of Mary's statement, no one can say that the prophecies of conclusion are the product of a handful of kooks on the spatial fringes of Protesantism. They are sweeping through the entire Church. It is God's way of telling us to wake up and listen—to repent and stop the processes now trying to unlock Daniel's temple in our time. When we look at Yugoslavia and what has happened there since Mary first made her appearance to those schoolchildren, it is sobering. When she first began speaking with them a winter Olympics was preparing to bring the world to the pinnacle of civility in Sarajevo. Her pleas for repentance and prayer went unheeded, and Yugoslavia has since dissolved into the kind of Bosnia we know today. And where else will the hatred that surrounds this Serbian-Bosnian-Croatian whirlpool lead the world? There must be something ominously significant about this place for God to have chosen it of all the locations on earth to effect the final appearance of Christ's mother. The dissolution of Yugoslavia is the same kind of partitioning into camps of hatred that Daniel's prophecies define for the entire world. If we look at Daniel's 'four winds' prophecy on a spiritual level we can see that he has these horns pointing in four dissimilar directions toward heaven. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that each of these horns will pursue the search for religious meaning in ways that are not only philosophically different from one another, but different from the teachings of their Christian ancestry as well. This implies diverse religious beliefs rising up throughout Babylon to replace the Christian-focused philosophy that had previously ruled there. Applying this to current events, the original empire (the 'he-goat from the west') can be seen as a Christian-oriented government that conquers the world philosophically, spreading its democratic (Greek) 'rule' almost to the ends of the earth. In this respect it follows in an uncanny way the Greek victories of Alexander. At the peak of its power, however, its Christian orientation disintegrates, followed quickly by political collapse. Thus the quotation that leads our chapter. Part of this has already occurred. The western world, as we have seen, has recently abandoned its championship of Christ and has begun to espouse secular and political philosophies in His place. Christ's moral teaching has been put out of the schools and the fierceness of its exclusion by western leaders has convinced a great many young that its teaching is bigoted, often irrelevant and subject to serious question—in some cases, even sanity. This has sent moral instruction reeling. As a consequence, the ethical unity of the Christian millennium is in the process of dissolution—a disintegration visible all across the western world. And soon, because of this evaporation of faith, the

political power of western government will, itself, dissipate. This apostasy promises political and social catastrophe, not only for the United States, but for all the other nations of secular Babylon as well.

If we accept that the western world in general is Babylon, then the United States in particular represents the far west portion of this doomed kingdom. And if we accept the fact that the world is preparing itself right now for the second war of the Apocalypse, then we must consider that The U.S.A. has a very special place in the prophecies of scripture. It is a place the Bible calls 'Javan'. And because a powerful segment of people within it's borders will sustain a deep faith in Christ throughout the period of the tribulation, it is destined to be the only segment of the western world capable of standing off the initial onslaught of the East when its dominions come rolling over Babylon in the days ahead. Jesus indicated, by His revelation concerning the two Hellenist visitors just before His crucifixion (Jn.12:20-23), that Greece would be integral to the spread of Christianity across the world. When the Holy Spirit directed that the New Testament be composed in the Greek language, it reinforced what Jesus inferred, binding Greece and what it stood for to Christ, and defining Babylon as the western world. History has since borne this relationship out. It was the Greco-Roman world that Paul criss-crossed in all his journeys; and it was this same area whose conversion to Jesus in massive numbers formed what was destined to become the primal heartland of the worldwide Christian Church. We can see the influence of this territory on the growth of Christianity all through the pages of the New Testament. For instance, the seven cities which house the seven churches to which the Book of Revelation was addressed were all major urban centers in the ancient Greek empire. The fundamental structure of modern Babylon, therefore, has strong ties to classical Greece. The nation Daniel calls Javan comes from one particular segment of this framework. These western countries are all part of a Babylon that converted to God. This is true of the United States, as well—the modern 'Javan'. Tracing the visions of Daniel, we can see that the western power which defeats the twin horns of Media and Persia will stand for a brief moment at the summit of world power. That is exactly where a U.S.-led western world, victorious over Iraq, is stationed today after the fall of the Soviet Union. If the images follow through, the Bible indicates that the world-wide dominance of the western world will come to a sudden end very soon after a second war in the Middle East (a war which has not yet been fought) has ended. (Dn.8:8). In other words, what happened to the Soviet Union in the disintegration of its relationships with eastern Europe will happen to America and the western nations of Europe as well. This, despite the fact that the latter's combined forces will have just secured convincing victories in both Middle Eastern wars. In the case of the Soviet collapse, it was communism that seemed the

loser. In the western collapse it will be the leadership of Christian government that will be vanquished. The political events which surround these changes are chronicled in the pages of scripture because they are fraught with spiritual meaning. Since all the prophecies concerning the last days seem to be coming to a focus in this century, it is reasonable to assume that Saddam Hussein imaged the first Median king. He was in the right place and the circumstances of his defeat matched perfectly with Daniel's vision. Since the same empire that won the first war will also win the second (Dn.8:7), the western world (the confederation of nations which the Bible calls Babylon) must be seen as the victor in both conflicts—and, therefore, as the horn which Daniel said will collapse at the height of its power. If these visions are about us and our times—and there is every indication that they are—then somehow, at the very pinnacle of its influence on the planet, the western world—an American-led alliance of Christian nations—will be broken (at least its vast world dominance will be shattered) and that authority re-distributed 'to the four winds' soon after a second Gulf conflict has ended.

There is little question that the western world has occupied the throne of world government throughout much of recorded history—enjoying an uninterrupted reign since the days of Alexander the Great. As the political nerve center guiding the West's latest push east, the U.S. role has been crucial. Resurrecting a Greek political principle (democracy), America has changed the nature of world government by distributing this ideology across the face of the earth. But with this western victory has come spiritual erosion. Human rights cannot flourish outside of Christ; and with His influence disappearing from the equation, the whole foundation of western government is beginning now to founder. While many nations have come to rely on the U.S. to oversee and direct the major affairs of the planet, the costs of doing so are becoming prohibitive, and the success of such efforts, in the face of expanding world hostility, increasingly questionable. Whenever a problem breaks out anywhere on earth the U.S. is expected to step in and solve it. The United States is the world's army, it is the food bank, the monetary system, the business leader and, more recently, the political ideal for all the other countries. Even the headquarters of the United Nations is located in a U.S. city. Whatever else may disappear, certainly this dominating and guiding political influence over the rest of the world by the United States will be lost in the western collapse foreseen by Daniel. A complete disintegration of the stars and stripes does not fit the vision, though, because there are additional prophecies in Daniel's book which strongly suggest that the United States will remain militarily powerful throughout the balance of the end times. What does fit the vision, then, is the sudden disintegration of western civilization—at the very height of its power and influence in the world. Daniel's

prophecy shows a western political and spiritual world-dominance suddenly scattered to the four winds. Taking the place of this 2000-year old 'Greco-Roman' Christian authority, Daniel envisions a suddenly powerful East, composed chiefly of a fiery Middle East (Persia) and a conglomerate of nine other nations centered in the Asian north.

While the precise political logistics in the collapse foreseen by Daniel still remain clouded to a large degree, the underlying cause seems certain to lie in the spiritual 'Revolt' which is erupting inside all western nations and driving the influence of Christ's Gospel out of world affairs. The spiritual dominion of Christ and His Church over the political West has been in place for almost 1700 years. All the nations that have sprung up on earth out of the roots of this Christian base (i.e., all the nations of Babylon) have been deeply impressed by the cross of Jesus Christ. Until recently, these governments, manifesting their strong Christian orientation, have all acquiesced to the moral guidance of the Church, demanding an unswerving obedience by their subjects to the Gospel's righteousness. But this submission by western government to Christ no longer exists. Reflecting a changing attitude in those they rule, these governments no longer want Jesus coming in and telling them how their citizens should behave. Instead, they now acknowledge no authority that is higher than their own. Tossed out from government along with the Church in this rebellion has been the Gospel of Christ with all its commandments from God. There is little question that this recent renunciation of the Gospel by world government is about to tear apart the wall of protection that faith erected between the orderly world of previous centuries and the global political anarchy envisioned by Daniel for the future. The signs of this wall's collapse are everywhere. And since it relates to a handwriting that Daniel deciphered only moments before the wall was destined to fall, we must assume that our sudden insight into Daniel's words gives us precious little time to change the events his visions portend.

Since the unseen force that gave the West its world dominating position was not the power of its governments, but faith in Jesus Christ, the political collapse of the West foreseen in these prophecies could not occur unless a disintegration of faith had first preceded it. Indications of such decay are evident everywhere in the violence and hedonism of our times, and it is this same fury that is propelling the youth of today's world down a course far different from the paths walked by their Christian predecessors. Even of those who still remain loyal to the Church, many are doing so outside of faith—much like the Jewish militants at the time of Christ who were outwardly religious, but internally faithless. Ultimately, then, the downfall of the West—the collapse of Babylon—will be specifically related to a failure in faith little different from that which we can see in progress all around us

right now. This dovetailing of current circumstance with Daniel's prophecy is another indication that the times now surrounding us are the very ones scripture has been predicting for the final fall of Babylon. If the present course persists, then—if there is no major faith awakening in the world in the near future—then those few who still remain faithful in the wake of the current collapse will be powerless in their minority to change these events or prevent the revolt of Satan from occurring. The world power of the western world will collapse because, in its rejection of the Gospel of Christ, it will have undermined the divine invisible supports which have given it all its strength. The fact that one bastion of faith will remain ('in the islands of the sea') has also been predicted by scripture. *"Therefore in the islands of the sea they give glory to God, in the islands of the sea, to the name of the Lord, the God of Israel."* (Is.24:15). *"But 'Enough, enough!' I say. 'Woe to the traitors who betray, to the traitors who treacherously betray!' Terror, the pit, the snare for you, inhabitants of the earth..."* (Is.24:16-17). The partial exemption of this one area across the ocean from the ensuing devastation will stand as a political metaphor in the sight of a darkening world—an indication that a last bastion of faith will remain amid the collapsing ruins of Christian belief—portraying in one single location on earth a faith sufficiently powerful to counter the satanic processes overwhelming the rest of the planet. Yet this is the hour of Satan, so those who remain loyal to Jesus on these 'islands' across the sea will be barely able to support the faithlessness of their own citizens let alone that of the rest of the world. There is every reason to believe, as we shall see later, that these words refer to the United States of America. Yet it should be noted that it will not be America in general that will be the final citadel of faith on earth, but strong and independent spiritual communities within it which will steadfastly hold to the obedience of Christ and so block the main body of the wrath from overwhelming selected parts of this hemisphere. (Is.1:19-20).

In Daniel's vision the collapse of Babylon points not only to spiritual division, but to a divided political world as well. All the works of God go in pairs by opposites. The division of Babylon is no different. This partitioning will produce four separate alliances of nations. An event of this sort would shatter completely the American dominance over foreign affairs that is currently powering international politics. Moreover, according to Daniel, it will shift the balance of world power from west to east. Examining the historic prototype on which Daniel's vision is said to be based, Alexander's death in Babylon did not kill ancient Greek government; instead, it caused the Greek empire to splinter into four widely disparate kingdoms. This broke apart the unity of Alexander's empire and left the Greek heartland impotent and, for the most part, uninvolved in the warfare and dissension which followed. In the same way, then, the snapping of the great horn in our time (Dn. 8:8), while not

actually implying the death of the United States, does confirm the disintegration of its world-dominating role. With its former allies suddenly shifting alliances, this will leave America isolated. This is where the division shifts from 'Javan' to 'Kittim', because America will not be relegated to impotence like the Greek heartland was during Antiochus' time. Instead, it will assume the mantle of a powerful isolationism like that which cloaked Rome during the age of the Syrian empire. While tariffs and other provincial economic measures may play a part in this fracturing, much more must be involved, because the collapse Daniel foresees points to something far more dramatic and final—the disintegration of Babylon itself. The vision is based on nothing less than Alexander's death—a really momentous event that forever altered world history in ancient times. And its counterpart will do the same in our own time. This is an event that will splinter Babylon, and it looms quite close to us now. It is not something that lies far off in the future. The ten-nations of the Apocalypse cannot grow outside this rent. In its wake, the western world will collapse, and the United States, despite its overwhelming strength, will be relegated to a distant voice in the new sweep of world politics. Western political dominion over the world will crumble in response to its loss of faith. As the influence of the western world disintegrates, the spiritual dominence of Christ on earth will collapse with it. Christ's influence among the nations will become increasingly isolated as His popularity plummets among the nations, and the political collapse of the western world will follow, mirroring Christ's dissolving world authority. Instead of seeing this devolving catastrophe in terms of faith collapse, the world will target faith as the culprit of the ensuing misery and Christianity will suffer accordingly. Since the political part of this dissolution is shown by Daniel to follow right on the heels of a Middle Eastern war, the isolation of America from the favor of its allies may well have something to do with that war itself. It might even involve world resentment toward the United States for the way in which victory in that war was pursued. If this is the case, resentment toward Israel would likely play a key role in the break of relations as well. Certain verses of scripture seem to bear this out. Graphic prophecies exist which show a militarily powerful west throwing its support, not to Europe, but to the king of the South in the last days. The conditions which would cause the United States to abandon NATO and realign with Arabs and Jews cannot even be contemplated at this time.

The Jewish presence in Palestine will be a key factor underlying any war that is fought in the Middle East. Therefore, a strengthening American alliance with a militant Israel in this inflammatory part of the world could easily swing Europe and Asia away from cooperation with the United States. Such possibilities are not remote. The world's major oil supply, for instance, is in the Middle East; and many world nations are bitterly opposed to

Israel's conquest and occupation of Arab territory—to many minds the Jewish version of a biblical 'manifest destiny' that has persistently escalated tensions in the Middle East and chronically destabilized the region. With Israel currently factionated between two parties (one arguing for peace and the return of such land, and the other pushing for war and greater territorial expansion) any future Gulf-style conflict, if large and protracted enough, could easily tip the scales in favor of the latter. This will bring to power an even stronger military-oriented government in Israel. Those who maintain that a second Gulf War is unlikely have not read their Bibles. Daniel shows that serious warfare in the Middle East will become a chronic fact of life as the days of the End approach. According to scripture, the whole area is destined to ignite into a furnace of firestorms which will not end until the day that Christ returns. (Is.4:4). If nuclear weapons are involved in any of the fighting—a possibility that cannot be taken lightly in view of the wanton behavior exhibited by Saddam Hussein during the initial Gulf War—the entire population of Europe and Asia would be legitimately terrorized. The spectacular fields of burning oil in Kuwait would pale in comparison to the specter of wind-driven clouds of radiation raining its charged particles down onto the soil of Europe, contaminating the water and food supplies of all its nations. Such possibilities might, of their own accord, make many western governments there willing to take radical steps to pacify tensions. This alone might freeze European-American relations. The fact that Iran has been steadily expanding its military arsenal in the direction of nuclear armaments (they have even stockpiled atomic submarines) does not bode well for any expectation of rational behavior during a future Middle Eastern conflict. With Israel already possessing nuclear weapons, the whole region is rapidly becoming a tinderbox capable of igniting the kind of world-wide conflagration all the prophecies of Armageddon postulate. This potentiality would not be lost on the people who live closest to the area—the people of Europe and Asia for instance. Even a few nuclear weapons detonated in a limited war in the Middle East would have devastating repercussions throughout the entire eastern hemisphere. Economic and political sanctions against Israel and its allies would be the very least of many possible reactions. One thing is certain, only a severe break with America by its former European allies could explain the ability of the 'ten horns' of Asia to conquer so much of that territory without incurring U.S. retaliation. Daniel's prophecies seem to show that although reprisals by the United States (i.e., 'Kittim') will be the only successful military responses taken against the eastern kings, these will be measured and will only involve encroachments by the North against Israel and the southern alliance, they will apparently have little to do with affairs in Europe.

The disintegration of America's influence in Europe and Asia points to the dissolution of Babylon itself—a kingdom reborn on earth by spiritual revolt. Jesus said that a house divided against itself cannot stand. Such will be the case here. The prophecies show that as this reborn Babylon breaks apart, world government will splinter into four distinct coalitions of nations. One of these will include Russia and the northern Middle East while another will unite Egypt and the southern Middle East. These two will form the 'North' and 'South' in Daniel's prophecies. Up until the time of the overthrow of the Shah, Iran was strongly allied with the United States. And today a tenuous alliance exists between the United States and Russia. When Alexander's great empire dissolved, four separate kingdoms appeared to replace the territories of his conquest. And, of these four, the one that produced the beast of Judah (Antiochus IV Epiphanes) was the quarter that lay on the northeast quadrant of his empire. Since this is Daniel's template, we can expect to see a similar kind of pattern in the future—but this time involving the fractured pieces of the western world. For this reason, American victories and alliances today in the Far East, including its cold war victory over the Soviet Union, are significant. Countries that once were inside America's democratic circle will go another way. Following the pattern Daniel has foreseen, one of these, rising up out of the remnants of the fourth Persian empire (like a clone of the old Soviet Union), will become the eastern ten-nation confederacy destined to destroy the world. Joining it will be Persia. Responding to Satan's mobilization for war, the Middle East will become embroiled in almost uninterrupted combat as the days of the end approach. Daniel's prophecies imply a rift dividing the Persians from their Arab neighbors. The first Gulf War must certainly have been the opening stages of this civil conflict. The second Gulf War will make the division irreversible. Pitting Moslem against Moslem, as this rent expands it will fracture the Islamic faith, creating north and south kingdoms in the Islamic world and bringing one of Daniel's most important visions to momentous substance. This partitioning of the Middle East has major implications because it will drive a large number of Moslem Arabs into an alliance with Israel—an alliance which is sure to involve the United States of America as well and thus perfectly fulfill Daniel's descriptions. Responding to Jewish and Arab requests for aid, the United States (the 'Kittim' of Daniel's prophecies) will lend its support to the 'king of the South'. In response to this southern alliance, Persia will join the north (the Ten-Nation Confederacy) locking in place Armageddon's battle lines. There are convincing indications in Daniel's words, then, that the final coalition of western forces in the last days will find the Arabs and Jews united and supported by the military complex of the United States; with most of the rest of the world leaning toward the Asian North and its Persian allies.

Once the coalitions solidify, Daniel's visions show us that great battles will rage all across the earth, plunging the world into warfare more intense and destructive than any ever experienced in the history of the human race. This is the time of the great tribulation when all the violence that scripture has predicted must come to pass. Before it is finished, the mayhem will touch every person on the planet. *"When that time comes no grown man will know peace, for many troubles will afflict all the inhabitants of the country."* (2 Chron.15:5). *"For the day is near, the day of God is near; it will be a day dark with cloud, the end of an epoch for the nations. The sword will come on Egypt, and terror will visit Ethiopia when the slaughtered fall in Egypt...when her foundations are destroyed...the whole of Arabia...and the sons of my covenant will fall by the sword along with them."* (Ez.30:1-5). While these descriptions may seem fanciful, they detail scenario's Daniel's prophecies have already locked into place. So many circumstance matching these prophecies have passed into fact in this century, it is hard not to assume that we are at the focal point of his vision. If this is true, we stand at this very moment on the precipice of all the mass devastation scripture's words have described. If this destruction does not follow precisely the format outlined above, it will follow one that is similar. Because one thing is certain—the Bible has decreed that it must happen—and, according to Jesus, the book of Daniel is the key to just how it will happen.

When Alexander the Great was rolling to victory across the lands of Persia some twenty-five centuries ago, he was defining a template which would become manifest in the last days. As we watch the political climate of Asia change with the democratization of what was once the Soviet Union, we can see that template suddenly springing to life in our times. The victorious penetration of Asia by the spirit of democracy seems to be transforming almost all of the eastern world by infusing it with western culture and politics. It is Alexander the Great all over again, but in a new format. We can see this change everywhere we look. Western fashions and music have become the world rage. So, too, have western businesses. American franchises are popping up in every conceivable part of the globe. But the most significant export by the United States to the rest of the world during this period has been its system of government—i.e., democracy itself. Because it originated in Greece, the spread of democracy deep into Asia today symbolically parallels the earlier successes of Alexander the Great when he first brought Greek culture to the East 2500 years ago. It is Alexander that most scholars feel Daniel was referring to in his prophecies concerning the "king of Javan", (Greece) (Dn.8:21). But, as we have noted before, Daniel's prophecies were not about Alexander—they described a parallel to Alexander. They were about the future. And that future is almost certain to be what we are watching unfold today. In all of

previous history, never has the relationship between the Javan of the prophecies and a current nation been more compelling than the similarities which tie Alexander's Greece to the United States of America. Democracy, the political seed of ancient Greece, found no soil anywhere on earth until the United States was born. So in this important sense, the 'king of Javan' appears to mean the 'prince of democracy'—i.e., the president of the United States. It is this relationship that brings Daniel's concept of Javan into union with the western kingdoms which make up the empire of Babylon in our time. As we have shown before, since all of Daniel's visions surround events which started when Alexander the Great carried the banner of Greek culture deep into Persia, Alexander is one of the primary codes we must use to open the book of Daniel. His victories are pivotal because they began the critical cycle of events which ultimately culminated in the 'Abomination of Desolation' whose recapitulation in the last days, Jesus said, would bring the world to its end. Alexander's two victories over Media and Persia and his subsequent death were the three pivotal events which began the 170 year sequence leading to this infamous desecration in Daniel's prophecies. If the United States and its war with Saddam Hussein have anything to do with the fulfillment of Daniel's words, then we are right now at the beginning of the times that these first three events were pointing to—i.e., we are at a moment in history that corresponds metaphorically to a time that lies somewhere between Alexander's two wars. (Dn.8:5-8). We have now discovered that these two wars relate in our time to the Persian Gulf. One of these two wars has already been fought and the second is approaching.

Even though the relationship between democracy and Christian government in America seems to many to be interchangeable, the idea of democracy does not come from heaven. In fact, the more democratic western nations have become lately, the more vocally they have recanted their previous ties to Christian government. Jesus has been freely offered everywhere, and government in His name exists only where that offer is freely accepted. While democracy, itself, as a political principle does not come from God, it was resurrected by this nation's founding fathers in response to traditions that sprang out of His worship. The rebirth of democracy as a political ideal grew out of principles that surrounded the ministry of Jesus Christ. His teaching concerning human rights—that all men were created equal by God and should be treated with equal respect and compassion—provided a tilled and fertilized field in which the democratic ideal could grow. The promise of democratic government is that it gives mankind a fighting chance against the tyranny of evil rulers. But this is true only when the people who form the democracy are steeped in Christian principles—because it is the principles of Christ underlying the democracy that give it its real power. If the people who run the democracy are as wicked as the totalitarian leaders they

have replaced, their tyranny will be just as oppressive. If the people elect leaders and support laws that promote greed and wickedness over justice and compassion, Satan will rule the democracy. So the difference is Christ, not the constitution. As good as the constitution and democracy might look to us in this world, they are values of Caesar, not God. We can see this when we examine the kingdom of Christ. There is no need for a 'rule of the people' in heaven because God is all-powerful and absolute. More than that, He is infinite goodness and the pure essence of righteousness—virtues which are almost incomprehensible to our worldly view. In his own kingdom Jesus is a King, not a president. He was appointed by God, not elected by the people. No one in the kingdom of heaven is allowed to oppose him or to hold different values. Democracy, therefore, does not even exist in heaven. Those who are accepted to live there must obey God's rules, while those who are opposed to His rules do not even get in. In heaven, Jesus has absolute authority—so the people there have no power to throw him out and elect someone different in His place. Satan, in fact, marshalled a great many angels to his side in an attempt to do this very thing and his effort created hell itself and brought death to the entire universe and to every angel and man who followed him. Dissent in heaven, then, is fatal. While the principle of individual authority clashes strongly with the powerful dominance of God's church government, the fact remains that democracy can succeed on earth only where Christian faith is strong. Those who put God (and His will) first in their lives (above even the government) infuse themselves with the essential virtues that make democracy vital. Those who put themselves and the government above God subvert all forms of government, including democracy. Today we find ourselves in a political system supposedly built on Christ, now being used to try to destroy His influence in society. This shows that democracy allows people the opportunity to go either way—to choose God's ways or reject Him as they please, and to do it publicly at the polls. What we see happening worldwide today is democracy choosing Satan's glamor and rejecting Jesus Christ. And that is just as much democracy in action as the reverse would be. Western government, then, gives us a graphic way to measure the extent of the Great Revolt by giving us direct and rapid access to majority views. Blinded by the new sense of democratic urgency which is now sweeping the globe, many view the Gospel as simply one of many viable paths to religion; but the words Jesus spoke are commandments that God has ordered us to obey, they are not suggestions subject to review. Majority rule cannot change the will of God. This is something the kingdom of Judah discovered. There is, then, a benevolent ruler that has absolute dominion over us, and if we strive for independence from Him, we will die. Christ is a king—the King of Kings—he was not appointed by any man on earth, nor is he an elected official. *"You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last..."* (Jn.15:16).

It needs to be noted here that the issue of democratic government is stressed in this chapter, not for its own virtue, but because democracy links America with ancient Greece making it the significant common denominator's in Daniel's prophecies. As we will see later on, Alexander's Greece and the government of the United States each form polar images of the majestic 'he-goat' that came from the West to fell at the Euphrates, the eastern 'ram' with its two horns. (Dn.8:5-7). It is this victory over the East that ties the United States to ancient Greece (Javan). And it is democracy's current sweep to popularity all across Asia that has brought Alexander back into the equation. Because with the rise of America, the ancient dream of Pericles seems finally to have found its age. Elucidated by Jefferson, the ideas of this Greek politician have victoriously spanned the entire earth, spreading western influence far beyond the borders of the eastern world, pushing past Russia all the way to Japan and profoundly impacting even the people of China and southern Asia. With its most powerful Asian threats thrown aside in this century, westernization of the planet is now approaching a second zenith, uniting America with Alexander and fostering bitter resentment in many parts of the eastern world. In the case of the United States, it is important to note again that this government is a nation in the empire of Babylon, not a kingdom coming from God. Only one nation (Israel) actually came from God, but even that country lost its inheritance on account of sin. Now, according to Christ, the only country that truly comes from God lies hidden in the kingdom of heaven. While the western world is an empire that made a spectacular conversion to Christ, it is, today, renegeing on its repentance and returning to its original pagan roots. It is an empire in revolt. And that rebellion is why there is now a militant Persian empire standing in the wings.

The classic years of the millennium encompassed a time when so many people on earth chose to live in the ways of Jesus that peer pressure worked for God, creating an atmosphere that encouraged repentance and conversion. But now, with the Revolt in full swing and the millennium beginning to collapse, all that is starting to change. With fewer and fewer people believing in the commandments of Jesus, peer pressure is beginning to create an opposite climate, and as this reversal grows it will further compound the Revolt. For this reason, it is not the West's impending second victory over the ram that is important, it is the events which will follow this victory that are at the heart of Daniel's prophecies. The Gulf Wars stand as warnings of what is certain to occur in the absence of faith. They are signs for this age and that is why they are so clearly and graphically detailed in the prophecies of Daniel. Everything that has happened in the 20th century (and the metaphors paralleling these events) have put the world on notice that God's promised Day of Judgment is closing

fast. That is why the call to faith is so urgent. The Bible has forecast these events as absolute. Only the timetable is a variable. Faith can forestall the sequence and slow its coming. But this can happen only if we abandon our participation in the Revolt and return to a Christ-centered life in the faith of the Gospel's commandments. Daniel's words show that democracy's recent victory over communism in Asia will not bring the world to a lasting peace as many now believe. It is not the Gospel of Jesus that is sweeping to victory in Asia, but a political ideology based on the principles of this world. Democracy does not come from heaven, it comes from Greece. It is no more a panacea for peace in eastern Europe than it is for peace in Los Angeles. It doesn't wipe out evil or forestall the need for a strong police force. True righteousness can only come from the words of Christ's Gospel. In the absence of that morality, no system of government can bring peace to the world. We can see that in Greece itself. Without the principles of Jesus Christ to modify it, Greek democracy faltered. Without spiritual righteousness at its center, Greek government produced the likes of Antiochus Epiphanes, not Abraham Lincoln. And that is why the experiment of Pericles failed in Alexander's country and did not reappear again in the world in any major form until the birth of the United States a little over two hundred years ago.

It is impossible to separate the Great Revolt from the collapse of Babylon. Failing not only to produce the fruit of God's Good News, the world has now bolted from its conversion as well and activated a set of gears that have begun to grind toward the Apocalypse itself. Chasing freedoms that don't exist, and placing its trust in realities that are not of God, the world has launched the forces of biblical ruin into motion. Before every storm there is a calm. This period of quiet should not be misinterpreted. *"The day of the Lord is going to come like a thief in the night. It is when people are saying, 'How quiet and peaceful it is' that the worst suddenly happens, as suddenly as labor pains come on a pregnant woman; and there will be no way for anybody to evade it."* (1 Thes.5:2-3). The signs are clear. Jerusalem has been restored and rebuilt. The Jews are back in Palestine. The Gulf Wars have begun. Sodom and Gomorrah have returned. The forces of the East are stirring at the Euphrates. The age is filled with violence. Even the cosmos has begun to reveal its fiery hand. Twice this century the world has been mobilized for all-out war. *"Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer near. So with you when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates."* (Mk.13:28-29). Despite all these signals and many more, the nations, have seen fit to toss out the Gospel and blind its children to the message of God. And as the people dash off in pursuit of the Revolt, most are laughing at those who have been ordered to

stand watch on the wall and call out the warning. So it has become for us now just like in the days of Noah.

PART 2

THE RISE OF PERSIA

*"God has roused the spirit of the king of the Medes,
because he has a plan against Babylon to destroy it..."
Jer.51:11*

6

The Kings of the East

"The sixth angel emptied his bowl over the great river Euphrates; all the water dried up so that a way was made for the kings of the East to come in."

Rv.16:12

When the apostles were first beginning to spread the Good News of Jesus into the world, the Holy Spirit instructed them *"not to preach the word of God in Asia"*. (Acts 16:6-7). In the footsteps of this admonition, the initial thrust of Christianity as it spread across the earth went toward the west rather than the east. This had profound implications for the future, not the least of which was the fact that Christianity thereafter would be seen as a western institution and be identified closely with western government. Because the Holy Spirit directed the pathway of the spread of Christian faith, it is obvious that the scattering of the people of God throughout 'Babylon' had defined *spiritual* limits which were known to God even though those borders were invisible to us. Jesus came to Jerusalem like the rising sun, because he was the 'Sonlight' of God. And he followed the sun—rising in the East and proceeding west. History shows that this has been the course that the message of the Gospel has taken as it has been preached across the world. It started in the Middle East and spread north and west throughout Europe while its eastern course was blocked and thwarted. Five hundred years ago Columbus brought Christianity to the Western Hemisphere where it began to spread across the American continent. (Jer.25:22). Today it is sweeping across eastern Asia, coming, like the sun, full circle around the globe. In his vision, Jeremiah saw God take a cup of wine and force the whole world to drink it—Jerusalem first, and then the rest of the world in turn. *"Take this cup of wine from my hand and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it, let them drink and reel and lose their wits at the sword I am sending among them."* (Jer.25:15-33). That 'sword' is the word of God—the Gospel of Jesus—the proclamation of heaven that has swept across the earth nation by nation over the centuries. *"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies will be those of his*

own household." (Mt. 10:34-36). The entire world is destined to hear this word, and when it does, at some point during its circuit eastward, God will deem the journey of the word complete: "*As for the king of Sheshak, he shall drink last of all.*" (Jer.25:26). The recent acceptance of western political and spiritual ideologies by the Asian nations of the Soviet Union has opened up many new areas throughout the East for the preaching of Christ's word (God's cup of strong wine) bringing the path of the Gospel in its migration around the world almost full circle.

Eastern resistance to Christ has been both political and spiritual. For the most part, Christ's vineyard has proved to be the western world. This can be seen in the West's prolific conversion history over the past 2000 years. That is because the Holy Spirit has given us a scripture that relates, not to the world in general, but to the people of Israel and to their captivity. Even where the Spirit of Christ has gained a foothold in the East, it has done so only with great opposition. When the communists took control of Russia and the nations of eastern Europe, they mounted a concerted attack on the political influence of the Christian Church in the Asian community, driving it out of power and underground, effectively neutralizing a large part of Christianity's eastern inroads. If nothing else, the easy and spectacular success of an atheistic and secular communism in Asia during this century has made abundantly clear the degree of philosophical antagonism that currently exists toward Jesus and toward His message in that section of the world. While 'Babylon' and 'Persia' are generic titles in scripture, each describing generalities that transcends their respective historic borders, it is still easy to see geographical elements in their composition. In the two, scriptural prophecy is fulfilled on a double stage that weaves back and forth between physical and spiritual elements. This, of course, is true with every subject of prophecy in the Bible. While the interweaving patterns are often clear in retrospect, they are usually difficult to see in advance. One thing, though, is certain: there is a definite contrast between west and east in the Bible's use of the names 'Babylon' and 'Persia'. In the previous world—the world before the flood—the same two divisions were evident. The western part was called Eden and the east, Nod. When Cain killed Able, God deported him from Eden and sent him east—to become a wanderer in the land of Nod. From the beginning of man's history, then, the East has represented a land hostile to, and independent of, the God of Israel. That is why Abraham had to leave his ancestral home. God took him out of the East and led him west. God did the same with Babylon itself. At first Babylon and Persia were separated only by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. But this changed when 'Babylon' reappeared in the world under the banner of Rome. By restructuring Babylon in Italy, the God has not only prepared us to understand the global implications inherent in the earlier framework, He has clarified

the boundaries between the western world and the 'kings of the East'. Scripture's prophecies are going to be fulfilled on a world stage, with the Euphrates river defining the border between the two primary combatants of the End.

Except for minor incursions, the message of Jesus did not make a serious impact on the Far East until just this last century—partly as a result of eastern isolation, and also because of the strong resistance Christ's word has faced in this part of the world. Despite such obstacles there have lately occurred widespread conversions to Christ in a variety of eastern countries—South Korea, for instance, and India, and, before that, in places like the Philippines. Smaller successes have occurred in Japan and China. With the fall of the Soviet Union and its satellite countries, the existence of hundreds of thousands of Christians behind the Iron Curtain has recently come to light as well. The size of this underground church has swelled the ranks of the eastern church far beyond the numbers that were previously thought to exist in this part of the world. These are exceptions, however, because for the most part, the East continues to this day to strongly resist Christian conversion. While the resistance of the East to Christ is a measure of spiritual limits defined by God from the beginning, the true boundaries of God's faith are *not* physical, they are spiritual. The rejection of Jesus in Mongolia is no different than the rejection of Jesus in Kansas. Therefore, in many ways they are two parts of the same thing. Yet Asia persists to be the heartland of Christ's rejection in the world and, according to scripture, somewhere within its perimeters lies the throne of the Antichrist. So it is in this contrary and militant hostility toward the Gospel that the differentiating factor seems most strongly to reside. A good example of this can be seen in the intense antagonism to Jesus Christ which is now exploding across the Middle East. Iran, for instance, will not even allow a Christian church to exist inside its borders; and it forbids the existence of the Bible. Scripture has always portrayed in draconic imagery this kind of overt antagonism to Israel's God. To the Hebrew's, the dragon is symbolic of the devil. But in the Orient, it is a symbol of worship. This has been true for thousands of years. For instance, Nebuchadnezzar and his people worshipped in Babylon a giant serpent-dragon called 'Bel'. One of the more persistent representations of the devil in scripture is that of a great red dragon (Rv.12:3), a master serpent who rules the lower waters. *"That day, the Lord will punish, with his hard sword, massive and strong, Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent; he will kill the sea-dragon."* (Is.27:1). Satan's reptilian imagery in scripture started with Adam and Eve in Eden. And John completed the Bible's imagery with his fire, smoke and sulphur-breathing serpent—the 'great red dragon' described above—destined to lead the kings of the East into the gathering of the nations at Armageddon. In Greek mythology, Draco, the dragon, was the constellation of stars in the

heavens which were thought to be responsible for bringing famine and pestilence to the world. But in the East (especially in China and Japan) the dragon has always occupied a place of great honor.

Since the light of God began in the East and followed the progression of daylight, going across the earth from east to west, we can expect the darkness of Satan to begin in the East as well, and to spread across the earth in the much the same way. This is how the Euphrates river relates to that moment in the future when the Day of Jesus on earth is destined to come to an end. It is at this river that the 'night' of Satan will burst its eastern boundaries and move west, proceeding westward from there to take away the light of God across the world. That aggressive and militant movement is stirring now in the camp of the Medes where Bibles and churches have recently been expelled. The invasion of the West by the forces of the East is one of the most significant events of the last days. From its earliest pages, the Bible has consistently predicted that the final destruction of Babylon will come with the rise to power of the Prince of Persia. (2 Chron.36:20). The prophecies are so numerous and so clearly stated in this regard that even casual inspectors of scripture (astrologers like Nostradamus, for instance) could not overlook or ignore them. A harbinger of this eastern destruction happened centuries ago when the original Babylon was overthrown by the Persian king Cyrus, but that action was only a foreshadow of the future. The ultimate Prince of Persia is still to come. At the head of an army greater than any the world has ever seen, this ranting madman from the North will overthrow the power of the western world, and, in his rampage, destroy the entire earth. In that disaster a third of the human race will die in warfare alone. (Rv.9:14). The army which will inflict this terror on the planet will number 200 million soldiers. (Rv.9:16). Their battle colors, according to the Bible, will be blue, orange-red and yellow. (Rv.9:17). John said that in the van of this army, demon spirits would issue "*out of the jaws*" of the dragon, calling the entire world to the battlefields that prelude and surround Armageddon. (Rv.16:13). 'Out of its jaws' means out of its mouth. John is not talking only about military conquests here, he is also referring to a spiritual disaster. Something the dragon says—the philosophy it preaches—this is the 'demonism' that surrounds the Beast. It is the spiritual darkness that will engulf the earth by systematically taking away from it the light of Christ—creating a philosophical eclipse that will cloak almost every nation in spiritual darkness. In this atmosphere of hostility, anti-christian sentiment will rise to fever pitch. Then, far from ruling the earth as it had in the past, Christianity will find itself at the mercy of those who hate Jesus and the type of righteousness He stands for. The whole ethical structure of the world will change. When this happens, the East will sweep to power. The Bible teaches that there is a cause and effect

relationship between sin and disaster. As the West, steeped in secular arrogance, sinks into profligate behavior, buried in its pornographic fixations and a fanatic quest for wealth, its actions against Jesus will precipitate the formation of the mighty Persian armada, loosing the angels tied up by God at the Euphrates river—and thus removing the final barricades that have kept this eastern force from assembling. (Rv.9:14).

7

The Four Empires of Persia

"Three more kings are going to rise in Persia; a fourth will come and be richer than all the others, and when, thanks to his wealth, he has grown powerful, he will challenge all the kingdoms of Javan"
Dn.11:2

The prophecies of Daniel explain that the fate of the world lies in an empire called Persia. On four occasions, Daniel writes, kingdoms from this eastern empire will rise up and cross the Euphrates river to challenge the western nations—a coalition of kingdoms which the Bible collectively calls 'Babylon'. Intimately related to the four angels of destruction described by the Book of Revelation, and which God has chained to the banks of the Euphrates, these four empires are elements of 'the kings of the East' whose battalions are dependent on Revelations' 'Sixth Trumpet'. (Rev.9:13-19). According to Daniel, the culmination of these four hostile invasions into the lands of Christianity will be the fateful appearance of the fourth and last Persian empire. The world's end, this visionary explains, and all the tribulation and warfare preceding it, will come to pass in the birth and growth of this fourth eastern league of nations. Far wealthier than its predecessors, it will rise up to "challenge all the kingdoms of Javan." (Dn.10:2). "Different from all the other kingdoms" on the planet, "it will devour the whole earth, trample it underfoot and crush it." (Dn.7:23). While scholars can prove that these words define conditions that took place long before Christ appeared in the Holy land, they are also key elements of Daniel's prophecy about the last days, so we must assume that they represent a recapitulation of ancient events in the Christian era. Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest man ever born on earth, but then he qualified this statement by adding that the least person in the kingdom of God was even greater than John. A new age dawned on earth, then, when Jesus began to preach. Applying Daniel's chronology to this new age—to the Christian era—allows us to move the historic sequence underlying his words into Christian times. When we do this, we find patterns that match. All Bible scholars agree that the term "Javan" in Daniel's words stood for the kingdoms of the west. Originally it applied to the kingdoms associated with Greece—and in Daniel's writings, the scholars say, especially to Rome. But with the spread of

Christ's words across the western world, another empire of "Javan" appeared on earth in the form of a Christian empire made up of scores of diverse kingdoms all committed to the spread of the doctrine of Christ. This conglomerate of nations grew strong through faith and, though challenged on its eastern front, spread throughout Europe, finally crossing the Atlantic Ocean to eventually encompass the entire Western Hemisphere. While the four ancient encounters between Persia and the western world before the birth of Christ have been widely chronicled; when they happened again in the Christian era, they passed virtually unnoticed. (At least as far as Daniel's prophecies were concerned). But there can be no doubt that the pattern is there and has been repeated. Three of these conflicts have come and gone. In Daniel's writings, the four eastern kingdoms follow a pattern of events that occupied history during the era of Alexander the Great. But because Daniel's prophecies apply to Christ, we must look for the corollary to all these eastern invasions within the time-frame of the Christian era. And they are there.

Since the time of Christ, there have been three major eastern empires which have sprung from the area of Daniel's prophecies, crossed the Euphrates (See map), and tried to challenge the spread of Christianity in the Middle East. About 500 years after Jesus was crucified, a Persian empire came to power in an area now called Iran. It was ruled by the Sassanid family. Since this was the first Persian empire to appear after the death of Jesus, the Sassanid's must be viewed as the first of the four invasions of the West foreseen by Daniel. (Dn.11:2). Challenging the people around them, the Sassanid's began to move westward across the Euphrates, conquering Syria, Palestine, Egypt and much of Asia Minor (Turkey). They captured the city of Jerusalem. This fulfilled the prophecies which predicted that Jerusalem, having been left desolate by the dispersion, would be handed over to the 'east wind'. (Is.27:8). Trying to protect its territory from this invasion, Constantinople, the headquarters of the eastern Christian church, fought back against the Sassanid family and finally succeeded in driving the Persians out of Asia Minor (now called Turkey), but which in Sassanid times had been Greek territory since the days of Alexander the Great. After its defeat in Asia Minor, the Sassanid Persian empire collapsed in revolution and disappeared.

Right on its heels, however, appeared the eastern prophet Mohammed. After his death, the Arabs—bringing his teaching and coming out of Media and Persia—invaded all the lands around them and began to build a second vast eastern empire that ultimately stretched from India all the way to Spain. Jerusalem, having been toppled by the Sassanids a few years earlier, was one of the very first cities to fall to these new eastern invaders. The incursion into western lands by the Mohammedan Arabs was overwhelming and it occurred

with lightening speed. This second Persian empire gobbled up most of North Africa and vast areas around the Mediterranean Sea, advancing all the way to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. After conquering Spain, the Moslems pushed even into France but were defeated there by the Christians at the city of Tours. This deep penetration into western territory by the Islamic force from Media and Persia was the second of the four eastern empires predicted by Daniel, and while it resulted in a massive conquest of lands formerly ruled by Christian leaders, the churches of Christ did not completely disappear from the conquered areas once the Moslems came to power there. That is because the conquering Arab forces exhibited a measure of religious tolerance, allowing Christians and Jews in all these countries to continue practicing their faith. Considered 'infidels', Christians and Jews under Moslem rule were generally relegated to a second class position, however. And Christian preachers were no longer allowed to openly proselytize—thus Christian growth in the Middle East was highly restricted by the Moslem presence there. The Arabs tried to take Asia Minor (Turkey), and thus complete their conquest of all the territory occupied by the eastern Christian church, but they were only partly successful in this endeavor. By the eighth century, Christian control of the eastern segment of the old Roman empire had been reduced to only those areas where Greek civilization was predominant—primarily Asia Minor (Turkey), Macedonia and Greece. The capitol of the eastern Christian church was in Constantinople, and from there the eastern church had to struggle to fight off attempts by the Arabs to overrun Turkey and push into Europe across the Bosphorus. While the eastern church was fighting the Arabs in Turkey, the western church also had to struggle to keep from being overrun as well. Because, before they were finally turned back, Moslem forces under the banner of Mohammed conquered the island of Sicily and even successfully invaded Italy, almost taking Rome itself around 860 A.D.

About two hundred years later, during the 11th century, an Islamic people from central Asia (the Seljuk Turks) invaded and conquered most of Asia Minor (Turkey). This third Persian empire, in swallowing up the land we now know as Turkey, reduced the small remaining territory of the eastern Christian church by almost half and subjected a great many Greek Christians to Moslem rule. They conquered Constantinople, the capitol city of the eastern Christian church. Gaining control of this city, the Moslems renamed it 'Istanbul'—a name it carries to the present day. By capturing Asia Minor and renaming it 'Turkey', the Seljuk Turks garnered control of all seven of the cities to which the Book of Revelation was addressed. As a result, city names like Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea all passed into Christian history. The Turkish invaders came from an area of central Asia (recently a part of the Soviet Union), close to where the Parthians

originated. It was in this same general area that the ancestor's of the original inhabitants of Media and Persia originated—a fact that ties all of these people together as far as bible prophecy is concerned. Moreover, it establishes an ancient genetic unity extending from Russia to Persia and encompassing areas from Turkey and the Black Sea across Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan that may play an important role in the development of the expansive fourth Asiatic Persian empire which is now just beginning to form. This relationship shows that, just as scripture's term 'Javan' now applies to the whole western world, we cannot restrict the Bible's use of the word 'Persia' to the relatively small country of Iran. The term seems to encompass a much larger area in the prophetic codes—one that, at the very least, incorporates all the ancient elements of Parthia. Under Ottoman rule the Turkish Moslems grew very powerful. Crossing the Bosphorus, they invaded central Europe, driving almost to Vienna Austria before being turned back. The Turks, then, represent the third eastern kingdom to rise up against the Christian world since the birth of Christ. Although they were driven out of most of Europe, they maintained their hold on Asia Minor and their empire was not completely dissolved until our own century when it was finally destroyed by the British and the Arabs (with the help of Lawrence of Arabia) during the Mediterranean campaigns of the first World War. While the Ottoman empire has now disappeared, most of the territory occupied by this dynasty continues to remain under Moslem administration. And because of it's many successful western penetrations, Moslem enclaves now dot southern Europe. This has created ethnic rivalries that have, on occassion, become intense over the years. This is true today in Bosnia and Hercegovina where antagonists have launched a bitter attempt to destroy the Islamic people of Sarajevo, etc. The British destruction of the last remnants of the Ottoman empire during World War I brought the third kingdom of Persia to an end, and it casually united the Arab kingdoms of the south and emplaced them at their northern boundary—the Euphrates river. With the defeat of the Turkish Ottoman's, the Holy land fell into British hands and the Arab victories under the guidance of the English officer, T.E. Lawrence, established the nations of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. This drove a major wedge into the Moslem world by partitioning Persia on the eastern side of the Euphrates and hostilely dividing it from the Arab Moslems to the west and south. This set in place the exact boundary established by Daniel on the eastern side of which the fourth kindom of Persia is to arise.

Historically, then, three large Asiatic empires from east of the Euphrates have come into being since the time of Jesus. This brings us back to the prophecy of Daniel which led our chapter: *"Three kings are going to rise in Persia; a fourth will come and be richer than all the others, and when, thanks to his wealth, he has grown powerful, he will challenge all the*

kingdoms of Javan." (Dn.11:2). While Javan, as we said, literally means Greece and has been applied to Rome, symbolically it references the whole western world. This seems obvious in Daniel's reference: "all the kingdoms of...", which suggests not one, but a great concourse of nations. In the same way, while it literally describes the territory of Iran, the Persia of prophecy symbolically references the entire East. Encompassing the genetic framework of the Parthian's of antiquity, the term references a vast population spread throughout Asia and the Middle East. In the case of the fourth kingdom, Persia is described by Daniel in the dual terms of 'Media and Persia'. Since much of the land of ancient Media is now encompassed within the boundaries of Iraq, the first part of this prophecy falls today at the feet of Saddam Hussein. Sitting in a kind of political no-man's-land, and bitterly antagonistic to the West, Saddam Hussein's country fits well with Daniel's description of the embryonic beginnings of the fourth empire—the first horn of the rich militant ram. If this is true, then the fourth confrontation in this series began a few years ago and is still in its infancy. A two-pronged attack, the initial stage of which was almost certainly the Gulf War, this fourth eastern assault against western forces is destined in its early phases to plunge the Middle East into war a second time and conclude with the West victorious once again. (Dn.10:2-4, 8:5-6). Since key parts of this prophecy have already been fulfilled, our position today relative to Daniel's sequence can be roughly ascertained. We exist at the present moment in a time-frame that has deep metaphoric ties to Alexander the Great, the driving patron of Greece who conquered the power of the East in the days just before Daniel was born. That places us in an era identical to the one prophesied by Daniel for the He-Goat and the Ram—the earliest kingdoms associated with the birth and development of the fourth and final Persian empire. If this is actually the case, then we are at the doorstep of Daniel's visions, because the bulk of his prophecy circles around events mimicking the exploits of Alexander, his sudden death and the rebel who rose up to lead an eastern remnant of the empire he once headed. From the victories of Alexander until the assassination of the Jewish high priest—events around which the majority of Daniel's words revolve—about 170 years passed. Since this earlier sequence was a pattern in metaphor, the times and dates involved are entirely arbitrary. But one thing we know for certain, Jesus said that the last days were destined to be cut short by the hand of God for the sake of the survival of the elect. Therefore, trying to fix a precise time-line to present events is impossible, although a time-frame involving something less than 170 years seems almost certain. All that can be determined at this time is that the final events described by Daniel have already begun to occur—events which have clamped the world onto a sequential countdown to disaster because of sin. With chronology aside, Daniel's sequence can best be measured by studying the patterns of the events themselves. In fact, that is why the Holy Spirit has directed

Daniel's sequence be given to us in the first place—so that we can trace patterns in it that are common to events happening now, and know as we see each of them occur that the future of this world is growing shorter every day. The gaps which separate these events will be determined by faith. If the world repents and returns to worship Christ as it did in the past, the time will be lengthened. If not, it will be shortened. And once the Rebel appears it will be shortened again because of his violence.

Daniel's comments concerning the immense wealth of the Media and Persia which he predicted would be involved in the rise to power of the fourth Persian empire key perfectly with two nations which are their modern Middle Eastern geographical counterparts. There is no question that Iraq and Iran today are far wealthier than any of the eastern empires that ever occupied these lands in the past. Moreover, it is hard to imagine any nations in this area every possessing more wealth in the future. The oil reserves that the middle eastern nations now possess has made them the financial barons of the entire world. And their militancy cannot be argued. The Twentieth-Century version of this 'Media' has pursued a course of aggression that has already produced two significant wars in less than fifteen years—one against Iran and the other against the western world. At the same time, the 'Persia' of our age has become intensely militant as well—sending out terrorist units like tendrils to wreak havoc in neighboring countries and stockpiling armaments far beyond the needs of its own defense. Under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, Iraq has been the first of these two middle eastern countries to actually challenge the western world (Javan) to a military confrontation. And since these two countries are situated on the very sands that now cover ancient Media and Persia—they are perfect templates for the twin horns that the prophet Daniel said are destined to unsuccessfully challenge the power of the West at the start of the last days. Most unsettling of all, both of these nations are using their immense oil capital in an all-out arms race which is reported to involve nerve gas factories, biological weapons facilities and nuclear weapons plants; and, in the case of Iran, the purchase of sophisticated war machinery from the debt-starved Soviet Union (nuclear submarines for instance). These two countries are now amassing all the militant ingredients necessary to fulfill every pre-ordained vision that concerns them. Since the words of Daniel assure us that his prophecies are a blueprint for the events of the end times, we can be certain that a second and far more intensive war will soon occur in this location once again—a war which is destined to forever alter world history. This repeat of the Persian Gulf War will fulfill Daniel's vision concerning the second of the two horns of the ram. At its conclusion the West will emerge victorious, and Iraq will probably disappear, most of it falling into the hands of the southern coalition at a new boundary stretching along the Euphrates river—a line which will stand like

a kind of 38th Parallel between the North and the South in the Middle East. See map of the Euphrates river. That part of Iraq on the other side of this river will become the borderland of the fourth Persian empire. This will firm Daniel's prophecies and create the base for all the warfare and violence that will later follow. North and South will face each other with this river and the fortifications along it standing like a kind of Maginot Line between them. In his confrontation with the West, an underlying goal driving Saddam Hussein was the destruction of the Jewish state of Israel—the nation that annihilated his atomic facilities a decade earlier. Since the first three 'Persian' invasions also included subjugations of Jerusalem, each of these four eastern challenges has involved not just political, but religious objectives as well. All of these confrontations have pitted the power and philosophy of the East against the people and philosophies of the two 'Houses' of Israel—the Christians and the Jews. It is this consistent religious antagonism that tells us that the three Persian empires of the past two millenia, and the one now forming, are all thematically biblical. By adhering to scripture's patterns, these empires close the loop between fortuitous history and Daniel's prophecies.

8

The Two Horns of the Ram

"This is what I observed: a he-goat came from the West, having covered the entire earth but without touching the ground...It advanced towards the ram with the two horns and knocked it down, breaking both its horns; no one was there to save the ram."

Dn.8:5-7

We have chronicled the rise of a great empire called 'Persia'—an eastern kingdom destined to fight its way to world dominion in the last days. Warfare of cataclysmic proportions will engulf the globe in this kingdom's rise to power. Rising from the ashes of two earlier defeats, the catastrophic combat associated with this empire's militant growth will be the defining edge of the destruction of Babylon and for this reason it is described in scripture as the 'Wrath'. At the final helm of this devastation will be a madman (the 'beast') who will come down on the world from what scripture calls, 'the far north'. As we have shown before, however, the sequence of Daniel's prophecies does not begin with this Rebel. It begins many years before he is scheduled to appear. For this reason Daniel's prophecies portray a time-line of events leading from the Millennium to Armageddon. This allows us to follow in his words a trail of prophecy leading from the time of Christ, past our own era, down a spiraling and apocalyptic road to the Day of Judgment. In this sequence, the fourth and final eastern empire described by Daniel in his visions of the last days seems now to have appeared. But before it rises up to set fire to the earth, Daniel foresees it undergoing two spectacular defeats at the banks of the Euphrates river. (Dn.8:3). *"This is what I observed: a he-goat came from the West, having covered the entire earth but without touching the ground, and between its eyes the goat had one majestic horn. It advanced towards the ram with the two horns...and charged at it with all the fury of its might. I saw it reach the ram, and it was so enraged with the ram, it knocked it down, breaking both its horns and the ram had not the strength to resist; it (the he-goat from the West) felled the ram to the ground and trampled it underfoot; no one was there to save the ram."* (Dan.8:5-7). This prophecy brings us to now. We are living today in the time of the ram. The overwhelming defeat of Iraq and Saddam Hussein by the forces of the western world at the Euphrates river—forces led by the United States—clearly parallel events offered in Daniel's description. Almost all of the

western forces came to the Middle East through the air, 'covering the entire earth without touching the ground'. The close correlation between this war and Daniel's vision suggests that we have now arrived at the very earliest stages of Daniel's final sequence—a convergence of circumstance and prophecy which implies a countdown that has already been launched. Not only that, but the entire scenario of Daniel's vision has already been completed in terms of Asia. That was accomplished in the western world's defeat of the Japanese empire followed by its subsequent astonishing victory over the Soviet Union. The two horns of the Asian Ram born and felled in this century. For the sake of our understanding, God has doubled the vision. As we have seen, this sequence also parallels the 170 year period in ancient history that led from a comparable kind of war to the erection of the 'desolating sacrilege' over the altar in the Jewish temple which Jesus spoke about in apocalyptic terms. It has already been noted that Daniel's prophecy involves western victories over two horns, not one. This means two wars in succession. *"I raised my eyes to look round me, and I saw a ram standing in front of the river (the Euphrates). It had two horns; both were tall, but one was taller than the other, and the one that rose the higher was the second."* (Dn.8:3). In the case of Asia, we saw a large Japanese empire followed by an even more mammoth Soviet Union. And in the case of the Middle Eastern part of this vision we must assume that Saddam Hussein is not alone, either. The prophecies clearly show that the Persian Gulf War has two parts. After the first king of Media/Persia has been defeated, a second, even larger king arising from the same area will also challenge the power of the West and will, in his turn, be defeated here as well. As this second aggressor—the second horn of the ram—grows to power, the militant hostility of the Middle East will become increasingly volatile until finally the entire area will erupt into another fierce battle—a second Gulf War. Although the West is slated to be victorious in this war as well, the second battle will be more violent than the first. We can see evidence of this in the fact that the second horn is destined to be larger (and therefore more powerful) than Hussein. The fact that Daniel has these two horns arising from both Media and Persia seems to indicate the added involvement of Iran in the second conflict. (Dn.8:20). While modern Iraq occupies territory that once was a part of earlier Media, the ancient country of Persia was located almost entirely inside present day Iran. Right now a second war in this area appears unlikely; but it seems inevitable if the current conflict represents the prelude to specific events detailed by Daniel in his vision.

According to Daniel, the victory of the West against the second 'horn' of the East will bring the United States to the pinnacle of world power, but it will also set in motion a restructuring of the nations of the eastern hemisphere—one that will result in the parcelling out of the world into the national boundaries of the final days. This will bring together the

alliance destined to form the ten eastern nations represented by the prophecies. From that point on—from the day these ten nations are formulated—the prophecies show that devastation and disaster will follow on earth like the cars on a train. Because the second western victory in the Middle East has not yet happened, these final national boundaries have not yet been formed, so the ten-nation confederacy does not at this writing exist. All of these things still lie in the future. The eventual boundaries of the malevolent empire of the last days, then, can only be seen in broad terms using the clues provided by the prophecies. Scripture suggests that the genesis of the Rebel's empire will occur somewhere above, and to the East of the Euphrates river, north of Jerusalem, and probably centered near the Black Sea. (Ez.38:3). The nations which touch this sea or occupy regions close to it today are Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and the former Soviet states of Georgia and Armenia—all of which lie below the Caucasus mountains. Farther to the north (on the northern side of these mountains, but still on the Black Sea) lie Russia and the Ukraine. On the western side of this sea sits Moldavia, Romania, Bulgaria and just to the west of these, Yugoslavia. All these areas are in a tremendous state of political flux today—a volatility that will certainly increase with the warfare predicted to occur close to here in the near future. More than that, almost all of these areas lie directly north of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, matching perfectly the geographical positioning defined in the Bible's terminal prophecies.

Apart from the Gulf War, the Asian parallel has reproduced Daniel's 'he-goat and ram' vision on a far more worldly stage. Moreover, in this wider context, both 'wars' have already come and gone, so there is no need to wait for a second horn to arise. The vision is complete just as it stands. This wider confrontation fits so perfectly with Daniel's prophecy that it actually makes somewhat redundant (but not unnecessary) another battle at the Persian Gulf. The prophecy calls for the combatants to come from Media and Persia. So the prophecy will be fulfilled at the Euphrates. The militant Japanese empire whose attack on Pearl Harbor precipitated World War II; and the much more powerful Soviet Union, were eastern, but not Middle Eastern. They were metaphoric elements that God has used to show the wider world stage to come, and to prove the implications inherent in the Gulf War conflict. Both of these eastern empires rose to immense military and geographic stature and then collapsed in defeat at the hands of the West—and they did so entirely within the boundaries of this century. One fell militarily, the other philosophically. While Japanese expansion followed traditional grounds, the Soviet challenge brought a new kind of war to the world, the 'cold war'—a terrifying conflict that piloted the entire planet to the brink of nuclear extinction. The capitulation of this gigantic and powerful eastern empire was so swift and so dramatically bloodless that it has virtually no historic counterpart. That is because the

war it waged and lost was philosophic. When the freedoms associated with western democracy overpowered the tyranny of eastern communism, the Soviet's military resolve dissolved internally. Since Daniel's visions of the 'he-goat/ram' conflict are tightly interlocked with Alexander the Great's victories over the East, both western conquests fit perfectly with the prophecy. Democracy, the instrument of victory over both Japan and the Soviet Union, as we have noted, came from Greece, the land whose flag Alexander carried into the heart of the East. God always manifests His works in opposite pairs. (Sir.42:24). While the events of this century allow us to see the twin defeats of Media and Persia in a way that encompasses the entire eastern and western world, we can expect the second Gulf War to occur at the Euphrates as well, and thereby perfect the dualism inherent in this prophecy. The fact that these events have been carried to a world stage makes a certainty of the Holy Spirit's message: the entire East will be involved in one way or another with the ten-nation coalition of the last days. This almost goes without saying. The Persian kings would not be able to amass an army of 200 million soldiers without immense Asian participation

We have reached a time when prophecy and circumstance match—a match so precise that the interaction between the two can be seen on several levels. The pieces fit so well that there can be little doubt that these are, in fact, the very days Daniel's visions were about—a conclusion further confirmed by the sudden and astonishing rebirth of a Jewish Israel in the land of Palestine. There is no question that the Book of Daniel is the key to the time of the end because Jesus himself referred us back to it on just that basis alone. (Mt.24:15-16). Doing this, he confirmed that comprehending Daniel was the key to interpreting the events of the last days—a comprehension that could only occur *at the end* once the nations Daniel spoke about began to form. For this reason, the coalition of these eastern nations and their rise to world power in this century constitute one of the most graphic signs of all that the End is not a great distance away. God has, in our own time, "...roused the spirit of the king of the Medes, because he has a plan against Babylon to destroy it..." (Jer.51:11). While the West has beaten back these challenges so far, the predictions are clear. Unless there is an immediate and resolute turn from sin, the tribulation of the last days is virtually at hand.

9

The Fall of Babylon

"Next I saw another vision in the visions of the night: I saw a fourth beast, fearful, terrifying, very strong; it had great iron teeth, and it ate, crushed and trampled underfoot what remained. It was different from the previous beasts and it had ten horns."

Dn.7:7

A small pile of crumbling stones lying on the west side of the Euphrates river in the country of Iraq marks the birthplace of the mystical empire called Babylon. This crumbling ruin now the dominion of Saddam Hussein is all that is left of Babylon's historic reality. Yet the Bible has shown us that the historic aspect of this mystical kingdom that will forever mark the birthplace of human civilization has been far overshadowed by its spiritual essence. In the Bible's terms, Babylon stands for a world community that holds in prison the captive children of the House of Israel—the people of God. At the time of Christ the Jewish theologians were convinced that Rome was the spiritual Babylon of the Bible because it was this nation that then occupied Judea and administered its rule. This notion seemed to solidify in 135 A.D. when Roman troops destroyed Judea as a nation and forbid Jews even to step foot inside the city of Jerusalem. Unknown to the Jewish leaders, that decree carried with it the power of God because it fulfilled the warnings of the prophets of scripture, and so it kept the Jews out of most of Palestine for almost 2000 years. Rome at the time of Christ ruled the world. With all the prophecies of scripture concentrating at this focal point in history, coupled with the Jewish dispersion into Roman-controlled nations, it became obvious that the Rome of history and the 'Babylon' of the Bible were identical. Filled with this spiritual comprehension—a knowledge bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit—those who listened to Christ understood the decrees of scripture, and so their faith was not shaken by the Roman annihilation of the Hebrew homeland. *"Because they have not listened to him, my God will cast them off and they will be wanderers throughout the nations."* Hosea 9:17).

As the Roman empire dissolved into western civilization, a third aspect of Babylon became apparent. The Holy Spirit blocked the spiritual march of Christ from going eastward and encouraged it to follow in the footsteps of the West. Babylon, western civilization and the Roman empire all turned out to be synonymous terms. Opposing Babylon in the ancient world was the empire of Persia. In the days of the Old Testament, Persia was a single country that sat on the eastern flank of the Euphrates river. Daniel prophesied that in one night this eastern giant would rise up and destroy Babylon. Again, times in the Bible are symbolic. That single "night" represents the short term of the tribulation. Under the influence of scriptural prophecy, the conflict between Babylon and Persia have become the template for the warfare surrounding the end of the world. Scattered into all the nations that make up the spiritual empire the Bible calls 'Babylon', the people of God have been held captive in a pagan environment. This captivity became a key part of the mechanism for the rescue of God: *"To Babylon you must go and there you will be rescued; there God will ransom you out of the power of your enemies."* (Micah 4:10). Pagan in its origination, Christ tried to cure the Roman empire and lead it to God. His disciples poured the Gospel of heaven inside its philosophic borders, filling the whole to overflowing. This Christian attempt at cleansing Babylon met, at first, with immediate success. The infusion of the Gospel saved the captive children of God, but the healing of Babylon, itself, proved shortlived. Like a cancer once in remission, paganism has quietly returned, suddenly turning metastatic in our day, and bringing western civilization immense notoriety in the modern world for a decadence unparalleled since the time of the Caesar's. Its conversion to Christ is the proof of the mortal wound Jesus delivered to paganism—the one described by John in the Book of Revelation—and the western world's recent recant of that conversion, the wound's healing. Rising up from the ashes of Sodom and Gomorrah, capitols of hedonism like 'Hollywood' and 'Las Vegas' now stand as sister-cities to their originals, and others just like them are rising up to dot the landscape of the nations of the western world. Powered by people who hate Christ, these real-life 'Pottersville's' are enemies of everything the Bible stands for, and they are spewing out a satanic and godless filth that has covered the world like soot pouring up from a vast spiritual chimney rising up from the depths of the devil's Abyss.

As this empire's decadence grows, so, too, does a spiritual mace on the other side of the Euphrates river. It is growing there in response to the Bible's law. The only thing that has kept this Persian giant in remission is faith in Christ. With that now in freefall, Persia has awakened and has begun to break off its chains. Spiritually these two empires designate sin on the one side, and its scourge on the other. In spiritual terms, Persia is the Bible's

natural law—a response built right into the creation as an answer to profligate behavior. It has nothing to do with the judgment. That comes later. The tribulation and the judgment are completely different and are powered by entirely different entities. It is the Bible that brings the tribulation, because, as Jesus proved, its terms must be followed. It is God that brings the Judgment and that will come after the tribulation has ended. Babylon is a conglomerate of nations buried in sinful conduct, while Persia is the destructive force that is destined to bring Babylon to its final ruin. While Iraq and Iran specifically define the point of the invasion itself—the Euphrates river—it is less clear what role each will assume in the physical manifestation of that invasion. It is obvious in Daniel's prophecies that, as the days of the end wind to a close, a northern king will become obsessed with eastern ways (little different, probably, from the Macedonian-born Alexander whose obsession for Greece 2200 years ago propelled him to become that nation's champion). It seems safe to assume this, since the Holy Spirit has used the exploits of Alexander as an obvious overlay to Daniel's words. An obsessive fascination for things Persian will lead the beast to the Middle East in the last days. Subverting that area's ancient traditions, he will drag all mankind into the disaster described. As we have already seen, the empire this evil tyrant will come to command will be the fourth in a steady series of eastern empires that have challenged western civilization since the time of Christ. The Euphrates river, while a centerpiece of the prophecies, has had little bearing on the eastern world's spectacular re-emergence to global might in this century. It didn't figure at all in the Japanese rise to power. Neither did it play a significant role in communism—the militant eastern philosophy of Russia which rose to prominence in Asia. What the coalition of communistic nations has done, however, is to amalgamate a large section of the Asian north into a cohesive and militant anti-Christian eastern force, producing the framework for a north/south division yet to come. The pivotal role of the Euphrates in these prophecies, then, still lies in the future. Following a pattern etched in scripture by the prophet Daniel, each of the three previous invasions of the west by eastern forces during the Christian millennium has involved this river in one way or another. We have already examined these invasions in chapter 7. The Moslem incursions of the early middle ages, for instance, which saw the Arabs overrun and subjugate almost all of the territory occupied by the eastern Christian church, poured right across the Euphrates when they began. The eastern invasions of the last days will do the same. *"The sixth angel emptied his bowl over the great river Euphrates; all the water dried up so that a way was made for the kings of the East to come in. Then from the jaws of dragon and beast and false prophet I saw three foul spirits come...demon spirits, able to work miracles, going out to all the kings of the world to call them together for the war of the Great Day of God the Almighty...they called the kings together at the place called, in Hebrew, Armageddon."*

(Rev.16:12-16). The reason why the sixth angel was ordered to empty his bowl over this river is because it is at the Euphrates that God has chained up the four angels that are armed to cause the destruction of the West and as long as they remain chained there, the power of these eastern forces will be held back. *"...I heard a voice come out of the four horns...it said 'Release the four angels that are chained up at the great river Euphrates'. These four angels had been put there ready for this hour of this day of this month of this year, and now they were released to destroy a third of the human race."* (Rev.9:13-15). This is how sin weighs into the picture. It is the world's faith that holds those angels in bondage. The voice coming out of the four horns will command their release when the people of the world fully abandon God's path of righteousness. Jesus revealed that God's power can work on earth only in the presence of faith. The collapse of that faith will loosen the bonds, because it will take away the power that has held them in place. God will then be obliged to order the chains broken. That will signal the end of the harvest.

The earth exists solely for God's harvest. The profligate behavior which has eroded Christian ethics in this century is a warning signal that the harvest has yielded the major fruits of its intention, and that only gleaning now remains. Completing God's allegory of sowing and reaping, when the harvest ends, the field must be plowed. And at the helm of that plow, says the Book of Chronicle's, will be the 'Prince of Persia'. Like the three Persian invasions preceding it, the fourth eastern invasion of the West will cross the Euphrates exactly as the vision has foretold. This time, however, while an east-west hostility will continue to underly the warfare, Daniel's prophecies show that the focus of the attack will shift to a north-south plane. This new alignment defines the major combatants on Armageddon's stage. The Euphrates river will divide an eastern 'kingdom of the North' from another which Daniel calls the 'kingdom of the South'. The location of the river as the division between these two groups of nations gives us a clear picture of the alliances involved. The Euphrates river begins high up in central Turkey and flows down into modern Syria, cutting right through the center of both Syria and Iraq before emptying into the Persian Gulf near Kuwait. At the border of Turkey and Syria the Euphrates comes quite close to the Mediterranean Sea before cutting back east towards Iraq and Iran. As can be seen on the map, this river hangs like a scimitar to the north and east of Jerusalem, separating this city and the nation of Israel from a large band of Asian nations that lie to the north and east of it. Coming down from Turkey into western Syria, the Euphrates river divides the East from the West; and its long course from Syria to the Persian Gulf divides the Middle East into the 'North' and 'South' familiar in the words of Daniel. This separation also divides a Persian north from an Arab south. A future 'Maginot'-type of line with those kind of perimeters could only occur in the event of

an Islamic civil war. The eastern oriented North will include major parts of Syria, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, part of Iraq and a great many of the nations that formerly comprised the old Soviet Union. A lot of other nations are certain to be involved in this empire as well—countries that could easily stretch from Europe to the Far East. The kingdom of the South—most of the countries situated below the Euphrates—will encompass Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Egypt and a part of what is now Syria and Iraq. As we shall see in the pages ahead, it seems certain in Daniel's prophecy that this southern coalition of Arab nations will involve the United States as well. These boundaries are not entirely geographic. Libya, for instance, is specifically mentioned in the prophecy of Ezekiel as one of the northern allies. North Africa most likely will join it. As we watch history unfold, then, we are certain to see events that support the formation of these two coalitions of nations. While some of this configuration may seem odd at the present time (even though the final alignment appears to be close) we must remember that a second precursory battle has been predicted for this area of the world, and its consequences will have a major impact on the eventual political framework of the Middle East. Syria and Iraq will end up partitioned in the aftermath of this war, and the Euphrates river will cut through their territory, dividing the nations of the North from those of the South as the fateful battle lines assume their predicted form.

By locking Satan in the Abyss and placing the forces antagonistic to the House of Israel on a temporary and worldwide hold, God facilitated the world's conversion to the message of Jesus. God's chains have effectively blocked Satan's most militant angels from seizing control of the world, and it is in these chains that they must remain until wickedness reaches a critical mass, and the Lord sets them free to unleash the final violence. It is this spiritual incarceration that has kept the latent military power of the East in check throughout the reign of Christ's Church on earth. It is not the East itself, of course, that is God's enemy, but spiritual dominions and powers who are able to coerce the world's people to do Satan's bidding. We can see by history that Satan's dominions and powers have enticed the people of the West to pursue a course far removed from the teachings of Christ. And, because of this, into the people of the East, scripture states, God will instill a spirit of war—a thirst for vengeance. It seems obvious that Satan's goal is to bring the two (profligacy and violence) together in a mammoth collision of forces. All of this seems destined to coalesce at some point in the 21st century unless a major faith renewal intervenes. Augmenting the collapse of Christian influence in the world, a growing number of people on earth no longer believe in God. In fact, it is this agnostic secular movement that now constitutes the fastest growing segment of the population on the planet. We can see this non-religious group

emerging in the United States and Europe quite rapidly today, but nowhere is the growth of this godless contingent more striking than in Russia and the Orient where, according to the World Almanac, they already constitute the largest single group of people on the Asian continent. This contingent played a key role in the formation of the godless Soviet Union in the early part of this century, and they figure to be no less involved in the amalgamation of the northern segment of the ten-nation confederacy destined to rise up out of the Soviet vacuum. Secularists are not the only opponents to Christ in the East, of course. About thirteen hundred years ago, the Moslem invasions coming out of Media and Persia where the prophet Mohammed lived and died, produced a powerful spiritual opposition to Christ's teachings. Combining these two we can see a 'type' of the eastern amalgamation against Jesus that the Bible says is soon to come—a 'Persia' with a vast Asian army at its disposal. An alliance between such powers could produce a union exactly like the one described in all the prophecies—hordes of combatants from out of Asia aligning with troops filled with the kind of religious fervor found in Media and Persia in the northern Middle East. Together, these two forces are predicted to mass for war against Jerusalem and the commercial West (the 'Babylon' to which Jerusalem has attached itself). In the case of the Soviet Union this alliance did not take place, of course. These nations did not unite; the Anger never took hold. So instead of being viewed as the antagonists of the end themselves, current forces in these countries must be seen as the antecedents of future powers which have not yet arrived. They stand as images of what could happen if sin is not countered in the western world by a resurgence of Christian faith. The western world's march away from Jesus must be reversed. If not, the Bible's warnings clearly indicate that eastern forces will unite under a Middle Eastern banner, and, guided by two powerful northern kings, will bring forth a violent tribulation far more horrendous than anything the world has ever known. (Dn.9:12). Pouring across the Euphrates, Daniel says, these forces will swarm into Jerusalem and crush the army of Israel. They will also capture Rome, overthrowing western rule in Europe. Demolishing almost every nation of Babylon, these eastern armies will inflict vast devastation on earth as they fulfill the final visions of scripture—'violence rising up to become wickedness' own scourge. (Ez.7:11). Caught in the middle of all this hostility will be the innocent and dwindling forces of the Prince of Peace. While the invaders of the past did not focus their attack on Christianity, the final eastern forces of the beast will do so with a vengeance. Viewing the Christian Church as a foundation of western power, the Rebel's warriors will undertake a vicious attack upon it, and in so doing, they will bring the retaliation of the universe into the equation, sealing the planet's fate. By aligning itself with Persia, this northern confederacy will become a party to the ambitions and obsessions driving the people of the Middle East. Thus, not only will intense anti-western sentiment exist

among these forces, added to it will be bitter hostility toward the two Houses of Israel. At the core of all this antagonism will lie the city of Jerusalem—the unrepentant spiritual heart of Babylon. (Jer.50:12). *"See, I am stirring up a league of mighty nations against Babylon. They will come from the land of the north, will draw up the battle line against her: there she will be captured; their arrows are like a victorious warrior, never returning empty-handed."* (Jer.50:9). Directly facing this affiliation of eastern nations will be the kingdom of the South—a coalition of Arab nations supported by the strength of an isolated America, joining forces with Israel.

Despite the formidable military reserves of the United States, the Bible makes clear that the western world will be almost completely destroyed by the Persian onslaught. This is the time for the fall of Babylon, and it is written in scripture that it must occur. While it is possible to see a secular ideology like communism driving the northern alliance, the very fact that the Rebel will be considered 'Persian' virtually guarantees that much of the momentum promoting this attack will be religious in nature and come from the Middle East. Daniel confirms this, and his prophecies further show that the religion powering this attack will be alien, not just to Christians and Jews, but to most Moslems as well (especially at the End, during the days of the Beast). Looking at the militant Islamic character of this area today we could conclude that the religious element of the Rebel's army might be Moslem. Perhaps so, but the Bible's descriptions of the beast and his forces are so unlike any Mohammedan sect currently known, such a relationship today seems quite remote. Most Moslem's, for instance, would be outraged at a warlord who came and claimed that he was God and commanded that they should worship him as such (which, according to Paul, is exactly what the Rebel will do—2 Thes.3:4). The Islamic religion doesn't even consider Mohammed himself as equal to God, let alone the Messiah predicted by the Koran. Conditions necessary to allow such an individual to come to power in an area where religious barriers today block his kind of arrogance so well, can barely be comprehended. Yet a military alliance authored by the beast between the northern Middle East and most of Asia is unmistakable in Bible prophecy. This means that an incredible deception must take place throughout this area in the not-too-distant future. We can see evidence of this deception in Daniel's prophecies. They indicate an Islamic civil war dividing the Moslem stronghold right down the middle—Arabs against Persians. This is why the angels God has tied up at the Euphrates are so important. Their chains have blocked the kind of violent deceit in this area which the Rebel needs before he can ascend to his throne. Satan's power of deception is so strong, scripture tells us, that these chains were necessary for the word of God even to take hold on earth. Satan's freedom in the last days, therefore, combined with the release of the jailed angels at the

Euphrates are certain to be the two mechanisms that will facilitate the dynamic religious changes that scriptural prophecy projects for this part of the world in the few years that lie ahead. As we have seen, the Book of Chronicles tells us that the Beast will be called the 'Prince of Persia'. Since the Rebel of the end is described in scripture as coming from the 'far north', he apparently will not be Persian by birth. In fact, scripture seems to indicate that he will not be. His allegorical counterpart, Haman, was not Persian by birth (though he later rose to major power there), and the Anti-christ is certain to be formed in Haman's mold. (Esth.3:1). Like Haman, scripture shows that the beast's association with an area immediately east of the Euphrates will be indisputable. The Rebel will gather his political following and much of his military strength by embracing the philosophies of the Parthian east—philosophies which, at the end will be thoroughly militant and even though religious, bitterly antichrist. He will gather all the kings of the East and their hordes of people to his cause. And, like Haman whose template he must follow, underlying everything will be his obsession with the destruction of the House of Israel. Reenacting on earth the action Satan and his angels took in heaven when they tried to destroy the people of God at the time of the creation, the Rebel will be a mirror image of Satan. Because of this, he will stand directly opposite Jesus Christ who is the mirror image of God. The war between them will replicate and terminate the conflict which began at the creation. Before any of this can happen, of course, much of the Asian north will have to return to the kind of totalitarianism which characterized its days under communism. And, above everything else, all of these events are dependent on the western world's relationship with Jesus Christ. If this 'Babylon/Javan' of scripture repents its current course, everything described above will be forestalled. But in the absence of that repentance all these things are inevitable, because the End must go by the Book. Since John prophesied in the Book of Revelation that the throne of the beast—the lands from which he is destined to rise and take power—will be plunged into darkness in the last days (Rev.16:10), we would expect to see Christianity being driven out of those parts of the eastern world most closely affiliated with the Rebel's appearance. Since this has already started to happen—beginning in Russia in 1914 and moving currently to the Middle East, it is a further warning of how close the predicted tribulation now appears to be.

Russia's recent conversion shows that the process can be stalled and even reversed, but the prayer and faith necessary for this to happen must be powerful and unified and carry with it an immense repentance. The power of the underworld is strong and must be countered with terrific faith in order to be overcome. While it does not seem fair that God would allow righteous people to be crushed with the bad in the wrath of the last days, the Law has decreed that sin bring disaster on everyone, not just on sinners. The Bible teaches

that *"The instruments of sin are instruments of punishment."* (Ws.11:16). This is why innocent people die of AIDS and it is the reason why Adam's sin was able to bring us all to this condition of sickness and death in the first place. When the time comes for the foundations to fall, Jesus said the upright must flee to the mountains because once the decree has been issued and the doors locked, it cannot be overruled—not even by faith. In Jesus God has given us a way to escape the ultimate sentence of Babylon, but not its transient violence. *"Up to the time of John it was the Law and the Prophets; since then, the kingdom of God has been preached, and by violence everyone is getting in."* (Lk.16:16). Over those who have converted to Jesus, the strength of the beast's eastern army will have no lasting power. *"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell."* (Mt.10:28). While the righteous must suffer and die along with the wicked, their death does not produce the same effect as the death of the sinner. *"These people see the wise man's ending without understanding what the Lord has in store for him or why he has taken him to safety."* (Ws.4:17). *"The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God, no torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us, like annihilation; but they are in peace. If they experienced punishment as men see it, their hope was rich with immortality; slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be."* (Ws.3:1-5).

10

The Ships of Kittim

"In due time he will make his way southwards again, but this time the outcome will not be as before. The ships of Kittim will oppose him, and he will be worsted." Dn.11:29-30

Is the United States of America specifically foreseen in the writings of scripture? It is not identified by its current name, of course, but then in scripture nothing ever is. Unmistakably, though, by description. And in these descriptions, its role is pivotal, because it is the country that seems able to single-handedly block the East from taking sole control of the entire planet during the final days of civilization. According to Daniel, the only government on earth powerful enough to soundly defeat the Rebel and his associates in battle is an island nation far to the west across the sea called 'Kittim'. Associated with 'Javan' (the western empire responsible for defeating the Ram), Kittim appears destined in prophecy to rise up out of the collapse of Javan to become the last surviving remnant of western civilization at the close of history. With the discovery of the 'new world' a few hundred years ago, the boundaries of western civilization were greatly expanded. The 'Kittim' (or 'west') of Daniel's time was Rome. The ships of the 'west' that opposed the evil Antiochus—the beast of Jerusalem—were Roman ships. And the 'islands of the sea' in his day were the islands of the Mediterranean. But Daniel's prophecies were not about Antiochus or his times, they were about our times and about the future. And in our days, the boundaries of the West have been moved across the Atlantic Ocean to include the United States. The Roman Empire which was the powerful west at the time these prophecies were written, is powerful now only in spiritual matters—in the strength of the Christian nation which bears its name. Militarily and politically, however, it possesses not a thread of its ancient power. Its global military prowess disappeared with the Caesars. That inheritance, having passed through several European hands, has gone to a western nation that carries with it every bit as much power as the Caesars possessed, and infinitely more—the United States of America. Because the world is larger today it is almost certain that the provinces occupied and fought over by the beast will involve greater boundaries than the place names listed in Daniel's prophecies. For this reason, Daniel's place names must be seen as symbolic

representations of future boundaries that mirror them in the last days. A 'west' that is powerful enough to oppose the formidable armies of the beast, block his advances and soundly trounce him and his precursors in military combat will not be any force on the European continent. Only the United States has that kind of 'western' power and there is little chance that this will change in the foreseeable future. For this reason, the 'islands of the sea' (Dn.11:18, Is.24:15, Ez.26:18) must be considered in terms of the American continent.

Perhaps confirming this, up until just a few years ago the Europeans in their provincialism thought of the western hemisphere as simply 'islands' in a vast ocean that stretched all the way to China. We can see that kind of thinking in a song written just a few decades ago: 'The Continental', which was an American reference to Europe. Before the 1940's, anyone traveling to Europe from the United States, was said to be going 'to the continent'—presumably from the islands of the sea. What Daniel's words seem to imply, therefore, is that although the beast will be given power over Rome, he will not have power over the military might of America. At least not until the very end, because the prophecies indicate that the Rebel's final attack on this last western power will have terminal consequences for world history. (Dn.11:44-12:1). As we have already seen, the United States will not die when it loses its European and Asian alliances. Although it will be a horn which 'snaps' in relation to most of western civilization (Babylon), it will, by Daniel's terms, remain intact and immensely powerful in its isolation.

The power of this 'west' (Kittim) in Daniel's prophecies is very significant. When the two northern kings destined to head the ten-nation eastern confederacy of the last days appear, neither of them will be successful in their efforts to vanquish this western force in their struggle to take world control. On the contrary, according to Daniel, every time the two engage in military combat, the west will emerge victorious. For this reason, even at the very height of his power, the great Rebel of the end will not control the entire world. His empire will never include the United States. (Dn.11:40-44). In fact, Daniel seems to indicate that the eastern forces will lose every major battle they engage in against the Americans. Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the ruler on whom a great many of Daniel's prophecies are thought to be based, had to measure every one of his moves because of the superior strength of the Romans in the West who were displeased with his aggressions, and, on several occasions, blocked his moves and defeated him on the battlefield. Daniel's prophecies call for a future repetition of this sequence at the End when the kings of the East pit themselves against the ships and forces of the far West. Daniel reveals that even though some of these conflicts will be hard fought, the East will always be forced, ultimately, to withdraw. (Dn.11:30). The

'ships' of the West foreseen here by Daniel cannot be those of any European power. Only the United States has the kind of naval armada necessary to overpower such a massive eastern force. Daniel's words must apply, therefore, to the ships of the Western Hemisphere—to the warships of the United States. We can see elements of this already. Wherever war threatens today in the world, U.S. carriers are sent steaming toward the area to aggressively enforce the peace. Whether it be China, the Middle East, Africa, the Mediterranean Sea or the Persian Gulf. Supporting this armada, hundreds of nuclear submarines invisibly patrol the depths of the seas. And each one of them alone carries enough armament to bring human civilization to a halt at the signal of an electronic bell.

While the Bible's prophecies stipulate that the Rebel will have little success against the American forces, he will be much more capable on his own continent. It is clear that he will conquer at least a part of Jerusalem: "God will gather all the nations to Jerusalem for battle. The city will be taken, the houses plundered, the women ravished. Half the city will go into captivity, but the remnant of the people will not be cut off from the city." (Zc.14:2). Daniel indicates that he will withdraw soon after taking the city, but later, filled with a contempt for the holy covenant, will try to recapture Jerusalem again. However, he will be thwarted in this second attempt by the forces of the West. This is similar to what happened to Antiochus IV Epiphanes during his second invasion of Palestine. (Dn.11:29). After being warned by the Romans to pull back, Antiochus was overwhelmingly defeated by them because he ignored their threats. (Dn.11:30). Humiliated on the battlefield, he abandoned Jerusalem and retired to his own country. Angered by this bitter defeat at the hands of the Romans, Antiochus turned his wrath inward—toward the holy covenant and the people who adhered to it. The implication, of course is that a similar attack on the people of God can be expected at the true End after the forces of the United States administer their crushing defeat on the Rebel as he tries to recapture Jerusalem. By focusing so strongly on the fury of the Rebel's attack on the holy people, (Dn.11:30), Daniel seems to portray this sequence as the fiercest moment of the tribulation. The temple has been defined as scripture, therefore it must be followed as written. But where Antiochus concentrated on destroying the Jewish religion, the Madman of the last days, when he is forced to abandon Palestine, will refocus his wrath on the Christian communities trapped and scattered throughout his empire. This will involve an enormous number of people.

Unable to destroy the first House of Israel, he will attack its successor. Bent on exterminating even the memory of Christ, the beast's wrath against God's people will be devastating. (Dn.8:10-12). While this purge will involve vast territories, there will be

boundaries to the mayhem because the Rebel will not have unlimited world political power. Many different forces will stand in his way. Daniel's prophecies indicate that the beast will be virtually surrounded by enemies. In addition to his lack of success against the west, reports coming from the north and from the east will worry him (Dn.11:44), and he will be constantly opposed by the forces of the south. Obviously he will not control the entire world. But he will destroy it. Because of his inability to best the United States in combat, the Rebel's major victories will be restricted for the most part to the eastern hemisphere—to Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Yet given the sophistication of his missiles and his stockpile of nuclear weapons, his forces will have the capacity to wreak havoc anywhere on the globe. (Dn.11:44). And if the end goes the way Jesus has warned that it will, he will do just that. Babylon, her sins reaching to heaven, will be burnt to the ground. At the time that Babylon is scheduled to fall, the Judea held captive within it will be released and return to Palestine to prepare for its reconciliation with God. That return is the sign of signs, and , in 1947 it began, amazingly, to occur. But the reconciliation process will not evolve in a unified and harmonious spirit as so many expect. Instead, it will be quite different. It will happen as the prophecies have announced—unexpectedly, and amid terrifying violence. It will go by the Book.

PART 3

THE RESCUE OF THE JEWS

*"I will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem and
build them again as they were before." Jer.33:7*

11

The City of God

"On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will repopulate the cities and cause the ruins to be rebuilt."
Ez.36:33

When Mark Twain visited Palestine about a hundred years ago, he found Jerusalem a small and poverty stricken village abandoned by the nations and lying in great ruin and desolation. He described his journey through Palestine in a book he wrote entitled, 'Innocents Abroad'. In its pages he detailed the wilderness he observed there: *"Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur and is become a pauper village. Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Nazareth is forlorn. Capernaum is a shapeless ruin; Magdala is the home of beggared Arabs; Bethsaida and Chorazin have vanished from the earth, and the 'desert places' around them, where thousands of men once listened to the Saviour's voice and ate the miraculous bread, sleep today in the hush of a solitude that is inhabited only by birds of prey and skulking foxes."* What a change this is from the nation that we see there today, just one hundred years later. Jerusalem—the pauper village of Mark Twain's era has risen up to become once again as it was 2000 years ago, a great world city filled with life and vitality—the most important political focal point on the planet earth. Jerusalem did not awaken from its millennial desolation until well after the end of the First World War. In fact, it did not return as a center of world political attention until after the end of World War II. During almost the entire period of Christian history, then, the restoration of Jerusalem, the great theme of all the prophecies in the Bible, has been happening on a spiritual level, not a physical one. Almost no part of God's rebuilding has taken place in Palestine. With acts of righteousness, Christianity has spent almost 2000 years rebuilding another Jerusalem—the one that God has kept safe in the heavens. Its designer and architect is Jesus Christ. *"He will fulfil my whole purpose, saying of Jerusalem, 'Let her be rebuilt', and of the temple, 'Let your foundation be set in place'. He will rebuild the ancient ruins, build up on the old foundations. He will rebuild my city, will bring my exiles back without ransom or indemnity...He will be called 'Breach-mender', 'Restorer of ruined houses'."* (Is.44:28,45:13, 58:12).

Because the rebuilding of Jerusalem is the hallmark of the new Covenant, and since, for almost two thousand years virtually none of this reconstruction has taken place in Palestine, these biblical prophecies can only be pointing to the formation of the holy city of Jerusalem in the kingdom of God. It was this city, hidden in the hearts of the people, that Jeremiah was referring to when he said in the Spirit of God, *"I will build you once more; you shall be rebuilt, virgin of Israel."* (Jer.31:4). The prophets described Jerusalem's restoration in terms of ethics, *"I will turn my hand against you, I will smelt away your dross in the furnace, I will remove all your base metal from you. I will restore your judges as of old, your counsellors as in bygone days. Then you will be called City of Integrity, Faithful City."* (Is.1:25-26). Statements like this in scripture proved that the site of the rebuilding was not a city in Palestine; it had nothing to do with bricks and mortar. Instead, these phrases involved the very soul of the people themselves. When Jeremiah said, *"The city shall be rebuilt on its ruins, the citadel restored on its site"* (Jer.30:18), he was not referencing the buildings and landscape of a dusty Jerusalem. He was pointing to the 'living stones' that made up God's spiritual house: people who had rebuilt their lives in Christ's integrity. Speaking in the Spirit, Ezekiel prophesied, *"I, God, have rebuilt what was destroyed and replanted what was ruined."* (Ez.36:36). In Christ, God had given His people release from ethical bankruptcy, enabling them to rebuild themselves in His image. This restoration began the moment Jesus first started preaching God's word, and it has continued throughout the entire millennium. *"Know this and understand: from the time this message went out: 'Return and rebuild Jerusalem' to the coming of an anointed prince, seven weeks and sixty-two weeks—with squares and ramparts restored and rebuilt, but in a time of trouble."* (Dn.9:25). The seven weeks and sixty two weeks have passed slowly by, etched in a framework of 2000 years. The squares and ramparts of a hidden Jerusalem quietly rebuilt in the prophecy's 'time of trouble'. The 'coming prince' is Michael the Archangel who is destined to appear at the end of time once all the reconstruction has been completed.. (Dn. 12:1).

Because it is a spiritual rebuilding, it has occurred secluded from human eyes. It has taken place on this earth, in the bodies of those who have repented and converted to Jesus Christ, so it has been rebuilt on the site of its ruins—but its reconstruction has not been centered in Palestine, nor will the city of God ever be centered there again. *"For you have made the town a heap of stones, the fortified city a ruin. The citadel of the proud is a city no longer, it will never be rebuilt."* (Is.25:2). What does this mean for the Jerusalem in Palestine? That city is God's instrument of justice—the place He has structured for judgment. Look carefully at its composition. It is being reconstructed not in olive branches,

but as a war machine. The armies of that Jerusalem have become the marvel of the entire planet. Stockpiling nuclear warheads around a sophisticated military complex, its potent martial presence has driven the Middle East into a frenzy of religious fanaticism and a precipitous thirst for battle. *"Look, I am going to make Jerusalem an intoxicating cup to all the surrounding peoples..."* (Zech. 12:2). *"When that day comes, I mean to make Jerusalem a stone to be lifted by all the peoples; and all who lift it will hurt themselves severely. (And all the nations of the earth will mass against her.)"* -Zech. 12:3. While the command of God decrees confession and repentance and a change of ways, the Jerusalem in Palestine is plotting a far different course. There is no repentance there, so that city is still in ruins as far as God is concerned. It may look like it has been rebuilt, but its image exactly mirrors that of the world, not God. It has rebuilt itself in the image of Babylon. The absence of repentance in the Judean restoration shows that the construction proceeding now in Israel has another purpose. That purpose is judgment. The nations are being gathered to a place where they are going to be put on trial for their behavior. (Ez.20:34-38). We will explore this in greater detail in the pages ahead. But first we need to examine the mechanics of the reconstruction—the major elements defined by the prophecies.

The Bible shows quite clearly that the key to Jerusalem's restoration is contained in its walls. In order to better understand this, we need to look at the primary allegory for the city's reclamation which occurred more than 2400 years ago when the Jews returned from the original Babylon (the Babylon of the Euphrates). According to the Bible, when the Jews returned from their captivity in that Babylon, the first thing they did was to rebuild Jerusalem's walls—a project that took Ezra and the refugees 52 days to complete. That speed was a momentous accomplishment according to scripture which etched the time frame deeply into the mechanics of the restitution prophecy: *"The wall was finished within fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about it, and all the surrounding nations had seen it, they were deeply impressed and acknowledged that this work had been accomplished by the power of our God."* (Neh.6:15-16). This fifty-two days has great symbolic significance because it points directly to the wall of God that surrounds the true Jerusalem—the one that surrounds the hidden Jerusalem in heaven. That wall, scripture states, is a wall of fire. It is called grace and it is imparted into us the moment we receive the presence of the Holy Spirit. And, in perfect harmony with the prophecy, the Holy Spirit appeared on earth at Pentecost, exactly 52 days after Jesus was crucified. By sending us the Holy Spirit on that particular day, God proved that He had built our wall of grace—the wall of heavenly Jerusalem—in exactly the same number of days that it took Ezra and his Israelites to reconstruct the wall around earthly Jerusalem when they returned from the first 'Babylon'. Uniting the two

Babylon's of scripture, a period of 52 days encompassed both inaugural renovations in the reconstruction of Jerusalem at the end of a hostile world captivity, showing that each was a part of the other. Fooled by the first recovery, the Jews considered all the prophecies which heralded their return as applying to them alone, and to their escape from the clutches of Nebuchadnezzar and his heirs. They saw no future reference in scripture to a spiritual Babylon, or to a more dynamic captivity than their first brief stay at the banks of the Euphrates river. And a 2000-year diaspora has not altered this misconception. But the Holy Spirit's sudden appearance at Pentecost, by reproducing the 52 days of scripture, has proved that the ultimate return from Babylon was to be centered in Christ, not Ezra. God had emplaced a spiritual wall to replace the fallen ruins of the first return. And He had constructed it in the same time-frame as a biblical proof of the transformation.

With the appearance on earth of the Holy Spirit, the rebuilding heralded by the prophets had truly begun because the wall protecting the reconstruction of the spiritual ruins of Jerusalem was at that moment perfectly in place. Jerusalem's ruins were synonymous with a humanity that had fallen into the clutches of wickedness. The collapsed walls around it represented a structure without any external defense against sin. Therefore, reconstruction of the wall—the defense of Jerusalem—was the first and most crucial part in its restoration: *"Sacrifice gives you no pleasure...my sacrifice is this broken spirit...show your favor graciously to Zion, rebuild the walls of Jerusalem; then there will be proper sacrifice to please you..."* (Ps.51:16-19). The wall surrounding the Jerusalem of heaven is the Holy Spirit—because the Holy Spirit is all the defense that God's city needs. *"Jerusalem is to remain unwalled, because of the great number of men and cattle there will be in her. But I—it is God who speaks—I will be a wall of fire for her all round her, and I will be her glory in the midst of her."* (Zech.2:4-5). That heavenly wall of God's defense extends to us in the form of His grace and is represented by the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us—forming a wall of grace which surrounds us and protects us from Satan's power. Forming our wall of grace against sin, the Holy Spirit is the guardian that Jesus has sent to keep us safe in the faith of the Lord. Because God has wrapped us in this heavenly garment, we can stumble and not die. God's grace keeps us free from sin. We cannot stay down when we slip, of course, but, because of grace, we can get up and continue on our journey to the kingdom of heaven even though we fall down many times. Therefore, as long as we don't give up the exodus we have begun, the wall of grace that God has built around us—the wall that appeared at Pentecost, 52 days after the crucifixion of Jesus—will keep us safe on our journey to Christ's righteousness. Again, this shows that we, ourselves, not the rocks and stones in Palestine, are the ruins of Jerusalem. The wall that Ezra built fell down again, but

God's spiritual wall of everlasting grace is an eternal guard, guaranteed by God to keep us safe forever as long as we remain in His word. This wall will never fall.

Because the old Covenant was a group covenant, when Adam sinned, he plunged the entire human race into Satan's power. Using baptism as the means to set us free from this group covenant, Jesus has created a way for us to be individually forgiven from the penalty of this rebellion, one by one. But the people of Judah in rejecting Christ have refused the covenant of individual salvation and still cling to the group covenant of the past. Because they have thwarted God's plan to rescue them individually, they must be rescued as a group. The mechanism for salvation, however, remains unchanged. God rescues us when we repent in Christ, and God is going to rescue the Jews in Palestine the moment they do the same. Paul said, *"If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved."* (Rom.10:9). The moment the Jews do confess Jesus in this way, as a group, the heavens will open, God will come down and the resurrection of the world will be instantly manifest. *"Since their rejection meant the reconciliation of the world, do you know what their admission will mean? Nothing less than a resurrection from the dead!"* (Rom.11:15). This is the moment of the group conversion of the Jews, and it is the instant of the resurrection when all the books will be opened and the people of the world will be gathered together in front of the throne of God. Everything has been made for this moment—for the conversion of the rebellious Judean city of Jerusalem so that the victory of God over Babylon can be complete. It is only this event that can halt the 'successive devastations' that Daniel said would come against Jerusalem. *"Lord God, how long will you wait before taking pity on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah on which you have inflicted your anger for the past seventy years?"* (Zech.1:12). *"The seventy years that must pass before the successive devastations of Jerusalem come to an end." ?* (Dn.9:2). Until that moment of conversion arrives, any reconstruction in Jerusalem will only lead to more destruction as the succession of violence continues. All this violence is leading to the judgment of the earth and so the reconstruction of Jerusalem in Palestine points not to a resurrection of Judaism, but to God's final rescue. God will have no use for an earthly city once the Jews repent in Christ. The Palestinian city will be replaced by a new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. Therefore the city now being revived in the land of Israel is part and parcel with the end of the world—it is to be the last nail in the coffin of Babylon. *"Lord, you have made this people an instrument of justice, set it firm as a rock in order to punish."* (Hab.1:12).

12

Judah Restored

"For in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I am going to gather all the nations and take them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; there I intend to put them on trial for all they have done to Israel, my people and my heritage."
 Joel 4:1-2

Every theme in scripture has at least two applications. The restoration of Jerusalem is no exception. In the last chapter we saw that the Jerusalem of Christ is being rebuilt in heaven through the conversion of the saints—a process that has been progressing every day since Jesus was crucified. But suddenly in this century we can see another reconstruction in progress—its literal counterpart. As if it had sprung from the archives of history and prophecy, the Jewish state in Palestine has been resurrected after almost 2000 years of exile. The fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem are being incredibly restored in this very century, before our own eyes. In the writings of the prophet Jeremiah, the Holy Spirit predicted this rebirth almost 600 years before Jesus was born. (Jer.33:1-7). *"I will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, and build them again as they were before."* (Jer.33:6). The prophet Joel indicated that the political duplication of the Jewish homeland would occur at the very end of time, and that it would signal a collective gathering of all the world's nations to the Palestinian Middle East where a final ominous end to Babylon would take place: *"For in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I am going to gather all the nations and take them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat; there I intend to put them on trial..."* (Joel 4:1-2). This historic encore, then, has momentous implications for every person on earth. Judah's restoration is founded in God's covenant. While all the other tribes of the House of Israel have made a spiritual journey to the Jerusalem of heaven by following the spiritual path of Jesus, the Jews remain bound to a covenant that ties them to the principles of this world. And that is why they have to return to Palestine. This tribe, out of step with the others, must repeat the first century—because Christ is coming again, and by God's grace, the Jewish leaders are being given a second opportunity to choose His course for their nation and for their people. The stage is now being set for the Second Coming of Christ. When Joel talked about *"...those days and that time"*...he was referencing these

days and this time. Waiting undone for centuries, Judah's restoration began in 1947, and it coincided almost precisely with the birth of the atomic age. Further, we can see by history that it was not until the spiritual construction of the Jerusalem of heaven had been all but completed that God gave His approval to the long-standing Jewish request to return to Palestine. This shows that the two cities are not the same and that they have different purposes. Joel revealed this second purpose when he declared that Jerusalem's restoration is geared to a proclamation of war: *"Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there."* (Joel 4:1-2). Joel's prophecy is a clear revealing that the earthly city of Jerusalem is being restored, not for its own glory, but for the ominous purpose of God's Judgment. The restored city is to be this world's gallows. What we are watching being constructed today in Palestine, then, is the end of the world. It is the sign of the imminent collapse of the millennium—the end of the power on earth of the holy people. (Dn. 12:7). It presages the collapse of the world rule of the Church. That is because the scaffold we see now in Palestine was built by Satan and meant for us; but God intends to turn it around in a way identical to what happened to Haman in the Book of Esther. (Esth.7:9-10). *"The righteous nation was thrown into consternation at the fear of the evils awaiting them, and prepared for death, crying out to God. Then from their cry, as from a little spring, there grew a great river, a flood of water. Light came as the sun rose, and the humble were raised up and devoured the mighty."* (Esth.1d). And just as that book predicted, it is the wicked who will find themselves in the hangman's noose, not the just. *"When that day comes, I mean to make Jerusalem a stone to be lifted by all the peoples; all who try to lift it will hurt themselves severely. (And all the nations of the earth will mass against her.)"* (Zech.12:3). Chased to Jerusalem by the nations of the world at the close of history, the last remnant of God's people on earth will await the final execution the world has planned for them, but it won't come. Instead, under skies as black as ink, with armies all around them, and at the very last moment of time, the righteous of Christ will be raised up to glory in the Great Victory of God. And, in Israel's place, to the gallows will go the nations.

The establishment of the Jewish state in the Holy Land in 1948 *"restored the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem"* just as Jeremiah's ancient prophecy had foreseen. (Jer.33:7). It created in the world the first Jewish nation since the time of the Caesar's of Rome, and because Joel made it clear that this restoration would be the world's signal that the last days had arrived, this monumental event, still less than fifty years old, is a clear and irrefutable sign that the Day of Judgement is near at hand. From the very first moment that the Jews were allowed to return to Palestine and set up a nation there at the end of the second World

War, attention has been focused on Jerusalem. Shocked by seeing such a momentous prophecy come true as they watch, the world has been hypnotized by the conditions and circumstances which have subsequently unfolded there. In these events, the Jewish nation has more than doubled its size, taken complete control of Jerusalem, become a nuclear power, neutralized and destroyed the most sophisticated Soviet defenses in the world, defeated the armies of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt, and expanded its borders all the way to the Suez Canal. Pulling back from the canal, it concluded a treaty with Egypt which returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egyptian control—a treaty which precipitated in a shocking parallel to prophecy, the Hophra-type assassination of Egypt's president Anwar Sadat. (see Jer.44:29-30). As a result of these events, all the nations of the world have now begun to polarize around either Israel or its enemies in the Middle East—a preparation for the gathering of the nations which the final prophecies insist lies just ahead.

The ultimate gathering of the nations against Jerusalem will occur because the world in its violence and hatred for the House of Israel will, after dethroning the Christian Church from its seat of state, chase the final remnant of God's people to this place. This pursuit is the reign of violence all the prophets have predicted. This is the call to war that Joel envisioned—the trampling of the world by the Wrath because wickedness has become so great. (Joel.4:13). The city is destined to be Babylon's final border. *"For I am going to sit in judgement there on all the nations round."* (Joel 4:12). Amazingly, despite all the terrors of the winepress, the city will not repent or see the light of salvation until the very last day. And when it does—when the Jews do see Christ—the world will end instantaneously—because the very last remnant of God's people will have then been saved. For this reason, there will be no earthly city of Jerusalem living in the favor of God ever again—not even at the end—for God's conversion process has produced a new city and it does not exist on this planet. Looking for the Messiah (for the 'Branch' of David promised by scripture) the Jews, instead, will encounter His angel Michael. And Michael will bring, not the conversion of the world, but the last rescue from out of it. The conversion of the world has been tried and it has failed. *"We tried to cure Babylon, but she has got no better. Leave her alone and let each of us go to his own country. Yes, her sentence reaches to the sky...sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers! God has roused the spirit of the king of the Medes, because he has a plan against Babylon to destroy it...this is the vengeance of the Lord."* (Jer.51:9). What began happening in 1948 has nothing to do with God rebuilding His kingdom in Palestine. Everything is still focused on the kingdom of heaven. The rescue of the pagans has almost been completed. Now it is the Jew's turn. Paul wrote that the Jewish rescue could not occur until the pagan rescue had ended. Therefore, as we watch the Jewish state build, we can also

see the Christian presence in Babylon begin to collapse. The age of the pagans is coming to an end, and it is this end that we can see unfolding now in our own time. The restoration of Jerusalem, therefore, should be a sobering moment for the entire world—especially for the pagan world. It is a certain sign that the age of the pagans is almost over, and that means that the time allotted for world salvation is about to end. We are quickly approaching the day when the pagan world, having rejected the message of the Church, will utter its fated cry: *"The harvest is over, summer at an end, and we have not been saved!"* (Jer.8:20).

The Jews have been restored to Jerusalem to find Jesus Christ. No one else can redeem the race of Judah from sin, and for this reason Jesus is the key to the whole ingathering. This can be seen in the restoration prophecy written in the Psalms. *"Lord God bring us back...Please, Lord God, relent! Look down from heaven, look at this vine (whose fences are now destroyed), visit it, protect what your own right hand has planted. May your hand protect the man at your right, the son of man who has been authorized by you. We shall never turn from you again; our life renewed, we shall invoke your name. Lord God, bring us back, let your face smile on us and we shall be safe."* (Ps.80). As far as the Jews today are concerned, however, the current restoration relates only to Moses. The Son of Man at the right hand of God has nothing to do with it as far as they are concerned. This shows that a great awakening must occur in Israel at some point in the future. Yet Paul has declared that this awakening will not occur until the very last day—proving again that the fundamental reason for the restoration is the final judgment of a defiant and rebellious world. The rulings of God are binding. The Jews can return to Palestine because the judgment of the world has come so close, but the only way that they can be reunited with God and with the rest of Israel is to recognize the Son of God they persist to reject. *"This is a statute binding on Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob...I can hear a voice I no longer recognize...My people refused to listen to me, Israel refused to obey me, so I left them to their stubborn selves to do whatever they pleased. If only my people would listen, if Israel would follow my ways, at one blow I would defeat their enemies and strike at all who attack them. Then those who hate the Lord would cringe, their doom being sealed forever; while I would feed you on pure wheat and satisfy you with the wild rock honey."* (Ps.81). Only when the terror in Israel becomes unbearable will these words find their ultimate fulfillment. (Is.4:4). Righteousness can only meet peace. (Is.30:15). This meeting, then, will come to pass only when the Jews turn from a worldly defense to complete trust in God. At that instant the entire world will be changed forever. When the Jews realize that what God is saying means peace—when they put down their weapons and turn their backs on war and

trust in God for their rescue—loyalty will meet Love and the reunion will be accomplished. But for now, the rebellion continues. And as long as it does, there will only be war.

13

Jerusalem Under Siege

"They carry out plans that are not mine and make alliances not inspired by me, and so add sin to sin. They have left for Egypt, without consulting me, to take refuge in Pharaoh's protection" Is. 30:1-2

Joel's is not the only prophecy concerning the rebuilding of the Jewish state during the age of Babylon. There is another revelation concerning this restoration written in the words of Jeremiah. Because it shares uncanny similarities with events surrounding the restoration of a militant Israel today, it is an unsettling prophecy—one pointing to catastrophic circumstances and showing that the Jerusalem which Jesus and his angels approach at the end will be divided and under siege. Set in circumstances surrounding the time of Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah's oracle describes a brief suspension of the Babylonian exile for a group of Jewish military commanders. Bowing to Jeremiah's pleas, in about 585 B.C., God allowed a contingent of Jewish army leaders to return and rebuild Jerusalem while the balance of the Jews remained in captivity in Babylon. This act of God was a holy, but limited reprieve to the first Babylonian diaspora. And because this original was scripture's template for the great dispersion of God's people to Babylon in our own time, the two must be considered in duplicate terms. According to the Bible, the return of this military contingent was doomed to fail because these commanders had it in their mind to stray beyond the boundaries assigned to them, and travel instead to 'Egypt'. (Jer.42). These army leaders had approached Jeremiah and begged that a remnant of Jews might return from Babylon to the land of Israel. Jeremiah, in turn, took their appeal to God. God agreed to their request, but before He did so, He had Jeremiah warn them, *"If you are willing to remain peaceably in this country, I will build you and not overthrow you; I will plant you, and not tear you up. For I am sorry for the evil that I have done to you. Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon any longer; do not fear him for I am with you to save you and deliver you from his hands. I will take pity on you, and move the king of Babylon to pity you and let you return to your native soil."* (Jer.42:1-12). In this prophecy a biblical codicil was created granting terms for a limited reprieve to the great diaspora which would later be mandated by the "Treaty of

Peace' made by Jesus at the cross between Babylon and the people of God. Jeremiah's prophecy governed the framework for the mechanism of the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine just before Jesus' time; and because it mirrors a similar rebuilding in our own time, there is a strong implication that these words by Jeremiah have important ties to our own twentieth century. In 1947, moved with great pity on account of the horrors of the holocaust, the leaders of this world (Babylon) gathered together in a body (the United Nations) and issued a proclamation allowing a group of Jews—many of them army leaders from World War II—to return to their native soil. Virtually identical conditions were imposed on these modern Jewish immigrants as were imposed on the ancient army leaders when they returned from the first Babylon at the time of Jeremiah 2500 years ago: both were mandated to remain peaceably inside strict boundaries. But neither did.

Using Jeremiah as a conduit, the voice of God warned the returning Jews to stay in their own country and not to go down to Egypt. In the classic terms of biblical symbolism, the word 'Egypt' stands for military preparations and reliance on military strength. Jeremiah cautioned the Jews that their power had to come from faith in God and not from the strength of their army or their military alliances. God had cautioned the Israelites in numerous passages throughout the Law and the Prophets that His ways were peaceful and that to please Him they needed to pursue a similar course. *"...the throne shall be made secure in gentleness."* (Is.16:5). The whole concept of 'Babylon' was formed around a single underlying theme: the ways of the nations were wrong in God's eyes—and the House of Israel was not to immitate their behavior. God told the Jews that their faith had to be in Him, not armaments. As long as they pursued His ways and stayed true to His word, He would protect them with His power and keep them safe no matter how weak their military structure was or how large the forces of their adversaries became. Their faith would keep them secure. But if they chose to disobey God's directives and pursue the ways of this world, the warning was clear, they would find themselves outside of God's power and at the mercy of the elements around them. Trusting in pharaoh instead of God, they would sacrifice their divine protection. This is why Jeremiah's warning to the army leaders was so important. God had permitted them to return to Jerusalem ahead of time—in advance of the Persian Decree—but with strict instructions that if they did not stay within the boundaries assigned, a great disaster would befall them. As Jeremiah's words show, the Jewish army leaders 2500 years ago did not listen to the warning but made straightaway for Egypt. *"They carry out plans that are not mine and make alliances not inspired by me, and so add sin to sin. They have left for Egypt, without consulting me, to take refuge in Pharaoh's protection."* (Is. 30:1-15). And true to the prophecy, the entire contingent—the whole remnant God had

permitted to return (except for a few refugees) was annihilated. This is why the ultimate Jewish return from Babylon had to wait undone the full 70 years—until Cyrus the Persian issued his decree. As Peter said, these prophecies were not for themselves—they were meant for us and for our time. (1 Peter 1:12). And because it concerns Israel's return from Babylon, this is particularly true here. Jeremiah's ancient prophecy seems to have recrystallized at the very spot where the modern nation of Israel sits today. Most of the House of God still remains in the captivity of Babylon. There is still an Egypt. And now, by a decree of the world's nations, there is an Israel again. In the Palestinian area of the world—especially in Jerusalem—nothing happens by chance. God has set aside a particular part of the planet and regulated its activities so that all the allegories of scripture are obeyed. The Jewish captivity in ancient Babylon had immense prophetic significance. It pointed to the dispersion of the people of God throughout the hostile world. Every person that comes to Jesus Christ must do so through a type of Babylonian dispersion. (Micah 4:10). The same is true of the Jews. The restoration of Jerusalem in scripture follows this theme and relates entirely to a reunion between the Prince of Peace and His people. It is this fact that makes Jeremiah's prophecy about the army leaders so current. Jeremiah let it be known that the treaty which governed the exile to Babylon and this exception to it were both tightly regulated by God. (Jer.42:20). In their militancy, the contingent of the past violated the treaty of peace that God had authorized the king of the Jews (Zedekiah) to make with Babylon in His name. (Ez.17:12-14). The result was disastrous. Ignoring the treaty, they put their trust in weapons and in the might of Pharaoh—depending on these instead of God. And that is why Jeremiah's words came against them, *"Understand this clearly: today I have given you solemn warning. You were playing with your own lives when you made me your envoy to the Lord. You have not obeyed the word of God or the message he gave you, so understand this clearly, you are going to die by sword, famine and plague in the place where you have been wanting to go and settle."* (Jer.42:20-22). We can see in this prophecy by Jeremiah that the return of the Jews to Israel from their captivity in Babylon is intimately tied to the word of God. This means that the Jews of today are as bound to the proclamations of scripture as were the army leaders in Jeremiah's day. And both, therefore, to the same warning.

The similarities to the 'Israel' the Jews founded in 1948 and that set up by the militants at the time of Jeremiah, are striking. Many of those involved in putting together the Twentieth Century's Jewish nation were freedom fighters from World War II. Copying the aggressive behavior of the world around them, their militant demeanor erupted into violent confrontations with the British government even before the treaty was signed. Terrorist bombs set off by Jewish zealots rocked the city of Jerusalem until the British forces

withdrew. Faced, then, with the hostility of their neighbors, the Jews next applied these same fighting skills to building an effective defense against the Arabs. As the warfare in Palestine escalated, the Jewish army's violations of the directives of the 'Babylon' which had authorized their freedom (the United Nations mandate) increased dramatically. Turning their military posture from a defensive position into one of offense, they used their battlefield skills to expand the borders of their nation almost at will. And it is this aggressive posture that has helped bring the new nation of Israel face to face with the prophecies of scripture. *"Because you have trusted in your chariots and in your host of warriors, turmoil is going to break out in your towns and all your fortresses will be laid waste."* (Hos.10:13). Hosea's prophecy confirmed in its fulfillment that the orders of Jeremiah were iron-clad; and they offer us a clear warning that the security of the modern Jewish state in Palestine has been placed in great peril by echoing the militant actions of its mirror past. (Ez.17:15-18). By scriptural definition, the exile to Babylon cannot officially end until a Persian decree mandates that end. (2 Chron.36:20). The state of Israel founded in 1948 had nothing to do with a Persian decree. While rumblings in the present-day Persia give testimony of a power-to-be, no such empire currently rules the Middle East. This proves that present-day Israel exists separate and apart from the ingathering scheduled to finalize scripture. Modern Israel came into being in precisely the same way that the doomed military state at the time of Jeremiah did—because God mellowed the heart of the king of Babylon. In view of this fact, Israel's military alliances and its aggressive stance in the Middle East would appear to have serious implications for its own future. Much of the world views Israel's military offense as its primary means of protection against the hostility of its neighbors. But God and scripture do not change. From the beginning, God commanded peace and faith. Jesus came down from heaven to teach peace to an aggressive people who were preparing for a militant revolt against Rome. He was sent so that these rebels (remember, the name 'Israel' means rebel) might learn God's behavior and convert their lives out of the violence they were heading for, and into the peace of the Gospel. Jesus told the Jews that they had to forgive the Romans and not revolt against them. (Mt.5:39-44). But the Jewish leaders had a different interpretation of the scriptures and pursued that instead. It was an interpretation that left the nation shattered and broken, and its citizens scattered to the farthest corners of the globe. In His Testimony, Jesus reiterated God's commands for peaceful behavior as it was taught in the scriptures, but He went even further. He explained to the Jews that the militant ways of all their ancestors were wrong. Wrong, for instance, was the violent behavior of Joshua when he led the conquest of Canaan, killing all the men, women and babies he came across. In direct opposition to the true will of God, such barbarism was a precursor for the inhuman behavior we see today in places like Cambodia, Bosnia and Rwanda. None of the violent actions so

prevalent in the Old Testament stories represented God-like behavior. Paul explained that God tolerated the Hebrew's wicked brutality only because they did not know better, but he said that God had set a day for the world to be judged and that kind of violence was no longer going to be acceptable. (Acts 17:30-31). *"Your salvation lay in conversion and tranquility, your strength in complete trust."* (Is.30:15). If the House of Israel intended that God save them, Jesus said they would have to change their militant ways and trust in His peace. The way the world fights is not the way that God fights. *"He conquered the bitter plague, not by physical strength, not by force of arms; but by word he prevailed over the Punisher."* (Wis.18:22). This is why scripture refers to God's word as a sword of conquest. Jesus was like a lamb led to the slaughter. Despite the fact that he could have raised 12 legions of angels against his enemies with a single command, Jesus did not even raise his voice. (Mt.26:53; Is.53:6-7). He obeyed the covenant precisely as God had instructed him, and he warned us all to follow in his footsteps. But as far as this world is concerned, Christ's way is weakness and foolishness. Consequently, the power in His instruction was lost on the militant Jewish leadership that surrounded Him. Had they listened to his words of peace and lay down their weapons, God would have given these Jews not only victory over Rome but ultimate command over the entire world—just as He gave it to the new tenants He appointed in their place. In revolt against the Roman occupation, and trusting in themselves rather than in the power of God, the Jews chose their swords and declared war on Rome instead of doing what God had decreed. History bears witness to what followed. They had no faith in the power of God, only in the power of their own weapons; and that is why the Jews lost their homeland and their leadership over the House of Israel. Scripture assures us that the wrath of the last days would be held back indefinitely if enough people clung unswervingly to their faith. *"Had the citizens of Jerusalem not been entangled in many sins, Antiochus would have been flogged the moment he arrived and checked by God in his presumption."* (2 Mc.5:17-19). Disaster, then, comes from our own behavior, not from the power of our enemies.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel were not the only prophets to share in the vision of a Jewish rebellion at the time of the end. The Book of Daniel bears witness to it as well, declaring that in the last days a group of violent rebels will rise up out of the Jewish people and be destroyed. *"In those times...men of violence will also rebel from your own people, thus fulfilling the vision; but they will fail."* (Dn.11:14). Daniel's reference, "thus fulfilling the vision" really keys this quotation, because it sends us right back to Jeremiah's words concerning the rebellion of the army leaders—and that, as we have shown, catapults us into the now. Both prophecies indicate that the militants in Israel will ultimately gain the upper

hand and lead the army into a fatal war. Instead of protecting Israel, these well-meaning zealots will almost destroy it. This is also confirmed by the prophet Zechariah who warned that "even Judah (the Jews) would fight against Jerusalem" in the last days, and so be subject to the plagues he described. (Zc.14:14). Instead of living in the peacefulness of scripture and putting their trust in God, they will arm themselves and try to take matters into their own hands. The 'men of violence' that Daniel refers to are the same militants described by Jeremiah—the Jewish contingent bent on reconstructing the ancient boundaries of the Judean empire through power and force and ahead of freedom's allotted time—i.e., before the Persian decree has been issued. Instead of pursuing the peaceful course of the scriptures which Moses said must be kept by all who want to live (Ez.20:21), and dwelling peacefully in the mandate which allowed them their return, the prophecies indicate that these rebels will grow more and more impatient as the days pass. (Ez.20:18). Entering into a divinely forbidden pact with Egypt, the Jewish militants will align with the Arabs against the Persians. And, when all is in readiness, the soldiers of Jerusalem will travel north to meet the fate scripture has decreed for them: *"I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you together from foreign countries among which you have been scattered. I will lead you into the Desert of the Nations and condemn you to your face."* (Ez.20:34-35). This reward for choosing to pursue violence over peace will occur, the Bible says, along the banks of the Euphrates river and it will annihilate the Israeli army and irrevocably divide Jerusalem. In this division, one group of Jewish citizens will choose the Bible's ways of peace, acquiescing to the kind of faithfulness commanded by Jesus, the Torah, and the prophets, but the other will seek revenge and opt for more war. (2 Chron.18:4-22). For the latter group there will be a second catastrophe. *"As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so will I judge you—it is the Lord God who speaks. I mean to make you pass under my crook and I will bring a few of you back; I will sort out the rebels who have rebelled against me. I intend to bring them out of the country where they are staying, but they shall not enter the land of Israel."* (Ez.20:37-38). There is a play on words here. As we have already seen, God's 'land of Israel' is in heaven, not Palestine. Although the Jews will be able to escape the captivity of foreign lands and make their way to Palestine, the only way they can reach the 'Promised Land' of God—the 'Israel of heaven'—is through righteous behavior. The decimation of the Jewish army by the king of the Medes when he gains his power and comes barreling through Babylon will bring many of these prophecies into sharp focus, and that is why there will be such division in Jerusalem as the final Day approaches. *"Terror from every side! It is God who speaks. The fastest cannot escape, nor the bravest save himself: for there in the north, there by the river Euphrates, they have collapsed, have fallen."* (Jer. 46:5-6). When these passages of scripture come into their own time, they will

confirm once again the words of Isaiah who, speaking for God, said: *"From the beginning I foretold the future, and predicted beforehand what is to be."* (Is.46:10).

There can be no doubt of what is coming. All the prophets have given their warning about the final plagues scheduled to descend on Jerusalem just before the End. The valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) courses right through Jerusalem—just to the west of its ancient walled city. This valley is scripture's pseudonym for hell (Gehenna). The Bible tells us that the disaster and bloodshed scheduled for this fateful location just before the end will have no equal anywhere on earth. Even in Jesus' day, when the valley was a garbage dump, the city's trash burned there in a perpetual fire. Its final burning is still to come. *"Persia takes up his quiver, Aram mounts his horse and Kir fetches out his shield. Your fairest valleys are filled with chariots and the horsemen take up positions at the gates; thus falls the defense of Judah."* (Is.22:5-8). While these words point to the destruction of the militants of Israel, they also demonstrate that this disaster when it occurs will be only one part of a greater scourge involving the destruction of the entire world: *"I will rise, he said, and drown the earth; sweep towns and their inhabitants away!...Now, this is the day of the Lord God, a day of vengeance for his revenge on his enemies...Yes, the Lord God Almighty has a sacrifice to make in the north country, by the river Euphrates."* (Jer.46:8-10). This cataclysm at the Euphrates, then, is not to be merely a Jewish-Persian event. It is the day of anguish for the entire world that scripture has predicted from the beginning—the day of Babylon's ultimate demise. Lighting not just the fires of Gehenna, it will ignite as well the lake of burning sulphur described in the John's Book of Revelation. So not only the militants of Israel, but much of Babylon as well is destined to collapse under the onslaught of this eastern army as it roars westward on God's day of sacrifice. (Zeph.1:14-18). Scripture's words show that the destruction of the restored nation of Judah during this fateful onslaught will be intimately related to the end of the world. There will be little difference between the armies of Israel and the armies of Babylon. Their close affiliation will bring them both to an end together as Persia begins its incredible rise to world power. These are the days when the kings of the East are destined to ride across the west in a sweep of fire and terror, and nothing can stop them except faith and prayer. No army on earth can change the prophecies of scripture. No weapons on earth are strong enough to prevent these things from taking place. Not even the formidable army of Israel and its ominous stockpile of nuclear weapons can block these prophecies from coming true. The only elements that can alter the fulfillment of these prophecies are repentance, conversion and prayer in the faith of God. If Jerusalem were to put down its weapons and choose such a course, none of these things would take place.

Because we live in an exile decreed by God, and structured by a divine treaty made manifest by Jesus on the cross, the bondage of the House of Israel in Babylon requires that every member of God's House live in peaceful obedience to the laws of Babylon. (Ez.17:12-14). The Jews are as bound to Christ's treaty of peace as are Christians and pagans. When the Jewish nation did not acquiesce to Jesus' mandate for peace, God allowed Rome to physically dispel the Jews from Palestine and He permitted Rome's successors to prevent them from going back there for almost two thousand years. The phenomenal duration of this second exile proved the real Babylon—and the real exile of scripture. Almost thirty times longer than the original, it was far too momentous an event to have occurred outside of biblical prophecy or decree. It proved beyond doubt the divine mandate that all twelve of Israel's tribes must obey the peaceful ways of the Gospel; and it showed that the ultimate treaty of peace on earth (structured between the king of the Jews and Babylon—Ez.17) was made by Jesus Christ, not Zedekiah. As such, the formation of the nation of Israel in our times represents a special codicil within the terms of the treaty of Christ. (Jer.42:7-18). For this reason, the treaty's provisions need to be precisely adhered to—something the Jewish militants have not done. Instead of searching for the will of God in the lessons of Jesus, the Jews in Israel today have pursued a course of violent revenge as outlined in the Torah—the same kind of militant thinking that brought their ancestors to the brink of destruction at the hands of Rome. Since the pursuit is the same, the outcome will be the same. Scripture indicates that the army of Judah is destined to be crushed by the Persian forces near the Euphrates river. (Jer.46:6). Since the terms of the treaty limit Israel to defensive actions only, its very presence at the Euphrates will constitute a major violation of the U.N. mandate. Since it is the disobedience of the covenant that brings the wrath, the Jews in Israel have already placed themselves in harms way by failing to abide by the terms of this crucial mandate. It was precisely this kind of disobedience that Ezekiel addressed: *"He has ignored the oath and broken the treaty by which he was bound...he shall not go unpunished."* (Ez.17:18). God's treaty (Jesus on the cross) dictates gentleness and it relates to the nation of Israel in a very special way. Israel as a world nation was forbidden to exist on earth as a provision of the treaty. This is because the terms of the treaty remanded all the people of God to captivity in the nations of Babylon. *"To Babylon you must go and there you will be rescued; There God will ransom you out of the power of your enemies."* (Micah 4:10). The United States, for instance, even though it was founded on principles particularly Christian, is not a nation of God—nor was it ever. It is a nation of Babylon in which a great many of its citizens believe in God. Israel, on the other hand, is the one and only nation born and raised of God on earth. This is a crucial difference. Israel was allowed to be reborn ahead of time (in advance of the Persian decree) by a special codicil to the treaty described by

Jeremiah. Its premature rebirth has brought it into existence in accordance with precise biblical rules—rules, as we have seen, that carry a stiff penalty for disobedience.

It has been argued that many of these prophecies—most of which stemmed from events occurring during the days of the deportation of the two Houses of Israel from ancient Palestine—were all fulfilled long ago and therefore have no bearing on events today. Just the opposite is true. The outcomes will be the same. Nothing in reference to Israel happens by mistake. The similarities between events of the past and those happening today have been outlined by God through the prophets so that we can understand what we are about to see. These similarities point out the kind of musical repetition that haunts the history of the Holy Land, rebirthing the ancient visions of scripture. God has taken all the major themes of the Bible and caused them to repeat, both circumstantially and prophetically. They reverberate like echo's through the pages of both scripture and history because they have a single purpose. Scripture is God's symphony. It's beginning and end are fixed on the same score. The past is fixed on the future and the future on the past. Because God has chosen to structure the Bible in this fashion, we cannot understand scripture in the way that we would philosophy or narrative literature. We must view it, instead, in the same way we would a great musical score where themes, like melodies, repeat. Not just once, but some times over and over again. The Bible is the score and history is its orchestration. The years, like instruments, change—but the melody remains. And even more like a symphony, there is not just a single melody—there are many different melodies, all interacting and repeating throughout the score together. Each making its own statement, but related and pointing always to the composite finale. The themes of God cannot be put away and compartmentalized as we would the past, because they continue to repeat in different ways over and over again. Current events send us searching the pages of Daniel and the Book of Revelation. That is what God wanted—it is the reason He authorized these books to be written in the first place. We are living in times when momentous events surround us, and each time they occur, the voice of God, like a trumpet, rings out within us: 'this is really important—go back and read—and see that I predicted it long ago!' We are absorbed in the trivial and God has to move us to the critical. And this is how He does it. He has made today an integral part of yesterday because Jesus has not yet returned, and the whole score of history and scripture exists solely for that return. That is why we cannot divorce current events from biblical events. They all intermesh.

The element that keys most of these prophecies to the last days is the inclusion in them of the forces of Persia. Whenever we see Persia mentioned in scripture, we see the End

discussed. The other element that proves finality is Daniel himself. Daniel's visions only relate to the final sequence. His prophecies show that there will be many skirmishes between the North and the South during the final period. Throughout the early part of these encounters—until the reversal of Persia's fortunes occurs—the South (Israel and its Arab allies) will dominate the fighting. (Dn.11:5). Pressing this advantage against advice, the Israeli militants will solicit military assistance from the west, take the offensive, and suddenly fail dramatically. *"But the prince rebelled and sent envoys to Egypt, asking for horses and a large number of troops. Is he going to thrive? Can he break a treaty and go unpunished? As I live, I swear—it is the Lord God who speaks—In Babylon, in the country of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he has ignored, whose treaty he has broken, there he will die."* (Ez.17:16). Here, again, there is a play on words. Connecting the international concept of Babylon (a world Babylon) with the ancient nation Babylon (a country which sat at the banks of the Euphrates), this prophecy reunites the two, bringing them together as one—a paradoxical union that proves the hand of God. Israel's forces will be destroyed at the Euphrates. They will fall, not in Israel, but along the shores of the ancient country whose roots founded pagan civilization on the planet—'by the waters of Babylon'. (Ps.137:1). And they will die in rebellion, having gone there in violation of the directives of the United Nations mandate—the mandate that had earlier put them in Palestine. (Ez.17:16, Dn.11:14). Crushing the strength of the southern army, the North will gain a huge advantage. (Dn.11:13). According to Daniel, as a result of this victory at the Euphrates, the king of the North will be able to move his forces right into Jerusalem itself. This incursion will be devastating and the South will be incapable of deflecting it. And only a strong and concerted intervention by the United States will keep the North from taking possession of the city permanently. Despite its superior forces, the U.S. will be unable to prevent any of these things from taking place once Israel goes to the Euphrates river in violation of the mandate. *"Despite the Pharaoh's great army and hordes of men, he will not be able to save him by fighting..."* (Ez.17:17). Our enemies are such that they can be defeated only by prayer and faith. Fighting won't work.

The very fact that God has restored the fortunes of Judah by allowing the Jews to return in our own time to a Jerusalem that they have been banned from for almost 2000 years is certain proof of the nearness of the end. But, as we have already seen, this restoration has nothing to do with a reconstruction of past Jewish glory. God has used it, instead, to gather all the nations of the world to trial. (See Joel 4:1-3). In the prophecy of Joel, the 'Valley of Jehoshaphat' is the place in Israel where God is going to judge all the nations. It is the site of Armageddon. As we have seen, the name 'Jehoshaphat' means 'God judges'. Also relating

to that judgment, Joel uses a second name for this place, calling it as well, the 'Valley of Decision': " *Let the nations rouse themselves, let them march to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for I am going to sit in judgment there on all the nations round. Put the sickle in: the harvest is ripe; come and tread: the winepress is full, the vats are overflowing, so great is their wickedness! Host on host in the Valley of Decision! For the day of God is near in the Valley of Decision!*" (Joel 4:12-14). This 'decision' is a clear indication that the events of the final End are only the last physical elements of a spiritual choice that has been taking place all over the world since the day of Pentecost—the calling of the world to the Gospel of Jesus to make a decision. The Valley of Jehoshaphat is the Valley of Christ. The restoration of Jerusalem, therefore, has only one purpose. It represents the culmination of the decision—the time when the Jews themselves must come to this decisive Christian valley. It is God's signal that the Great Trial is about to begin. Israel's restoration in this century has not been a sign of its conversion because there has been no conversion there at all. In fact, not only has a persistent resistance to the teachings of Jesus Christ continued in Palestine under Jewish leadership, but since the Jews have come to power there, that resistance has increased. The ability of Christians to openly proclaim the Gospel in Palestine has been seriously curtailed by a government whose citizens are growing increasingly hostile to Jesus' words. In many of the prophecies, the unrepentant citizens of Judea were portrayed metaphorically in the context of 'Egypt'. And at the end, as we have seen, the nation of Israel in Palestine will be tightly knotted into a military alliance with Egypt. At the time of Moses, the House of Israel had lived so long in Egypt (about 400 years) that many of the Israelites had become a real part of that country. That is because, even though they were genetically a part of Israel, their hearts were 'Egyptian'. This was proved when Moses tried to lead them out of Egypt and back to the Promised Land. During the journey across Sinai, most of these travelers tried to turn back. The prophets have revealed that this turning back to Egypt was a symbol of the people of Israel refusing to listen to the word of God and of their returning to the ways of this world instead—a refusal made manifest in their later rejection of Jesus Christ whom God had sent to lead them out of sin. When John declared Jerusalem to be "*the Great City known by the symbolic names of Sodom and Egypt, in which the Lord was crucified*". (Rev.11:8), he established that the Palestinian city of Jerusalem and the nation of Egypt are often identical locations as far as biblical prophecy is concerned—and that both relate strongly to Sodom. Unrepentant Israel, therefore, has a profound symbolic relationship with the Egypt of scripture. This relationship has peaked in our time. The classic symbolism of the term 'Egypt' in scripture revolves around militarism and military reliance. No one can doubt that the modern Jewish nation has robed itself in the mantle of this symbolism completely. A succession of sudden, swift, fearless, brilliant and ferociously powerful Davidic blitzkriegs

by the Jewish war machine against raging and hostile Arab forces, especially in the face of overwhelming odds, has given this nation a reputation that dwarfs the military exploits of biblical Egypt. However, infantry strength is not a substitute for God's directives. Jesus is the meaning of the Bible, not a power of arms. Because the returning Jews have refused to repent in Jesus and live peacefully in His tranquility, their journey has led them back—not to Israel—but to a symbolic 'Egypt' in the land of Palestine—to a combat zone bristling with the most powerful weapons of modern mankind. (Jer.44:12-13) Like the Hebrews whom Moses led, the Jews were allowed to return to Judea, but only for the purpose of scripture. By rejecting God's command to forgive and turn the other cheek, and choosing instead, to pursue a consistent course of retaliation and militant revenge, a large part of the remnant which had intended to rebuild Jerusalem in our own time, have actually settled, not in God's country, but in a symbolic 'Egypt'. This enigmatic paradox was underscored by Jeremiah in prophecy when he termed Judea 'the daughter of Egypt'. (Jer.46:24).

Sealing this vision, Jeremiah said, *"And here is the proof for you that I mean to deal with you in this place...I will hand the pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, over to his enemies and to those determined to kill him..."* (Jer.44:29-30). The assassination of Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt, after he formalized a treaty with the new nation of Israel propels Jeremiah's prophecy into the twentieth century. *"Things now past I once revealed long ago, they went out from my mouth and I proclaimed them; then suddenly I acted and they happened."* (Is.48:3). According to Jeremiah, this one event—the assassination of the king of Egypt soon after the treaty is signed—is to be the proof of all the prophecies concerning the catastrophes destined to befall the Christ-defiant nation in Israel. (Jer.44:29-30). Anticipating all that lies ahead, Anwar Sadat's assassination stands as a warning that the prophecies, ancient as they are, belong to our own time. It proves that we are at the threshold of the End—that we have come to the conditions specified by the prophets. *"I will deal as severely with those who have made their home in the land of Egypt, as I dealt with Jerusalem, with sword, famine and plague."* (Jer.44:33). This particular sentence in Jeremiah's prophecy, because it compares the disaster now about to befall modern Israel with the devastation which leveled Jerusalem during the days of Vespasian and Titus in 70 A.D., shows the severity of the catastrophe now poised to ignite the inferno of Gehenna. *"Then the entire remnant of Judah who have come to settle in the land of Egypt will know whose word came true, mine or theirs."* (Jer.44:28). By having Jeremiah use the acronym 'Egypt' to represent Palestine, the Spirit of God not only prepares us for John's prophecy (Rv.11:8), but makes clear as well the mis-directed course of Israeli militancy. The disaster when it comes will show that Jesus and His Gospel of peace, rejected by this Jewish population in

favor of tanks and warplanes, was the only correct course all along. According to the Bible, only a small remnant of the Jewish citizens now present in Israel will escape these calamities (the "sword, famine and plague") and ultimately repent in the name of Jesus Christ. And it is these—the Jews who opt to keep the peace prescribed by scripture that Michael and his companions will approach on the last day. The militants will all perish beforehand.

Because the Jews will not accept the new Covenant until the very last moment in history, the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem involves a Jewish nation that will remain hostile to Jesus until the bitter end. It is against this rebellious Jerusalem that God is gathering the nations to His trial. *"Let the nations muster round you in a body, and then return, high over them."* (Ps.7:7). At the very end of all the disasters, at the final instant of time, when all the nations of the world have been gathered together in a body in the land of Israel, and just before the Trial of God begins, the Jews will recognize that Jesus is truly the Son of God and convert. This conversion will fulfill the prophecy of Moses: *"In your distress, all that I have said will overtake you, but at the end of days you will return to the Lord your God and listen to his voice."* (Dt.4:30). Until this final conversion occurs, great misery will encompass Jerusalem. And, as the end draws near, the city's suffering will increase dramatically. *"Wickedness is destined to bring the whole earth to ruin." "If you are willing to obey, you shall eat the good things of the earth. But if you persist in rebellion, the sword shall eat you instead."* (Is.1:19-20). The size of this descending sword is immense. The carnage necessary to strip the land of Israel away from its powerful army in order to accomplish these prophecies can hardly be imagined. *"From a land of horror a harsh vision has been shown me—the plunderer plunders, the destroyer destroys."* (Is.21:2). During the last days Jerusalem will be subject to more misery than ever before in this city's history as the nations of the world are gathered into her and around her in preparation for the Judgment. And near the center of Jerusalem, in a valley called hell, a fierce fire will burn. *"I will collect you inside Jerusalem. As silver, copper, iron, lead and tin are thrown into the melting-pot together, and the fire is stoked underneath to melt it all down, so I will collect you in my furious anger and melt you down; I will collect you and stoke the fire of my fury for you, and melt you down inside the city. As silver is melted in the melting-pot, so you will be melted down inside the city; and thus you will learn that I, God, am the one who has discharged my anger on you"*. (Ez.22:19-22). It is in this final catastrophe—a cataclysm that could have been averted by prayer and repentance—that the world will come to an end.

14

The Citadel of the Proud

"For you have made the town a heap of stones, the fortified city a ruin. The citadel of the proud is a city no longer; it will never be rebuilt." Is.25:2

It has been widely suggested that before the final day can arrive, the Jewish temple must be rebuilt in Jerusalem. According to the Bible, however, Jerusalem's temple can only be rebuilt in Christ. Not in bricks and stones. Its material rebuilding has been forbidden by a divine decree. Pointing to the temple mount and to its buildings, Jesus decreed, *"You see all these? I tell you solemnly, not a single stone here will be left on another: everything will be destroyed."* (Mt.24:2). To this day, Christ's prophecy has not yet been wholly fulfilled. Even though most of the stones have come down, a few still remain in place, showing that more destruction still lies ahead. And long before Herod put them up, Isaiah made a prediction over the fallen precursors of these stones, saying that Jerusalem's temple would never be rebuilt. He called Israel's obsession with stones a 'wrong turn'. *"The Lord hurls a word against Jacob, it falls on Israel. In their pride they have said, speaking in the arrogance of their heart, 'The bricks have fallen down, then we will build with dressed stone; the sycamores have been cut down, we will put cedars in their place'. But God is marshalling his people's enemies against them, he is stirring up their foes...This people's leaders have taken the wrong turning, and those who are led are lost."* (Is.9:7-16). *"For you have made the town a heap of stones, the fortified city a ruin. The citadel of the proud is a city no longer, it will never be rebuilt."* (Is.25:2). As scripture, Isaiah's prediction constitutes a mandate which heaven must keep. According to the prophets, these stones are the very objects which have separated the Israelites from God. Because they have chosen to worship them instead of the commandments He spoke. *"Israel was a luxuriant vine yielding plenty of fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built. The richer his land became, the richer he made the sacred stones. Their heart is a divided heart; very well, they must pay for it: God is going to break their altars down and destroy their sacred stones. Then they will say, 'We have no king because we have not feared God.'" (Hos.10:1-3).* Another prophecy

concerning the shattered rocks of the temple can be seen in a statement in the Book of Maccabees about the profaned stones that were pulled down when the temple was purified after the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. (1 Macc.4:41-46). Since the temple's ultimate purification centers on Jesus, the scattered stones described in the Maccabean prophecy seem certain to veil by metaphore a prophetic reference to the fallen stones of Herod which were to be profaned by the wicked and worldly priesthood who ruled under Herod's command. This would mean that the scattered stones described in the Book of Maccabees are the prophetic twins of the stones that Jesus later mandated for destruction. According to scripture, when Judas Maccabees demolished the desecrated altar, he *"deposited these stones in a suitable place on the Temple hill to await the appearance of a prophet who should give a ruling about them."* (1 Macc.4:46). Most certainly, Jesus was that prophet, and his ruling decreed that the stones all be destroyed. Not a single one could be left on top of another. (Mt.24:2). This mandate has become a crucial prophecy of the Christian Church.

God cannot dwell in a house made with human hands. He can only live inside the people themselves. This is why scripture says that we are the 'living stones that make up God's spiritual house'. (1 Peter 2:5). Because God lives inside of us, we, ourselves, form the ultimate dwelling place of God. Such a dwelling place cannot be duplicated by any kind of building in Palestine. *"Even so the Most High does not live in a house that human hands have built: for as the prophet says: 'With heaven my throne and earth my footstool, what house could you build me, what place could you make for my rest? Was not all this made by my own hand?'"* (Acts 7:48-49). A great ruin was created in Jerusalem, not when the stones that made up the temple building came down, but when the people living there turned their lives over to sin. The ruins are caused by sin, and reconstruction of these ruins occurs when the person breaks with sin. The only way these ruins can ever be rebuilt is through repentance and conversion into the faith of Jesus Christ. That is because God dwells in people, not in buildings. Conversion through repentance in Christ is the only construction process that can make a person pure and holy enough to be a fit receptacle for God's Spirit. Stones are dead—they cannot make this conversion. The temple Jesus gave us is a living temple—it is not one built from dead rocks. Proving this, for the last 2000 years (throughout virtually the entire period of God's reconstruction of the true Jerusalem) the stones in Palestine have remained scattered broken and buried, showing that they had no part to play in the blueprint for God's holy city. Even the temple mount and its rock of Abraham were ordered abandoned by Christ and allowed to be given away. The worship of God, Jesus said, must be in spirit and truth. *"Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem."* (Jn.4:21). Physical worship

is not what Jesus preached: *"I want mercy, not sacrifice"*. God did not want the kind of worship being offered Him at the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The whole meaning of the Jewish temple was for the slaughter and sacrifice of animals. Every nook and cranny of that building was constructed for killing. Each part intricately described in the Bible, specifying how the flow of blood should descend, and where and how the bodies of the sacrificial animals should be burned. Peter said that the sacrifices which truly please God are the spiritual sacrifices of mercy, justice and good faith that Jesus made acceptable to Him. (1 Peter 2:5). When the covenants changed almost 2000 years ago, animal sacrifices completely disappeared. Not just pagan sacrifices, but the Jewish sacrifices as well. Jesus changed the theological outlook of the entire world by showing it a God different from any kind they had ever worshipped in the past.

A physical temple for physical sacrifice is totally opposite of God because God himself is the temple and Jesus Christ is its only sacrifice. When Jesus said, *"Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in 3 days"*, his resurrection established the fact that he himself was the temple, not the stone building on Mount Moriah. John proved this when, in his vision, he revealed that there was no temple in the new Jerusalem in heaven. (Rev.21:22). This is worth repeating. There is to be no temple in the new Jerusalem! According to John, Jesus and God are now the temple. This means that any physical 'temple' built in the last days would actually be a graven image of God. To make this point clear, Jesus said that we can no longer look to one specific place as we once could in Jerusalem and say, 'Here!' or 'There!' In the New Covenant, the kingdom of God is spiritual and has been internalized into people everywhere on earth. This goes far beyond the temple. It means that we cannot look even to a specific church and say 'Here!' or 'There!' All the churches are the same—they all represent the outer chambers of a religion that is now internal. The new sanctuary of the everlasting covenant is God alone, and it is He that we carry inside of us in the presence of Jesus. Because of this, we now carry the Holy of Holies within our hearts. That puts the temple of God within each of us individually—a fact which enables us to carry the temple in our hearts wherever we go. That is why we have been made a royal priesthood, *"so that we can offer the spiritual sacrifices that Jesus made acceptable to God: mercy, justice and good faith."* (1 Peter 2:5). Our priesthood would have no meaning if we did not already have the temple within us to offer these spiritual sacrifices to God, because we cannot offer them in church. (Heb.13:10). Instead, we must offer them in the community—wherever we happen to be when we obey the Gospel. Jesus took us out of a worship dependant on physical things and brought us into the kind of spiritual worship that truly pleases God. This again illustrates the dualism of scripture. God has kept the physical temple of Palestine in ruins so

that we might see the invisible temple it really stood for: Jesus within us. God's sanctuary represents the presence of God dwelling within us. That is why, when David wanted to build a house for the Lord, God said to him: *"Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I have never stayed in a house from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until today."* (2 Samuel 7:5). To make it clear that God dwells in people and not in buildings, Stephen told the high priests at the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, *"Even so the Most High does not live in a house that human hands have built: for as the prophet says: 'With heaven my throne and earth my footstool, what house could you build me, what place could you make for my rest? Was not all this made by my hand?'"* (Acts.7:48-49, Is.66:1-2). Therefore, those who look for a physical temple to be rebuilt in Palestine in the last days have exactly the same kind focus as those who expected the Messiah to set up an earthly kingdom and lead the Jews to a military victory over the Roman empire. It was this same materialistic attitude—this love of temple—that caused the Jews to reject Jesus Christ as their Messiah in the first place. And as far as a building for sacrifice is concerned, it is no longer needed. The crucifixion has replaced all of the Law's sacrifices—just as Jesus in his elevation to equality with God has replaced all temples. It is the Law, not faith that looks to temple buildings, sacrifices and circumcision for justification. The people of Christ look only to faith. And it is this same kind of faith that the Jews will have to look to at the time of Michael. If their attention does not shift from buildings and walls to faith, their eyes will never open. In fact, all the destruction that is still destined to come against Jerusalem in the years ahead is for the single purpose of ripping out the last vestiges of physical worship that now stand between the people of Judea and God. These dressed stones are the last solar pillars. And, according to scripture, they must all come down. Instead of physical worship, the citizens of Jerusalem have to set their hearts on seeking a God of spirit and truth—a God, not of temples and sacrifices, but of the Gospel and the Ten Commandments. (2 Ch.19:3).

God intended the temple as a place to house His word. But the Judeans of Christ's time were no longer using the temple for this purpose. They had transformed it completely into an altar for sacrifice. That is because the word it once contained had been lost. This sacred 'word'—the Ten Commandments—had been stored in a chest called the 'Ark of the Covenant' (2 Ch.5:10), which disappeared into history 2500 years ago when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem. The Ark of the Covenant was built specifically to house God's word. And the purpose of the temple (which came much later) was to house the Ark. Solomon designed the entire temple around a place called the 'Holy of Holies'—a room made sacred by the fact that at its center lay the two stone tablets (the Ten Commandments) which the priests had carefully placed there inside a wooden housing called the Ark of the

Covenant. Because the prophet Jeremiah had taken this holy Ark with its sacred tablets and hidden it in a cave during the days of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the chest with its Testimony had been missing from the temple for 500 years by the time Jesus was born. For all those years, the word of God was missing from the temple. This, in fact, is what Jesus represented when he entered Jerusalem—he was the missing word of God returning to the empty temple. Jesus was God's living rendition of the two stone tablets—more actually, He was the completion of these two tablets—the completion promised by Moses (Dt.18:15-19). When the Jews rejected this living word sent down to them from heaven, their empty temple was allowed to be torn down because it no longer served any purpose to God. It was rebuilt spiritually in the hearts of those who, through belief, took God's word inside of them. As proof of this, neither the Ark of the Covenant nor its two stone tablets have ever been seen again, and according to scripture they never will be. Jesus and his Gospel have replaced them.

During their 40 year journey through Sinai, there was no temple. The Israelites conducted their worship in a tent. Throughout this entire period they offered no sacrifices and, instead, held assemblies revolving around the word of God which they kept inside the Ark. Once they reached Palestine, however, all that changed. There, they erected buildings designed around the sacrifice of animals. This changed the object of worship from the word of God to the altar of sacrifice. With this shift, the Jewish focus on dressed stones began. They wanted to build the biggest and best temples humanly possible. Lost in this new obsession for altars and sacrifices, of course, was the word of God. The temple existed, then, so that the sacrifices specified by the Law could be offered by the priests—so that the priests could offer sacrificial services they thought pleasing to God. Yet Jesus showed that when we keep the commandments of the Gospel (no matter where we are when we obey them) we conduct services at an even higher altar—the highest altar that heaven has put on earth—because when we obey His commandments, we please God far more than anything done by a priest in a church or temple can. As we have already seen, in Christianity there are two altars and two services. One in the visible church and the other—the higher one—in our hearts. These alters and these services mirror the inner and outer chambers of the Jewish temple and the two priesthoods designated by Moses. Our own priesthood relates to the inner sanctuary which lies hidden within us because our personal sacrifices represent an internal service conducted entirely through obedience to Christ's words. Because the keeping of Christ's commandments is rarely noticed by others, this sacrifice is hidden and internal—and that is why it relates to the inner sanctuary: *"Your Father who sees everything that is done in secret will reward you."* (Mt. 6:4). In the Law (the Torah), the inner

sanctuary could only be attended by the high priesthood, and its most sacred enclosure, the Holy of Holies, could only be entered by the High Priest himself. The outer sanctuary, on the other hand, was set aside as the domain of the lower priesthood. The works of God go in pairs by opposites, and we can see two sets of opposites at work here. The Mosaic covenant had its two priesthoods and so does the Christian Church. The low priesthood points to the ministers and theologians who attend to the affairs of the outer visible church. The high priesthood involves all the people within the church who put the word of God into practice in their daily lives, offering the invisible sacrifices that Peter said were most important to God. God did not come to destroy the Law, but to complete it in Jesus who offered himself as its ultimate sacrifice. The sacrifices offered in church, therefore, can only relate to the crucifixion of God. Animal sacrifices are now meaningless. That is why Christian services see Jesus alone as the Lamb of God. This is the whole meaning behind the service of communion in church. It is a commemoration of a single sacrifice that took place on a single day in time and which can never be repeated. God created the two priesthoods to lead us toward understanding that the true sanctuary of God is in our hearts, and not in a building. As we grow in this understanding, the visible structure must diminish and eventually pass away. Therefore, reconstructing it in the last days is opposite the direction that God is leading us. Understanding this is crucial to our faith. Because, instead of seeing a grand edifice to God rebuilt in Jerusalem in the last days, what we are actually going to witness in the last days is the final destruction of the outer chamber. This means that not only will there be no temple rebuilt in Jerusalem in the troubled times ahead, but all the stones still standing there that have not yet been torn down, will fall—just as Christ's prophecy has announced. And along with them, even the cathedrals of the Church will be ravaged and destroyed in the holocaust that is coming. *"They burned down every shrine of God in the country."* (Ps.74:8). The physical sanctuary attacked by the beast at the end applies to this outer chamber and thus to the visible church. The beast will tear down the last vestiges of the replica; and when he does this, only the true sanctuary will remain—the spiritual sanctuary in our heart. If the Beast's disastrous attack on Christianity and his successful conquest of the Vatican do not make this fact clearly evident, the toppling of the wall in Jerusalem will, because, in completion of prophecy, during the tribulations of these final days the very last part of Herod's temple—the wailing wall—is also destined to collapse. (Ez.38:21).

15

The Fall of the Wall

"The people shouted, the trumpets sounded. When they heard the sound of the trumpet, the people raised a mighty war cry and the wall collapsed then and there."
Joshua 6:20

"All these things you are staring at now—the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another: everything will be destroyed." (Lk.21:6). When Jesus predicted the destruction of the Jewish temple and all of its buildings in Jerusalem, most of his words came true within just 40 years. The Roman army in 70 A.D. pulled down every building and portico on the temple compound. Yet, a few stones were left intact and stand to this day. What remains standing in Jerusalem today from the time of Christ are not buildings, but a wall. Called 'Herod stones' because they were designed and carved by Herod's master architects, the hewn rocks which compose this wall constitute the fine stonework that adorned the structures and foundation platform upon which the temple and all of its adjacent buildings once stood. While nothing is left of Herod's temple itself, some of this foundation wall is still in place. The western wall—called the 'wailing wall' by the Jews—is actually a part of this foundation platform. It had little to do with the temple itself, but because the Moslems now firmly control the actual rock upon which the temple was constructed, the Jews today are resigned to this wall. It is called the 'wailing' wall because of the intense remorse Jewish people associate with the loss of their temple and the rock of Abraham on which the temple was built—two of the holiest shrines in the Jewish religion. Both are gone—the rock and the temple—and, according to prophecy, they are gone forever because God gave them away. He left the Jewish nation only this wall—a wall that has now become, in effect, the Jewish temple in absentia. While Christians believe that Jesus is the true temple of God and that Peter is the actual 'rock' on which God's Church is built, the Jews still focus on the rock of Abraham. That is why the temple and the boulder on which it stood are so important to them. Because of this importance, when the day recently came for the restoration of Jerusalem in fulfillment of Joel's prophecies, one of the very first Jewish priorities was the repair and restoration of the wailing wall. For several years, however, they could not get at it. The Palestinian Arabs who controlled this part of Jerusalem had built their

houses right up to the wall, blocking many portions of it and severely limiting Jewish access to it. After the six-day war in 1967 when the Jews finally gained control of this sector of Jerusalem, they pulled down those Palestinian houses and opened up a large square in front of the wall. In his prophesy about the restoration of Jerusalem, Isaiah foresaw this event: *"You counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you pulled down houses to strengthen the wall."* (Is.22:10). Isaiah's words warned the Jews that their rejoicing at this restoration was untimely, because it was leading to a day of panic and rout (Is.22:1-14), and that during this rout the walls of Jerusalem would be thrown down. *"For this, a day of panic and rout is from the Lord God Almighty. In the valley of Hinnom a wall is thrown down, they are shouting for help on the mountains. Persia takes up his quiver, Aram mounts his horse and Kir fetches out his shield. Your fairest valleys are filled with chariots and the horsemen take up positions at the gates; thus falls the defense of Judah."* (Is.22:5-8). Added support for Isaiah's warnings are clear in the prophecies of disaster which Jeremiah and Ezekiel announced would sweep the nation of Israel as the days of the End unfold. These warnings are not veiled and they are unequivocal. The defense of Judah is destined to crumble in the last days under the onslaught of Persian invaders.

As we have seen, the Jews have been restored to Jerusalem by God for the purpose of repenting in the mercy He has offered to the world through Jesus Christ—a mercy the early Jewish leaders rejected. God has returned His people to Jerusalem to hear again the Gospel, the living water of heaven which has power to save this world. But Jewish ears are still tuned to Moses. Ignoring Jesus Christ, they have attempted to rebuild the old traditions there instead. Scripture has termed this misconstruction, 'plastering the old wall' rather than 'rebuilding' a new one. (Ez.13:10). A 'new' wall would be one created by the encompassing power of the Holy Spirit --a power that could only be obtained through faith and baptism into Christ. This is a wall far different than one emplaced by the whitewashing of Herod stones. The old traditions were quite militant, and the renewal of these traditions has follow suit. Not content to stay within the confines of the boundaries set for them by the United Nation's mandate, a powerful Jewish contingent has undertaken a concerted campaign to regain the ancient boundaries which Israel enjoyed at the time of Solomon. Successful at war, Israel has expanded its borders into the neighboring countries of Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon—occupying a part of each. Until it rolled its tanks into Lebanon, the Jewish fighting had been predominately defensive in nature, but the Lebanese invasion was aggressive; and it steeled, as never before, the Moslem world's resolve against them. Because of this, it has focused new attention on the pronouncement of the ancient prophet, Habbukuk: *"The cup from God's right hand comes round to you, and disgrace will*

overshadow your glory. For the violence done to Lebanon is going to overwhelm you, so will the slaughter of terrified beasts, for you have shed men's blood and ravished the country, the city and all who live in it." (Hab.2:16-17). The slaughter of the 'terrified beasts' by Jewish forces in Beirut was so inhumane it actually went to trial. Before Israel invaded it, Beirut was considered one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Called by many the 'Switzerland' of the Middle East because of its wealth, it boasted a fervent modernity unsurpassed in the civilized world. After the war, its ruins became the planet's specter for Armageddon. Habbakuk's prophecy warns that this image is to a be for Israel, a vision in a mirror. In conquering and destroying Lebanon, the Jews brought to an end Christian rule in that country and caused the entire balance of power in the Middle East to shift away from the Arabs and into the hands of the Persian Shiites of Iran. Not content to live legally under the protection of God in faith, the Jewish nation has embarked, instead, on a military solution to its problems. In pursuing that kind of remedy, they have invaded and confiscated lands in violation of the mandate of freedom given to them by the powers of Babylon—a legal reprieve (approved by God) from the binding terms of the diaspora. It is this conquest and occupation—the usurping of lands that do not legally belong to them—that has brought the nation of Israel to the brink of disaster in the last days. For ordinary nations, the rules and spoils of war go to the strongest power, but the nations of God are judged by a higher authority. (Amos 3:2). This is doubly true for the current Israel because it resides in Palestine today only by virtue of a treaty it had been bound by the nations to keep—a codicil to the treaty Christ sealed with Babylon at the cross. This is why Hosea's prophecy has such meaning today: *"Because you have trusted in your chariots, and in your host of warriors, turmoil is going to break out in your towns, and all your fortresses will be laid waste..."* (Hos.10:13-14). Most Christians understand that the restoration of Jerusalem is for the purpose of the Jewish meeting with God's chosen king, Jesus Christ. But the Jews who went to Palestine had no intention of attending any such meeting. They went there instead, with the single mind of returning to the old covenant and to the old boundaries. Isaiah warned that such an event would happen: *"In the middle you made a reservoir between the two walls for the waters of the old pool."* (Is.22:11). The cisterns they have constructed are for Mosaic waters, not for the living waters Jesus offered. Any Jew who believes in Jesus is denied Israeli citizenship outright and must be deported. Isaiah predicted that the Jews would misconstrue God's purpose in restoring them to Jerusalem and that, as a consequence, the conflagration of the last days would catch them unrepentant and sweep most of them away. (Is.22:5-14). *"Instead of my people rebuilding the wall, these people come and slap on plaster."* (Ez.13:10). God created, at the time of Christ, a wreckage in Jerusalem as a signal so that people everywhere would understand their need to rebuild their lives, not in walls and

buildings, but in the grace of the Holy Spirit through faith in the king of Peace, Jesus Christ. Instead of rebuilding themselves in the integrity of God's Gospel, however, the Jews have returned to Jerusalem with an idea of restoring the stones of king Herod. As a sign to the world that the true wall of God is a life of integrity and not Herod stones, during the disaster of the last days the Bible states that the wall of king Herod will come crashing down. *"When I have exhausted my anger against the wall and those who plastered it, I shall say to you: The wall is gone, and so are those who slapped it over with plaster, these prophets of Israel who prophesy about Jerusalem and have visions of peace for her when there is no peace."* (Ez.13:10-16)

Another wall is also destined to fall in Jerusalem. This is the eastern wall which faces the Mount of Olives. This is the wall housing the sealed Golden Gate, which is the last of the eight gates leading into the Palestinian city of Jerusalem. The other seven gates were left open by the Moslems when they rebuilt the city and its walls many centuries ago, but this eighth gate they sealed because they felt that by closing it off they could prevent the Jewish Messiah from coming through it in fulfillment of the Rabbinical traditions. Neither the Moslems nor the Jews believe that Jesus is the Messiah. Both look for someone else. Jewish tradition taught that the Messiah would come into Jerusalem through a portal called the 'Golden Gate' which faced east toward the Mount of Olives. When the Moslems learned of this, they sealed the eastern gate to prevent anyone entering at this location. It has remained sealed to the present day. At the end of time, when Michael the Archangel appears on the Mount of Olives, the sealed golden gate will be opened by God, and it is to this opening that Michael will proceed on his journey to Jerusalem, heralding the second coming of Jesus Christ, whose brilliant re-appearance will follow right afterward, just as soon as Michael calls out the command. (1 Thes.4:16). For this reason, when the western wall comes down and the golden gate is made open to the east, it will be a sign to the whole world that the return of Jesus is imminent. It will be just the same then as it was in Jericho when the people of the Lord shouted the war cry: *"The people shouted, the trumpets sounded. When they heard the sound of the trumpet, the people raised a mighty war cry and the wall collapsed then and there."* Joshua 6:20). In this same way, the stone and mortar seals on the eastern gate will crumble and fall away when Michael is near. Because they encompass the city of Jerusalem, each one of these eight gates have a symbolic meaning—a meaning which points to Jesus—the true master of Jerusalem. The seven open gates of this city stand for the seven churches of Christ. By preaching Jesus—these churches are the seven gates to the Gospel (which is Jesus—the temple of the Lord). Seven is a symbolic number standing for the sum total of Christian worship on earth. The eighth gate—the sealed gate—stands for

Judaism. Together they represent the two Houses of Israel. Spiritually, the eighth gate was sealed by God long before the Moslems came. This sealing took place in fact when the Jewish blindness was first decreed—a decree announced by the Apostle Paul. For this reason, the opening of this gate points to the restoration of Jewish sight and to their reunion with the Lord at the end of time. This is why the golden gate will tumble open at the end—as a signal to the Jews that the One they have been waiting for all these years is about to re-appear.

PART 4

UP FROM THE ABYSS!

"When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive all the nations in the four quarters of the earth...and mobilize them for war."

Rv.20:7-8

16

The Seven Hills

"Here there is a need for cleverness, for a shrewd mind; the seven heads are the seven hills, and the woman is sitting on them." Rev.17:9

Standing at the shoreline on Patmos island, John looked out over the Mediterranean and *"saw a beast emerge from the sea which had seven heads and ten horns..."* (Rv.13:1). The symbolism in this vision is rich with dualism. The seven heads, John explained, are metaphors describing on one side, seven particular nations, and on the other, seven specific men, both of whom, in combination, have severely persecuted God's people on earth throughout history. The monster these seven heads belong to is Satan, the dragon, the creature Babylon is shown to ride. (Rv.17:3). Often described in prophetic passages as the 'sea monster' (or Leviathan), this dragon is the ruler of the lower sea. Its seven heads have been smashed and destroyed by the word of Jesus Christ. *"By your power, Lord, you split the sea in two, and smashed the heads of the monster on the waters."* (Ps.74:13). Note in the passage above the multiple heads of the monster God has destroyed. Its plurality in this Psalm shows that the Psalm and the Book of Revelation are referencing similar entities—similar heads. One of these seven heads, Persia, destroyed long before Christ was born, will soon be reincarnated and become so powerful in the last days that it will challenge all the kingdoms of Babylon—seeking to dominate the earth completely. A significant measure of this challenge will manifest itself in the city of Rome. For this reason much of the symbolism concerning Babylon seems to point to Rome—the city of the seven hills. But Rome and its seven hills is only one part of the meaning. The seven continents of the earth is another. The seven continents form the seven hills which human civilization has mounted itself upon. And all the symbolism of the Bible seems to be directed toward this larger image, because in its inception Babylon had nothing to do with a city in Italy. It originated at the Euphrates River, the cradle of human civilization. When God corrupted the language of this civilization at the Tower of Babel, He scattered mankind across the earth, sending the civilization of Babylon to the four corners of the planet. The society of man began to take form in the Euphrates valley soon after the birth of Adam and Eve about 5800

years ago. From there it spread across the earth. Later (and again back at the Euphrates) this emerging society began to polarize into two parts when Abraham was born. Using Abraham as His seed, God began to officially divide human civilization into two clusters of people by forming the House of Israel inside of it. This division grew to the point of Jesus Christ whose arrival lifted the division to a spiritual level—one which brought the entire human race to the doorstep of God. Promoting God is Jesus Christ and the righteous Gospel he preached. Opposing Jesus is Satan, the beast who guides the nations in wicked behavior. In between are all the world's leaders. Their rule can either support wickedness and expand its influence over the people, or it can deplore such behavior and actively work to control it. Those leaders who promote Jesus Christ and struggle to expand the growth of His churches on earth, work against the beast. It is these who flourished during the millennium. But those world rulers who work against Jesus, promote the beast. And it is these, the latter, who occupy the framework surrounding the beast's seven heads. And it is these that we can see arising in our own time, rebirthing the secular world championed by the Caesars. Rome is the symbolic capital city of the secular earth (Babylon). For almost 2000 years (the term of the millennium according to Joshua's prophecy), this Italian city has been ruled by a Christian government—fulfilling the vision of the millennial rule of Christ. But, as the vision shows, that conquest and rule had defined limits. (Rev.20:1-9). Because world leaders play such a pivotal role in promoting one or the other of the two kinds of behavior on earth, they form an integral part of the image. The beast's seven heads not only represent the kings and kingdoms dedicated to the beast's service, they are brought to a focus in seven particular world leaders who have committed their energy to the captivity and destruction of the House of Israel. It is in this obsession—the destruction of the people of God—that we can identify the heads specifically. The first six were: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece (through Syria) and Rome. The seventh head seems to have been Germany. And beyond that, there is an eighth yet to come. The ten horns are a part of this eighth, and they represent the nations making up what Daniel called 'the fourth kingdom of Persia'—the ten eastern nations who will band together to support the reappearance of this eighth and last beastly head at the end of time. The heads, then, while pointing in one sense to Rome or to the continents of the world, are integrally bound up with nations and their rulers. It is in this latter sense that they can be most clearly identified. While the seven heads of the beast seem to encompass in a symbolic way all the pagan rulers of Babylon from its inception to its end, they can be seen most vividly in those seven individual governments listed above which have actively committed their energies to the purpose of Satan's fundamental goal: the enslavement and persecution of God's people on earth. In the case of Egypt, we do not know for certain the exact name of the Pharaoh who persecuted the Hebrew tribes, but we do know the nation—

Egypt. That is why the seven heads in certain cases refer to nations, and in others, to the leaders who headed these nations. Rome plays a key role in this vision because it can be seen on both sides of the prophecy. Not only was its government (especially under Nero) one of the seven enemies of the House of Israel, the city itself sits atop seven hills, duplicating mankind's occupation of the planet's continents. Seeing Rome's relationship to the vision in John's prophecy, some scholars feel that the first six heads allude to the first six emperors of Rome. The claim falls apart, however, in the procession of emperor's who followed Nero—a number which stretches far beyond eight. John focuses everything on Rome because it is in Rome that all the visions of Babylon will ultimately crystallize. A truer image of John's vision lies not in Roman emperors, but in the seven nations and world leaders which have focused their combative energies against the House of Israel.

EGYPT

The first pagan nation to attack Israel was Egypt. The captivity of Pharaoh, the first head of the beast, was so binding that it could only be overcome by the direct power of God—the display of which when it came was of such awesome proportions that it split the Red Sea in half. Egypt was the reason for Moses and the Exodus. This nation created the allegory for the 'ingathering' and defined the structure upon which mankind's redemption and atonement would be based.

ASSYRIA

The second of these seven nations was Assyria, a country situated in what is today the northeastern part of Iraq. Its capitol, Nineveh, was about a hundred miles north of the modern city of Baghdad. The Assyrians were responsible for the lost ten tribes of Israel. Invading the land of Palestine, the army of Nineveh swept ten of the twelve tribes of Israel out of the pages of history, plunging them into a captivity so deep that only the power of Jesus could rescue them from permanent anonymity. In this mass eviction and enslavement, over 80% of Jacob's entire descendancy disappeared—submerged by the Assyrians into the greater human race through the genetic camouflage of intermarriage with the pagan people which surrounded them. The Assyrians were also responsible for bringing the foreign Samaritans in to occupy the land made vacant by the deportation of the Hebrew Ephraimites. The Assyrian offensive against the northern tribes was of preeminent significance, because it created the vast invisible pool out of which the 'hidden remnant' of Israel which Jeremiah said would be called back by the Messiah to take the ruling scepter away from the Jews and rebuild Jerusalem in the integrity of the Son of David, would later flow. As we have seen before, these 'lost tribes', because they were so extensive, have created, through

intermarriage and time, an enormous hidden reservoir of Israelites able to claim in Christ a legitimate tribal legacy reaching right back to Abraham himself. And no one can dispute their claim because God has made their heritage physically invisible. In the 3000 years that have gone by since this massive deportation first occurred, virtually every person living on earth today has the potential for having been 'touched' at some point in their genetic past by this ever-expanding, but imperceptible, Hebrew legacy. This lineage was promised to Abraham by God in the Bible: *"I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore... All the nations of the world shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience."* (Gen.22:17-18).

BABYLON

The third major nation to attack the House of Israel was Babylon. One hundred years after the northern tribes fell to the Assyrians, Nebuchadnezzar led the forces of Babylon into Jerusalem and carried away the last two tribes (Judah and Benjamin), transporting them to the banks of the Euphrates where they were held in bondage for seventy years. This event created the base on which the Bible has brought to a focus every attack ever made against the House of Israel. Babylon's very name has become the scriptural cryptogram for all empires opposing God's people. As a result, most of us now see Babylon and the work of Satan in synonymous terms. The destruction of Babylon by Persia, (announced the night before it happened by Daniel) presages the ultimate destruction of this sinful world by eastern forces in the last days; and the Persian decree which set the Jews free from Babylon, anticipates a future declaration that will end Babylon's reign over Israel forever.

PERSIA

The fourth assault against the House of Israel came from Persia. This attack, documented in the Bible's Book of Esther, came in the form of a Persian proclamation sentencing all Jews to death—a sentence typifying Satan's own decree. In the pages of the Book of Esther we are shown vivid symbols of the hierarchy of God's kingdom and its principle figures. In this story the king alludes to Jesus; the first wife (Vashti) to the old creation; the new bride (Esther) to the new creation; her guardian (Mordecai) to Michael the Archangel; and the wicked prince trying to exterminate the Jewish race (Haman) to Satan and his Beast. The book unfolds its analogy in an allegorical format; and it culminates in the ultimate salvation of the people of God from a death sentence initiated by Haman—a high official in the Persian court—a man who is ultimately put to death on the very gallows he built to destroy the Hebrew race. These circumstances not only duplicate the biblical image of the House of Israel under siege by Satan (the 'Accuser' who has condemned us before

God and petitioned for our deaths) they bring into focus the actions of the Rebel to come who will duplicate all these things one final time at the end of the world. At that time, the whole tenant of the Bible's story of Esther will be repeated once again in a fatal decree which will be issued by the Rebel when he overthrows the church in Rome, taking back his throne; and then gathers his armies around Jerusalem in an attempt to make his dictum final. The fact that Haman (a non-Persian who had risen to the highest ranks of the Persian court) tried to use his office to exterminate the Jews as a race brings him into direct correlation with the northern prince at the end of time who will similarly vow to bring the House of Israel to the gallows of Jerusalem—using troops from the very same nation.

GREECE

The fifth attack on the surviving tribes of the House of Israel came from Greece—actually from the Syrian part of Alexander's Grecian empire. This assault was led by Antiochus IV Epiphanes and elements of it have been recounted throughout this book. That is because it was Antiochus who ordered the original abomination in the Jewish temple be erected, defiling the Hebrew sacrifice. In this action, Antiochus initiated the allegory which now defines the ultimate separation of the human race from its one and only shield against the Apocalypse—the sacrificial peace treaty of Jesus Christ that holds back the terrible wrath of the last days. When the beast of the last days places iniquity on Christ's sacrifice, the entire allegory of Antiochus will be replicated, and there will be no clemency possible from the events which follow.

ROME

The sixth of the seven empires was Rome itself. This is the nation which put Jesus on the cross and then later repented of its actions by ratifying the treaty of the cross. Within this treaty was structured the exodus of the millennium. Because of this, Rome brings us full circle. In the actions of Constantine we see a duplication of the edict of the Egyptian Pharaoh who allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt in peace as they followed the road God created for them in Moses, leading to the Promised Land. With the Edict of Milan, the Roman emperor Constantine allowed the Christians to live in peace in his empire and to preach the Gospel of Christ without hindrance from the government. This allowance enabled those who chose to live and work in Christ, full opportunity to carry on their worship, creating the spiritual exodus the Bible was written to expedite. At the end of the Exodus, however, Pharaoh had a sudden change of heart and sent his troops to attack the rearguard of the departing Israelites. This attack brings us to the seventh emperor—to the head which had not yet come when John wrote down his words. And then to the eighth. These last are the two heads of the final

days. They will duplicate Pharaoh's attack, focusing their hostility on the rear column of God's departing people.

When paganism returns to rule the earth, its reign will eventually center in the city of Rome. Just as Babylon itself became the cryptogram for the beast and all of its heads, Rome has fallen heir to the fulfillment of these prophecies, because it is in this city that Satan will set up his final throne. While Rome is portrayed as Babylon in the prophecies of John, and the Rebel depicted as a Roman emperor, Daniel's prophecies focus on a 'prince of Persia' who will come out of the east in the image of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Since the Rebel of the last days will conform to everything written about him in scripture, he must be seen in both contexts. One aspect of his rule involving Rome and the other encompassing the eastern world. Satan's rule is not just in Italy. Satan exists in every nationality on the planet because he rules everyone on the earth who is not committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That includes not just the pagan people of Babylon but the religious zeal of those blind to Christ as well. John's vision and Daniel's vision coalesce in government hostile to the Hebrew God, and since it is this animosity that continues while the 'heads' of the beast come and go, we must assume that such governmental commitments represent the true 'beast'. The beast itself, then, is something that has the capacity to outlive earthly human beings and even earthly empires. Together, all these empires and their kings are a part of each other and so they all form the one 'beast'—a lawless world at odds with God and committed to the destruction of God's people. As such, the beast has been around for thousands of years. And each of its heads represent the various kings and empires who have committed their energies to carry out Satan's war against the House of Israel.

When Theodosius outlawed paganism in the Roman empire and declared Christianity the only true religion of God, he ended the world-rule of the beast and replaced it with the world-rule of Jesus Christ. This was a major happening in the world. With his sword (the word of God) Jesus inflicted what the Bible calls 'a mortal wound' on the pagan Roman empire—dooming the sixth 'head' of the beast. What Christ's mortal wound destroyed was the adversarial relationship between the House of Israel and world government. The disintegration of a Roman empire hostile to God effectively ended pagan rule in the world and initiated an era of Christian rule in its place, and this created the millennium. The wound Jesus administered was proved mortal the moment Theodosius issued his proclamation outlawing any form of pagan worship in the empire, and commanding the entire world to worship Jesus Christ. Only nineteen years after this proclamation was announced, The barbarians of Germany overthrew Rome militarily, proving physically what had just occurred

spiritually. The sixth head of the beast had been destroyed. The Roman empire of the Caesar's was gone—spiritually and physically. In its place, the spiritual 'invasion' from the North which Jeremiah so clearly predicted, had begun. (Jer.1:14-15). The 'lost tribes' of Israel began returning in spirit to rebuild in Christ the Jerusalem which they had left in ruins because of their sins. This was not a physical return. It was entirely a spiritual return. These converts did not go to the Jerusalem in Palestine and rebuild a major Christian city there. This was a rejuvenation of ethical behavior. As such, it constituted a spiritual return to God. These converts rebuilt themselves in the ethic of Jesus, creating in the process, and by behavior alone, an invisible city in heaven. The conversion of the Lost Tribes of Israel also constituted a spiritual exchange of leadership roles over the House of Israel. The Jews who had previously headed these twelve tribes were dismissed from the management office by God for a lack of faith; and their influence was immediately overwhelmed by an immense Christian body that grew meteorically to mammoth size, soon outnumbering the people of Judah by a hundred to one. Taking away the Jewish reigns, and heralding the message of God's treaty of peace for a rebellious mankind, this immense Christian Church quickly became the dominant theological force on the planet, and the divinely designated spokesperson for the House of Israel on earth—two roles it has retained virtually to the present day. The Roman persecutions ended for the most part soon after the empire converted to Christianity, but the Church never went back to Palestine. It has remained bound to 'Babylon' by the will of God since the day of the crucifixion. (Jer.29:4-10). The Holy Spirit has made this displacement of God's people obvious by structuring the headquarters of the largest Christian Church in the city of Rome and keeping it there for almost 20 centuries. According to prophecy, this Babylonian exile is to remain in place until the day the Prince of Persia appears and cuts the tie. The image is that of a Babylon being ruled by the people of Christ from the moment of the decree of Theodosius to this century—a period of time constituting on earth, Christ's millennial rule. We can see evidence of this by the fact that even though Germans took control of Rome in 410 A.D., their descendants never renamed the empire in their country's own image, but chose the name 'Holy Roman Empire' instead—acquiescing their own heritage in favor of one defined in God's Son. That is why so few people today are aware of the fact that the Holy Roman empire was in reality a German kingdom, ruled by German kings. The title really states this: the empire of Babylon, ruled by God's Son, i.e, a mortally wounded Babylon, converted. While the influence of Jesus has been the leading export of Rome since the days of Constantine, the city of Rome itself remained subservient to a great host of German monarchs—from 410 A.D. all the way up to the nineteenth century. Because these German kings chose not to tamper with the rule of Christ, the overwhelming image that emanated from Rome throughout the Germanic rule

was the power on earth of Jesus' Church. That image did not change with the Protestant Reformation which came wrapped in the love of God. Nor did it change with the rise of the United States of America, a country founded on God. It is changing now, however, because world government has decided in our day to sever the bond between itself and Jesus.

At the end of Christ's reign on earth, when this Christian rule over Babylon is scheduled to collapse, the last two 'heads', according to John, will make their appearance. John said they were standing by, just waiting for the appropriate time. Because so little is said about the seventh head in scripture we know very little about it; but it seems likely that this is the empire designed to prepare the way for paganism's return to power. Given the state of the world today, it is almost certain that the seventh head has already come and gone. We will explore this in more detail in the next chapter. The eighth head, of course, will end the world. As we can see all around us now, under the influence of Satan, Christianity is beginning to fail. The mortal wound inflicted by Christ on paganism has begun to heal. World government has abandoned Jesus and that alone constitutes the revolt that will destroy the millennium, because it has brought to an end the world rule of Christ. This sudden religious reversal by the western world has allowed pagan leaders to return to political power all across the earth. Not even the emperor Napoleon (who grabbed the crown of France out of the Bishop's hands and put it on his own head) would have been able to foresee how quickly those who came after him would take his lead and toss out the church. The collapse of Christian influence in world government began in earnest at the beginning of this century with the First World War and the communist revolution in Russia. And its ultimate death blow was delivered a few decades later by Adolph Hitler, the seventh head of the beast. We shall examine his relationship to the prophecy in the next chapter.

17

The Beast of Berlin

"The seven heads are also seven emperors. Five of them have already gone, one is here now, and one is yet to come; once here he must stay for a short while."
Rev.17:10-11

The Book of Revelation, in one of its most evocative images, shows us a scarlet beast galloping across a lifeless desert. Mounted on her back is the prostitute Babylon—Satan's wicked city. (Rv.17:1-3). The desert is space itself, and the beast which is hurtling across its reaches is Satan, prince of this world, demon of the turbid sea that produced the stars and planets, and architect of the pagan lifestyle which this world (Babylon) has chosen to pursue. The seven heads on the beast represent those individuals and countries which have carried out the seven great persecutions of the people of God (the House of Israel) which the beast holds captive in its flight. These seven heads form the backbone of the world coalition perpetuating Satan's war against the children of God. We have already explored the identity of many of these heads in the last chapter. Most Christians are convinced that the sixth head of the beast was Nero; and there is little question that a coming 'eighth head' relates to a reincarnated Nero-like figure at the End. But very little is known about the seventh head—the wicked emperor destined to appear between Nero and the Rebel. All that is said in scripture about him is John's cryptic remark that his reign will be short. (Rv.17:10). Since many scholars seem convinced through John's prophecies that the supremely malevolent eighth head somehow applies to Rome (the home of the sixth head), the seventh head may also, perhaps, be seen in the context of Roman rule as well. Because a loose Germanic reign over this city lasted for almost 1600 years, from 400 A.D. until the 19th century, a period coinciding with the worldwide growth and spread of Christianity, had the seventh pagan 'head' appeared at any time during the reign of the Church and had he been associated with Roman leadership at all, he would have had to have been German. Yet the only German to launch a claim to this title came a century after German rule had ended—a man already mentioned—Adolph Hitler. Hitler re-established his country's historic authority over Rome, but instead of occupying mankind's eternal city himself, he left there a puppet Italian government ruling the nation in his stead—a government that completely acquiesced to his

wishes. While his military authority over Italy was indisputable, the key to Hitler as the 'seventh head' of the beast has far less to do with his dominion over Rome than it does with his vicious persecution of the Jews, one of the twelve tribes of the House of Israel. It is this savage attack on God's people that brings Hitler into alignment with the other heads in John's vision. The Italian leaders proved their subservience to Germany by freely allowing the German occupation of their country and by wholeheartedly complying with Nazi demands in pursuing the persecution of the Jews; rounding up all the members of this tribe of Israel they could find in Italy and shipping them off to the German concentration camps for extermination.

Hitler's pagan views were in complete contrast to his predecessors. While nearly all of the German kings of the past submitted their various governments to the authority of the rule of Christ, Hitler did not. And this is the key to the remaining 'heads'. In its portrait of the last two heads, the Book of Revelation appears to be pointing to the appearance of two specific godless and warmongering leaders whose avowed purpose revolves around the destruction of the people of God and the return of Rome and the rest of the world to Antichrist government—i.e, rulers committed to healing the 'mortal wound'. In this respect, the seventh head had to have been Adolph Hitler. He not only commanded the first truly pagan empire to control Rome since the days of the Caesar's, his reign matched the only prophecy that exists concerning the beast's seventh head—it was quite short. Hitler's hatred for the House of Israel, demonstrated by his obsessive desire to murder the entire Jewish race makes him stand out starkly from all other secular leaders during the Christian Era. It also makes him fit like a glove with the previous six heads of the beast. In fact his single-mindedness and terrifying resolve with respect to Jewish extermination far outstripped all of his predecessors put together. Everything about Hitler seemed to personify wickedness. No person who has ever lived on this earth was a better parrot of the actions of the 'angel of the Abyss'—the title bestowed upon the armed Destroyer whose appearance on earth is heralded by events surrounding the sounding of the 'fifth trumpet' in the Book of Revelation. (Rv.9:11). Perhaps nothing less than Abaddon, himself; this German emperor of death was a willing accomplice in Satan's intent to mobilize the twentieth century for war. He approached this objective ferociously, perpetuating his international campaign of evil on a scale never seen before. And he was totally obsessed with the destruction and annihilation of the House of Israel. As bad as the worst of the others were, no other kingdom in the history of the world can even come close to matching the gruesome atrocities of Deutchland's Third Reich as far as the House of Israel is concerned. And the man who masterminded this government was so completely satanic there was never a question from any quarter of earth

regarding the forces driving his ambitions. In fact, the aura surrounding Adolph Hitler was such that when he came to power he appeared to represent the very image of Satan, himself, climbing up out of his chained imprisonment in the Abyss and returning to the earth with all the clouds and steam of hell surrounding him. And that may be the very signal that his appearance was supposed to image to the world. Since the other six heads of the beast sent signs of such importance, there is no reason to suspect that the seventh would do less. Hitler appears to have physically manifested before the eyes of the world the momentous unchaining of Satan and his epochal return to deceive the earth and plunge it's inhabitants into the final abyss of fire and war. (Rv.20:3). He came with all the credentials for such a purpose. With his bold, hateful and hypnotic voice, Hitler used his terrible charisma to mesmerize the German people and lead them into a disaster so catastrophic that it not only destroyed his own nation, it threatened to bring down in flames the entire world. If for no other reason, in light of his devastating attack on the House of Israel, Hitler's empire would have to be included with the other six. None of the previous attacks on God's people in this world have ever involved as many Israelites or been as savage or brutal as the one initiated by this malignant German housepainter. He was obsessed with his 'final solution'—the liquidation of every 'citizen of Jerusalem' from the European continent...and once he had gained control of the world, to erase even their memory from the planet's history. Although the Jews have been temporarily isolated by Christ's proclamation, they have always remained a true part of the House of Israel and as such represent a true branch of the chosen people of God. Their situation on earth is unique because they have been made blind by God for the sake of the salvation of the pagans. (Rom.11:25). Therefore Hitler's actions in murdering six to nine million members of this race in the middle of this century is by far the most devastating attack on the people of God ever made. Haman of Persia in the Book of Esther had it in his mind to do something similar, but he never got the chance. Hitler did and he leapt at it with a vengeance. He was without a doubt, a madman—a tyrant so similar to the biblical descriptions of the beast, many people at the time thought he was the beast. His coming in the middle of this century, intensely committed to Hebrew extermination seemed to presage all the prophecies about the end of the world with its final attack on the Church of God and the people within it. In this respect his appearance foreshadowed the ultimate evil destined to follow him. The pagan character of his regime clearly underscored the distinction between Christian values and those of Satan and it was this contrast that gave World War II its persevering aura as a battle between good and evil. The images of Treblinka and Auschwitz served only to reinforce this aura and make it indisputable. But evil's assault against good which seemed to suddenly become clear with World War II did not begin with that war, nor did it end with that war. The ethic of the Gospel has been involved in an

escalating conflict with satanic values right up to the present moment. In the wake of this onslaught, we can see the millennium of Christ's rule on earth being torn apart before our very eyes. For this reason, the conflict made clear by Hitler actually continues to rage all around us even though he is gone—showing that he was just one battle in a larger war. The seventh head was just a stepping stone to the eighth. The key point separating the two, the House of Christ. Although Hitler controlled Rome, his storm-troopers did not enter Vatican City. The fact that he did not overthrow the headquarter's of Christ's largest church or declare war on Christianity proves that he was not the Rebel to come—but only a prelude to the Rebel. The last head of the beast, in what Daniel says will be the most crucial moment in Christian history, intends to carry his own war right up to the altar of Christ inside that sacred Christian camp.

With the seventh head now come and gone, all attention can be focused on the last head of all. According to John, the eighth head of the beast will be a reincarnation of the sixth (Nero/Rome). The mortal wound will heal. This means Christ's victory over pagan Rome will be reversed. According to John, the beast's sixth head will be brought back to life by the will of the people in the last days as they build an edifice in its honor. John called this edifice a 'statue', and predicted that it would be erected in recognition of the beast with the mortal wound. A statue is a replica—it is a copy made in honor of its image. Coming out of the north and accompanied by a horde of troops from the east, the second beast will be able to win over the people of the world and convince them to erect this replica "*in honor of the beast that had been wounded by the sword and still lived.*" (Rv.13:14). When they do so, scripture says that the statue will suddenly come to life and become the very beast in whose likeness it has been carved. These words have little to do with a human statue, they describe a national replica. The Rebel of the last days will conquer and take control of Rome, and when he does so, he will create there a replica of the pagan empire of the past which was destroyed by the Gospel of Christ. In fulfillment of the prophecies, he will refashion there an empire in the image of pagan Rome, complete with all the trappings of the government of the Caesar's which disappeared under the rule of God. Suddenly it will be as if no mortal wound ever occurred. Throngs of people will cheer this reincarnation and lend their support to its formation. As soon as the Rebel does this, the replica will come to life and become the very empire that it was created to image. The beast's victory and conquest of Rome will symbolize his triumph over Babylon itself. East will conquer west and subordinate its original identity by transforming itself into the image of pagan Rome. This exchange will allow east and west to embrace, transforming a provincial eastern empire into one with world-wide authority. This points to far ranging influence for the beast at the end despite his

many enemies and their respective military strengths. The beast will not rule the world, but he will have immense control over its behavior and destiny. Despite all the battles between the governments, virtually all of the world will be pagan and committed to pagan principles. Church persecution will reach a level where those who espouse Christian inclinations will be in hiding, afraid to make their views known to anyone for fear of their lives.

When the eighth head of the beast appears, he will end up in Rome as a symbol of his identity. *"The dragon handed over to the beast his own power and his own throne and his worldwide authority."* (Rev.13:2). When the eastern beast resurrects pagan Rome, Satan will bring the empire to life and hand it to the Rebel as a gift, the fulfillment of this prophecy. Having returned from the Abyss where the forces of God kept him prisoner throughout the millennium of the Church, Satan will bestow his world-wide authority on the eighth head of the beast, and hand over to him his own throne from which to rule the world. This is why the conquest of Rome by the Rebel will be so symbolic—it will be a signal to the world that the beast, in receiving Satan's throne in Babylon, has overturned the proclamation of Theodosius and returned Babylon to pagan rule. None of this would be possible if the Church remained a viable entity within the capitol city. Complete pagan rule can only exist in the Church's absence. Creating this void, and completing the prophecy, the Rebel will overthrow the sanctuary and set himself upon the chair of Peter when he conquers Italy. And it is from that chair that he will issue the proclamation that frees the House of Israel from its Babylonian captivity. The proclamation will be a declaration of war on the people of God, and it will launch the tribulation—a time of violence against the House of Israel the likes of which have never been seen on this earth before. It is in the carnage of this tribulation that the greatest part of the rapture will occur. And it is only then, as this attack grows, that Christians will truly understand the bitter meaning of this scripture: *"Up to the time of John it was the Law and the Prophets; since then, the kingdom of God has been preached, and by violence everyone is getting in."* (Lk.16:16).

18

The Woman and the Dragon

*"The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign.
It is this: the maiden is with child and she will soon
give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel."
Isaiah 7:14*

The portrait of Christianity painted by John in his Book of Revelation is framed by an adversarial struggle between two maternal figures. On one side, riding the scarlet beast is the adulterous lady Babylon, and on the other, wearing the raiment of heaven, the holy woman of God. One of the most perplexing mysteries in scripture is the fact that John's vision shows us a Satan who has defined his war not only on Jesus, but on His mother as well. In the Book of Revelation, the Bible reveals that Satan's battle plan has been woven deeply around the image of the pregnant virgin Mary: *"Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with the twelve stars on her head for a crown. She was pregnant, and in labor, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth. Then a second sign appeared in the sky, a huge red dragon which had seven heads and ten horns...the dragon stopped in front of the woman as she was having the child, so that he could eat it as soon as it was born from its mother. The woman brought a male child into the world, the son who was to rule all the nations with an iron scepter, and the child was taken straight up to God and to his throne, while the woman escaped into the desert, where God had made a place of safety ready for her, to be looked after in the twelve hundred and sixty days."* (Rv.12:1-6). In a succession of graphic symbolic images, John reveals that the world's lady, the prostitute which sits on the seven hills, and who has given birth to the children of Satan (the harlot the Bible calls 'Babylon'), exists in violent opposition to God's sacred woman: the mother of Jesus Christ. *"As soon as the devil found himself thrown down to the earth, he sprang in pursuit of the woman, the mother of the male child, but she was given a huge pair of eagle's wings to fly away from the serpent into the desert..."* (Rv.12:13-14). Why the battle lines have been drawn on Mary has remained an enigma for ages, but we can clearly see on earth Satan's role in pressing a violent campaign against her. Failing to destroy her, *"The serpent vomited water from his mouth, like a river, after the woman, trying to sweep her away in the current..."* (Rv.12:15). This flood of water seems

to constitute a river of propaganda—a torrent of vitriolic attacks directed at the defamation of the holy lady's image among the people. There can be no doubt that its purpose is to try and subvert the conception process that Mary has initiated on earth under God's direction. Whatever Satan's water is, much of it vanished into the graves of the wicked as the earth opened up to *"swallow the river thrown up by the dragon's jaws."* (Rv.12:16). The perpetrators of this initial assault all died and the major aspects of their efforts disappeared, buried under the weight of the victory of the Christian millennium. Similar attacks, however, have begun to re-surface in our own time apparently in response to Satan's return from the Abyss. (Rev. 20:7). With the recent stirring of the last heads of the beast, John's battle lines are becoming clear once again. As they rise up from the Abyss, the modern servants of the dragon have shown a pre-ordained obsession with perpetuating Satan's deep hatred for the mother of the Lord and those who choose to follow her Son. There are some who argue that John's symbolic maternal image in these quotations is that of Judah, the errant tribe of Israel whose rejection of Christ has presented on earth a counterpoint to His Gospel and whose string of catastrophe's down through the ages, a graphic example of that rejection's consequences. The image that John gives us, however, shows us a mother quite different. The birth of Jesus on earth was wrapped in faith and loyalty—a devotion and belief so powerful that it enabled Him to conquer the entire planet in just a few hundred years. The mother of that conception was not a hostile and disbelieving people, just the opposite. This is proved in John's next verse: *"Then the dragon was enraged with the woman and went away to make war on the rest of her children, that is, all who obey God's commandments and bear witness for Jesus."* (Rv.12:13-17). Faith, not rejection was the maternal genesis of Jesus Christ, and the figure of that conception stands crystallized in Old Testament prophecy: *"God is going to abandon them till the time when she who is to give birth, gives birth"*. (Micah 5:2-3). *"The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign. It is this: the maiden is with child and she will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel...For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince-of-Peace"*. (Isaiah 7:14; 9:5-6). Clearly a line separating Satan from God has been drawn in the sands of creation, and it crosses right through the mother of Jesus Christ, making her a central target of Satan's rage. On one side of this line are the people of God and on the other, those who are led by the dragon. John's words regarding this attack are as extensive as they are stark; and they telegraph an ominous warning to every Christian who feels animosity toward Christ's mother. According to the Book of Revelation, anyone who attacks Mary is drinking from the devil's river and has fallen into union with the core of Satan's rage.

In the Bible, two feminine images share center stage in the motherhood of Jesus—His earthly mother, Mary, and His spiritual mother, the Word of God, a sacred entity called 'Wisdom' in the Old Testament. The Word of God becomes our own mother in the Third Person of the Trinity (the Holy Spirit), and it is the Spirit's new birth inside us that keys the prophecy. The Holy Spirit and the word of God are exactly the same, so they share a common identity in the generation of God's kingdom—and this identity is tied by John's scripture to Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Jesus had two natures (true man and true God). In both He was perfect and without sin, and Mary gave birth to one of these two natures. The Book of Revelation clearly shows that the glorification she has since received for her maternal role in the genesis of Righteousness on earth is not a mistake or an accident (Rv.12:1), and much of it is related to Satan's attack. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the unforgivable sin. Because Satan is so cunning, he has been able to coerce a significant number of Christians to join with him in the hatred he has directed at the Mother of Jesus Christ. This despite the grave admonition against it braided by John into the pages of the Book of Revelation. Mary, as the alter image of Christ's spiritual mother, stands as a buffer to this venom, absorbing much of this abuse so that those who spout it in ignorance are not made ineligible for eternal life by their unwitting participation in the spread of Satan's river against the Holy Spirit (which, according to Christ, is participation in something unforgivable). John's vision has defined the battleground. Because God Himself was the author of all this imagery, we can see that war on Mary is an extension of Satan's war on the Church. It is the physical side of warfare against the word of God. In the Book of Revelation, the Holy Spirit shows us exactly where the focus of Satan's anger will be directed. (Rv.12:13-17). According to John, Satan hates the Church and he hates the woman who brought it to birth. His rage (Rv.12:17) against both is the malevolent spiritual force that he has tried to implant inside each of us to get us to join him in his hatred—to try to make us accomplices and participants in his anger against the holy motherhood of Jesus Christ. He tells us that the Church is evil; he accuses many Christians of worshipping Mary, and he attacks the Jews. No aspect of the genesis of God's Son escapes his wrath. Those who forget the words of John's vision try to find an answer to Satan's questions. But Satan has led all who listen to him into a trap. He has convinced many that a deep affection for Mary is evil and made them think their hatred of her is pleasing to God. Satan used the same tactics with Eve, filling her mind with questions that caused her to rebel against God in the Garden of Eden. It is no different with us because Satan has not changed. There are no reasonable answers. Just a decree by John. And with it, a line drawn on the battlefield of Babylon that no one should ever cross.

In the kingdom of God there is neither male nor female, but the presence of a feminine image in divine royalty is deeply imbedded in scripture and it is always associated with the Holy Spirit. Femininity in the Bible represents motherhood. Usually in the divine sense it is portrayed in the Old Testament as 'Wisdom'. Precedence for it goes as far back as Esther who is described as the 'bride of the king', and also as the 'little spring that became a river' to save her people. Described in this way, Esther portrays in an allegorical form both the Jerusalem of God and the Holy Spirit, two concepts mysterious to the Jews but later revealed to Christians by Jesus Christ. Speaking of the new Jerusalem in feminine terms, Isaiah said, *"For now your creator will be your husband, his name, the Lord God Almighty...he is called the God of the whole earth."* (Is.54:4). Creation is portrayed by the prophets in scripture as the wife of God. There are two, and they signify the two creations. The old creation (human civilization), is the unfaithful wife imaged in the Old Testament by both Vashti and Hagar, and the new creation in heaven (the spiritual creation of Christ) is imaged by Esther, and Sarah, and even more perfectly by Mary, the mother of Jesus. Pouring out from the breast of Christ to form this new creation in heaven is the 'living water' of the Holy Spirit. Because this sacred 'water' brings those it enters into the new life of God, it is defined in the terms of motherhood. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit down from heaven to bring us into the life of God by wedding our soul to itself. This bonding makes us one with the new kingdom. Jesus called this union 'rebirth', showing that the Holy Spirit is the creative substance—the 'living water'—of the new Jerusalem in the kingdom of heaven. (Jn.7:38-39). God's Spirit is a pure emanation of spiritual water from the third heaven. When we are fused with this Spirit we are made one with God's new kingdom—its living water, Christ's Gospel, bathing our soul in eternal life. Since scripture terms this new creation the bride of Jesus Christ, our fusion with her brings us to life in her own existence—an existence created by Jesus. She is the new creation—the Jerusalem of heaven—and she exchanges this world which is passing away with a new world of her own substance. The woman of Babylon, mother nature, the first bride, has been replaced. Passing away, she is doomed to a lake of fire because Satan has infused her so completely with his own wicked spirit. The Holy Spirit, then, is both God and Holy Mother. The Old Testament, preparing us to understand the true nature of our spiritual mother uses the term 'Wisdom', always imparting a feminine gender to it. This closes the circle because it brings us back to the Gospel. The word 'Wisdom' and the Gospel of Jesus Christ are identical terms. The Holy Spirit is the word of God.

Our true 'Holy Mother', then, is the Gospel—the will of the Father—the word which created the universe, and which brings each of us to life the moment we take it into our hearts

and are reborn into its nature. Jesus proved this when he said, *"Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.'* (Mt. 12:48-50). This is what being 'born again' is all about. It is our spiritual union with the word of Christ. Born again is what happens to us the moment our soul is fused with the Holy Spirit. We were born into the substance of Babylon when we came out of our earthly mother's womb, and Jesus came to transform us from that worldly material into the substance of heaven by imparting His Holy Spirit into us. John has revealed that the clearest sign of Satan on earth is hatred of Jesus' mother. (Rv.12:13-17). The clearest sign of God on earth, then, must be just the opposite. The love of Christ's mother is a proof of faith. And in the case of Mary, such honor fulfills the prophecies of scripture: *"Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me."* (Lk.1:46-55). And when she gave birth to Jesus Christ, she gave birth not only to Him on earth but to all of us who follow Him as well. And it is on this fact that all the imagery lies. The Bible does not call us to worship Mary, but it does insist that we must side with her. *"Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."* (Lk.1:42). Such reverence is not only prophesied, it proves which side of God's line we are on. By defining the warfare between Satan and the Lord in the images of these two women, the Book of Revelation has sealed this reverence as the counterpoint to the worship of the dragon and his beast in the last days.

19

The Confederation of the Medes

"Vast hordes thundering, with thunder like thundering seas, the roaring of nations roaring like the roar of mighty waters. He rebukes them and far away they flee, driven off like chaff on the mountains before the wind, like an eddy of dust before the storm. At evening all was terror; before morning comes they are no more."

Is.17:12-14

The Bible makes no bones about the situation ahead. On history's horizon there awaits a vast horde of armies. Preparing to amass in numbers enormous beyond count, they are readying themselves for the order which will permit them to unleash their fury on a world buried in sin. *"...I will let you see how I make Babylon pay for all the wrongs they have done to Zion...Prepare nations to make war on her; summon kingdoms against her: Ararat, Minni, Ashkenaz; call the roll of her enemies, officer! Bring up the cavalry, bristling like locusts. Prepare nations to make war on her: the king of Media with his governors and dignitaries and the whole territory under his rule. Then the earth trembled and writhed, for God's plan against Babylon was going forward: to change the country of Babylon into an unpopulated desert."* (Jer.51:24-29). Failing to heed the words of Christ which had once spread across Babylon like a spiritual fire and converted the world into the Gospel, the nations began to fall away and unite against Him. His teachings were ignored as the children of the conversion began to mock the precautions that accompanied their prosperity. Scripture was clear, *"On these grounds is the sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds are evil."* (John 3:19). *"Prepare nations to make war on her: the king of Media with his governors and dignitaries and the whole territory under his rule..."* (Jer.51:28). These armies of the Prince of Persia, his governors and dignitaries—all the kings of the East (Rv.16:12)—will appear at God's command—not because He sent them, but because He will stop holding them back. Sin has formed them. They could come at any time. But divine intervention has held them at bay. God has held them back for a purpose—but with a forewarning. The purpose is for salvation. The warning is the wrath—a wrath that is coming. It was always coming, but for

awhile God intervened with His Christ to push back into the future the time of the terrible days ahead. The symbol of God's warning is the cross: *"Display the standard throughout the world..."* (Jer.51:27). And the message of the approaching apocalypse is the Gospel: *"Sound the trumpet among the nations! Prepare nations to make war on her"* (Babylon). (Jer.51:27). So while the nations listened, the terror was held in chains, struggling to break away in the inevitable apostasy which lay ahead and which would transform their bonds from iron to paper. When that happens, they will pour across Babylon—all across the world—bringing every terror that scripture has decreed for wickedness. And they will come because of apostasy. Wickedness rising up to become its own scourge because the world has abandoned Jesus and his word. *"Sharpen the arrows, take up the shields! The Lord has stirred up the king of the Medes, because his purpose is to destroy Babylon."* (Jer.51:51). As we have seen, a key area around which all these prophecies revolve (an area represented today by Iraq and Iran) is known by the ancient names 'Media and Persia'. It is this section of the world (the land of king of the Medes) which biblical prophecy has designated as the guiding source of the armies that will bring Babylon to ruin at the end of time.

In contemplating this violent rampage decreed for the end of the world, the first question that comes to mind is 'how could God do such a thing?' But God is not ending the world, sin is. God does not bring pain and suffering and He does not cause evil. He does allow it, of course, but only for the good of His ultimate purpose. *"For the Lord God Almighty says this: The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor when it is being trodden: a little while, and there the grain will lie that has been harvested."* (Jer.51:33). Satan is this world's master and Satan is responsible for every catastrophe. When a baby dies or a traffic accident destroys a family, God is not the cause. He is just as anguished over the disasters that occur in this world as we are. Yet while God is saddened over the tragedies of this world, His anguish is not impotent. He has used this world's mayhem for His own purpose. God has overcome Satan so that all catastrophes can lead to good, but He has not put a stop to the disasters themselves, because to do so would derail everything He has worked to accomplish—to find His people and break the bonds that tie them to this world so that He can rescue each one from the captivity of sin. If the world were pleasant, we would not leave it and follow Christ. *"Man in his prosperity forfeits intelligence."* (Ps.49:20). Staying in blindness, we would die in our sins, and Satan would be victorious over us. When there is no tragedy Satan becomes invisible. In catastrophe his presence is indisputable. Disaster and the influence of Satan are identical. Only when Satan and his influence are completely eradicated can calamity end. While God has it in His power to destroy Satan immediately, He is holding that event back so that we can be saved. In fact,

the world should have ended long ago—at the time of the flood—but God prevented it from being destroyed by sending it His Christ—a treaty of peace to hold back the wrath. In bringing Jesus to the earth, God blocked the world's destruction so that the Holy Spirit could find and rescue all the people of Israel whom Satan had taken captive and hidden within it. It is for our salvation that God has prevented the world from being destroyed. But once His rescue has been completed, then the end will come, and it will come in cataclysm. Not because God decrees it, but because God stops blocking it. Man himself, chasing evil, will do the critical damage, but the universe, too, will also play a part. Jesus has forewarned us that the consequence of sin is disaster and always leads to death. This is a natural law and does not need a special order from God to be carried out. It is built right into the harmonics of creation. And even if a natural disaster does ring down the final curtain, God will use it only to stop the carnage and end the suffering, not to add to it. The greatest part of the damage will come, not because of nature, but because of God's absence from that nature.

The mechanism of the wrath will be the ten-nation confederacy whose existence was revealed by Daniel (Dn. 7:8; 7:20; 7:24), and elaborated on by the Apostle John (Rv.17:12). Exactly which nations will be involved in the formation of this ten-country coalition cannot be determined at this time. But a large part of it, scripture shows, will be Asian. Jeremiah terms this confederacy, 'Media' (Jer.51:28). Daniel calls its early configuration, 'Persia' (Dn.11:2), and says that it will lie in the 'north' (Dn.11:15; Ez.38:15)—above the Euphrates river (Rv.9:13-15). The troops of the North will come from a vast reservoir of nations scattered all across the northern part of the Eastern Hemisphere. John said that the armies of the beast "*will be as many as the sands of the sea*" (Rv.20:8). Isaiah said that it will be composed of 'vast hordes' of soldiers. (Is.17:12). The prophet Joel described these minions as "*a great and mighty host as has never been seen before and will never be seen again...*" (Joel 2:2). Such descriptions give certain indication that almost the entire Asian continent will mobilize behind the confederacy. Ezekiel says that its troops will "*cover the earth like a cloud.*" (Ez.38:16). With many nations they will invade Israel, bringing there "*a great army of countless troops all mounted.*" (Ez.38:15). The size of this confederation will be truly gigantic. Ezekiel says that associated with it will be Magog, Rosh, Meschech, Tubal, Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, Bethtogarmah, and many other nations as well. (Ez.38:4-6). Far more, it seems, than the ten defined by the prophecies. This shows that many satellite nations will gather together to add support to the ten-nation commonwealth. Such visions conjure up images of an empire that could stretch the length and breadth of Asia, from the Black Sea to the eastern Pacific, encompassing the entire Middle East above Saudi Arabia, and perhaps involving extensions deep into Europe. (See map in Appendix). This huge eastern bloc of

nations will amalgamate against the West for the purpose of destroying Babylon—a corrupt way of life—a society of man that the invaders view as hopelessly immoral, secular, materialistic and filled with sin and debauchery.

While we view this terrible eastern force as a disaster for ourselves because it is coming to destroy the countries we live in, scripture says that it is being gathered at the service of God. *"Be ready, be well prepared, you and all your troops and the others rallying round you, and hold yourself at my service."* (Ez. 38:7). There is a cancer of evil growing in this world and God has excised it with His Christ. Our plans for civilization are irrelevant when measured against the goals of God. The entire plan behind the tribulation has been orchestrated by the Almighty as the birth process of the new kingdom—a travail beyond which lies eternal life—given by God to those who have opened their hearts to the Gospel of Christ. The wrath is the essence of the warning words of Jesus. Its coming is an absolute because wickedness here reigns. God's peace treaty that blocks this wrath is symbolized by the cross. Therefore its presence is the signal—the essence of the warning. Everywhere that it stands it beacons an alarm from God of what is to come to those who ignore its message. The disasters which follow sin are inevitable. God can give us a way to escape these disasters by following Christ, but outside of Christ there is no escape from the Law. Even God cannot overrule the Law's decrees. Jesus went to the cross to keep the Law, not to destroy it. And when He did, He created a treaty of peace whose terms free those who accept it from all the penalties of the past. Many times in the Old Testament words attributed to God actually apply to His divine Law. This is the case with Ezekiel's words here. The troops of the end are coming at the service of a divine Law which decrees disaster as a penalty for sin. The Law and its penalty disappear only when the people remain inside the terms of Christ's treaty. For all who reject God's offer of divine forgiveness, though, the punishment decreed by the Law remains in effect. This is the awful reality of the collapse of the Christian millennium. With the Church falling out of favor, and the western world embracing its secular replacement, the harsh rules of Old Testament Law take over again and mercy disappears.

The fact that the ten-nations have been put at God's service does not mean that their troops will be holy—far from it—but they will serve God's Law, because the Law itself will create this army. The profligate nature of our own civilization will provide the soil for its genesis. God has armed creation to destroy itself on account of sin and with grace removed, nothing can stop this process from taking place. The Eastern forces, then, will be steeped in a type of morality. Not Christ's morality, but their own which they will attribute to God.

And in their intense anger they will harbor a deep hostility to the West and to the moral decadence they see there. Initially, the troops of the East will view themselves the saviors of a world that seems to have gone entirely immoral. As a result, in their first assault they will come sweeping into Babylon under the banner of their own god carrying retribution for sin in their swords. They will come like the Hebrews came when they descended on the Phillistines. But in this case, they will be fighting, not for the House of Israel, but against it—fighting to drive the Western way of life out of their countries—and ultimately, off the earth itself.

What will be the make up of this confederacy? It will be formed, Daniel shows us, in the aftermath of the second Gulf War. That war will pit the western world, especially the United States and Israel against Media and Persia (Iraq and Iran most likely). Defeating this eastern coalition, the west will stand at the pinnacle of its power—a power that Daniel tells us will very quickly disintegrate and evolve into four components. One of these four, the smallest, will initiate the development of the confederacy which will grow into a ten-nation coalition of nations hostile to the western world. If a religious component exists in this confederacy, it's early composition will be for the most part Moslem. Looking at the geography Daniel gives us, there can be little doubt of this. However, unless a religious revival of significant proportions occurs in this area very quickly, a much larger percentage of its population will likely be secular and have no religion at all. There is every possibility that such a fundamentalist revival could occur across the broader Asian continent. This would be especially true if the second Gulf war involves nuclear weapons. That would polarize anti-western emotions in this area, so close to the conflagration, and the radiation floating around their atmosphere would provide an easy focus for a consuming hatred of the West. Those kind of elements fit perfectly with the expansionist plans of an Islamic fundamentalism currently growing in the Middle East—militant Moslems who, even today, consider the United States 'the Great Satan'. Considering that it will arise from the ashes of the second Gulf War, the virulent hatred of the west most militant Islamic components voice in that area today can only be expected to accelerate. Elements of this hostility are already quite measurable, but the ravages of intense war in the Persian theatre will deepen the rent considerably. More than that, Daniel shows us that the ten-nation confederacy will develop in the 'North' in antagonism to another empire to the south of it, the two divided by the Euphrates river. This illustrates a tear that will split the Moslem world in two. Daniel's vision argues a religious civil war, with the Persian Moslems on one side and the Arab Moslems on the other. No such division now exists, but the prophecies clearly show that the Arabs and Jews will unite against the forces of the North, solidifying their pact with a treaty

of peace. Such a treaty will enrage the Persian elements of the Islamic world. And it is these elements of Islam that lie to the north of the Euphrates. Central to the prophecies of the last days is a Jewish-Egyptian peace treaty. It is on this alliance that all the elements of the end-times are contingent. It will fracture the Middle East into polar elements, and the warfare between the two (North and South) will begin, says scripture, at the banks of the Euphrates river. Given the current composition of these regions today, the prophecies point most strongly to an Islamic civil war—one pitting Persian Moslems against Arab Moslems, and one in which the Jews become strategically entangled.

There can be little doubt that a strong Islamic presence has grown all across the Asian continent and now covers much of the territory where the ancestors of the coming hordes of the East now dwell. This presence, Persian as opposed to Arab, seems certain to underlie the early character of the northern confederacy. Its antagonism to Christianity is well documented. It is much more militant in this regard than the Islamic attitude that permeates much of the South. The victories of the Moslem revolution impacted in a major way the spread and scope of the Christian Church—especially the Eastern branch of the Christian Church. That is because Christianity was seen by these eastern conquerors as a rival to be spiritually exterminated in the areas of their occupation. Followers of the Koran considered Christians to be 'infidels'. Not only did these Islamic invasions take away Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Christian rule, they effectively snuffed out Christian dominion in places like Antioch, Constantinople, Egypt, Greece, Turkey, and, as we have seen before, all seven of the cities to which the Book of Revelation was addressed. As we saw in an earlier chapter, the Arab invasion proceeded along the southern Mediterranean coast, reaching up through Spain and finally running out of steam at the battle of Tours in southern France. The Arab attack and conquests, beginning just after the death of Mohammed in 632 A.D., lasted about 200 years. And two hundred years after that, another attack—that of the Seljuk Turks—took out almost all of the remaining territory of the Eastern Christian Church and spread up from Greece through the countries between the Adriatic and Black Seas into Europe, reaching to Vienna, Austria, before being repulsed there by Christian forces. With major enclaves throughout Europe, Africa, and the Mediterranean, the Islamic dominion on earth now spreads from sea to sea all across Asia. At least 40% of the population of the Phillipines, for instance, belong today to the Moslem religion. The Islamic impact, especially in its deflection of the spread of Christianity across the world, has been profound. While the Christian presence itself has been allowed to remain in place in most areas of Moslem occupation, all Christian proselytizing activities have been disallowed. And, in the case of the Ottoman empire, the sultans promoted Christian slavery. It is against the Koran for

Moslem's to enslave other Moslems, but no such anti-slavery injunction is to be found in that book concerning infidels (such as Christians). Taking advantage of this option, the leaders of the Ottoman empire ruled that every fourth-born son of Christian families living in the areas of their control—in Europe, Greece and Turkey, for instance—be made a slave of the Islamic state. And, once cleansed of Christian training and re-schooled in the ways of Mohammed, to spend the rest of their lives in service to the sultans—as their personal property and possession. Those who were obedient were paid handsomely. The most elite of all the fighting forces of the Ottoman empire were composed of such 'Christian slaves'—called 'Janissarys'. Not only were they forcibly denied their Christian heritage, they proved a formidable fighting machine for their captors. It was the Janissarys, for instance, who conquered the city of Constantinople for the Moslem forces (the capitol of the Eastern Christian Church), after the regular Islamic forces had failed.

The consequences of this active antagonism to Christ by the Islamic world has had a profoundly negative effect on the development of the eastern Christian Church and severely blocked its passage eastward across the Asian continent. The focus of this fence between East and West has historically resided at the Euphrates river. It is this area which scripture tells us will fall open at the sound of the 'sixth trumpet' of the Book of Revelation. That trumpet, scripture says, will release from God's bondage certain angels at the Euphrates, making a way for the kings of the East to come in and conquer Babylon. These eastern kings, then, will put together the final great Persian empire foreseen by the ancient prophets. That sixth trumpet seems to be sounding now. The ascendancy of the East has been one of the major events of the 20th Century. Three enormous empires have grown there in the last 60 years, Japan, the Soviet Union and China. The United States suffered a humiliating defeat in Vietnam, and the Korean conflict is still smouldering. And now a fourth empire there, that of the Medes, is beginning to form. Scripture indicates that initially, when the great powers of the End prepare to meet each other in combat, they will be divided by the Euphrates river. The North on one side, and the coalition of countries which Daniel calls the kingdom of the South on the other. The 'kingdom of the South' seems certain to include the three military powers seen there today—Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt. The second Gulf War when it comes is certain to fuse the alliance between these three countries even further than the processes of the first war have. As we have seen, according to the book of Daniel the affiliation of these three nations will be cemented in the strength of the west—a process also well in progress today. The current Arab boundaries were defined at the Euphrates river during the First World War when the British, under the leadership of one of its officers—T.E. Lawrence (popularly called Lawrence of Arabia), united with the Arabs to drive the

Ottoman Turks out of the Middle East. In this action, Lawrence helped Arabia gain control of almost all the territory that lay to the west and south of this river. In so doing, he helped structure southern boundaries that now match scripture's battle lines. At the same time, other British actions secured Jerusalem. This is the conquest that made it possible for the Jews to return to Palestine because it brought the Holy Land under British rule. In retrospect, therefore, we can see many processes being molded by God in this century to bring the world into line with the Bible's predictions.

Daniel's prophecies show that the ten-nation confederacy will be founded not in peaceful and secretive economic alliances, but in open combat—in warfare that will be catastrophic—worse than anything the world has ever seen in the past. In order to understand the fanaticism which will drive the eastern confederacy's initial lust for such a war, we have to look again at the Great Revolt sweeping the West. We have already seen that it is essential for the freedoms associated with western government to be anchored in the statutes of God in order to work. But with these governments now declaring their freedom from Christ, His moral code is no longer in force in the West. In the resulting ethical vacuum, where the constraints of Christian conscience have been physically removed, western freedoms have been turned into a license to sin, producing social anarchy and internal chaos. We can see vast tributaries of that disarray spreading throughout our entire country now. It may be free, but it is falling apart internally because of sin. Shunning discipline, western government has been altogether helpless in trying to slow down the proliferation of drugs, weapons, violence, greed and sexual misconduct that has engulfed it. The revolution against Christ and His Word is occurring at all levels and in all countries of the western world. The politicians and business leaders are often just as wicked as the people they are trying to bring to justice. And the judges and leaders of the society continue adamantly to mandate a civilization devoid of Godly principles. This breakdown proves that civilized behavior is not dependent on political processes alone. Human society must be held together by the moral fabric of God as well if it is to be orderly. That moral code must come from the Bible because God has expressed the laws of this world's social order through that one Book, and He has created the whole universe within its rules. God's Law is Jesus Christ. Wherever Jesus is obeyed, peace prevails and order is maintained. But wherever He is rejected, public anarchy and violence take over. With the world's commitment to Jesus Christ waning, the rules He promoted in society are being thrown out. That is why we now see a civilization that is falling apart, bringing with it in this century a global anarchy not seen on this planet during Christian times. The politics have not changed during this period, only the moral base. Western government has evicted Christ from His post at the head of its table,

handing His ruling scepter back to the pagans. This means that the government is on His shoulders no more. Isaiah's song has been silenced. As a result, what the western world has been exporting to the East in recent years is not just its democratic freedoms, but also the decadence associated with its moral collapse. Watching the immoral and hedonistic processes of modern western civilization enter their own countries has produced in the East a culture shock everywhere that it has happened, but especially where such behavior clashes with strong religious taboos. This is particularly true in the case of the Middle East where the populations are deeply committed to the moral ethics of the Koran. The same is true in much of Asia as well, not just because many of those populations are also Moslem, but also because these nations have lived for such a long time under totalitarian regimes which have tried to block such behavior politically through military repression. Now virtually all eastern gates have been opened to the West and the music and videotapes and movies and drugs are pouring in—right alongside the freedoms of democratic government—all of it seeming to go hand in hand. Resurrecting Sodom and Gomorrah in a place called Hollywood, the scions of capitalism have packaged all the elements of this misconduct in an endless parade of promotions glorifying sex and violence which they have disseminated to every corner of the earth. Fueling the breakdown, these sinful productions and their dark music, antagonistic to God, have helped immeasurably to intensify Satan's corrosive effect on the societies of the world. As a result, western culture is being viewed with growing alarm by many government leaders in the East as they begin to see the same kind of social turmoil prevalent in the West start to proliferate through their own cities as well.

Only two avenues exist. The East can either react or acquiesce to the decadence. The Bible predicts the former. It foresees a people coming out of the North and aligned with the East consumed with the idea that they are the servants of God empowered by Him to restore social order to an earth consumed in profligacy. And that is how Babylon will fall. Very soon then, this collision of values will come to a head in a violent and shattering confrontation. Driving this hostile encounter will be the inflamed passions of the next U.S./Persian war. In the aftermath of that war, Daniel shows that the United States will lose its leadership role in the world. This split in the unity of the West will tear apart its military alliances and leave much of western civilization helpless against the hordes of eastern armies amassing against it—vast hordes whose minds have become obsessed with the notion that the earth can only be cleansed with blood. These are the last days of Babylon—the time of the great scourge of the planet earth. Joel said that the ten nations will launch a campaign of violence that will ultimately denude the globe, leaving the world of the past—a world of gardens and flowers—a battlefield of bombed-out craters filled with the ashes and the dust of

human civilization in its wake. We are not dealing here with an orderly exchange of governments. These are the days when the world will spin headlong out of control into what the Bible calls "*all the devastation decreed*". (Dn.9:26). It is the time the Bible has called 'the Wrath'—a time that will make the World Wars of the past seem simply preludes to the catastrophic events they have heralded.

This monster now stirring in the steppes of Asia will be launching its programs through the barrel of a gun, not at a red-teller. There will be no confusing the mark of this beast. His stamp will be clear even to the blind. It will be inked in violence. Daniel said that this mammoth eastern coalition will have "*great iron teeth*", (Dn.7:7), and that it will use those teeth to crush the earth as it tramples down its kingdoms. "*The fourth beast is to be a fourth kingdom on earth, different from all other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, trample it underfoot and crush it.*" (Dn.7:23). If this kingdom were able to lock up the world economically, it wouldn't have to resort to burning it down. Economic unity and widespread warfare do not go together. Especially the kind of purging and depopulating warfare all the prophecies predict. Economies and money markets will all collapse in that kind of environment. Therefore, unity, especially economic unity is never to be. Not in a world where markets are isolated and economic production in vast areas brought to a standstill by fighting. Listen to what Joel says of these time: "*Day of darkness and gloom, day of cloud and blackness. Like the dawn there spreads across the mountains a vast and mighty host...in their van the fire devours, in their rear a flame consumes. The country is like a garden of Eden ahead of them and a desert waste behind them. Nothing escapes them. They look like horses, like chargers they gallop on, with a racket like the clatter of chariots they hurtle over the mountain tops, with a crackling like a blazing fire devouring the stubble, a mighty army in battle array. At the sight of them the peoples are appalled and every face grows pale.*" (Joel 2:2-5). All of this fighting (the 'roaring of the nations' that is destined for the last days) will result in the complete ruin of Babylon.

While the scope of Daniel's prophecies seems to demand a significant number of years necessary to allow all these events to transpire (164 years were necessary at the time of Antiochus for instance), such will not be the case in our time. Since God has cut the years of the end short, history's final events will take place in rapid sequence and with startling speed. History has taught us that immense changes in world politics can occur almost overnight. In 1923, ten years before the housepainter Adolph Hitler took control of Germany and changed the political structure of the civilized world, there was not the slightest hint of his coming. And twelve years after he came to power, he was dead. It will be the same at the End with

the horde of armies commanded by the Beast and his compatriots. *"At evening all was terror; before morning comes they are no more. Such was the lot of our plunderers, such, the fate of our despoilers."* (Is.17:14).

PART 5

SECOND WAR OF THE APOCALYPSE

"Listen, a rumbling in the mountains like a great crowd. Listen! The din of kingdoms, of nations mustering. It is the Lord God Almighty marshalling the troops for battle. They come from the far horizons, God and the instruments of his fury to lay the whole earth waste." *Is.13:4-5*

20

The Night of the Tribulation

"Persia takes up his quiver, Aram mounts his horse and Kir fetches out his shield. Your fairest valleys are filled with chariots and the horsemen take up positions at the gates; thus falls the defense of Judah."
Is.22:6-8

There has always been a great sense of urgency in the Christian religion. The Sonlight, Jesus said, is only temporary. There is a 'night' coming which will replace it. *"As Long as the day lasts I must carry out the work of the one who sent me; the night will soon be here when no one can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world."* (John 9:4-5). The great tribulation which scripture has foreseen as the instrument of the 'night' Jesus predicted will make its appearance in the formation of a ten-nation confederacy constructed among the countries of the Asian north. With strong ties to Media and Persia, this amalgamation of nations will plunge the world into almost uninterrupted warfare; a reign of chaos so horrific that the Bible, from its opening pages, has termed it 'the Wrath'. It is the very disaster Jesus came to warn the world about, predicting that it leads to a place of doomsday which scripture has termed 'Armageddon'. Covering the earth like a dark cloud, it will end the millennium by taking away the light of Christ from the world. Coming from out of the North and the East like the deadly hurricane storm winds of a dreaded 'nor-easter'—ten leaders, fomenting legions of warriors, will rise to head different aspects of this confederacy. While both will come with the same intent—to drive the western way of life out of existence, the first Persian king, the early leader of the ten-nations, will lead forces whose goals are austere: *"See now, I stir up against them the Medes, who think nothing of silver, who take no pleasure in gold. The baby boys all cut to pieces, the baby girls all crushed. They have no mercy on the fruit of the womb, no pity in their eyes for children."* (Is.13:17-18). It is evident from Isaiah's description that this empire will be puritanical, vicious and extremely violent from the very first. The words are connotative of an eastern regime that is overwhelmingly harsh and fundamentalist. Daniel, allowed by God to see key visages in the 'night' of Satan, described its precipitating empire with these words: *"Next I saw another vision in the visions of the night: I saw a fourth beast, fearful, terrifying, very*

strong; it had great iron teeth, and it ate, crushed and trampled underfoot what remained. It was different from the previous beasts and it had ten horns." (Dn.7:7). This last Persian empire (an empire formed in the blast of the sixth trumpet of the Book of Revelation) will banish the light of Christ from the world canceling God's offer of reconciliation. Not only will it destroy Babylon spiritually, it will annihilate it physically as well. As it does so, it will pass through three distinct phases. The first of these, the days of its inception and development, will be marked by protracted fighting and at least one major treaty as the confederacy tries to come to grips with the religious civil war which has erupted inside its borders—an immense Islamic crises which will have devastating consequences for the future of the earth. This rift in the Moslem world will effectively split the Middle East in two. On one side there will be the 'North' in Daniel's prophecies, and on the other, the 'South'. (See map 4 in the Appendix). The Islamic schism so evident in this division divides at the Euphrates river, separating the Persian sector in the North from the Arab contingent in the South. Born out of the political turmoil that will soon generate a second Gulf War, scripture's prophecies (especially those of Daniel) show that the unrest between them will produce a time of endless combat on earth destined to continue virtually uninterrupted all the way to the End. The 'kings of the North and the South' in Daniel's prophecies are the various leaders who will fight escalating battles in the world's progression to that fateful Day of Judgment. The warriors of Iraq and Iran do not stand alone in these prophecies. The vast numbers involved show that even in the early stages of this fighting, Persian fundamentalists will apparently join ranks with much of the Asian north. The name 'Persia' in the Book of Daniel is generic, encompassing the entire East. But the Bible always matches such dualism with literal counterparts. It seems certain that this will be the case here as well, but just how remains a mystery yet to be revealed. Certainly to a large degree it will hinge on the fact that the lands surrounding the Euphrates river will prove to be the historic birthplace of the fundamentalist extremism which scripture indicates will obsess the eastern nations as they rise up to overturn western civilization in the waning days of history. In the Book of Daniel, remember, the entire war of the last days is defined in North/South terms divided by the Euphrates river—terms which, if this battle takes place in our time, define combat between two rival Islamic empires. The troops of the North (Media/Persia) will come from a vast reservoir of nations scattered all across the northern part of the Eastern Hemisphere. Gog's armies are characterized as being 'like the sands of the sea' -- 'vast hordes' of men and material. Such descriptions indicate that almost the entire Asian continent will mobilize behind the confederacy. While a large part of this area today is Moslem, a greater percentage is secular—completely non-religious. It was the committed goal of the communist regimes which ruled all through the 20th Century to drive religion out of the entire Soviet Union.

They referred to religion as the 'opiate of the masses'. How successful they were in their efforts to secularize the East can be seen on graph 8 in the Appendix.

Ezekiel's prediction that the Rebel will come from the 'far north' seems to point to a geographic location close to Russia. The place name, 'Rosh' is mentioned in the Greek Bible in relation to Gog (Ez.38:3), indicating that a transliteration of a name similar to 'Russia' does appear in at least some of the original Biblical manuscripts. Besides 'Rosh', two other countries bordering the Black Sea, Meschech and Tubal (Ez.38), are described by Ezekiel as forming a part of this empire as well, and they reinforce the Rebel's strong relationship with the nations which surround this sea. While a return to communism is a distinct possibility in many areas of the former Soviet Union, the most militant force for eastern instability right now remains the growing threat of Islamic extremism which is inclined to violence, steadfastly opposed to western civilization, and whose adherents today occupy much of the territory described in the prophecies. This is why the union between 'Persia' and the northern Asian alliance (the ten-nation confederacy) so obvious in Daniel's prophecies, seems to point to a fundamentalist revival within these nations. (Ez.38:5). Several of the nations in the new Russian confederacy have large, if not predominately Moslem populations and at least one of these countries is equipped with a large arsenal of the most modern nuclear weapons, complete with the latest missile delivery systems. Nuclear weapons and the means to launch them is something that the Middle East has been trying to secure for many years. Israel apparently already has such an arsenal. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, thousands of nuclear and rocket scientists and technicians have been set free to fend for themselves. This sophisticated pool of nuclear architects is literally up for grabs to the highest bidder. Awash with money and sitting on the richest oil reserves in the world, the Middle East is in a position to offer these nuclear experts the highest bids of all. This is one of the unsettling factors in the militant attitude (both anti-western and anti-Christian) that seems to be festering and growing throughout the Middle East at this time. What happens here in the coming years has tremendous consequences for the rest of the world because almost every nation on earth is dependent on Middle Eastern oil. There can be little doubt that this international dependency on the energy resources of the Middle East is the underlying factor which will give the beast such powerful leverage among so many nations of the world at the time of the End. With a world consumed by the kind of warfare the prophecies envision, world economies will be simple, not complex -- and oil (the means to sustain this warfare) will be the driving issue confronting almost every country on the globe. For all these reasons, and especially because it is so clearly delineated in the Bible, it is certain that a binding coalition between the Asian/Russian North and the forces of the Middle East is going

to occur as a central process in the formation of the ten-nation confederacy. Given the austere principles scripture predicts will drive this confederacy, and the names scripture often associates with it (i.e., 'Media' and 'Persia') the Middle Eastern emphasis cannot be overstated, especially in its early formation. (Is.13:17-18).

While the victories will see-saw back and forth for a period of time between North and South, Daniel shows that the South will be generally stronger in the early battles between the two. That will change, however, as the days pass—days that will lead to a united and powerful eastern coalition. When this happens, a great war-lord will arise to take the reigns of this confederacy, and under his direction, the 'ten-nations' will march to a triumphant string of military victories that will lead these eastern contingents successfully across much of the earth. Jerusalem will fall; so will Europe as will significant parts of the American continent. (Dan.11:15-18). In contrast to the 'beast' who will appear later, the goals of the confederacy will be ascetic during this initial period. It will be steeped in a fundamentalist kind of morality. Not a Christian morality which promotes peace and gentleness, but a violent and coercive morality that is exercised at the end of a gun. This commitment to violence will be the key factor which divides the philosophy of the invading armies of the East from the Christian tenets that they will be so successful in tearing down. Peace on earth will disappear. Satan's mobilization of the world for war will proceed exactly as the Bible predicted it would. (Rev.20:8). The fact that so much warfare could occur in the Eastern Hemisphere without the United States being drawn into the hostilities in a greater way—especially in Europe—may be an indication of how swift this first major campaign will be. Significant capitulation will also occur (Dn.11:14)—in fact, it is this betrayal that will dissolve the strength of the union binding the southern allies and make possible the overall success of the Persian assault.

Because the rise of this eastern coalition (the Ten Nations of the North) is so important to the terminal events of history, we need to go back and review some of the more critical aspects of this upsurge in more detail. As we stated before, in the very earliest battles, the South will dominate the northern forces. (Dn.11:7, 11:11). Over time, however, Daniel indicates that the tides of battle will change. The North will recruit a very large army and this time bring plentiful supplies. (Dn.11:13). When this happens many allies of the South will bolt and join the northern forces. At the same time, *"men of violence will also rebel from your own people, thus fulfilling the vision; but they will fail."* (Dn.11:14). One aspect of this prophecy describes the doomed fate of Jewish militants who will imprudently carry their war machine north to the Euphrates river. Perhaps thinking to expand the Israeli

presence to the boundaries of Israel at its greatest moment in history—the northern extreme of Solomon's kingdom touching the banks of the Euphrates river—it is this reckless Jewish contingent that will be caught unawares in the eastern ambush. Isolated so far from home, the entire Jewish army will be destroyed by the flood of eastern forces as they sweep down into Palestine in the North's initial conquest of Jerusalem. (Dn.11:16). *"The king of the North will then come and throw up siege-works to capture a strongly fortified city. The forces of the South will not stand their ground, its picked troops will not be strong enough to resist. The invader will treat him as he pleases, no one will be able to resist him. He will take his stand in the land of Splendor, destruction in his hands."* (Dn.11:15-16). The 'strongly fortified city' described in these passages is Jerusalem. (See Is.25:2). Isaiah's words show that the city of Jerusalem will be captured in this stunning assault. Instead of pressing home his victory, however, the eastern monarch in command of the ten-nation empire will make a treaty with the king of the south and withdraw. This will free Jerusalem from his grasp and buy time for the South to reorganize its defenses. The king of the North will not simply go home, however. Instead, fortified with all the infantry of Pandemonium's army, he will turn toward the west and try to extend his conquests all the way to America. This is the march that will bring him across Europe. *"He will next turn to the islands and conquer many of them..."* (Dn.11:18). His hordes will be so successful in their march west that they will not be stopped until they have crossed the Atlantic Ocean and secured substantial victories in the Western Hemisphere. By bringing the war in Europe to the Western Hemisphere, the king of the North will draw the United States into the action. When that happens, the western response will be so intense and devastating that the eastern forces will be routed and have to withdraw: *"a magistrate will put a stop to his outrages in such a way that he will be unable to repay outrage for outrage."* (Dn.11:18). The western 'magistrate' who will put a stop to this eastern march around the world would have to be a future commander of the forces of the United States military. No one else on earth will command forces powerful enough to crush a Persian war machine of such size and ferocity, especially one driven by the inertia of so many victories. Many scholars considered Daniel's passage fulfilled long ago when the Roman consul, Lucius Scipio, humiliated the armies of 'Antiochus the Great' at Magnesia. But Scipio's crushing defeat of Antiochus the Great (the father of the Rebel Antiochus Epiphanes IV) only serves to throw light on this prophecy. The true meaning of Daniel's words (as we have shown so many times before) relates to a time that is still to come.

In its initial sweep west, as the giant war machine of the Medes marches across Europe, that continent will cease to exist in any political way that we know it now. The

damage there will be incomprehensible because it will involve the opening stages of the ravages defined by scripture—sin's scourge of the earth. *"The country is like a garden of Eden ahead of them and a desert waste behind them."* (Joel 2:3). In order to accomplish destruction this extensive, a vast armada of armies will be needed. *"Listen, a rumbling in the mountains. Like a great crowd. Listen! The din of kingdoms, of nations mustering. It is the Lord God marshalling the troops for battle. they come from a distant country, from the far horizons...to lay the whole earth waste."* (Is.13:4-5). This warfare will be world-wide. It will see the ten-nations expand their power and influence across much of the earth. Even so, Christians, during this period, will apparently not become a primary target for extermination on account of their religion. The warfare will be intense, producing incredible damage and Christian losses will be immense, but the king steering it will not carry his warfare into the Church per se. This is undoubtedly the reason why so little writing regarding this first king appears in scripture. It is only in the writings of Daniel that we are given images of his exploits. (Dn.11:15-20). Defeated on the shores of the American continent, this eastern scourge will collapse and the ten-nation Asian empire will falter. (Dn.11:18). Although this early king's attack will not be levelled against Christians per se, we can see in Isaiah's prophecy that these Eastern forces will be extremely vicious, and the damage they inflict on those they attack will be as caustic as anything ever seen on earth in the past. Christians in great numbers will fall victim to the incredible violence of these times. Under this mercilous monarch's direction, the ten-nation confederacy will appear invincible. Jerusalem will be captured; and his campaign against Babylon will not be stopped until well after his forces have secured major victories in the Western Hemisphere. His fanatic demolition of the West, Daniel tells us, will finally burn out somewhere in the 'islands of the sea'. (Dn.11:18). Thwarted by his losses in America, the king of the North will return to the Eastern Hemisphere and try to consolidate his victories there, attacking fortifications opposed to him in various places throughout Europe and Asia. While he is attempting this, however, Daniel tells us that he will suddenly stumble and die. *"He will then turn on the strongholds of his own country, but will stumble, fall, and never be seen again."* (Dn.11:19). *"In his place there will rise a man who will send an extortioner to despoil the royal splendor; in a few days he will be shattered, though neither publicly nor in battle."* (Dn.11:20). Again, Daniel's prophecies relate to Christ; so we must view Daniel's words through Christian eyes. The Bible is about Jesus and the rescue of God. Nothing else. It is in this light that we must view Daniel's words. Proof of this is obvious in Daniel's vision of the Last Judgment. (Dan.7:9-14). His reference to the 'royal splendor', then, applies to a major Christian Church, not to a Jewish temple or synagogue. The place in question (the location of the royal splendor) is the City of David in exile—the City of David in Babylon. The only

cathedral there which fits the location Daniel has specified is the Christian headquarters now structured in the city of Rome. St. Peter's is the largest Christian church in the world and it is filled with valuable and expensive works of Christian art. An extortioner at these premises, by commanding the removal of much of this statuary and artwork, could indeed, despoil 'the royal splendor'. To say that this is a splendid cathedral is an understatement, and it is the only Christian church on earth to boast a throne (that of St. Peter) to prove that it is, in fact, 'royal'. The prophecy indicates that after the first king dies, he will be replaced by a man who will challenge the sanctuary of the Vatican. This could not happen unless the empire of the Medes—the 'ten-nation empire of the east'—controlled Rome. We can see in this prophecy, then, that Italy will have fallen to the eastern forces very early in the course of the tribulation. And it will remain under the control of the eastern forces even after the first great king has died. This indicates that the death of the first eastern monarch will not take the world back to the way it was before he brought his hordes of troops west. Much of western Europe and the Mediterranean will lie under permanent eastern administration as a result of this king's earlier victories. Such will not be the case with Jerusalem, however, and this is further proof that Daniel's prophecy of extortion does not relate to a Jewish worship center. The administrators from the North cannot extort what they do not control. Daniel's words are very clear in this respect—the forces of the first king of the North will be driven from Jerusalem and kept away from that city by the same western power that pushes these eastern forces out of the 'islands of the sea'. Thus the kingdom of the South (the Arab-Israeli alliance situated on the east side of the Mediterranean and stretching from Egypt to the Euphrates river) will remain independent and exist apart from the vast Persian empire that lies to its north. Daniel's extortion prophecy indicates that the eastern governor who replaces the dead king will send a team into Vatican City to assess the treasures there—almost certainly in relation to some kind of hostile taxation specifically targeting the Christian Church. This eastern attempt to blackmail the Vatican is to be a key signal to all Christians that the Body of Christ is about to be attacked. The extortioner will die—seemingly by the hand of God—but the gauntlet will have been thrown. The autonomy of Christ's Church on earth will have been challenged at the highest level, a clear signal that the End is at hand. In symbolic terms, Pharaoh is about to attack the rear-guard. This means that the beast and his small band of fanatics have arrived and are now standing at the ready. The world, however, will see these events differently. With the great eastern warlord dead, and the battles drawing to a close, many nations may breathe a collective sigh of relief and look forward to clearing the wreckage of the massive devastation just past with the hope that they can rebuild peace and prosperity on earth once again. Despite its extensive territorial gains throughout the Eastern Hemisphere, the power structure of the ten-nation confederacy is certain to lie in some

disarray after its powerful leader's death, especially following so closely the empire's decisive defeat at the hands of powerful U.S. forces. Even so, the prosperity they are looking forward to will elude them. That is because, according to Paul, it is in this atmosphere of expectation for peace and a new world order that the Rebel will suddenly appear. *"It is when people are saying, 'How quiet and peaceful everything is', that the worst suddenly happens..."* (1 Thes.5:3).

21

The False Prophet

"Then I saw a second beast; it emerged from the ground; it had two horns like a lamb, but made a noise like a dragon. This second beast was servant to the first beast, and extended its authority everywhere, making the world and all its people worship the first beast, which had the mortal wound and had been healed. And it worked great miracles, even to calling down fire from heaven on to the earth while people watched." Rev.13:11-12

When Daniel said that the Rebel of the End will *"use the people of a foreign God to defend his fortresses"* (Dn.11:39), it meant that we must look beyond the geographic identity of his forces to their religious composition as well. The vast majority of people in the areas involved in Daniel's prophecies who are religious are currently Islamic—both in the North and the South—and while political empires have come and gone over the intervening centuries, the Moslem presence in these lands has not waned at all—in fact, it has grown stronger. Because it is not likely that the Rebel will be able to overcome this vast Islamic influence in his empire, he will have to alter it. This is exactly what Daniel predicted when he indicated that those who support the Rebel will not worship like their fathers or ancestors did. Instead, they will honor a god of fortresses and wealth. *"Heedless of his fathers' gods, heedless of the one whom women love, heedless of any god whatever, he will consider himself greater than them all. Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses—a god unknown to his ancestors with gold and silver, precious stones and valuable presents."* (Dn.11:37-38). Daniel's words clearly indicate that the Rebel will honor a god unfamiliar to the Islamic rulers of today. The Koran strictly forbids the worship of gold and silver. So if the Rebel of the future commands Moslem forces, they will have to be different than any ever seen before—an entirely new sect. Because Shiite Moslems detest the West, are prone to the use of violence to achieve their ends, and given their strength in what was once the Parthian stronghold of Iran, it could be argued that the Persian army to come will be composed of members of this sect. While the early hostilities may well involve Shiite Moslems fighting against Sunni Moslems, the Rebel himself, worshipping gold and silver, will obviously gather support from a group that has nothing to do with either of these. Confirming this,

Daniel has revealed that the Rebel's following will start from a very small base. (Dn.11:23).

It is not surprising that profound changes could soon occur in the religious character of the Middle East given the widespread warfare that scripture says will ravage this part of the world as the days of the end wind down. Religions can be changed by warfare. When the Roman army rolled through Judea in 70 A.D., it completely erased the Jewish religious structure we read about in the New Testament; and that warfare cannot begin to compare with the violence the Bible predicts is now about to unfold in the Middle East. In the short time that is left, the Moslem religion, now so ubiquitous in the Middle East, has no possibility of simply dissolving and disappearing. It is certain, however, to fracture. The fundamental structure underlying Daniel's prophecies, remember, calls for a divided Middle East—one that splits apart at the Euphrates river. Because Islamic politics and religion are so closely united, this could not occur without a concomitant and shattering theological schism within the Moslem faith. Since none of the forces of the future are likely to supplant Islamic supremacy in the Middle East or alter the ethnic balances of the regions specified in the prophecies (on one side of the Euphrates, the Persians—descendants of the Parthians—and on the other side of this river, the Arabs), whatever happens there must occur within the framework of these two pre-existing cultures. What the prophecies call for are conditions to appear which will inflame emotions to such a pitch in this area that it will produce a schism between these two groups so violent that it will forever alter the moderate and peaceful policies now holding sway there. There can be no doubt, then, that Daniel's prophecies reveal a future marked by a major split in the Moslem world—a rent so severe that it will become the fundamental mechanism for all the warfare of the last days. It will create the 'North' and the 'South' in Daniel's prophecies—a division the very roots of which will exist on schismatic terms. The ten-nations will be deeply involved in this split—promoting it, in fact—and as the time of the end gets closer the people of these two areas (separated from one another by the Euphrates river) will become involved in a series of armed conflicts that will escalate in intensity as they progress. (Dn.11:5-13). In these battles the areas that lie above and to the east of the Euphrates will be pitted against the nations that lie to the south and west of this river. (See Map). This can mean nothing less than Islamic civil war—a civil war dividing the Arab Moslems in the south from the Parthian strongholds of Persia and the Asian north. The entire scenario of Middle Eastern politics in the prophecies of Daniel revolves around the battles and truces between these two empires—with a third force—the superior forces of the West (almost certainly the United States), acting to try to modify the aggressive policies of the North. This means that the turbulence which is now beginning to sweep across the planet today in the wake of Satan's reappearance on earth will continue to

grow in its scope and intensity—and as it does so it will drive moderation and peace out of most human hearts and replace these values with bitter hatred and a clamor for war. This planet-wide return to brutality and paganism at the end, so clearly defined in the prophecies, is the very mobilization John alluded to in his description of Satan's return from the Abyss. *"When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive all the nations in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, and mobilize them for war. His armies will be as many as the sands of the sea; they will come swarming over the entire country and besiege the camp of the saints, which is the city that God loves."* (Rev.20:7-9).

The false prophet will be closely correlated with Satan's plan for this angry mobilization. His two horns will deceive the nations and enrage them, bringing them to the point where they will willingly carry out all the brutality the visions of scripture predict. These two horns, at least one religious, yet both brutal, seem closely related to the expected appearance on earth of a future 'false messiah'. There have been several Jews down through the centuries making claims to this title. One just a year or so ago, was written about in the New York Times. The last serious contender was a military leader, Ben Koseba, proclaimed by Rabbi Akiba as both Messiah and the 'Star' of Numbers 24:17. Deriving his messianic title from scripture, Rabbi Akiba dubbed this Jewish warrior 'Bar Kokeba' (Son of the Star). Instrumental in the final destruction of Judea, he led the last revolt against the Romans in 135 A.D., and died in the process; his claim to the title dying with him. As do the Jews, most Moslems also believe that a messiah lies in the world's future. According to the Koran, he is to be called 'Al Mahdi' (the 'guided one'). And when he appears he is expected to restore the glory and power of Islam throughout the world. Unlike the Christian Messiah, Al Mahdi, according to Islamic tradition, will be beneath God, not His equal. So there will be no Trinity associated with him. Perhaps the most famous challenger to this title in the past was Hasa ibn-Sbah, who, many centuries ago spurned the Koran and all of its moral laws and founded the Moslem order of Assassins. Hasa ibn-Sbah's appearance shows that precedent has already been set in the Islamic world for the acceptance by some of a militant and violent messiah. So while the Rebel's philosophy—a theology based on emperor-worship—will violate everything decreed by the Koran, he could still try to claim an alliance with Mohammed by discarding that Islamic scripture the way Hasa ibn-sbah did. By claiming to have received the blessings of Mohammed, the Rebel, standing on the doorstep of imminent victory in an Islamic civil war, could put himself in a position to make a powerful claim to the messianic title of Al Mahdi. Especially after he sets the stage for Moslem reunification by tearing down the resistance of the traditional Islamic forces gathered against him in the South.

It seems certain that the desire to accomplish such reunification will be a strong underlying agenda in the Rebel's war with Israel and the gathering of all the armies at the battlefield of Armageddon. Moreover, the incredible victories which accompany his swift rise to power will be viewed, all over the world, as having a divine component to them. By crushing the Arab moderates and eradicating Christian influences throughout Asia and the western nations of Europe and replacing these with his own philosophies, he could well appear to some the Islamic hero of the prophecies. After all, world rule for him would lie just beyond Armageddon. The problem with this, of course, (and it is a major problem)—the Rebel of the last days is going to claim that he, himself, is God. (2 Thes.3:4). No Moslem today could ever accept such a claim—not from anybody. Furthermore, Daniel's prophecies show that the religion of the beast will be nothing like the religion practiced in the Middle East now—it will be a faith of pomp and show—of nationalistic glory and emperor worship—reproducing on earth the kind of ostentatious spectacle that emanated from the ancient Roman empire at the height of its glory. The Koran specifically forbids such pageantry—prohibiting even statues and icons. Emphasizing this contrast, Daniel says that the Rebel will reject the God of his fathers and set himself up in God's place. *"Heedless of his fathers' gods...heedless of any god whatever, he will consider himself greater than them all."* (Dn.11:37).

Not unlike Christians, most Moslems believe that the world is coming to an end and that certain 'signs' will occur which will usher this final day in. Among the signs that Moslems expect to see involve a decay in faith; various turmoils across the earth; increased warfare and the appearance of an 'Antichrist'. At the conclusion of these hostilities, the people of Mohammed expect, not just Al Mahdi, but Jesus as well to appear on earth; and when he does so, to reject Christianity and to rule in favor of Islam. In this respect, there is an intriguing prophecy in the Book of Daniel which has God ruling, instead, in favor of the crushed forces of Christianity. *"I watched the horn making war on the saints and proving the stronger until the coming of the one of great age who gave judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High..."* (Dn.7:21-22). Some Moslems believe that when Jesus returns in the last days, he will not only reject Christianity and choose Islam, but that he will also assassinate a religious figure on earth which is reputed to be the Antichrist. After accomplishing this violent assault he will then assume a station subservient to that of Al Mahdi. Since a key assassination is at the heart of the Christian prophecies as well (Dn.9:26), it seems inevitable that these two forecasts will converge at the conclusion of history. The expectation in the Koran which foresees the death of the Antichrist at the hands of an Islamic-converted Jesus dovetails with the prophecies of our own scripture which reveal that the forces of the beast

will assassinate a great Christian figure during the wrath of the final days. Thus in Christian prophecy it is not Jesus, but the Antichrist who will direct the assassination, and it will be aimed at a great Christian leader, termed by Daniel, 'The Anointed One'. (Dn.9:26). The most notable Christian figure on earth, of course (especially in the Eastern Hemisphere), is the Pope. He leads the largest Christian church in the world and has his headquarters in Rome—the city most Christians believe is Babylon, the capitol city of the pagan world. Any extremist capable of successfully corrupting the religion of his own ancestors the way scripture foresees the beast doing in the last days would have little compunction branding the Christian Bishop of Rome the Antichrist. It is a view, after all, that thousands of Protestant Christians have entertained for centuries. Committed to warfare against Christ in the last days, this same malignant attitude will almost certainly seep into the Rebel's hostile theology as well, leading him, when the time is appropriate, to issue a call for this Bishop to be removed. Any 'Jesus pretender' who might happen upon the scene at that time, willing to carry out such a wicked call, would appear to many to have fulfilled prophecy already extant. Salmon Rushdie has proved that calls for public assassination can come from the religious east even during ordered times, let alone during times like those of the beast when everything is out of control and religious principles are all crashing down like hailstones.

In his vision, John saw two beasts coming against the House of Israel. The first beast is Babylon—a creature with seven heads and ten horns. The second beast is a creature John called the 'False Prophet'. (Rv.16:13). The False Prophet, John wrote, had two horns and made a noise like a dragon. It was a servant of the first beast, and in that servitude, extended the authority of the first beast everywhere, making the world and all its people worship Babylon. The only people on earth who will not worship the beast or have themselves branded with his name are those who turn their lives over to Jesus. Everyone else, the Bible says, will become a servant of the beast. (Rv.13:8). The False Prophet will command everyone on earth to worship the first beast, and everyone in the world will do so except those whose names have been written in God's Book of Life. Again, the first beast is Babylon—the creature mortally wounded by the preaching of the Gospel. The message of the False Prophet, then, can be seen in every teaching that arises in opposition to Jesus and His Gospel—whether it be intellectual, philosophical or religious—and no matter which age it ever appeared in. However, the presence of this figure will be most apparent in the last days when it preaches all-out war on Christ. It will play a central role in the destruction of the Church. Commanding spiritual obedience by all the people conquered in the victories of the confederacy of the beast, the first horn of this prophet will strongly oppose Christianity, promoting a harsh philosophy of religious and moral austerity in its place. The second horn,

far more pagan and secular, will command honor to a god of gold and silver. A warmongering god. (Dn.11:37-39). Its two horns are the two great philosophers who will arise to command the world to the obedience of these non-Christian doctrines, and whose policies effectively dismantle the work on earth of the servants of Jesus Christ.

John's characterization of this second beast as a 'prophet' clearly reveals its affiliation with religion. (Rv.16:13, 19:20, 20:10). The fact that he calls the second beast a 'false' prophet confirms that its teaching will be opposed to the philosophy of Jesus Christ. The second beast, then, (the False Prophet) will constitute a religious empire intensely hostile to the Lord and to his Church—it's two horns the two figures who will bring these philosophies to world power. The fact that these two horns are characterized as being lamb-like, while issuing the sound of a dragon, lets us know that the second beast will appear in religious form, but it's two horns will be bent on mayhem: "...it had two horns like a lamb, but made a noise like a dragon." (Rv.13:11). Despite its religious veneer, this empire and the religion it promotes will be war-like and have a strong tendency toward violence. All these images point to the warfare against Jesus Christ which will be promoted by the Confederation of the Medes in the last days. As we have already shown, the ten-nation empire from which the beast is destined to spring will produce two kings who are very similar. The second of these two kings will be the Great Rebel—the beast, himself. Both of these northern rulers will cross the Euphrates river and make deep incursions into the west, and both will defeat the army of Israel as they come against Jerusalem. In its appetite for warfare, this second beast (the ten-nation eastern confederacy) will be the servant of the first beast (pagan Babylon). In fact, at the very end the two will actually merge, transforming the False Prophet and the beast into a single entity. By leading the eastern forces to Rome, the second horn of the False Prophet will end up becoming the eighth and last head of the beast itself. This is not as confusing as it sounds. Emperor worship is its own religion. Seeing himself as the reincarnation of Nero, this final Parthian king, already claiming himself to be the messiah of the prophecies, will be obsessed with rebuilding Nero's earlier empire. In order to do this he will need to move his headquarters to Rome. With that accomplished he will then issue an order transforming the ten-nation empire of the East into a reincarnated Roman empire. *"This second beast was servant to the first beast, and extended its authority everywhere, making the world and all its people worship the first beast, which had received the fatal wound that had been healed."* (Rv.13:12). By this decree, what had been the empire of the Medes will suddenly become the empire of Rome, reincarnated. In that instant the Prince of Persia will become the final Caesar of Rome. This will transform the second horn of the False Prophet into the eighth head of paganism—i.e., the eighth head of the dragon in

John's vision. He will accomplish this twist of prophecy by crowning himself emperor. His self-appointment to this post is one of the reasons he is referenced apart from the other seven in the prophecies. *"He will not be given royal honors, but will insinuate himself into them in his own time and gain possession of the kingdom by intrigue."* (Dn.11:5). A part of this 'intrigue' will include the 'false Jesus' bowing to the Rebel (who has taken up residence in the Vatican) after he has violently removed his predecessor from the throne of St. Peter. It is at this point that the Beast will issue his famous proclamation, raise the Abomination and implement branding in order to distinguish Christians from non-Christians in his empire. *"He compelled everyone—small and great, rich and poor, slave and citizen—to be branded on the right hand or on the forehead, and made it illegal for anyone to buy or sell anything unless he had been branded with the name of the beast or with the number of its name."* (Rv.13:14-17).

It is clear that once the Rebel comes to power, he will promote, not just a continuance of the militant polices of his predecessor, but launch a terrible holy war against the spiritual structure of the western world (its Christian community), as well. As we have already seen in the Book of Daniel, his initial act in this endeavor will be to murderously remove the Christian Bishop who oversees Rome, and this will be followed by an attempt to remove all others on earth who follow the tenants of the Christian Church. The Rebel's vendetta will include not only Christians and Jews, but all Moslems who fail to support him. His willful attack on the main body of the House of Israel on earth will encompass the last stages of the harvest of Israel. It will be a most terrible time on earth. The violence of this period, of course, will bring to maturity the 'rapture; which, in its final aspects will occur amidst unprecedented devastation and bitter warfare. This purge is defined in scripture as the second war of the Apocalypse—the second war of the end-times. The first war occurred in the wake of Christ's crucifixion and involved all those Christians fed to lions during the days of the Caesar's. The second war will lead to Armageddon. And between the two has existed the 1700-year troubled millennium of Christian rule on the planet. And so it is that the grain harvested by God will come to lie on the threshing floor of Babylon. (Jer.51:33).

Everyone who does not follow Christ, the Book of Revelation says, shall be considered a servant of the beast. This means that the Great secular Revolt against Christ which is now sweeping the world is part and parcel of the teaching of the False Prophet. Paul said that *"nothing can happen until the Great Revolt has taken place..."* (2 Thes.2:3). Obviously, then, the Christian world has come to the most decisive moment in its entire history right now. The Revolt that Paul warned about is beginning to spread across the

globe. That means the message of the False Prophet can be seen today. We can view one part of it in the secular and pagan revolt that is driving the world community out of the Church, and we can see another part in the religious antagonism toward Christianity growing so virulent now in the Middle East. Only full scale prayer and repentance by the people of the world can slow down the processes which this two-pronged Revolt have begun to unleash. If such repentance does not happen, the end will come very quickly. There is little time, because we are close to a point where repentance will no longer be possible. Jesus warned that *"once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking (in vain)"*. This is why world prayer is so essential—especially now. And it explains why Christian visionaries in the churches today are proclaiming this need on a greater scale than ever before in history. The forces which the Revolt are unleashing are very powerful, but God has given the people of Christ a power that is even greater—as long as it is used. If not, or if there is no faith through which the power of God can flow in order to make that prayer work—the pagan forces which are now beginning to make their bold reappearance in the world will find little opposition in their attempt to return the world to Satan's complete control. While intelligent and thoughtful diplomacy can play an important role in ameliorating the tensions that are now building in the world, only a spiritual renewal in Christ can actually reverse the turbulent processes now in progress. That is because the real power of the East lies in the West's rejection of Christ's word. For this reason, faith, prayer and a return by the western world to the ethical commandments of Christ is the only process that can alter the timetable concerning these events. That is why a deep spiritual revival is such a crucial imperative during these momentous times.

22

Gog—Prince of Magog

"Son of man, turn towards Gog and the country of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him. Say, 'The Lord God says this: I am against you Gog. I will turn you round, fixing hooks in your jaws, and drag you and your troops along...Persia and Cush and Put...Gomer and all its troops, northernmost Bethogarmah and all its troops, and many nations with you. Be ready, be well prepared, you and all your troops and the others rallying round you, and hold yourself at my service.'"
Ez.38:2-7

The Bible tells us that when the man whom Ezekiel calls 'Gog' comes to power, Satan's warfare on earth will expand and its focus will be re-directed toward Christians and their churches. This will initiate across the land the sobering times detailed so vividly in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Matthew. As bad as the first king's murderous rampage of violence will be, then, the beast's reign will be far worse than that of his predecessor -- in fact, worse, according to scripture, than that of any monarch who has ever lived, or, whoever will live. Targeting the entire House of Israel for extermination, Gog will bring the tribulation on earth to epochal proportions. *"Armies will be utterly routed and crushed by him, the prince of the covenant too...He will go from treachery to treachery, ever growing stronger despite the smallness of his following."* (Dn.11:22-23). His campaign against Christians will likely mimic Hitler's persecution of the Jews, but take place on a much wider scale. Expanding that persecution, he will make it hundreds of times larger. The scriptures tell us that Gog will outlaw the religion of Christ itself. He will burn down every church and synagogue in all the territories under his control, and hunt down and order murdered every Christian and Jew in his empire. Every Bible he finds will be burned. This lawless Rebel is to become the 'Gog' of Ezekiel's prophecies, and the empire which he carves out of the framework of the earlier confederacy' will be a kingdom the Bible calls 'Magog'. Through intrigue, this lawless monarch will realign the confederacy along the lines of a new and violent religion—one formed on emperor worship—a religion entirely different from that of his predecessor whose armies disdained the riches and intoxicants of this world. The Rebel's forces will be driven by a thirst for plunder. Stealing and amassing treasure and

distributing it to their friends, they will be the direct opposite of those whose shoes they fill. (Dn.11:37-39). When the Rebel, building from an eleventh nation, realigns the Asian empire, Daniel informs us that he will overthrow and assimilate into his own, three of the original ten-nations of the earlier Persian confederacy. When this realignment occurs, another wave of invasions will result. Jerusalem again will fall for a time and vast areas will come under the beast's far-reaching control. Just as it was with the first king, until Armageddon, the only power on earth capable of standing off this second eastern war machine will be the forces of the United States military. (Dn.11:30).

Ezekiel has shown that when Gog attacks Israel, he will come down on it from the far north exactly as the first king did. It is possible to infer from this that both of these eastern tyrants will arise from areas quite close to one another. Antiochus IV Epiphanes, scripture's prototype of the Rebel, for instance, was actually a son of Antiochus the Great (his predecessor and the first king). When his father died, Epiphanes IV (the 'beast' upon which scholars insist Daniel based his visions) seized the throne from his nephew (the rightful heir). While that is how events correlating to Daniel's prophecies occurred in the past, such a relationship is not specifically designated in Daniel's words (Dn.11:19-22), so the two kings of the east may not be related to one another in any way whatsoever when Daniel's vision is fulfilled in the future. The fact that the Rebel will rise from small beginnings seems to confirm a significant disunity between these two kings. The familial relationship scholars find in Daniel's prototypes may be symbolic and refer only to a similar race or ethnic background. By referring to the coming madman as the prince of 'Rosh, Meshech and Tubal', Ezekiel not only confirms the assimilation of these countries into the Rebel's empire, he also intimates that his government—the empire of Magog—will occupy land close to the Black Sea. Historically, as we have stated before, the three nations named in this prophecy were ancient countries that bordered this sea. It is not certain which four countries the prophecy of Magog designates, but their proximity to the Black Sea seems significant. As we said, the name 'Rosh' may allude to the name 'Russia'. Tubal, perhaps, to Turkey. These locations are supported by many prophecies which see the Rebel coming down on Jerusalem from the far north. A line drawn from Jerusalem straight north (beginning in Jerusalem and extending up to the north pole) would pass right through the center of Turkey, then the Black Sea, and, further north of that, almost through the city of Moscow. Today the five largest countries bordering the Black Sea are Russia, the Ukraine, Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria. Turkey, of course, in historic times was called Asia Minor. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, another independent eastern republic is in the throes of being formed along this seacoast as well: the former Soviet republic of Georgia, the birthplace of Joseph Stalin.

And although it does not border the Black Sea directly, immediately to the west of this inland sea lies the former nation of Yugoslavia. Now divided, much of that nation is currently controlled by militant Serbians, an angry people who have violently established themselves as among the most contentious in all of Europe. The Serbian campaign to either dispossess or exterminate a large Moslem population which has peacefully inhabited the Bosnian sector of this country since the days of the Ottoman empire, has created deep hostilities in this region recently. Adding to these tensions, the Islamic sector has been infiltrated by Iranian-backed fundamentalist militants. These 'moujahedeen' (Muslim holy warriors from Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan), often called the 'madmen of God' were brought in to battle the Serbian forces, and have remained behind in a move to destabilize any peaceful settlement to the hostilities still bubbling there. They are skilled at killing and, according to the Los Angeles Times, 'have been implicated in criminal acts as far away as France'. The fierce emotions revolving around these two Yugoslavian states are certain to one day become a significant component in the complex factors which will later fuel the merciless quest for vengeance sought by the Persian-dominated ten-nation confederacy in its destructive march across western civilization. With the Serbian faction claiming to be Christian, the moujahedeen bring an atmosphere of 'jihad' (Moslem holy war) to the events taking place there. The Christian visionaries of Medjugorja, a community in Yugoslavia not far from the Bosnian city of Sarajevo, communicated messages which they said they received from Mary the mother of Jesus, which foretold a great event occurring in this area at some point in the near future. So fateful is this event, Mary told these children, that world prayer has been called for by her on an unprecedented scale. These visions began several years before Yugoslavia disintegrated into the warring states that now rule there. Since visions of Mary have been occurring now in Medjugorje for over ten years, the conflict that now encompasses Bosnia may be the basis for these holy apparitions. It is also possible, of course, that something even more fateful may emanate from this region in the near future. It is close to the Black Sea, so it lies quite near the throneland of the beast who will rise up to lead the ten-nation confederacy to Armageddon. And the fact that the visage of Mary is reported to have told the children in Medjugorja that her appearances in this Yugoslavian countryside are to be her very last on earth, add credence to this area's deep involvement in the coming darkness which is about to put a stop to the work of Christ. (John 9:4).

Another interesting sidelight to the Yugoslavian disintegration is that the southernmost state in this fracturing is Macedonia, the country that produced Alexander the Great—the prototype upon whose activities the entire litany of Daniel's prophecies stem. In the prophecies of Isaiah, we have seen that the rise to power of Cyrus, the king of Persia

which allowed the Israelites to return from their captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem, alludes to a compassionate messianic figure sent by God to set the House of Israel free from worldwide persecution and exile. (Is. 45). Other prophecies, however, especially those of Daniel, have portrayed the king of Persia as a tyrant who becomes hopelessly obsessed with the extermination of the two Houses of Israel. As we said earlier, this has created dual symbols—with one set portraying a benevolent religious rescue and the other the harsh punishment of a sinful world. They are two parts of the same event. It is easy to see that the Cyrus in Isaiah's prophecies was Jesus—the king whom God has raised out of the east to lead the House of Israel in a great victory for righteousness. Isaiah's prophecy points directly to Jesus Christ. He is the perfect spiritual fulfillment of the prophecy in the Book of Chronicles which promises a decree by the King of the East setting the people of Israel free from the clutches of their captors in Babylon. This prophecy has been perpetually unveiling itself in every Christian conversion that has ever occurred on earth since the day of Pentecost. That is what Jesus came to do—to set the people of God free from Babylon. But the Rebel of the end, aligning himself as he does with the east and surrounding himself with a fierce Persian army, will also lay claim to these words. It is here that we see the dualism that marks God's written Word.

Scripture shows that the Rebel will see himself as the messiah, pre-empting Jesus by trying to promote himself as divinity in God's place. The Rebel will support this claim by having a 'Jesus' appear and pledge allegiance to him while renouncing the faith of the Christian Church. This so-called 'Jesus', when he appears, will be subservient to the Rebel and dedicate himself to the ten-nations of the eastern confederacy. Prophecies to this effect already exist in certain traditions of the Islamic religion, where Jesus is viewed as a lesser prophet. Paul indicated that the beast will set himself up as a god and consider himself greater than all the gods on earth. (2 Thes. 2:4). In an attempt to drive this point home, he will enthrone himself in the sanctuary citadel. (Dn. 11:31). Since neither Jews nor Moslems believe that the Messiah has yet come, there is widespread precedent among non-Christians for the expectation of someone messianic other than Jesus. Once he has taken control of Rome and evicted the Church, the Rebel will issue his own decree concerning the bondage of the people of God to Babylon. This decree will be marked by a physical manifestation (Daniel calls it the Abomination of Desolation) and it will break the covenant between God and the people of the earth. Destroying the Eucharist (Dn.8:11) and ending the captivity, it will seal the fate of the planet. Since Daniel indicates that the Rebel will use the people of an alien god to defend his fortresses (Dn. 11:39), his association with some kind of religion is obvious. But scripture seems to indicate that it will be a religion of his own making—one in

which he (the Rebel) proclaims himself as the god of the universe, and every prophet who ever lived, his subjects. He will claim that he, the emperor, and not Jesus, is the messiah that the scriptures were pointing to, and in this way set himself up as Christ's polar opposite. Daniel has indicated that the Rebel will not be born or elected into his royal power, but will gain possession of his kingdom by intrigue. (Dn. 11:21). His strong association with religion—the fact that he is destined to see himself as a god and proclaim himself greater than any messiah, is an indication that he may enter the political scene obliquely; possibly from a religious platform. Perhaps from the minor beginnings of a bizarre religious sect. If so, it may very well be one that he, himself, has founded or invented. Only the Jews and Moslems are still looking for the appearance of a messiah, so the Rebel may stem from one of these two lineages. His close alliance with the people of Persia, and his warfare against Israel seems certain to prove that he will not be Jewish. And there is a significant prophecy in the Bible which indicates he might not be Persian either. This prophecy is contained in the Book of Esther. It shows the evil Haman as neither Persian nor Jew, but a foreigner who comes into Persia and aligns himself with that eastern nation from the outside.

The Rebel of the End will be dedicated to his own divinity and bent on the annihilation of Christians, Jews and many Moslems as well. As he gathers followers to his own cause, Daniel explains, he will begin to grow powerful—strong enough not only to take over the reigns of his own tiny country, but in his rise to power he will also annex three of the ten nations of the Asian confederacy, forming the Magog of the prophecies. (Dn. 7:8). Enlarging his growing empire, he will extend his base of power "towards south and east and toward the Land of Splendor". (Dn. 8:9). Starting out with virtually no strength at all, and despite his microscopic beginnings, Daniel indicates the Rebel will grow Herculean as other strong countries throw their lot in with him and give him control of their armies and weapons and finances. It is in this way that he will gain almost complete dominance over most of the northern section of the Eastern Hemisphere, including a significant part of the Middle East—eventually coming to command the entire army of the eastern world—the ten-country federation of the Medes that had caused all the previous warfare and destruction in the years leading up to the Rebel's appearance. Through intrigue and treachery, Daniel says, the Rebel will rout whole armies, ultimately crushing the immense power of the Christian Church as he vanquishes Israel and the Arabian alliance that is opposed to him (the king of the South). (Dn. 11:22). Called into action by God, the Rebel will come held in the grip of a divine snare: *"Son of man, turn towards Gog and the country of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him. Say, 'The Lord God says this: I am against you Gog. I will turn you round, fixing hooks in your jaws, and drag you and your troops*

along...Persia and Cush and Put...Gomer and all its troops, northernmost Bethogarmah and all its troops, and many nations with you. Be ready, be well prepared, you and all your troops and the others rallying round you, and hold yourself at my service." (Ez. 38:2-7).

Since the devil, too, will put all of his power at the Beast's command, his victories will apparently come easily. Daniel says that not only will the saints be put into his power, but his potency will grow right up to the angels of heaven. (Dn. 8:10). This is a reference which points to his overthrow of the Church. (Dn. 7:25). As a part of that destruction, a great many of the world's Christians will be killed or driven into hiding. The Rebel will be obsessed with trying to drive Jesus and His Church off the face of the planet. As a result, the rapture will mimic the crucifixion. When Jesus at the end of His life was dragged up the Hill of Calvary by the people of this world and nailed to a cross, he showed an end that the Church itself must one day join Him in. Jesus explained this to Peter: *"I tell you most solemnly, when you were young you put on your own belt and walked where you liked; but when you grow old you will stretch out your hands, and somebody else will put a belt round you and take you where you would rather not go."* (Jn. 21:18). Peter, here, was given a prophecy directed toward his own person and also toward everything that relates to him. This prophecy, therefore, describes not only his own last days on earth, but also the last days of the religious edifice God has built on top of him. *"...you are Peter (rock) and on this rock I will build my church."* (Mt. 16:18). This grave attack on the Church by the Beast, supported by the people of his empire, will finalize the world's ultimate rejection of the Lord's Gospel. It will finalize the Great Revolt whose rudimentary processes we can already see at work in the world. Doing so, it will bring to an ultimate fulfillment, John's words: *"On these grounds is the sentence pronounced..."* (John 3:19).

Since all the prophecies point to a very militant and war-like end to the world, it is obvious that the king of Magog will bring the Church and Babylon down in flames together. And all of this because the world abandoned the mercy God sent to it—mercy that had the power to prevent all these terrible things from ever coming to pass. Because of his successes, the beast will grow arrogant, considering himself, according to Daniel, *"greater than all the gods"*. (Dn. 11:36). Narcissistic and terrible, he will utter incredible blasphemies against Christianity, and consider changing the seasons and the Law. (Dn. 7:25). And as we have already indicated, as a part of this decree, he will contaminate the liturgy of the Church by instituting the Abomination that desolates Christ's sacrifice. Looking back into history, when Antiochus Epiphanes IV was preparing to go to the East and engage Persia in battle, he sent his general, Lysias, with a great army *"to crush and destroy the power of Israel and the*

Jews and to efface their memory from the land." (1 Macc. 3:35). Daniel shows that a similar edict of extermination against Christians and Jews in the lands controlled by the Rebel will be a major circumstance of the final days, as the Rebel pushes through his decree that all populations worship him rather than the gods of the past. Such a decree will put him at odds with the Koran as well as the Bible, and, with his preoccupation for collecting all the world's gold and silver, will align him with the huge population of Asia that is today largely secular. (See Graph 8).

Like the king (the horn) who preceded him, the Rebel when he appears, will be obsessed with the destruction of Israel—a land he will attack three times. (Dn. 11:25-45). The Rebel will launch the first of these attacks by blindsiding the king of the South in a murderous assault that will be so sudden and violent that the entire southern army will be annihilated before it has a chance to respond. (Dan. 11:25-26). The army of the South which is destroyed in this sneak attack may be Egyptian as the words infer, but the devastating strike will also include or be focused on Israel and its troops (who will obviously have deep political as well as symbolic ties to Egypt at this point in time—see Jer.46). It is likely that the entire alliance of the South will have its forces decimated in this massacre. That would likely include Saudi Arabia and all the other countries aligned in the last days against the Persian north. In this sneak attack by the beast, Daniel predicts that the world will almost come to an end (Dn.11:27). But since God is the master of the end—not man, the kings of the earth will not be allowed to have their way. The beast will be forced to leave the land of Palestine and return to his own country. The fact that he will be unable to keep the lands of the southern Middle East which he had just conquered is an indication of the power of his enemies. According to Daniel, the might of the nations that oppose him will be strong enough to make him back down even in the face of this incredible military victory. Severely angered by this setback, he will set his heart against God and the holy covenant, targeting Christians and Jews in the lands under his control. He will leave Jerusalem and return to his own country. (Dn.11:28). Clear proof of the strength of those who oppose him is thoroughly demonstrated by the fact that when he tries to come down against the king of the South a second time, the ships of a western nation called 'Kittim' (obviously those of the United States) will confront him and will defeat his army in a major battle. (Dn.11:30). Retreating from this defeat, the beast will take furious action against the people of Christ. It is at this point that his forces will come and profane the sanctuary citadel and set up the desolating sacrilege there. (Dn. 11:31). This action will be the 'Pearl Harbor' in the world's war against God. A fierce, full scale war will have broken out between heaven and earth and nothing will be able to stop or slow the events which follow, not even prayer. The First

Book of Maccabees tells us that together with the desolating sacrifice the Rebel will issue a proclamation unifying the confederacy and all the lands he has conquered by commanding that the entire kingdom become a single people, each renouncing their individual customs. (1 Mac. 1:41-43). This proclamation is the fateful decree which separates forever the people of God from Babylon, an action that terminates irrevocably, human habitation of the earth. This decree will be aimed at the religious structure of the empire. Generally, the pagans will show their approval by conforming to the king's decree. The beast's edict will ban the religious services of all churches—Judaism, Christianity and traditional Islam—from the lands under the Rebel's control. Especially hard hit by this proclamation will be the people of Israel—the central focus of the beast's rage. In the Rebel's destruction of the Church, all Christians will be forced to flee—many taking to the mountains—and those who are discovered will be subject to numerous terrors. (1 Mac. 1:31-41). Scripture says of this time that *"every cave in the country will be the scene of violence"*. (Ps. 74:20). The people devastated in these attacks will not be faithless Christians who, because of sin missed being picked up by a previous rapture. As final day martyrs they will constitute the heart of the Church and, owing to their great faith in the very worst of times, will be among the most faithful followers of Christ who have ever lived on earth.

The beast will make it illegal for anyone to perform Christian baptisms or for anyone to be baptised in any nation under his control. This will include not only Asia and the Middle East, but Europe and most of the nations that ring the Mediterranean Sea as well. Those who do not obey his demands will be put to death. (1 Mac. 1:60-64). The reign of the beast will be a time of great wrath for the House of Israel and almost every part of the world will be subject in some way or another to his lawlessness. The fact that the Rebel will consider 'changing the seasons' makes it clear that he will launch an attack on the Christian dating system. Almost the entire civilized world today uses a system founded on the birth of Jesus Christ—a system which revolves around the feast days of the Christian calendar. A key part of the Rebel's war on the Church will be his promotion of a religion to replace those he has displaced. When Antiochus IV Epiphanes erected the Abomination of Desolation above the altar in the holy sanctuary, he also built other shrines as well: *"altars were built in the surrounding towns of Judah and incense offered at the doors of houses and in the streets."* (1 Mac. 1:57). There is a clear indication in these words that the beast, when he comes to power, will order the construction of a false set of temples and sacrifices in his kingdom to replace the worship services he has outlawed. Claiming that he, himself, is God (2 Thes. 2:4), these new alters will have their services centered in emperor worship. As a part of that worship, every Bible will be banned and destroyed: *"Any books of the Law that came to light*

were torn up and burned. Whenever anyone was discovered possessing a copy of the covenant or practising the Law, the king's decree sentenced him to death." (1 Macc. 1:56-61). The 'Book of the Law', of course, is the Bible. Daniel's prophecy indicates that the Rebel will try to change the Law as well as the calendar. This is an obvious reference to the scriptures. Outlawing the Bible, the Rebel will apparently try to replace it with another scripture—perhaps one that he himself has designed. During their reign of terror, the king's forces will *"take action month after month against any offenders they discover in the towns of Israel."* Despite the terrible wrath of these days, Daniel reveals that many Christians will stand firm and choose to die for their faith. *"Those of the people who are learned will instruct many; for some days, however, they will be brought down by sword and flame, by captivity and by plundering. And thus brought down little help will they receive, though many will be plotting on their side."* (Dn. 11:33-35). Holding firm like this to their faith (despite the terror surrounding them) many will save their lives in Christ. (Dn. 12:1-2).

Consumed by his desire to conquer the Holy Land, the Rebel will apparently go completely mad at the end. Furious, Daniel says, he will direct his armies to the battlefield of Armageddon. At the same time, he will launch a direct missile attack on all his enemies—a fusillade that will almost certainly blanket the world in a firestorm of hydrogen bombs. (Dn.11:44). Retaliating, an equal number of missiles and bombs will come flying at his own empire. (Ez.38:22; Rev.18:8). Magog and the islands of the sea will vanish in flames. (Ez.39:6). At the same time, a massive earthquake, greater than any man has ever know will occur. (Rev.6:12-14; 16:19-21). Perhaps, struck by a comet or mountainous meteor, the whole world will reverberate, and the fires ignited by this combination of disasters will rage so furiously that most of the earth will be garmented in a dense blanket of thick black smoke. *"When I extinguish you I will cover the skies, and darken the stars. I will cover the sun with clouds and the moon will not give its light. I will dim every luminary in heaven for you, and cover your country in darkness."* (Ex. 32:7-8). Pitching the tents of his royal headquarters between the sea and the mountains of the Holy Splendor (the city of Jerusalem), the Rebel will come to his fateful end, dying suddenly with the earth he has cast to ruin. (Dn. 11:45; Rev.20:9). In the end, all the armies will disappear and God will be revealed triumphant over all—His will having finally been done on earth as it is in heaven. The roaring of the nations will turn to silence and the armies will all vanish in the rebuke of God. *"Vast hordes thundering, with thunder like thundering seas, the roaring of nations roaring like the roar of mighty waters. He rebukes them and far away they flee, driven off like chaff on the mountains before the wind, like an eddy of dust before the storm. At evening all was terror; before morning comes they are no more."* (Is. 17:12-14).

23

The Beast and His Mark

*"Is this the man who made the earth tremble, and
overthrew kingdoms, who made the world a desert
and levelled cities, who never to his captives opened
the prison gates?"* *Is.14:16-17*

The most malicious and fearsome of all the Caesar's who rose up to occupy the Roman throne was a tyrant named Nero. He called himself a god and considered himself greater than all the gods. His violent actions against Christians in Rome (whom he persecuted in great numbers) sent terror through their ranks. And owing to Nero's erratic and violent behavior, his own citizens were as frightened of him as were his enemies. Most early Christians felt at the time that Nero was the personification of the great pagan Rebel that Isaiah and Paul had predicted—the evil 'Daystar' of Isaiah 14, and the 'Lost One' of 2 Thes.2:3-4. Many of Jesus' closest companions and Apostles apparently were felled by his hand. Between 65 A.D. and 68 A.D. (when he died), he managed to decimate the ranks of the fledgling Roman Church. A prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah indicates that not only Peter and Paul, but probably seven close personal friends of Jesus, up to one half of his twelve Apostles, and most of the early leaders of the Christian Church in Rome were put to death under Nero's orders: *"The commander of the guard took prisoner Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank, and the three guardians of the threshold. In the city he took prisoner a eunuch who was in command of the fighting men, seven of the king's personal friends who were discovered in the city, the secretary of the army commander...and sixty men of distinction discovered in the city. Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, took these men and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king of Babylon had them all put to death."* (Jer.52:24-27). We already know that Peter (the 'chief priest') was in Rome, as was Paul (the eunuch who headed Christ's army), and that both of them died during Nero's reign and under Nero's orders. Jeremiah's prophecy indicates that Paul's personal secretary was also taken (Luke) as were seven of Jesus' personal friends. These could have included Mary Magdalene and some of the other women who had followed Jesus from Galilee. Who the person 'next in line in the

priesthood' below Peter was, or who the three 'guardian's of the threshold' were is unclear, but it seems likely that these four were Apostles. The 'sixty men of distinction' must have included the most distinguished members of the young Roman church. To have captured so many of the Church's key figures in one place at one time indicates that Nero took them unawares. This is supported by the Act's of the Apostles which ends on a hopeful vein, indicating that the Church had begun to relax somewhat from it's earlier persecutions as Nero was ascending the throne. Paul had even been freed from his Roman jail and was preparing to go to Spain. It was in this atmosphere of relaxed reticence that Nero struck. The prophecy is an indicator of just how swift and catastrophic his persecution of the Christian Church was. And he treated his own people with a similar disdain.

The beast will mimic all this. He will come in the image of Nero, and he will attack the Christian Church in a brutal assault, torching every church in his empire. Rising to power, the Rebel will enthrone himself in the main citadel of the Christian faith and proclaim from there to the world that he is God and that he should be worshipped as such. (2 Thes.2:4). It is at this point that he will order every citizen in his empire to be branded on the forehead or right hand in an affirmation of his worship. This maneuver will be designed specifically to ferret out all who oppose him. According to Daniel, anyone without his mark will not be allowed even to purchase food in the marketplaces of the countries that lie under his jurisdiction. As we have seen before, the mark of the beast is the reverse of Christian baptism. Since we are marked three times by God in baptism, once for each part of the Holy Trinity, it is likely that his polar opposite will have three 'marks' as well. As we noted in an earlier chapter, the Book of Revelations has shown us that Satan has mimicked God, producing a trilogy of beast, false prophet and dragon. Branding his claim on earth, the mark of the beast will apparently involve a mirror image of God's formula: producing two spiritual marks and a physical one. According to its computation, the number for God is 3. This number specifies the Trinity which forms His Being. Therefore, Jesus is 3 and the Holy Spirit is 3 as well. When the Beast appears he will claim to be the reincarnation of Caesar Nero. In Hebrew, where letters are used for numbers, the total value of the letters that form the title 'Caesar Nero' is 666. By claiming this title—'Caesar Nero'—the beast heralds the reincarnation of the sixth head of the beast, which he claims to be. Thus his number is 6 (i.e., the sixth head). Note here that the Book of Revelation does not assign a number to the Rebel (Rev.13:1), only to his seven predecessors. i.e., there are only seven heads on the Dragon. Numerically, the number of the Beast should have been 8. He seems to appear as the eighth head. But he will forego that position when he claims to be head number six reincarnated. That reincarnation proclaims the healing of the fatal wound,

allowing the beast to mirror in evil the resurrection of the Messiah—a fact he will promote as an integral part of his role in his impersonation of God. His counterfeit messianic claim, then, will be a key to his name. The dragon, as the counterfeit double of God, doubles God's number, so is 6. Therefore it follows that the beast is 6 and the false prophet is 6. This is how we come to a key meaning of the number 666. The sixth head of the beast is one with the dragon and the false prophet, and his return to Rome incarnates all three. The number, then, stands for impersonation—God's double. The Rebel's given name will not be known until he appears, but the meaning of his name can be determined now. So, too, can be his title, 'Caesar Nero', already known to have a numerical equivalent which is 666. According to Jesus, after all is said and done every person on earth will be proved either a child of God or a child of Satan. When all earthly toil is over, everyone will wear either the number of God or the number of the beast on their soul—the kind of lives we lived, proof of the number we wear. The spiritual brand of Satan comes through our love of this world. It also comes through our rejection of Christ and baptism. These are brands that scar our soul, and they are the exact opposite of God's spiritual marks, the baptism of the Spirit and the fire that we must walk through as we leave this world following in the footsteps of Christ on our way to His new world. The physical mark of God is baptism. It came at the beginning of the harvest, as it does in our Christian journey, because it paves the way for us to follow Jesus. The Beast's physical mark is just the opposite. It comes at the end, as an unmasking of the world's reality. Hiding in the shadows awaiting his moment to strike, the beast's physical mark cannot be made manifest until he is allowed to appear on earth at the end. While his physical mark awaits the End, Satan's spiritual marks have been branding people continuously from the beginning, and killing them. But secretly. Christ has made Satan's secret marking known and has broadcast across the globe the fact of it. This subject has obsessed the literature and art of the Western World, but it has not converted everyone. The physical mark of the Rebel will unmask Satan, and it will glorify Nero and everything he stood for.

Nero was such a malignant man, and so hated and feared that when he suddenly died, most people in the Roman empire could not believe that he was really gone. So a rumor caught on in the Roman capitol and quickly spread throughout the world that Nero was going to rise again in the east—in Parthia—where he would gather an immense eastern army and march against Rome and retake the throne of his former empire by force. This rumor became so rooted in Roman and Christian folklore, that it has never died—an indication that the Holy Spirit may have been responsible for its development and propagation. For this reason, it needs to be examined. The Parthians were a nomadic people that migrated down from the

northern grasslands of the Soviet Union to occupy the area currently called Iran. From there they expanded westward to the Euphrates, eventually occupying much of southern Iraq as well, taking control of both Media and Persia. Their conquest of Mesopotamia occurred at about the same time that the Romans were just coming to power. The Parthians were famous and most feared for their deadly use of archery—a weapon they used with far greater perfection than any other nation. There is a significant parallel here, of course, to the massive use of archery described so often in the prophetic descriptions of the the rise to power of the East in the warfare of the last days. For instance, according to Ezekiel, at the time of the end, the Lord will say to Gog, *"When you attack the mountains of Israel I will break the bow in your left hand and dash the arrows out of your right."* (Ez.39:3). The flight of thousands of arrows arching up through the air and falling down on their victims mimics the trajectory and flight of rocket warfare. The modern equivalent of bow and arrow, of course, is guided missiles and their mechanical launchers. The only difference between the two is the type of bow and the type of arrow—and what lies at the tip, of course. Today, nuclear bombs have replaced the iron arrowheads used by the Parthians. These prophecies imply that the armies of the East which are to arise out of Media and Persia in the last days will be experts in the use of rockets and missiles. The Parthians were fierce fighters who were such skilled archers that they were able to utterly wipe out the massive Roman army under Crassus at the Euphrates river. If the location of this disaster sounds familiar, it should. This was the only defeat the great Roman army ever suffered, and it was catastrophic, coming at the same Euphrates river described in all the prophecies of the last days as the site where the East will commence its destruction of the West. If we are to accept the ancient Roman and Christian prophecy regarding the resurrection of Nero in Parthia, the defeat of Crassus is a prophetic symbol for what is still to come. It was, in fact, this defeat that gave gist to the Nero/Parthian rumor in the first place. Crassus was the powerful Roman general who crushed the slave rebellion memorialized in the movie 'Spartacus'. He and his battalions appeared invincible. Thus the rout of this army under a withering barrage of Parthian arrows explains why the Roman citizens had such a great fear of these eastern warriors: they were the only people on the planet able to soundly defeat the great Roman army at the height of its power. The Roman fear of the Parthians engendered by this unexpected defeat illustrates why the rumor of Nero rising from the dead to lead a Persian army against Rome evoked such consternation among the people of Italy in the early days of the Church. The implication being that the people of Italy would be powerless to stop the advance of this 'Parthian Nero' when he returned to reclaim his Roman throne. *"The beast you have seen, once was, now is not; he is yet to come up from the Abyss, but only to go to his destruction."* (Rev.17:8). John wrote these words about 20 years after Nero died;

therefore, the rumor of the reincarnation of Nero and this prophecy in the Book of Revelation predicting his return, have ever since been related.

There is precedent in Christianity for this sort of reincarnation: The Jews expected Elijah the prophet to reappear in Israel and precede the Messiah, but when Jesus revealed that John the Baptist was in fact the Elijah of the prophecy, it confirmed that one person can prefigure another as far as God is concerned in Biblical prophecy. Whether Elijah and John the Baptist were actually one and the same person we do not know, they probably were, but that does not matter because God considered them one and the same as far as the prophecy was concerned. We must expect the reappearance of Nero—as he forms into the beast of the end—to evolve in a similar way. Since the prophecies calling for a reign of terror at the end similar to that of Nero's fit so closely with him, and because he, too, will eventually retake control of Rome (Babylon), a great many Bible scholars see the Rebel of the future as a repeat of Nero. His Parthian connection is also clear. The fact that the Rebel will appear at the head of an eastern army is well documented throughout the scriptures. And everything that the beast will do in Rome seems a clear indication that he will lay claim to this early Roman prophecy and say that he is Nero reincarnated. It is not necessary for him to do so, of course. The prophecy can be fulfilled either way. John the Baptist, for instance, never indicated that he was Elijah, (although God considered him to be) proving that such a self-proclamation is not necessary as far as the prophecies of God are concerned.

PART 6

THE WRATH

"Then they will hand you over to be tortured and put to death; and you will be hated by all the nations on account of my name."

Is.13:4-5

24

The Seven Churches in Flight

"From a land of horror—a harsh vision has been shown to me—the plunderer plunders, the destroyer destroys. 'Go up Persia, lay siege Media. I am putting an end to groaning.' I am too distressed to hear, too afraid to see. My heart flutters, dread makes me tremble, the twilight I longed for has become my horror." Is.21:1-4

Christianity has been eagerly awaiting the conclusion of the harvest and the final events of history ever since the first days of the Church. Described in recent literature as 'the rapture', this event is thought by many to culminate the harvest of God's people in a grand and triumphant exodus, leaving the earth populated only by those who have been rejected. But scripture shows us a scenario quite different. Much of the rapture, it tells us, will occur unrecognized amid all the chaos surrounding the second war. *"Pray"*, Jesus said, *"that your flight will not occur in winter or on a sabbath. For then there will be great distress such as, until now, since the world began, there never has been, nor ever will be again. And if that time had not been shortened, no one would have survived; but shortened that time shall be, for the sake of those who are chosen."* (Mt.24:20-22). The final event of the rapture—the rescue of the Jews—cannot occur until Michael enters Jerusalem and calls out the command. There can be no sky event, therefore, until the Jews repent; and scripture shows that this will not happen until after the Rebel has died and all the tribulations have ended. (Dn.12:7). The twilight of this world will be a time of violence for the Church, not peace. *"We were hoping for peace—no good came of it! For the time of healing—nothing but terror!"* (Jer.8:15). This is because so many people at the end will withdraw from the Church and reject Jesus Christ. The wrath is the product of apostasy. We would not see Christians fighting Christians in the last days if the spirit of Satan's anger had not replaced their faith and driven them to acts of rage and violence. The beast's war against God in the last days proves that God's people will be drawn up to heaven during this time of turmoil in exactly the same way that the Christians were in the days of Rome. By violence. Christ's decree that the kingdom of heaven will be subjected to violence (Mt.11:12), will not change in the final days. It will actually intensify—bringing the millennium of Christ's peaceful rule in this world to a very

savage end. *"Alas for those with child, or with babies at the breast, when those days come!"* (Mt.24:19). This is the time of the wrath—the distress all of scripture has warned about. *"So when you see the disastrous abomination, of which the prophet Daniel spoke, set up in the Holy Place (let the reader understand), then those in Judaea must escape to the mountains..."* (Mt.24:15-16). As the balance of power in the world shifts back to Satan, the western world will reject its Christian interlude, making these final days a time of horror on earth—just as the days of Christ became a horror for the Jews when they denounced him at the beginning. *"Trouble for those who are waiting so longingly for the day of God! What will this day of God mean for you? It will mean darkness, not light, as when a man escapes a lion's mouth, only to meet a bear..Will not the day of God be darkness, not light? It will all be gloom, without a single ray of light."* (Amos 5:18-20). Scripture shows that God will return to a world cloaked in darkness, covered by the smoke of mankind's own fury. Since the mass rapture of scripture cannot occur until after the Jews repent, it will not occur until after the Revolt has ended and all the warfare of the last days has been concluded. Before that day arrives the rapture will continue one by one, just as it has since the beginning, but the numbers will increase dramatically during the final war. The second war of the end will be just like the first one which saw Christians in great numbers murdered by the Caesar's of Rome; only it will be more violent at the end than it was at the beginning, and as its days progress there will be fewer and fewer conversions. It will be just the opposite of the persecutions of the Roman empire when Christian ranks swelled as the persecutions raged. At the end Jesus will have few spokesmen. This is the true nature of the wrath that all the prophets have been predicting, and, according to John, only one out of the seven churches will escape it. (Rv.3:10).

As the violence of the second war increases, fewer and fewer people will bow in submission to Jesus. The darkness that covers the earth during the turbulent events of the last days will signify that most of the world's people have turned their backs on a Gospel which could have saved them. The people who remain in Babylon will search in vain for the word of God just as the Jews searched in vain for the Messiah after they denied Jesus. Speaking of these final days Jesus said *"But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"* (Lk.18:8). Christ's words indicate that most of the populations of the earth will have joined the Revolt and sided with Satan at the very end. It was the same when Moses came down from the mountain—he came to a people in revolt. They had gotten Aaron to make a golden calf for their worship and were preparing themselves to return to Egypt. When Jesus came to Jerusalem, he came to a people in revolt against the Roman empire. They wanted war, and so they rejected the peace Jesus offered them. The people of

the world did the opposite. They believed what was preached to them, and converted. *"You deliver me from a people in revolt, you place me at the head of the nations, a people I did not know are now my servants..."* (Ps.18:43). This is why the pagans became the heirs to the New Covenant. *"So I will give their wives to other men, their fields to new masters, for all, least no less than greatest, all are out for dishonest gain; prophet no less than priest, all practice fraud."* (Jer.8:10). At the end, however, the descendants of these new tenants will rebel and leave the way Jesus marked out for them, as well. When the people of Babylon revolt against God and reject the words of Jesus, they will then be no different than the Israelites who revolted in Sinai or the Jews who rejected the peace of Jesus to pursue a war with Rome. The same kind of darkness that came to the Jews and the same kind of fire that swallowed up the rebels in the Sinai will descend on the people of the world. This is why the prophecies once aimed at the Jews also apply to the people of Babylon. These divine warnings apply to anyone who leaves the path of God and joins the Apostasy.

Those who revolt at the time of the end are going to bring the disaster down on all people, good and bad alike. Just as the drunk driver who plows down the highway carries with him a sin that impacts everyone around him. The wrath and the judgment are different from one another and the two should not be confused. The judgment comes from God but the wrath comes from the Law. The judgment only applies to those who did evil, but the wrath happens to everyone. God has set aside a day for judgment and no judgment will occur until that day arrives. Since that day has not yet come, none of the effects of evil we have ever seen on earth have anything to do with God's judgment. The same is true of the wrath. The terrors that precede the day of judgment come from the Law, not from judgment. Like a hot stove that burns to the touch, the rules of the Law which God has built into the universe never change and they always affect our behavior. When a drunk driver crosses the median and kills a car full of innocent people, the disaster he precipitates is not a measure of God's judgment—God had nothing to do with it at all. It was a wrath that came from evil. The warnings about behavior in the Bible, then, are like the barricades along the freeway. They are there not only to lead us to eternal life, but are designed for our protection in this world as well. If we cross the fences and go running around on the freeways we are going to experience a type of wrath, but it is not the wrath of God. It comes from natural law. It is the same with much of the Bible—especially the Old Testament. It describes natural law. God has structured creation in such a way that human behavior interacts with the natural laws of its composition. How this happens is unclear, but whenever the laws of scripture are broken, an aura of disaster surrounds the one who broke those laws, and it covers everyone around him or her as well. This puts us at the mercy of each other. AIDS not only strikes

the adulterous homosexual, for instance, it reaches out beyond him to hurt the innocent who are touched or transfused with his blood. The same processes apply to a city or a nation or the entire planet. The Bible says that even the universe has been programmed to join in this reaction. The more extensive the evil, the greater the catastrophe's and the larger the sphere of their influence. The judgment will be selective, but not the wrath—the wrath comes down on everyone, good and bad alike. The reverse is true as well. When God's rules are kept, a sphere of righteousness surrounds those who are obedient and the peace and harmony that result from its presence also impacts everyone in the vicinity. This is why prayer and faith are so powerful in blocking the wrath. Righteousness brings an aura of peace and order on good and bad alike. All this relates to the promises of the Bible. Wrongdoing brings to fruition every disaster predicted for it; righteousness brings the rewards. The Bible is true and God sees to it that its words will be kept. God has structured creation so that all this will happen naturally. The wrath, then, happens everywhere, and has since the beginning, and so the catastrophe of the last days is different only in its dimension. Virtually the entire population will end up playing on the freeway of disobedience. The resulting disaster will reflect the size of the apostasy—the extent of the Revolt. *"For this is the time of vengeance when all that scripture says must be fulfilled."* (Mt.21:22). This vengeance is the impact of the Law when broken, it is not the vengeance of judgment. Yet that, too, will follow. Jesus could not stop this time of disaster, but he showed us how to defer it, and how to keep safe from its effects. As the era of Revolt intensifies and most of the people in the world shift their loyalty to Satan, the harvest will draw to a close *"The harvest is over, summer at an end, and we have not been saved!"* (Jer.8:20). Then the people who are left will find themselves in the same predicament that Jesus prophesied for those who defer their conversion and wait until the end: *"Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking on the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us' but he will answer, 'I do not know where you come from'."* (Lk.13:25). Since God never does anything without first announcing His intentions through the prophets, the prophecies of scripture stand as our own warning today. This mass exodus from the ways of Christ is called by Paul, 'the Great Revolt', and it stands as a graphic warning to those who follow Christ today, because it tells us of a time when Christians, mesmerized by the glitter of this world, abandon their faith in God by leaving the Way He preached. Because this Revolt has already started, all those pronouncements in scripture once meant for the Jews, now belong to us. *"Sound the trumpet in Zion, give the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the country tremble, for the day of God is coming, yes, it is near. Day of darkness and gloom, day of cloud and blackness. Like the dawn there spreads across the mountains a vast and mighty host, such as has never been seen before or will not be seen*

again. In their van the fire devours, in their rear a flame consumes. Arrows fly, still they press forward, without breaking ranks. They hurl themselves at the city, they leap onto its walls, climb the housetops and make their way through windows like marauders. As they come on, the earth quakes, the skies tremble, sun and moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brilliance." (Joel 2:1-11). Warnings such as these are the scriptural fences surrounding the freeway of human life. The terrors they envision describe natural laws that lurk on the other side of scripture's rules. Like the fact that fire is hot and should not be touched.

Both Christians and Jews will come under attack by the beast during the last days; and not only Vatican City but a part of Jerusalem as well will fall to the power of his forces. The destruction raining down on the Christian Church and the synagogues of Judaism by the forces of the Rebel of the End will be so devastating that few people on earth will be able to understand why God has allowed it to happen. Most people will not see these events with the understanding that the harvest has come to an end—and that God has kept all the promises of scripture. It will be inconceivable for almost anyone to understand that this grotesque assault on the Church is the mechanism of the rapture. *"Since John the Baptist came, up to this present time, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence and the violent are taking it by storm."* (Mt.11:12). The violence of the last days will be the most intense of all. *"Pick your steps over these endless ruins: the enemy have sacked everything in the sanctuary. They roared where your Assemblies used to take place, they stuck their enemy emblems over the entrance, emblems we had never seen before."* (Ps.74:1-23). Setting up his headquarters in the Vatican and usurping the throne of Saint Peter for himself, the Beast will replace all that was dedicated to Jesus with the emblems of his own world reign. He will erect there the Abomination Daniel described. *"Axes deep in the wood, hacking at the panels, they battered them down with mallet and hatchet; then, God, setting fire to your sanctuary, they profanely razed the house of your name to the ground. Determined to destroy us once and for all, they burned down every shrine of God in the country."* (Ps.74:1-23). Powering their way into the cathedrals and churches of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, the horde of eastern forces plundering the earth under the flag of the Beast will purge Christianity, determined to destroy forever every remnant of Christ on earth. Christians will be hunted down and murdered without mercy. This is the time of flight when escape is the only path left. Every cave in the Eastern Hemisphere will become a place of hiding. Jesus warned that there would be so much distress during these times, more than ever before in the history of mankind, he said, that we should pray that our evacuation not occur in winter or on a sabbath. Obviously Sunday's during these horrendous days will see hordes of troops searching for Christian services, and massacring those found

attending them. *"And if that time had not been shortened, no one would have survived; but shortened that time shall be, for the sake of those who are chosen."* (Mt.24:20-22). Chanting blasphemies and filled with the frenzy of a furious rage, the minions of the Rebel will carry out the murderous orders given to them by their crazed and satanic monarch as he carries out against the Church his war with God. It is in this savage atmosphere that the heart of the rapture will be concluded. *"Deprived of signs, with no prophets left, who can say how long this will last? How much longer, God, is the oppressor to blaspheme? Is the enemy to insult your name forever? Why hold back your hand, why keep your right hand hidden? Remember the enemy's blasphemy, how frenzied people dare to insult your name. Respect the covenant! We can bear no more—every cave in the country is the scene of violence! Rise God, say something on your behalf, do not forget the madman's day-long blaspheming..."* (Ps.74:1-23).

25

An Anointed One Cut Off

"Rebellion is at its work already, but in secret, and the one who is holding it back has first to be removed before the Rebel can appear openly."

2 Thes.5-7

The reign of Christ will end abruptly and the last war be ushered in by assassination. *"And after the sixty-two weeks an anointed one will be cut off."* (Dn. 9:26). First and foremost, the word 'anointed one' here revolves around Jesus Christ. This passage in the Book of Daniel tells us that at the end of the '62 weeks' the Messiah will be 'cut off' from the people. It predicts that the millennium of Christ's rule on earth will come to an end suddenly. The prophets have written that this end will come at 'noon', at the pinnacle of preaching on earth: *"That day I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight...I will make it a day of mourning like the mourning for an only son. As long as it lasts it will be like a day of bitterness."* (Amos 8:9-10, Ez. 32:7-8). Paul has shown us that there is more to this prophecy than the removal of Jesus alone. Coupled with this 'cutting off', Daniel has indicated that all these events revolve around the desolation of the 'perpetual sacrifice' (Dn. 8:11); And the 'one', Paul said, who holds the rebellion at bay. (2 Thes.2:76). The word 'anointed one' not only refers to the Lord, but to His ministers as well. Daniel has written '**an** anointed one', not '**the** anointed one'. In this case, the prophecy points to a minister of Christ—and not just to any minister, but to one of the highest figures in the faith. Just as the Jewish religion had a high priest, the Christian religion also has a personage who the world recognizes as its leading spokesman. This recognition is not a faith issue. There are many who rightfully argue that Christianity has only One true leader—Jesus. Yet the title remains and so does the office. Centuries of bitter assaults against this figure and the erosion of time have not changed this fact, they have only strengthened the reality. The reason is simple: this particular bishop is the highest officiating caretaker on earth of the communion sacrifice. The perpetuation of the sacrifice (the 'perpetual sacrifice', in Daniel's chronology) is the whole reason for this pastor's ministry. Communion is the peace offering that God has made with the world (by treaty in the blood of the cross) giving it (for a limited time) amnesty from annihilation so that all people on earth

who choose to do so are able to repent of their sins and return to God through the path of Christ. As long as the offering is able to continue, the rebellion is held in check, and the wrath is blocked.

Every church on earth exists for a purpose, just as every Christian on earth has been given a specific job to do for God. The 'one' who has been assigned the task of holding back the catastrophic wrath from crashing against the world is the anointed prince of the Last Supper—the overseer of the peace offering. The church he heads has devoted itself to the perpetuation of that offering. Daniel made the significance of all of this known when he revealed that the beast will attack the sacrifice after 'cutting off' the high priest who is its guardian. (Dan. 9:26-27). In making this prophecy, the Holy Spirit had Daniel structure it as an echo to two historical events which duplicated its conditions and therefore emphasized the future implications involved. And once it reoccurs as predicted—then, on the heels of the final fury—the full blackness of Satan's night will unfurl across the earth and the light of Christ's peace offer to the world will be no more. (Is. 24:1-6). This is the catastrophe. *"...the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by a prince who will come."* (Dn. 9:26). Paul said that when the Revolt had reached a certain point—a point which seems almost certain now to have already passed—Satan would come up out of the Abyss and deceive the world one final time. *"When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive all the nations in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, and mobilize them for war."* (Rv. 20:7-8). That militant 'mobilization' has become the very signature of the twentieth century. Never before in the history of man has there been a time of such intense and widespread combat on earth; genocide and mass murder. Although warfare is not new to the planet, the last 80 years have witnessed a period of combat and human carnage unlike any ever seen before—an endless march of armies carrying wars from one end of the earth to the other. Twice in that time, the entire planet has been embroiled in the fighting en masse. Using monstrous weapons against soldier and civilian alike; and coalescing with the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem, these armies have responded to the proclamation of God issued through the lips of the prophet Joel: *"Proclaim this among the nations. 'Prepare for war!' Let the nations rouse themselves, let them march to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for I am going to sit in judgment there on all the nations round."* (Joel 4:9-12). It is because of sin that Satan has been released: *"Put the sickle in...come and tread: the winepress is full, the vats are overflowing, so great is their wickedness!"* (Joel 4:13). According to Paul, the return of the dragon will lock the world in its rebellion, and the assassination of the priest holding back the worst of the fury will make inevitable the final countdown to the Judgment. (2 Thes. 2:5-7). *"The harvest will be over, gathering will not*

come again." (Is. 32:10). With the anointed prince removed, and the peace offering desecrated, the vintage will be consumed by the Wrath. *"The word of God was addressed to me as follows, 'Son of man, say, 'The Lord God says this to the land of Israel: Finished! The end is coming for the four quarters of the land. Now all is over for you; I mean to unleash my anger on you, and judge you as your conduct deserves and force you to answer for all your filthy practices. I mean to show you no pity. I will not spare you..."* (Ez. 7:1-4). By chaining Satan in the Abyss, God allowed the rule of Christ to occur. Without that incarceration there would have been no millennium—no rule of the Christian Church on earth. (Rv. 20:3). Satan's power of deception is just too great for many to overcome. Had God not locked him personally away, the last 2000 years would have been disastrous for the Church and millions of Christians could easily have been lost in the chaos. His reappearance on the earth in our time is a direct result of the world's rejection of Christ's rule. Satan has been allowed by God to return to our world because of the apostasy of the Revolt—the secularization of the planet. The world's conversion to Christ is the power that put him in chains, and the world's abandonment of Christ in our time is the power of his release. *"The reason why God is sending a power to delude them and make them believe what is untrue is to condemn all who refused to believe in the truth and chose wickedness instead."* (2 Thes.11-12).

Freed from his long incarceration in the Abyss, he is back sowing the seeds of his chaotic deception wherever we look. His new emergence on earth is why everything has suddenly gone so berserk around the globe. Brash and violent, godless, intoxicated with riches and trampling over the poor, the malevolent spirit of Satan has manifested itself into the soul of the earth and its people. From the streets of Los Angeles to the battlefields of Bosnia and Palestine, violence has erupted like a volcano in spate. All this is a response to Satan's power for evil. It is happening just as the Bible promised it would, and yet it is all going quite unnoticed. As if in a hypnotic trance, the world, in its march away from Christ, sees nothing of the disaster that now dogs its heels. The tycoons of business and industry are still busy building their monuments, thinking that everything is as it was during the peaceful days of the reign of Christ, unmindful that everything has suddenly changed for them. Satan has returned to the helm of the planet filled with an insatiable thirst for war. Jesus warned that when an evil spirit has been driven out of man and then is allowed to return, it will always bring in seven others more wicked than itself so that the last state of the man will be much worse than the first. If this applies to each of us individually, it applies even more to the world. The collapse of world faith—the rejection of the Church by the world—will bring more evil to this planet than it has ever seen before. The days that are

coming will be incredibly wicked and unremittingly violent. Seven times worse than the pagan world of the past. The Revolt that ends the millennium will be certain proof that the reign of Jesus in the world could not have occurred had Satan been actively present on earth during its term. Locking him away, Michael removed the most powerful obstacle that stood between us and our reconciliation with God. (Rev.20:1-3). His return has brought that obstacle back. But before the worst can happen, Satan's partner in crime, his 'son of perdition' must appear.

Paul revealed that in order for Satan to accomplish the unholy part of his charade, he must first bring forth his Lawless Prince, the man Paul calls the Rebel, the Lost One, who is also known in scripture as 'the beast': *"When the Rebel comes, Satan will set to work; there will be all kinds of miracles and a deceptive show of signs and portents, and everything evil that can deceive those who are bound for destruction because they would not grasp the love of the truth which could have saved them."* (2Thes.2:9-10). A similar kind of deception swept over the Jews when they rejected Christ. They were made blind because they repudiated God when he came to them. The times ahead will see that blindness reversed. It is the people of Babylon who will go blind—and the deception in our time will be much worse than that which afflicted the Jews. A dominion and power that has the capacity to vent his emotions into men, Satan's anger has already engulfed the planet, plunging it into a level of violence that has driven love far away and made men's hearts grow increasingly cold. (Matt. 24:12). Recent hostilities launched against the poor and needy are indications that some of Christ's most frightening words are coming true even as we watch. The fact that Satan is so powerful in his capacity to manifest delusions on earth and the fact that the Christian world has not had to deal with him directly since the beginning of Christ's reign shows the terrible impact that his appearance will ultimately have on mankind. In fact, the nations are all polarizing at this very moment against the Son of God. Not content merely to change 'Christ' to a 'common era', they are secretly plotting a fate far more malignant. And at some point in the process Satan will be allowed to remove the last entity on earth which blocks his return to power. In a strange parallel to the game of chess, the Beast will take out a strategic bishop and, in so doing, checkmate the world and himself with it. It is not because he is popular or powerful that this slaying is so strategic. It is because of his office. The bishop in question oversees the power which drives the entire millennium: the perpetual sacrifice. And that is the key to the end of the world, said Daniel—the 'abomination of desolation' that the Rebel will place on the perpetual sacrifice. (Dn. 8:11-12; 11:31). By removing the Bishop who guards this sacrifice, the way will be opened for the disastrous abomination to be installed.

The words 'cut off' imply an act of lethal violence. When we explore the historic circumstances behind Daniel's words, we discover just such a murder. When Antiochus IV Epiphanes (the great desolater of the Jewish temple during the Greek occupation of Jerusalem) was rising to power, his forces assassinated Onias, the immensely popular high priest of Jerusalem. (2 Macc.4:34-38). It is around this event and its surrounding circumstances that Daniel constructed his last-day prophecies. The assassination of a modern high priest will duplicate the biblical circumstances which led up to the appearance of Antiochus. The murder of Onias, the Jewish high priest, allowed Antiochus to subject the Jewish sacrifice to abomination, giving historic circumstance to all the visions. Daniel's model (Dn. 9:26) projects the assassination of Onias into the prophecy, and for this reason it foreshadows a like catastrophe against the world's foremost Christian bishop at the end of time. Paul confirmed this when he told the people of Thessalonica that the Great Rebel who was destined to enthrone himself in God's sanctuary at the end of time, could not appear until this Christian leader had first been 'taken out of the way'. (2 Thes.2:5-7). Since it is this shepherd that God has assigned the duty for holding back the wrath from the earth, none of the final events described by Daniel can happen until this terrible act of violence takes place and the Bishop who guards the Eucharist is removed from his station. Paul's words show us that once this assassination does occur, Satan's appointed beast will appear openly on earth. The hidden purpose behind the Rebel's violence will become clear to everyone once he takes over the sanctuary and turns it into his own palace. The significance of Rome to these prophecies has already been noted. The Bible shows us that the beast will arise in the eastern hemisphere and he will be obsessed with, not just conquering Jerusalem, but Rome as well. He will succeed with the latter, but the world will end before he can take the city of God.

The early Christians had one word which stood for both the appearance of the Rebel and 'the Second Coming' of Christ. That word was 'Parousia'. The polar circumstances inherent in this single definition points to the close relationship between these two appearances—one counterfeit, the other real—and it may also refer to their chronology as well. That is because there is a certain day set aside in the Christian calendar for the appearance in the world of a divine Being. That day is January 6th, Epiphany—the word itself meaning 'appearance' or 'manifestation'. In the western church epiphany represents the day Jesus Christ was made manifest to the Gentiles as the Son of God—i.e., the day of the three wisemen. In the eastern church Epiphany represents the day of Christ's birth (the eastern church does not recognize the western Christmas). It also represents the date of

Jesus' baptism by John at the river Jordan (thought by eastern Christians to have occurred 30 years to the day after His birth). In its ultimate fulfillment, however, the word and the date point to the Parousia—the word with the double meaning. Whether the Rebel, as the impersonation of divinity, or Jesus, returning as the true Son of God will make their appearance in the view of the world on this specific date cannot be said for certain, but scripture is clear that the whole Christmas season has deep symbolic ties to the gravest events of the last days. Because the calendar governing Christ's return has been divinely altered, it is not possible to link His Second Coming with this date (or any other date, for that matter), but the Rebel's appearance seems to be another matter. Since Epiphany follows by only 12-22 days the event of the abomination of the sacrifice (see below), the 'son of perdition' will likely make himself manifest to the world very near to this date (January 6), if not coincident with it. Following the bishop's murder the identity of the beast will be clear to everyone who understands the prophecy. The assassination itself will permit the Rebel to openly manifest himself before the world, and his coronation will confirm it in terms which are absolute. For this reason, in the aftermath of this devastating martyrdom, the final events of the End will cascade upon each other, one after another, each precipitated by the other in rapid succession. The persecution of the Jews by Antiochus lasted a little over 3 years—in fact, the Jewish sanctuary itself lay desolate almost 3 years to the day. The prophecies of Daniel indicate that the persecutions of the Rebel will follow a similar pattern. (Dn. 12:11). The desolating sacrifice was instituted on the 15th day of Chislev (1 Macc.2:54), a lunar Hebrew month which correlates with the Christian solar month of December. The temple was purified three years later on the 25th day of Chislev (1 Macc.4:52), an event commemorated by Hannukah. Ten days in December separate these two events, the same number of days that often separate Hannukah from Christmas. The coincidence in the two dates and their season (winter/December) are so striking that there can be little doubt that they, too, are portents of the future. The Rebel's assassination of the prince of the Christian covenant will be quickly followed by the rout of the sanctuary and the iniquity on the Eucharistic sacrifice. That is the moment when Jesus said that everyone in Judea should run for their lives by escaping to the mountains. (Mt. 24:15-16). The assassination of the Christian bishop will signal the imminent desecration of the sacrifice. God has decreed that for as long as that Bishop remains in place overseeing the perpetuation of the Last Supper, the rebellion will be kept at bay. But with his removal, the whole Church will collapse—Catholic, Protestant, Greek—all of it. *"That day—it is the Lord God who speaks—the peg driven into a firm place will give way. It will be torn out and will fall. And the whole load hanging on it will be shattered, for God has spoken."* (Is. 22:25).

With the Bishop's death the signal will be clear—the 'abomination of desolation' is at hand—the Rebel is on his way to the sanctuary. Tearing down the communion sacrifice and placing iniquity in its place, the beast will make inevitable the world's end. (Is.24:5-6). Daniel used the disastrous abomination in the sanctuary as the measuring point for his 1290 days of Christian persecution, and the 1335 days. The latter illustrating a 45-day period of world darkness and disaster beginning with the Rebel's death, his army's annihilation by God, and Michael's journey to Jerusalem. (Dn.12:11-12). For this reason, we must see the assassination of the 'anointed one' and the desecration of the sacrifice he ruled, as the 'Pearl Harbor' of the second war of the Apocalypse—the definitive signal that the final war against Christ (Rv. 20:7-9) has been officially launched by the people of the world. (Dn. 12:11).

26

Fall of the City of David

"Then they fortified the City of David with a great strong wall and strong towers, and made this their Citadel. There they installed an army of sinful men, renegades, who fortified themselves inside it, storing arms and provisions, and depositing there the loot they had collected from Jerusalem."

1 Mac.1:33-37

When the Rebel appears, he will take control of Rome and return this city to pagan worship. (Rv.11:7-8). In order to do this he will have to first neutralize the Christian city which lives inside of Rome. It has already been shown that his ability to attack this holy camp will be greatly facilitated by a serious internal collapse of faith within the Christian Church—a rebellion called, by Paul, the Great Revolt. (2Thess.2:3; Jer.51:48-49). And the final assault itself cannot occur while the present tenant of this city, the Bishop of Rome, remains seated on Peter's chair. The Beast's conquest of Rome is to be expected since John revealed that the Rebel would be the eighth and final emperor of that city. (Rev.17:10-11). John's Book of Revelation tells us that Rome and Babylon are symbolically united, and will remain that way until the end. The two are bound to one another by a treaty which Jesus made with the world from the cross. This pact physically ties the people of God to Babylon until almost the last day—until the day the Prince of Persia comes and revokes the treaty, decreeing the two separate. We can see the tie between this world and the people of God in the structure and location of the Christian churches—churches which remain scattered throughout Babylon despite the conversions taking place within them. None of these conversions have carried the churches to a lasting dominant presence in Jerusalem. They still sit in the foreign lands of their exile. Everyone who has ever been born onto this earth has been born into the exile of Babylon; and the only escape from this exile has been spiritual—conversion into the Christian faith. The people who make this conversion are able to leave Babylon instantly the moment they choose Jesus, but that journey is spiritual and heads them toward a different kind of Jerusalem (in heaven). The churches they belong to must remain behind, locked in scattered exile until the day comes for the treaty to be broken. The Holy Spirit has orchestrated this circumstance to make clear the fact that God's true Jerusalem is

the kingdom of God in heaven; it is not the carnal and rebellious city that commands Palestine. When the leaders of the Roman army conquered Judea, they swept the last remaining tribe of Israel out of Palestine and sealed the borders of that country so that they could not return. It was this action that established Rome as the figurehead city of Babylon's exile—a role that it cannot relinquish until the exile of the House of Israel is divinely terminated. The dispersion is not a separation perpetuated by the Christian Church. On the contrary, major Christian leaders have tried on many occasions to carry the cross back to Jerusalem in the land of Palestine, but these efforts have all ended in failure. Certainly the most visible of these attempts were the Crusades of the early Middle Ages. At that time virtually the entire Christian world united in trying to push the Moslem's out of the Holy Land. All their efforts were in vain because it is not historic serendipity, but a treaty manifested by God in heaven, that has perpetuated the exile all these years. Completing the commands of scripture, it was the Almighty, Himself, who handed the land of Palestine over to the arid winds of the East. (Is.27:8, etc.). Christianity's armies were powerless to overturn the prophecies. The Crusades proved fruitless against the will of God. The treaty which banished God's people from the Promised Land and sent them to Babylon for a rescue (Micah 4:10), was signed in blood with the crucifixion of Jesus, and its terms can be fulfilled only by the singular Persian process which the treaty, itself has defined. (2 Chron.36:15-21). The fact that the largest church in the Christian religion has been headquartered in Rome since the exile began bears witness to its symbolic role in scripture's drama—its ongoing presence there perpetually demonstrating to the world that the treaty and the exile both remain in effect. When the Roman army burned down Herod's temple and eliminated the presence of a Jewish nation in Palestine, it duplicated the actions of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, establishing a clear relationship between the empire of Rome and the symbolism surrounding the Babylon of prophecy. This action fused the prophetic relationship between the eastern prince of scripture and his future destiny with the city of Rome. When the Prince of Persia comes to Italy in fulfillment of the prophecies, he will issue a decree that will end the exile completely, both physically and spiritually. When the time comes for the union between Rome and this wicked prince to take place, it will signal the world's complete abandonment of the Christian conversion which had once swept over it. The harvest will be over. The Son will go down and darkness will descend upon the earth.

According to Daniel, a key part of the Rebel's attack on the Church will be focused on the liturgy of the sacrifice and it is this apostasy which will constitute the Abomination of Desolation. The altar in St. Peter's basilica is surrounded by four gigantic baroque posts designed by an Italian architect named Bernini. They rise to a prodigious height, stretching

95 feet above the altar, and, at the top, support a huge ornate bronze canopy. According to the Book of Maccabees, Antiochus hung his abomination of desolation in the Jewish temple 'above the altar'. (1 Mac.1:54-57). If this approximates what is to come, it can be expected that the Rebel will hang his desecration from the canopy, allowing it to swing among Bernini's columns. The Rebel's defilement of the sacrifice of Christ, and the alternative that he decrees in its place at the basilica of St. Peters will destroy Vatican City and officially return Babylon to pagan worship. His decree separating Rome from the Christian faith will end the treaty which ties the Church to Babylon, physically freeing the Christian people from the mandate of the exile. This will free, not just the Roman church from Italy, but the entire Christian Church from its world-wide captivity throughout greater Babylon—it will free all Christians and their churches everywhere from their captivity to this world. More than simply breaking the treaty, the Rebel's proclamation and the sacrilege of abomination that accompanies it will guarantee Babylon's imminent destruction.

John said that when the Rebel attacks the Church, he will besiege 'the camp of the saints, which is the city that God loves'. (Rev.20:9). This prophecy is not a reference to Jerusalem as many now think. John's use of the word 'saints' proves that this quotation applies to a camp of Christians—the saints of God in Christ. (John 14:21). The camp in question is not in Palestine. To this very day, the Christian Church remains in exile in Babylon in accordance with the terms of the treaty. And the nucleus of that Church sits, not in Jerusalem, but secluded within its own camp inside the city of Rome—inside the capitol city of Babylon. Only 3% of the present population of Palestine (including Jerusalem) are Christians. That is three out of every hundred. Such a meager presence guarantees that Palestine's Jerusalem is not the city or camp that John describes. 'The city that God loves' denotes a city living in the faith of the Gospel. John said *"The man who denies that Jesus is the Christ—he is the liar, he is Antichrist; and he is denying the Father as well as the Son, because no one who has the Father can deny the Son..."* (1 John 2:22). This is very strong language, but what John emphasizes here is that no one can come to God except through Jesus Christ. The strength of John's words prove that the saints of Daniel (Dn.7:21-23) are the people who honor the Son whom the Father has sent to lead us back to heaven. The Jews not only deny Jesus to this very day, scripture shows that they will continue to deny him during the time of the beast as well. They will not make their conversion until after the beast is dead. (Dn.11:45-12:1). Even now, citizenship in Israel is specifically denied to Christians—even to Jewish Christians. Because of this kind of rejection, Jesus decreed God's abandonment of the city of Jerusalem until the day of its repentance. (Mt.23:37-39). This confirms that the 'city' called the 'camp of the saints' which is attacked by the beast in

John's prophecy cannot be Jerusalem in Palestine. On the contrary, the camp in question has to be a city dedicated entirely to the worship of Jesus Christ. (Ez.38:10-12). When John revealed that the camp of the saints was not just a camp, but a city as well, it severely narrowed the contenders. In fact, there is only one city on the planet that qualifies: Vatican City. There is not another 'city' on earth that is dedicated entirely to Jesus, and certainly none that can be considered a camp in bondage—one city inside another. Not only is this 'city' subjugated to Babylon according to the terms of the treaty, it is an encampment of refugees who are attempting to make their way to a city of God that is not of this world. So that in one city, Rome, the symbolic capitol of the pagan world, and the heir to the sceptre of Babylon, there exists another city—the capitol city of the largest Christian nation on the planet—a city which guards almost 60% of all Christians on earth. Just as we are a nation of God camping within the nations of men, so is the Vatican a city of God 'camping' within the city of man—a graphic physical witness to the spiritual exile mandated by God's treaty. For this reason, the presence of Vatican City images to the world the relationship between Babylon and the Church. Because, while this tiny holy city which is dedicated to Jesus is located inside the city of Rome—it lives there separate and apart—a sovereign city of God within another city which is its polar opposite. Therefore it stands as the Christian fulfillment of the City of David on earth—a city dedicated to the Son, but bound to Babylon by the chains of the exile. Our personal existence in Babylon is exactly the same. We still live in this world even though we have converted to Christ. Our conversion into the Gospel has made us separate and apart from this world, but it has not physically taken us out of the world. *"I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world...As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world..."* (Jn.17:14-18). The same correlation can be seen in the Roman incarceration of Paul. He was allowed to freely preach in Rome, but was bound there under a type of house arrest, awaiting the evil Nero who, when he ascended to power, plucked Paul out of his ministry and placed him on the cross. Peter and a large number of other Christian leaders were taken as well and subjected to the same violence. When Jesus spoke to Peter He told him that at the end of his days he would be bound and dragged away against his will. (John 21:18-19). Because Peter is the head of the Church, Jesus was not just speaking about Peter's own relationship with a Roman emperor, but the Church's relationship with those emperors as well. The world has tolerated Christian preaching and allowed it for many centuries—even encouraged it—but the day is coming when a man will come in Nero's image and when he arrives, he will mirror Nero's malignant persecution of the people of God.

The parallel between Vatican City and Rome—and what they each represent—gives us a basis for understanding some of the most strategic events of the last days. The Church called Saint Peter is the central focus on earth of liturgical communion (the Eucharist)—the holy meal already shown to be the key target of the Rebel's attack. As we have seen, it is the Rebel's assault on the feast of God which will put an end to the covenant's offer of peace to the world, just as Pharaoh's attack on those trying to celebrate a similar feast brought about the catastrophe at the Red Sea. (Exodus 5:1-4; 10:8-11; 13:3-10; 14:1-31). This is why the Bishop of Rome is so important in these events. His primary role on earth is to be the guardian of the feast—a guardian, not of the unleavened bread of Moses, but of the bread and wine of Christ which God has directed to replace the Mosaic offering. This is the 'one' Paul said who must be removed before the Beast can make his appearance openly. (2 Thes.2:7). Because he oversees the sacred feast, he is the guardian that blocks the man of evil. Since prophecy shows us that it is the destiny of the Rebel—the harshest enemy of God in all of human history—to become the eighth and final Roman emperor, Vatican City will soon lie at the very heart of the Rebel's war on Christianity. Because of Christ's treaty with Babylon, Christianity's most visible camp is required to sit in Satan's capitol and must stay there as a sign to the world; but only as long as God's treaty with Babylon remains in effect. Once released from its captivity by the decree of the Persian prince, the camp cannot remain in Rome. When the exile ends, this 'City of David' in exile must return to Jerusalem and reunite with it in Palestine so that the two can become one at the moment of Jewish vision. This is why the prophecies show Michael leading a journey of Christians—survivors of the Rebel's holocaust—back toward Jerusalem at the very end of the world. His journey, filled with symbolism, is the return of the once-captive City of David to Jerusalem, coming home from its 2000-year captivity in Babylon. Before any of this can happen, though—before Michael can lead the people of God back to Jerusalem, or the Jews regain their sight—the Rebel must attack the Church, raise his abomination there and issue his fateful decree.

According to Daniel, the building to be desecrated by the beast when he erects the Abomination is not the sanctuary itself, but the 'citadel' of the sanctuary. *"Forces of his will come and profane the sanctuary citadel; they will abolish the perpetual sacrifice and install the disastrous abomination there."* (Dn.11:31). The word 'citadel' means 'fortress'. At the time of Daniel the temple and the citadel were not the same, they represented two entirely different kinds of buildings. (Neh.2:8). In the old Covenant, the citadel was the fortress that the Hebrews built next to the temple to guard it against attack. The citadel was the castle-like bunker which commanded the city of Jerusalem and guarded the temple from foreign intrusion. When the historic overlay of Daniel's prophecy was first fulfilled (at the time

when the forces of Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the holy altar in the temple of Jerusalem), his forces did not set up their camp inside the temple; instead, they occupied the citadel located in the City of David that looked down on the temple. In this location they were able to control what happened at the temple and to wreak havoc against it. Likewise, during the time of Christ, the Roman soldiers were garrisoned in a similar citadel on Mt. Moriah. This building was called the Antonia Fortress and it stood right next to the temple of Herod. This brings us to the Christian fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy—the one Jesus predicted and instructed us to diligently watch for as the definitive sign for our moment of flight. (Matt.24:15-22). The citadel in the City of David that overlooks & guards the temple is now in Rome. It is in captivity there. But the temple it overlooks is spiritual. In his vision, John saw that the true temple was not a building at all. *"I saw that there was no temple in the city since the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were themselves the temple..."* (Rv.21:22). This observation, because it changes the definition of the temple, changes the relationship between the citadel and temple. Since in Christ the true temple of God is spiritual and hidden within human hearts, the institution that guards and protects the people of God (the citadel of Christianity) must be the churches. Each church in Christ is, in actuality, a physical edifice built to hide and guard the true spiritual temple hidden within it. Each church, then, forms a separate Christian fortress (or citadel) on earth. Thus we have a Christian citadel that is Roman, another that is Lutheran, another that is Greek, one that is Methodist, and so forth. Each of them forming separate 'wings' of the temple of God, and each housing a specific population of Christian believers. John's revelation (Rv.21:22) proves that the temple can never be rebuilt on a rock in Palestine. God has rebuilt His temple inside the hearts of those who believe in Him. Therefore, the churches of our time must be considered as the guardians or citadels of the people who themselves house the real temple (which is God and Jesus) within them.

The significance of all this is considerable, because it impacts squarely on Daniel's prophecy. When the beast of the future comes and profanes the sanctuary citadel in fulfillment of Daniel's vision (Dn.11:31), it is a specific Christian church that he will desecrate. In the dictionary the word 'citadel' is defined as 'a fortress that commands a city'. This brings us back to the camp of the saints in Rome. The city it guards is Jerusalem, God's spiritual city. It keeps the converts of Babylon protected while they make their journey across this worldly wilderness toward Jerusalem's gates. For almost 2000 years it has stood as the most visible symbol of the Christian Church in this world—the Christian fortress commanding what used to be paganism's heartland—Babylon's converted capitol city. Because it is bound to a location which is destined to become the very center of the

rebellion now in progress, it is situated in a place that the beast will later be able to reach and take firm possession of—something that the prophecies tell us is not true of Jerusalem. Although the words of scripture show that the Rebel will attack Jerusalem three times causing terrible destruction there, his personal access to that city will be very limited. Each time the beast tries to enter Palestine's capitol, his forces will be driven out. In fact, Armageddon itself, the world-ending mobilization of planetary armies, promises to be the final thrust in the Rebel's on-going efforts to gain control of Jerusalem. Rome, on the other hand, will lie easily within the boundaries of his empire. Daniel's prophecies clearly show that the Rebel's attack on the sanctuary citadel will occur as an alternative to his original plan because the ships of the west have blocked his access to the Jewish capitol. (Dn.11:30-31). Unable to secure Jerusalem, the Rebel will turn on the strongholds of his own country and take furious action against the holy covenant. One of these actions will be his occupation and desecration of the sanctuary citadel—Christianity's largest and most dominant church. (Dn.11:30-31). The prophecies predict this confrontation between the Rebel and the Church and indicate that it will be extremely violent. Scripture showed that the forces of Antiochus, once they had gained access to it, then *"fortified the City of David with a strong wall and strong towers, and made this their Citadel. There they installed an armory of sinful men, renegades, who fortified themselves inside it, storing arms and provisions, and depositing there the loot they had collected from Jerusalem; they were to prove a great trouble."* (1 Mac.1:33-38). These words not only describe the historical actions of the forces of Antiochus, they are visions of the future as well. Coupled with many other prophecies, they reveal that the Rebel's forces will make the Basilica of Saint Peter's in Rome their own citadel, turning it into a fortress for their military operations, and driving out the Christians who currently reside there. The 'loot' they gather will be the treasures which they confiscate from Christians and Christian businesses in compliance with the Rebel's orders. We have seen many examples of the extent that such looting can take in the European holocaust event that foreshadowed this attack. The tribulation that lies ahead, however, will be much worse than Hitler's actions during World War II. Not just because it will involve a vastly greater number of people, but more importantly, because it will take away the feast of God, and thus sentence the world to death. *"For they have transgressed the law, violated the precept, broken the everlasting covenant. So a curse consumes the earth and its inhabitants suffer the penalty, that is why the inhabitants of the earth are burnt up and few men are left."* (Is. 24:5-6). The 'Jerusalem' from which the Rebel's booty will be taken is the Jerusalem in exile—the Jerusalem in Babylon—and although it's population will be primarily Christian, Jews will be fully included in this attack as well.

Once he has captured Christianity's main citadel, and secured control of the world's 'eternal city', the Rebel will announce his edict to Babylon: *"Then the king issued a proclamation to his whole kingdom that all were to become a single people, each renouncing his particular customs. All the pagans conformed to the king's decree, and many Israelites chose to accept his religion, sacrificing to idols and profaning the sabbath. The king also sent instructions...to adopt customs foreign to the country, banning holocausts, sacrifices and libations from the sanctuary, profaning sabbaths and feasts, defiling the sanctuary and the sacred ministers; building altars, precincts and shrines for idols, sacrificing pigs and unclean beasts...and prostituting themselves to all kinds of impurity and abomination so that they should forget the Law and revoke all observance of it. Anyone not obeying the king's command was put to death."* (1 Mac.1:38-53). Considering himself a god, the beast will use the Church of St. Peter's not simply as a fortress, but as his own temple as well. Paul said that when the Rebel overthrows the foundation (rock) of the sanctuary, he will enthrone himself there, in its place, declaring himself to be a god, greater than God, usurping the power and majesty of the Church of Christ, and claiming all divinity for himself: *"This is the Enemy, the one who claims to be so much greater than all that men call 'god', so much greater than anything that is worshipped, that he enthrones himself in God's sanctuary and claims that he is God."* (2 Thess.2:3-4). Isaiah prophesied that the Rebel will say to himself: *"I will climb up to the heavens; and higher than the stars of God I will set my throne. I will sit on the Mount of Assembly in the recesses of the north."* (Is.14:14.). The true 'Mount of Assembly in the recesses of the north' is the Zion of heaven, but the Rebel will have no power to climb there. On this earth, however, it is imaged by its counterpart held captive in Babylon. The word 'assembly' in the Bible refers to the gathering together of the people of God, and thus to the services conducted in the churches. (Ps.74:4). Isaiah's announcement that the Rebel will 'sit on the Mount of Assembly in the recesses of the north' is another of scripture's references to the cathedral at Rome. It's cavernous interior, 163,000 square feet, and the prodigious square which fronts it will accommodate the large numbers of people his forces will assemble there to worship him. The interior of Saint Peter's is so large, in fact, that all the other great cathedrals of Europe could easily fit inside it. The Rebel, in his arrogance, would not pick a smaller Christian citadel. When one thinks of the 'recesses of the north', Rome is not a city that comes quickly to mind. In fact, it is a city that many would reject. However, Rome lies on the same latitude as Martha's Vineyard near Boston—about the level of Chicago or the Oregon-California border. The people of Judea (who lived at a latitude which intersects Baja California) understood Italy's northern latitude very well. For this reason, they have always considered Rome a city of the 'far north', and since the focal point of all prophecy is Jerusalem, the description holds true. It is obvious in these

prophecies that the city of Rome will be a primary target of the Rebel's hostility during the last days; especially because control of the Vatican—the City of David on earth—will become his personal and driving obsession once he realizes he cannot get control of Jerusalem. The overthrow of the Church and the destruction of its 'perpetual sacrifice' will set the worst moments of prophecy into action. *"All you who drink wine, lament for that new wine: it has been dashed from your lips. For a nation has invaded my country, mighty and innumerable; its teeth are the teeth of lions, it has the fangs of a lioness. It has laid waste my vines and torn my fig trees to pieces; it has stripped them clean and cut them down...Oblation and libation have vanished from the house of God. The priests, the ministers of God, are in mourning. Wasted lie the fields...for the corn has been laid waste, the wine fails, the fresh oil dries up."* (Joel 1:5-10).

Seeing into these prophecies, but only barely, many early Protestants came to the conclusion that the Vatican (because of its showy liturgy) was the 'beast' and this opinion became a key part of the engine which drove them to escape the Roman Church's influence over their lives. History has shown us, however, that all this did was to spread the Christian faith farther out into the scattered dispersion. No Prince of Persia appeared in response to this flight. And that is the key to the captivity of Babylon (and to our separation from it)—the appearance of the Prince of Persia. *"The people of Israel are to serve the king of Babylon until the kingdom of Persia comes to power."* (2 Chron.36:21). The Antichrist will come at the head of an eastern conspiracy to destroy the Christian Church—every part of it. And the swarm of soldiers spawned by this conspiracy will roll to their victories across Europe and Asia in a classic military style—using mobilized warfare. Because of this, Persia's separation of the people of God from Babylon will not come easily. It will be a bloody disconnection—far more harsh than anything that has ever preceded it. (Matt.24:21). Here, all the prophecies agree—this severance will be bathed in violence, because it will launch into play all the predictions Jesus talked about in the 24th chapter of Matthew. Jesus spoke about these days as a time of flight—a time of chaos and chase—because all the nations on earth are going to be slashing and burning their way toward a battlefield in Palestine in an attempt to strike the final and terminal blows against Jacob's descendents. During this chase, the refugees will be trying in every way to hide from the terror, and the prophecies in scripture give clear and ominous warning that anyone who turns them in will be met with a blaze of fire. *"Hide those who have been driven out, do not let the refugee be seen...be their refuge against the destroyer."* (Is.16:3-4). *"Do not take your stand at the crossroads to cut off its fugitives. Do not hand over its survivors on the day of distress. For the day of God is near for all the nations. As you have done, so will it be done to you: your deeds will recoil on*

your own head." (Obadiah 7:14-15). These warnings in scripture bring to mind the story of Ann Frank—a child of the House of Israel during World War II. She and her family were hiding in a secret room in Holland awaiting the liberation troops. They had been there in seclusion for almost two and a half years. Suddenly D-Day occurred; and as the American forces were coming toward her, someone turned her family in to the Nazi's. She was carried away on the very last prison train out of Holland to a death camp in Germany. Those who turned her in did not know that these prophecies were for them. When the judgment is completed, their souls will be plunged into the deepest part of the burning lake. They did just the opposite of what Rahab did in the days of Joshua, and their reward will just the opposite as well. (Joshua 6:17, 22-25).

In freeing the people of God from their captivity to this world, Persia will end the world. Declaring the Christian Church an enemy of their state, the forces of the Antichrist will bring the harvest to a close. The proclamation that accompanies this attack will constitute the Persian decree separating the House of Israel from Babylon. This edict, calling for the renunciation of all previous customs and religions within the beast's empire, will terminate the treaty between Babylon and Christ, bringing to an end the age of pagan dominion over the people of God. This will allow the Church to leave its Babylonian exile and return to Jerusalem. The door will be closed. The harvest of the pagans will come to an end. Night will descend on the earth, cloaking it in a darkness so dense, Jesus said, that no one would be able to work. The times will become chaotically violent. Christians by the thousands will be martyred, their bodies succumbing in vast numbers to the terrible persecutions wrought by the beast and by the warmongering of those who precede him. The headquarters of both the Eastern Orthodox church and the Roman Catholic church will fall into the Beast's hands and come under his personal control. These two churches have populations in the affected areas which are, today, immense. The Greek church alone, for instance, lists 300 million Christians in areas that stand squarely in the Rebel's path, and almost all of these will eventually fall under the control of his forces. Another 200 million Protestants and perhaps 65% of all Roman Catholics (over 600 million) will also fall under the dominion of the Rebel's armies. In all, the forces of the beast will one day occupy territory which now claims a Christian population of over one billion people. These numbers show the terrible dimensions of the tribulation that the world's apostasy is now building. With his forces firmly in control of the Vatican, and blocked from access to the Jews, the Rebel will launch a furious offensive against the Christian House of Israel in Europe. Before the Rebel kills everyone, however, the Lord will intervene and crush his armies, raising the entire population on earth to Judgment to answer for all this mayhem—for all the evil that has been

perpetrated against the children of God. And when that day occurs, only those who have remained faithful to the commandments of Jesus Christ will survive.

27

The Madness of Annihilation

"Immediately after the distress of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of heaven will be shaken." *Matthew 24:29*

Bewildered by the unsettling visions which had preoccupied him during those fateful months at the Euphrates, Daniel welcomed the word from God which informed him that all the terrible things he had seen were for another time—for an age far beyond his own at the conclusion of history. *"This explanation of the vision of the mornings and the evenings is true"*, the voice told him, *"but you must keep the vision secret, for there are still many days to go."* (Dn.8:26). *"...you, Daniel, must keep...the book sealed until the time of the End. Many will wander this way and that, and wickedness will go on increasing."* (Dn.12:4). Sealed for 2500 years by the command of God, Daniel's visions have remained an unfathomable enigma until our own time. They are being unveiled now at the conclusion of the age so that a detailed chronicle might portray in advance the final days of the earth's history; the final proof that God has instructed His messengers in divine truth. Daniel's words speak to us about the world's final dictator—the man of sinister evil whom Ezekiel calls 'Gog'—and how he will bring the civilization of the entire world to ultimate ruin. Just before the end, after all his forays and battles have run their course, Daniel predicts that this man of perdition—this 'Gog'—will ignore all pleas for peace. (Dn.11:40). Instead, he will gather the armies of the east for a third massive campaign against the armies of the kingdom of the South. This will ignite on earth the ultimate wrath of all. Berserk with power, convinced that he is God and no longer fearing the power of the west, the beast will throw all reticence to the wind. Declaring all out war on everything that lies outside his own dominion, the Rebel's assault will cover the earth, but focus most intently on the country of Israel, a land his enemies have sworn to defend at all costs. *"With chariots, cavalry, and a large fleet"*, the Bible says, (Dn.11:40), the beast will successfully attack and conquer many lands including much of Palestine. There he will set up his final camp somewhere between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean Sea. (Dn. 11:45). At this point (just before Armageddon) confronted and blocked in Palestine by the southern forces, and in response to threats rising

up in the east and the north, suddenly *"...with great fury the Rebel will set out to bring ruin and complete destruction to many."* (Dn.11:44).

Like Saddam Hussein who tried to destroy Kuwait and the Persian Gulf with fire and oil when he was forced to retreat, the beast, at the very end will apparently decide to destroy the whole world simply out of spite. Daniel tells us that he will launch a furious, apparently planet-wide, attack. International in scope, it will leave vast numbers of people throughout the world dead or dying and the world itself in global flames. *"I have brought fire out of you to consume you. I have made you ashes on the ground before the eyes of all who saw you."* (Ez.28:18). By scripture's descriptions, this can be nothing less than the terrible military apocalypse that so many have been fearing. Scripture's predictions bespeak a type of civilization-ending World War III event—an unrestrained nuclear holocaust that will quickly incinerate all that is left of Babylon. (Micah 1; Zeph.1). *"See how the Lord lays the earth waste, makes it a desert, buckles its surface, scatters its inhabitants, priest and people alike, master and slave, mistress and maid, seller and buyer, lenderer and borrower, creditor and debtor. Ravaged, ravaged the earth, despoiled, despoiled, as God has said."* (Is.24:1-3). *"For they have transgressed the law, violated the precept, broken the everlasting covenant. So a curse consumes the earth and its inhabitants suffer the penalty, that is why the inhabitants of the earth are burnt up and few men are left."* (Is.24:5-6). *"The time will come when the ten horns and the beast will turn against the prostitute, and strip off her clothes and leave her naked; then they will eat her flesh and burn the remains in the fire."* (Rv.17:16). The statement is direct and unmistakable. Following ruinous warfare, the ten horns and the Beast will take actions that set ablaze virtually every city on earth, torching most of them in a single volley. America will not escape the fire. *"I will send fire ...on those living undisturbed on islands..."* (Ez.39:6). As the arrows of that catastrophe begin to make their strikes on American soil, the United States will launch its own missiles in retaliation, returning a fire that will incinerate Magog. (Ez.39:6). In the wake of these mammoth firestorms, black clouds will encircle the earth, enveloping the planet in an acidic shroud of choking darkness. Human suffering—the aftermath of this holocaust—will be unimaginable in vast areas of the planet as the burned, broken and radiated survivors grope about in the blackness searching for scraps of food and water in the fires and ashes of what once had been world civilization. All of this because the people gave up on God and chose sin instead. *"There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence."* (Dn.12:1). Jesus confirmed this period of calamity and said it would be so grave, that had it not been shortened, no one on earth would survive it. (Matt.24:21-22). This

terrible phenomenon will occur apart from the gathering of the nations at Armageddon, isolating those who have assembled there by cremating the countries the soldiers came from.

With so many of their homelands burning furiously, the clouds of smoke encircling the earth will envelop the battlefield of Armageddon as well, plunging the forces amassing there into the same black noon enshrouding all the other areas of the planet. *"When I extinguish you I will cover the skies, and darken the stars. I will cover the sun with clouds and the moon will not give its light. I will dim every luminary in heaven for you, and cover your country in darkness—it is the Lord God who speaks."* (Ez.32:7-8). Concerning this momentous attack, God prophesied through Ezekiel: *"On the day that Gog attacks Israel, I shall grow angry. In my anger, my jealousy and the heat of my fury I say it: I swear that on that day there will be a fearful quaking in the land of Israel."* (Ez.38:18-19). Zechariah said of this earthquake that it will be so strong it will split the Mount of Olives into two parts. The fracturing of this mountain will give physical evidence on earth that the Lord has indeed said, 'Enough!' (Is.24:16). For *"Then God will take the field; he will fight against these nations as he fights on the day of battle. On that day, his feet will rest on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem from the east."* (Zech.14:3). *"The Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, forming a huge gorge; half the Mount will recede northwards, the other half southwards. And the Valley of Hinnom will be filled up from Goah to Jasol; it will be blocked as it was by the earthquake in the days of Uzziah."* (Zech.14:4-5). God's own feet, Zechariah said, will touch the Mount of Olives, splitting it into two gigantic parts. The signal will be unmistakable. Man's reign on the planet will be over. Amassing the limitless forces of heaven to His bidding, the Bible says that God will instantly direct them all in a staggering celestial assault against the beast and sin. Having just overrun a part of Jerusalem, the Rebel and his forces will be quite close to that city when the Mount of Olive's thunderous split occurs. He will perish in one of the events related to this moment—or perhaps in an event that comes just before it. *"I will punish him with plague and bloodshed and send torrential rain, hailstones, fire and brimstone against him and his hordes and against the many nations with him...you shall be killed on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes, and the nations with you."* (Ez.38:22-23, 39:4). At this point the universe will join natural law and bring the wrath to its final conclusion. The shock wave from this event will dissolve all the walls and barriers still left in the city (Ez.38:21) and it will bring many of the people inside that city to their knees in preparation for the Lord's visitation. *"...all these things are going to happen when he who crushes the power of the holy people meets his end."* (Dn.12:7).

In the world-shattering and cataclysmic events that follow Gog's demise, all anarchy on earth will abruptly cease. The massive violence of the second war will culminate in the complete annihilation of everything that is evil. *"From the moment that the perpetual sacrifice is abolished and the disastrous abomination erected: one thousand two hundred and ninety days."* (Dan.12:11). *"Blessed is he who stands firm and attains a thousand three hundred and thirty five days."* (Dan.12:12). For forty-five days, then, the earth will shake and shudder in the smouldering ruins of catastrophe, bombarded from the heavens by the hailstones of cosmic retaliation for sin—forty-five days unlike any the world has ever known before. Then the call will be made. The End will come and the Judgment will begin. *"All this is going to happen, all this is going to take place—it is the Lord God who speaks. This is the day I predicted."* (Ez.39:8).

28

The Death of the Beast

"Not from the east, nor from the west, not from the desert, nor from the mountains, but from God the judgment comes..."
Ps.75:6-7

At the height of his power, and before the world itself comes to an end, the beast will suddenly die. (Dn.8:25). *"All who see you will gaze at you, will stare at you, 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, and overthrew kingdoms, who made the world a desert and leveled cities, who never to his captives opened the prison gates?' You have been expelled from your grave like loathsome dung, buried under the slaughtered, under those cut down by the sword, and thrown on the stones of the ditch like a mangled carcass. You are never to rejoin them in the grave, for you have brought your country to ruin and destroyed your people."* (Is.14:16-20). Coming in catastrophe, the Rebel's death will not occur at the hands of men. (Dn.8:25). Antiochus IV Epiphanes is said in one account to have died as a result of a chariot accident he was involved in as he was rushing to rejoin his forces in Israel. According to the writer of the first Book of the Maccabees, he died slowly of his injuries, in bitter grief, deeply regretting the fact that he had ordered the extermination of the Jews. (1 Macc.6:10-13). Whether this mimics the death of the Rebel is unknown. Daniel said that the catastrophic events surrounding the beast's end will not come at the hands of another human being: *"...but no hand intervening, he shall himself be broken."* (Dn.8:25). A traffic accident would seem mundane in light of the magnitude of this moment. Daniel's prophecy seems to point to an event much more sweeping—to something bordering on divine retribution. However, the worst part of the cataclysm appears to follow the Rebel's death rather than cause it. Ezekiel reveals that the rebel will die on the mountains of Israel (Ez.39:4); on an open field thereof: *"You will fall in the open countryside."* (Ez.39:5). Isaiah indicates that the beast's body will be buried by his forces and then all at once, exhumed and catapulted through the air by some immense force. *"But you, you have been expelled from your grave like loathsome dung..."* (Is.14:19). Whatever event causes this disentanglement in Palestine during those final days, it will be sudden and violent, hurling the Rebel's corpse out of the ground and dropping it into the same gorge where the bodies of many of his forces will come to lie. (Is.14:19). Divine retribution, then, will play a key role in the terrifying events of the

last days. Although the nations of the end will set the world on fire with missiles and bombs, the final disasters will almost certainly come out of the heavens themselves. *"He rains coals of fire and brimstone on the wicked, he serves them a scorching wind to swallow down."* (Ps.11:6). The involvement of nature in the upheavals of the last days is overwhelmingly evident in scripture, *"...he will arm creation to punish his enemies...he will forge a biting sword of his stern wrath, and the universe will march with him to fight the reckless. Bolts truly aimed, the shafts of lightning will leap, and from the clouds, as from a full-drawn bow, fly to their mark; and the catapult will hurl hailstones charged with fury. The waters of the sea will rage against them...so lawlessness will bring the whole earth to ruin and evil-doing bring the thrones of the mighty down."* (Ws.5:18-24). All the elements of divine catastrophe are present in these passages of the Greek Bible: Stoney thunderbolts falling out of heaven blazing with fire; mammoth impacts; cataclysmic tidal waves and irreversible ruin. And perfect aim as well, because one of these cosmic cataclysms will destroy the Rebel's army as it encircles Jerusalem. *"On the day Gog attacks the land of Israel...there shall be a fearful quaking there. At my presence the fish in the sea and the birds of heaven, the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl along the ground, and all men on earth will quake. Mountains will fall, cliffs crumble, walls collapse and I will confront him with every sort of terror."* (Ez.38:19-21). *"I will punish him with plague and bloodshed and send torrential rain, hailstones, fire and brimstone against him and his hordes and against the many nations with him. I mean to display my greatness and holiness and to compel the many nations to acknowledge me; this is how I will teach them that I am God."* (Ez.38:22-23).

The 'shafts of lightning from heaven' (Ws.5:18) will follow closely the devastating earthquake in Israel described by Ezekiel and Zechariah. Since Zechariah has said that the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem will be split in half, it is obvious that something enormous will occur here in the days that lie ahead. According to John, shock waves from this assault will cause the entire earth to shudder violently. (Rv.16:18). As a part of these natural events, the terrible fires of the end will occur—the time scripture says God will *"send fire to Magog and on those living undisturbed on islands."* (Ez.39:6). As we have shown before, 'Magog' is the empire of 'Gog'—and includes all the countries that have aligned themselves with the beast. Those who are living undisturbed on the islands include the people of the United States. Magog and 'the islands', then, constitute the two great superpowers of the End. Whether Ezekiel's reference to these fires alludes to those ignited by the missiles of the last days or by the cosmic hailstones which God intends to rain down from the skies just before Jesus returns is not clear. A meteoric assault could easily trigger a nuclear response—a potentiality often discussed in current literature. Daniel's description of the day of demolition

does not rule this potential out: *"But reports coming from the East and the North will worry him, and in great fury he will set out to bring ruin and complete destruction to many."* (Dn.11:44). Scripture states that *all* these fires, (whether they are ignited by missiles or meteors) will come from God who has ruled that the End should be now. In fact, so will the eastern army itself be spurred on by God, and all the devastation it causes on earth from the opening days of its existence. *"Be ready, be well prepared, you and all your troops and the others rallying round you, and hold yourself at my service."* (Ez.38:7). This shows that all the devastation is related—all of it happening because God has pulled the plug. *"I will turn you round, fixing hooks in your jaws, and drag you and your troops along, all the horses and well-armoured horsemen, and all that great army carrying shields and bucklers, and wielding swords."* (Ez.38:4). *"I will turn you round, lead you on, and bring you from the farthest north to attack the mountains of Israel"* (Ez.39:2). This is the time that was predicted from the beginning—the day of divine retribution because of sin. For this reason it is impossible to separate the events. The assumption would be that the warheads will come first and the lightning of God second. That scenario seems to match Daniel's chronology of the disaster. Daniel said that after the beast dies there will suddenly come upon the earth *'...a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence'*. (Dn.12:1). His words indicate that the celestial bombardment of the earth from the heavens will be even more terrifying and destructive than the terror wrought by human missiles. As the turmoil of the last days progresses, the impacts will grow more dense, finally striking with such mammoth size and force that the earth will be shattered into rubble and cease to exist. *"Yes, the sluiceways above will open, and the foundations of the earth will rock. The earth will split into fragments. So heavy will be its sin on it, it will fall never to rise again."* (Is.24:18-19). *"I will punish the world for its evil-doing, and the wicked for their crimes...This is why I am going to shake the heavens—and make the earth reel from its place."* (Is.13:11-13). One thing is abundantly clear, there will be extensive participation by elements outside the planet. *"That day, God will punish above, the armies of the sky, below, the kings of the earth."* (Is.24:21). The world's annihilation, then, will be accompanied by destructive anomalies in the heavens equally as cataclysmic as those impacting the earth. Since the very last days are destined to occur under skies darkened by the fires of intense warfare, it appears certain that the arrows of the beast will fly first, incinerating the cities and blackening the skies, and then the heavens themselves will begin to fall apart. As they do so, lethal asteroid or cometary debris from space will begin to bombard the planet from the skies, destroying the armies of Armageddon and thoroughly cleansing the world for Christ's return. Scripture refers to the universe as a wild 'sea' which God has tamed by storing its waters in containment vessels. (Ps.33:7). There are voluminous passages in the Bible which tell us that these 'deep waters'

will rage at the end, churned by God into a frothing boil. Not just raging oceans, but even the hydrogen bombs themselves could be considered a part of this churning sea because the fire they represent is no different than that which powers the stars -- a surging kind of 'water' which God has contained in an orderly way and kept distant from us in outer space. It is only man's stupidity that has broken these divine barriers and brought that fire down to the earth. (Is.5:30). The sequence of demolition is going to be very fast. Forty-five days, according to Daniel. (Dn.12-11-12). The intense fires destined to rage on earth as the final bell tolls are symbolic of God's total annihilation of wickedness. *"Yes, wickedness burns like a fire: it consumes briar and thorn, it sets the forest thickets alight and columns of smoke go rolling upwards. The land is set aflame by the wrath of the Lord God Almighty and the people are food for the fire."* (Is.9:17-18). In the end it will become clear that the true agents behind all these catastrophes were those who promoted evil. They did not believe a day of retribution was really possible or that Jesus Christ told the truth. *"The day of God is coming, merciless, with wrath and fierce anger, to reduce the earth to desert and root out the sinners from it."* (Is.13:10). Every word in the Bible will come true. Scripture is God's Law and Jesus Christ is the only mercy which protects us from that Law. All the catastrophe's described above were decreed long ago and it is only the fact that Jesus Christ is being preached on earth that has blocked them from having taken place already. By revolting against Jesus, the world will cast away its protection from obliteration. *"The seventh angel emptied his bowl into the air, and a voice shouted from the sanctuary, 'The end has come'. Then there were flashes of lightning and peals of thunder and the most violent earthquake that anyone has ever seen since there have been men on the earth. The Great City was split into three parts and the cities of the world collapsed; Babylon the Great was not forgotten...every island vanished and the mountains disappeared; and hail, with great hailstones weighing a talent each fell from the sky on the people."* (Rv.16:17-21). *"For by fire will God execute judgment, and by his sword, against all mankind."* (Is.66:16). Accompanying this fire will be the roar of the oceans. Devastating tidal waves will roll across Babylon during these times. Scripture is clear that God intends to destroy the earth by fire, not water (as He did during the days of Noah). But immense water damage will accompany the fire, nonetheless. *"The sea will rise over Babylon, she will sink under its roaring waves."* (Jer.51:42). Damage this intense on earth has not occurred since the days of the dinosaurs, when a comet struck in the Yucatan, blasting a crater hundreds of miles wide in the Gulf of Mexico, and sending immense tidal waves rolling completely over the state of Florida and across the Atlantic Ocean. As we have shown so often in this book, God brings scripture to fulfillment both literally and metaphorically. These waves, then, will be as much physical as symbolic. Waves large enough to wash across whole countries in a single sweep could only be driven

by forces catastrophic beyond comprehension—the reeling of the earth from its place in space for instance, or by massive meteoric impacts into the oceans. The physical waves will be a counterpoint to the mass of eastern armies which they represent. *"I mean to cause many nations to surge against you like the sea and its waves."* (Ez.26:3). *"...I am going to hand you over to the sons of the East, they will pitch their camps inside your frontiers, they will settle there."* (Ez.25:4). Elements of this prophecy were completed many years ago when the Persians under the flag of Mohammed took control of Palestine. But that invasion was only a sign. It stands today a proof of the End that is still to come. We can see in these passages that all the assaults against Babylon's many faces by the forces of the east are related to one another. We are witnessing a continuum which is destined to crescendo in the final moments of history. And as it does so, the sea itself will join the armies, washing even the mountains of Babylon into the deep. *"God is our shelter, our strength...so we shall not be afraid when the earth gives way, when mountains tumble into the depths of the sea, and its waters roar and seethe, the mountains tottering as it heaves."* (Ps.46:1-3).

The two countries most associated with the tidal waves of prophecy are Babylon and Tyre. (Jer.51:42, Ez.26-28). *"Now you are shattered by the waves, surrounded by the seas."* (Ez.27:34). As we have seen before, Tyre appears to be a biblical cryptogram for Rome. Not the Christian part, of course, but the secular Babylon that is destined to renege on its conversion in the last days and return to paganism. Rome's spiritual collapse has been in freefall since the days of Mussolini. Like the Tyre in Ezekiel's prophecies, Rome, in its earlier conversion to Christ had wrapped itself in a divine beauty which it exported to the nations through evangelism. Allowing that reformation to lapse, however, the city has since foundered on the rocks of a secular revolt which is today ripping apart its earlier conversion. This defection from the grace of God has created a critical breach in the city's defenses. It is through this gaping spiritual hole that the beast will march his armies when he routs the current management and takes control of the city's gloomy future. (Ez.26:7-18). In retaliation for its apostasy, the waters of the ocean will completely cover Rome when the day of divine retribution comes. *"...when I bring up the deep against you and the ocean covers you, I will cast you down with those who go down to the pit. I will make you an object of terror. You will not exist."* Ez.26:19-21. It is this particular face of Babylon that will interlock with the beast in the last days and provide the launchpad for the bulk of the armies that are destined to descend on the plains near Megiddo at the end of history. The Hebrew name 'Armageddon' applies to the mountains of Megiddo in the north of Israel very near the town of Nazareth—a place situated between the southernmost end of the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean coast. This is where the Book of Revelation indicates the armies of the

end will be gathered together for the final conflict of mankind. (Rev.16:14). While this may be the central battlefield of the conflict, Ezekiel seems to indicate that the Rebel will die instead near the plateau of Moab in a place called the 'Valley of Abarim'. According to Ezekiel this valley was renamed Harmon-gog (Ez.38:11) because it will be here, somewhere near the deep gorge of the Arnon on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, that Gog and much of his army will be hurled and destroyed when evil's reign on earth is brought to its sudden end. (Dn.8:25). *"The enemy may sharpen his sword, he may bend his bow and take aim, but the weapons he prepares will kill himself and his arrows turn into firebrands. He dug a pit, hollowed it out, only to fall into his own trap! His spite recoils on his own head, his brutality falls back on his own skull."* (Ps.7:12-16). *"God will appear above them and his arrow will flash out like lightning. The Lord will sound the trumpet and advance in the storms of the south."* (Zc.9:14). Since scripture defines two different locations relative to Armageddon, we must consider both to be accurate.

The battlefield at Megiddo will never be used. Although intense preparations for war will be in progress, the prophecies are very clear. The end will come before the final assault begins. (Ez.7:10-14). It seems likely that the ditch where the Rebel's corpse eventually will come to rest (at the bottom of the gorge of the Arnon perhaps), is a place adjacent to where he will move to command the fighting, or perhaps where he will be buried following his sudden death. Prophecy makes it certain that both locations will be involved in the conflict. The forces massing here will be immense—the greatest gathering of armies in the history of the entire world. These forces will involve soldiers from almost every nation on the planet. Inevitably, this vast horde will be spread across the entire landscape of Palestine. The army of the beast—a union of soldiers from all the eastern nations that are allied with Magog will be on one side, and on the other will gather the remnant of all the armies that have aligned themselves with the South. *"Let the nations muster round you in a body, and then return, high over them."* (Ps.7:7). As we have seen, this final massing of troops will produce no war. (Ez.7:14). God intends to draw all the nations here for the day of His judgment. *"Here is the day! It has come; your turn has come, the scourge is ready, pride is at its peak. Violence has risen to become the scourge of wickedness...for anger rages against all alike. The trumpet will sound, all will be ready; but no one will go into battle, since my anger rages against all alike."* (Ez.7:10-14). Despite all the preparations for war, there will be no fighting there that day. Only the devastation coming down from God out of the skies. *"A fire unlit by man devours him and consumes what is left in his tent."* (Job 20:26). Thus all the violence of the last days will be concluded in a final scourge of wickedness by a fiery rain of rocks from heaven—a rain of cosmic violence that brings all violence on earth to a violent end.

"Since John the Baptist came, up to this present time, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence and the violent are taking it by storm...and by violence is everyone getting in." (Mt.11:12, Lk.16:16). This abuse started with the beheading of John the Baptist and the crucifixion of Jesus and it will end with all the warfare of the last days, revealing that it is all part of the same process. The ultimate Law of God is a mirror. What we put out is what we get back. What we do to others, we do to ourselves—good or bad. The whole universe has been constructed on this premise making it an absolute Law of creation. God's secret intention is that the virtuous be saved through their humility and compassion while the wicked be destroyed through the violence of their own hands. In this way wickedness destroys not what it kills, but itself, while those who do good save themselves through their own compassion. "These people see the wise man's ending without understanding what the Lord has in store for him or why he has taken him to safety. (Ws.4:17). They do not know the hidden things of God, they have no hope that holiness will be rewarded, they can see no reward for blameless souls. Yet God did make man imperishable, he made him in the image of his own nature; it was the devil's envy that brought death into the world, as those who are his partners will discover. But the souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God, no torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us, like annihilation; but they are in peace. (Ws.2:22-3:3) On the sinners, however, punishments rained down—not without violent thunder as early warning...those beasts they had taken for gods, now the means of their punishment." (Ws.19:13,12:27).

The final events of scripture will all take place in darkness. *"When I extinguish you I will cover the skies, and darken the stars. I will cover the sun with clouds and the moon will not give its light. I will dim every luminary in heaven for you, and cover your country in darkness." (Ez.32:7-8). Whatever missiles are fired, all will have been launched before the final day comes (Rev.17:16, Ez.39:6); their aftermath leaving a day of darkness and gloom all across the earth. Presaging the sea of burning sulphur that is to follow, columns of smoke will rise from the tribulation's flames, uniting across the world and plunging the earth into darkness like the shroud that comes from a nuclear winter. (Is.13:10). "That day I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight...I will make it a mourning like the mourning for an only son—as long as it lasts it will be like a day of bitterness." (Amos 8:9-10, Ez.32:7-8). In spiritual terms, this darkness will reflect Satan's final 'night'—the loss of the light of Christ that will come to the world during these last days (the fact that preaching stops); but the darkness of the end will also be tangible, covering the whole earth in a perpetual night. It was God's ultimate purpose to gather the whole world to*

Jerusalem for the final judgment—a judgment designed to bring God there as well. As He comes, the fires of heaven will march with Him—in front of Him—in the final fulfillment of scripture, *"A fire precedes him as he goes, devouring all enemies around him; his lightning lights up the world, earth observes and quakes. The mountains melt like wax at the coming of the Master of the world."* (Ps.97:3-5). Struck by large meteors, the ground will liquify; it will shudder and shake and in the end according to the prophecies, catapult from its place. This is how it will be on earth in the last moments just before the Second Coming of Christ. Sin brings disaster. In sin's wake even the innocent must suffer. We have seen this same kind of response in our own lives—in sickness and disease—and scripture indicates that the same thing applies to the planet and to the universe. Sin has structured a point of impact in the future and the earth is heading toward it on a collision course which has been programmed by wickedness. The orbit of the earth and the elements of space are scheduled to meet at a predetermined location on a fateful day unknown to anyone except God. When that day comes there will suddenly tumble out of the heavens all the destruction decreed in the Law. For almost 2000 years, God has been holding this awful moment back in hopes that mankind will come to its senses and repent, but the all the signs demonstrate that the time for such repentance is now drawing to a close.

Only repentance for sin and conversion into the commandments of God can alter the circumstances of the final days. *"Because you have kept my commandment to endure trials, I will keep you safe in the time of trial which is going to come for the whole world, to test the people of the world."* (Rev.3:10). To bring the world to this repentance God sent Jesus to sound the warning of what was coming—all the fire His Book has announced—a holocaust which could be avoided only by repentance and conversion into his Gospel. *"For I am God, not man: I am the Holy One in your midst and have no wish to destroy."* (Hos.11:9). Those who say that God wouldn't do anything like this have failed to hear the warnings of scripture. The Law of the universe had already judged us and sentenced us to death—and it did this long before we were born. The truth of this judgment can be seen by the fact that all earthly life ends in death. Wickedness rules this earth, not God. Jesus came to save us from a sentence already decreed by the Law and already ratified by our own universe, and it is the universe itself that will deliver the terminal blows unless the world repents in the brief respite that Christ gave us. Those who disregard the door of mercy He has sent us from heaven (Jesus Christ) have no way to escape the penalty of scripture's decrees. That is why it is so important that we follow Jesus. His treaty is peace. Outside that treaty there is only catastrophe. *"The wide ramparts of Babylon will be razed to the ground, and her high gates will be burnt down. Thus the laboring of the peoples comes to nothing. The toiling of the*

nations ends in fire." (Jer.51:58). "You will make them like a blazing furnace on the day that you appear." (Ps.21:9). The Law has decreed that "lawlessness will bring the whole earth to ruin and evil-doing bring the thrones of the mighty down." (Ws.5:17-24).

PART 7

THE JUDGMENT

*"He who obeys the commands will come to no harm,
and the wise man knows there will be a time of
judgment." Eccl.8:5*

29

The Withered Fig Tree

I would like to go harvesting there, says God. But there are no grapes on the vine, no figs on the fig tree: even the leaves are withered. This is because I have brought ravagers to ravage them." Jer.8:13

A death sentence has been commanded for the world by the Law in response to sin. This is the meaning of the withered fig tree. Jesus, obeying a directive from God, commanded the leaves on that tree to wither as a warning to mankind. Many Christians are appalled that this event is even chronicled in the scriptures. Silently they ask, "How could anyone whom the world calls 'God' do such a thing to a helpless tree?" To startle a sleeping civilization. Jesus withered the fig tree in Jerusalem so that people would be shocked into understanding that sin has launched the world toward a catastrophic end, and anyone who does not bear the fruit of righteous behavior will come to an end with it. God wanted us to know that our reconciliation with God is serious business. We are all in the process of dying, and a tree in Jerusalem gave its life to show us that we can stop that disintegration in its tracks. We can be cured of inevitable death and live forever. The future of this planet is not sunshine and roses. The Bible says the future is cloaked in calamity, and anyone who does not break with sin will be swept away by the disaster that is coming—a calamity of Satan that will not simply consume just one tree in Palestine but burn to a cinder every tree on the face of the earth. God sent Jesus to save all who would listen to Him-- to redeem all who are willing to follow the only path that successfully skirts the death that lies ahead. To make clear what rejection of His path implies, God manifested an example that was abundantly documented in Israel's ancient scriptures—all the Old Testament prophecies about withered fig trees. He wanted everyone to understand just what these passages truly say: (Joel 1:7; 1:12; 2:22; Hosea 2:12; Is.34:4; Jer.8:13; Hab.3:17; Na.3:12; Ps.105:33; Hab.3:17; Micah 7:2; Amos 4:9). The deathblow that is coming will crash down on good and bad alike. The Bible teaches us that the tribulation will be catastrophic. The Church will collapse as fully as the governments that surround them. Everything will be destroyed. Nothing physical will remain. Every tree on earth will die because of mankind's sins. This is why Jesus gave us a sign so serious. His prediction foretells total apocalypse, and only the good will survive.

"For a nation has invaded my country, mighty and innumerable; its teeth are the teeth of lions, it has the fangs of a lioness. It has laid waste my vines and torn my fig trees to pieces; it has stripped them clean and cut them down, their branches have all turned white." (Joel 1:6-7). "The earth is mourning, withering, the world is pining, withering..." (Is.24:4) "The heavens are rolled up like a scroll and their armies all drop like leaves, like vine leaves falling, like falling fig leaves. For my sword has drunk deep in the heavens...See now how it slashes through Edom, through the people I have condemned to be punished." (Is.34:4-5).

The pages of the Old Testament are filled with prophetic descriptions of ravaged fig trees. They are there because God placed them there in preparation for Jesus who would unveil the secret meaning of this mortal decay before the gaze of the House of Israel. Because it didn't bear fruit when the Master stood before it, even fruit out of season, God ordered Jesus to strike the tree dead in front of the eyes of the whole world. That was the sign. The forewarning of the ultimate prophecy. God wanted the world to see that Jesus was God in their midst—powerful and fearsome, yet still the gentle voice Elijah had forseen (1 Kings 9-13)—sent by the Almighty to warn the world about the incalculable disaster approaching it, and to lead anyone who would follow His divine Voice to the safety God had prepared. The fig tree proved to the world just what its apostasy in ignoring His Presence and rejecting His message would mean—that it would leave them powerless to escape the dreaded wrath described in the Bible which sin is bringing down on the world—all the terrible signs and events that are predicted to precede the coming of God. *"The harvest of the field has been ruined. The vine has withered, the fig tree wilts away. Pomegranate and palm and apple; every tree in the field is drooping. Yes, gladness has faded among the sons of men. Priests, put on sackcloth and lament. Ministers of the altar, wail. Come, pass the night in sackcloth, you ministers of my God. For the house of our god has been deprived of oblation and libation."* (Joel 1:12-13). The Jewish leaders knew their scriptures by heart, but they failed to draw the connection Elijah had given them between the terrible signs that herald God's coming and the gentle nature that is His Being. They wanted a warlord, someone who would destroy the Roman Empire, so they rejected the gentle teaching of Jesus. Rejecting peace, peace eluded them and the sceptre passed to others. The ravagers came and went. (Jer.8:13). The fate of Israel astonished the world, and for awhile, people woke up and took note. Today the fig trees are wilting once again. The harvest of the pagans is drying up in a secular revolt that has tilted the world away from its Gospel past. And once again, Jeremiah's ravagers are beginning to cluster at the periphery, scepters in hand. All the signs of God's appearance are happening again today, just as they did when He began to descend the mountain at Sinai—but now they are occurring everywhere, not only before the tribes of

Israel. That is because Christ's return is almost at hand. The signs are not just for Jewish leaders, they are for everyone. And like the great portents of the biblical past, these current happenings herald once again the nearness in the skies of the heavenly Host and of the Great Judgment which is now so close to us. In front of this great empyreal armada the promised ravagers have begun to appear—those who are destined to devastate the earth in its sin. Once again, there will be winds and earthquakes and great fires. But now there is more. The appearance just ahead will be greater than anything in the past so the signs which herald it will be far greater. Immense armies, new plagues and diseases, floods, pestilence, wars and terror everywhere on earth—even in the heavens above our heads. Jesus said the signs of the last days would crescendo so violently they would manifest themselves throughout the universe—in the sun and the moon and the stars. Comets crashing on planets, bombarding the earth; creating turbulence so frenzied, the oceans will become unmanageable. The fig tree is beginning to wither now everywhere we look. But is anyone paying attention? News agencies of international size, greater and more numerous than any mankind has ever assembled, stand ready to run off at a moments notice with untold thousands of camera's and reporters to cover the slightest wrinkle in society's fabric. Are they paying attention? No. They are all asleep. They see nothing. They report the signs of the stirring, but they are blind to the cause. Worse, they scoff at anyone who tries to sound the alarm.

Because the Law has decreed the sentence, God cannot repeal it. That is why Jesus allowed himself to be placed on the cross to pay this penalty in our names. He did this because the sentence cannot be overruled, only fulfilled. All God can do about the destruction ahead is to hold the storm of wrath back for a short while—just long enough to rescue us from it's path. Like the walls of water that He pushed apart at the Red Sea so the Israelites could pass to safety, God is holding back the wrath for us now. For Him to continue to block the tribulation we have to repent of our sins in Jesus' name and follow the way He has commanded. It is our own faith that enables God to hold the disaster at bay, because in order to escape the wrath, we have to become one with Jesus Christ. Yet scripture prophesies that, far from repenting, the world will do just the opposite. It will abandon the covenant and so make the disaster of the end inevitable. *"...but instead of repenting for what they had done, they cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores."* (Rv.16:11). Failing to call on the mercy of God which could save the world and defer the terrible consequences of sin, the planet's people will wait in terror and hatred for the events of the last days to pass, hoping against hope that all the things they see descending on them is not the end of life but just a terrible moment in history. Still, they will not repent. Instead, unlike Elijah, they will blame God for all the disasters they see.

And then it will happen. Darkened by the clouds of a burning world, the battlefield will meet the Judgment. *"The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up. Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and hope for the Day of God to come."* (2 Peter 3:10-12). At that moment, the sky will be rolled back and all the hosts of heaven will appear. Thrones will be set in place and the books will be opened and everyone will be brought to answer for the way in which they lived their lives. The earth of the past will no longer exist—it will be completely annihilated by the forces which the Bible tells us that God will bring against it. (Is.24:18-20). *"I looked to the earth, to see a formless waste; to the heavens, and their light had gone. I looked to the mountains, to see them quaking and all the heights astir. I looked, to see no man at all, the very birds of heaven had fled."* *"I looked, to see the wooded country a wilderness, all its towns in ruins, at the presence of God, at the presence of his burning anger. Yes, thus speaks God, 'The whole land shall be laid waste, I will make an end of it once and for all...'"* (Jer.4:23-27).

30

The Sign in the Sky

"Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven..." Mt.24:30

In the darkness of the last days, just before he returns, a crack will suddenly appear in the curtain of the sky and the sign of Jesus Christ will shine through it behind the clouds. (Mt.24:30). All the peoples of the earth will beat their breasts in fear when they see it happen because it will prove that the entire earth is about to be consumed by the flames of God. *"Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down—at your Presence the mountains would melt, as fire sets brushwood alight, as fire causes water to boil—to make known your name to your enemies, and make the nations tremble at your Presence..."* (Is.63:19). Exactly what this sign is, the apostles have not revealed, but the scriptures give us a clue. One thing is known, when he does come back, Jesus will reappear just as he left, but in reverse. That means he will first be manifested hidden behind a cloud. *"...he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight...he will come back in the same way as you have seen him go."* (Acts 1:9-11). The clouds of the end will be dark: *"He bent the heavens and came down, a dark cloud under his feet."* (Ps.18:9). *"Darkness he made a veil to surround him, his tent a watery darkness, dense cloud..."* (Ps.18:12). Within this cloud a sheen of bronze will radiate, and along its edges will be a halo of brilliant light. *"I looked; a stormy wind blew from the north, a great cloud with light around it, a fire inside it from which flashes of lighting darted, and in the center a sheen like bronze at the heart of the fire."* (Ez.1:4). The sign of the everlasting covenant is a rainbow. (Gen.9:12-13). Whenever a rainbow appears in the sky scripture tells us that we are to remember that this is the sign of the Covenant that God made between Himself and every living creature on the face of the earth. *"Whenever you see a rainbow in the clouds, you will remember the everlasting covenant..."* (Gen.9:16). Since Jesus is the everlasting Covenant, his sign in the heavens at the end will almost certainly involve a rainbow which appears in the clouds. *"...I saw what looked like fire, and a light all round like a rainbow in the clouds on rainy days; that is how*

the surrounding light appeared." (Ez.1:28). The powerful angel that stood before John in his vision of the world's final days came wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow over his head. (Rev.10:1). When Daniel saw the glorified Christ materialize before him at the Tigris river, he wrote that his body was like beryl and his face shone like lightning and that his arms were fiery torches. (Dn.10:5-6). In this same vision, Daniel said that his arms and legs had the gleam of burnished bronze. Ezekiel saw the glorified Christ appear to him in much the same manner: *"I looked and saw something like a man. Downwards from what seemed to be his loins was fire, and upwards from his loins he seemed to shine like polished bronze."* (Ez.8:2). When the sign of Jesus becomes visible in the clouds of the end, this same bronze-like figure surrounded in fire will manifest itself before the sight of the whole world. The glory of the Lord has always been associated with a cloud. (Ex.16:10, 2 Ch.6:1). The cloud which hides God from men's view comes to the earth in two forms: *"Whether for punishing earth's peoples or for a work of mercy, he despatches his clouds."* (Job.37:13). Everywhere we look in these visions we can see the dualism that is always manifest in scripture. When He first appeared on earth Jesus was a dark cloud as far as the Jews were concerned, but out of that cloud came a gentle rain—the living water of heaven which saved the pagans. Thus he was a cloud of mercy. At the end, the cloud's appearance will be terrifying to the wicked, because for them it will be a cloud of punishment—a cloud of judgment and wrath. (Is.30:27-28). In the darkness of these terminal clouds will appear flashes of God's lightning and out of them, great hailstones will come hurtling down onto the earth. *"Before him a flash enkindled hail and fiery embers"* (Ps.18:12-14). As we showed in the last chapter, when this cosmic fusillade strikes the planet, the Bible says that it will lay the foundations of the sea bare. (2 Sam.22:16). Science has discovered that meteoric bombardments of the planet from space have occurred frequently in the past and many have produced catastrophic effects. Sixty-five million years ago a single meteorite measuring from 6 to 12 miles in diameter struck the Gulf of Mexico with a force equal to 10,000 times the combined power of all the hydrogen bombs the world has ever made or stockpiled. In a single instant it gouged a crater almost 200 miles wide, incinerating much of the Caribbean basin. In the aftermath of the strike so much matter vaporized into the atmosphere that the entire world was plunged into darkness for a period of 10 years or more. A great many scientists are convinced that it was this decade of perpetual night which caused the extinction of the dinosaurs. A vast 'dead zone' was created which spread out for thousands of miles around the blast site. Nothing grew or lived within that zone for about 5000 years after the impact—not even in the seas. In its history, the earth has taken many hits from interplanetary debris; the last one of significance, the comet which struck Russia when this century began—a fireball that may have occurred in association with Satan's return from the Abyss. As

knowledge of these past catastrophe's unfolds, the probability of future bombardments has become a statistical certainty. That is why the appearance of the sign of Christ in the clouds of the end will cause such consternation among the people still left alive on earth. Matthew indicates that the Lord's sign will appear in the sky *"immediately after the distress"* caused by the beast and his armies. This means that the world will already have passed through an intense rain of unrestrained military fire—nuclear as well as conventional—a cannonade of such ferocity scripture says, that it will leave the skies shrouded in darkness across the entire earth. (Mt.24:29-30). The thought of a rain of cosmic fire that is even worse and more widespread will terrify all who still survive. Especially those who know what it means—that the doors to heaven have been locked, and that the Tribunal of God lies immediately beyond the fiery hailstones. This is the reason Jesus predicted that everyone will cry in anguish and beat their breasts when this sign appears (Mt.24:30). It will be a profound signal for all to see—a signal that announces once and for all the inevitable and final consequence for unrepentant sin—God's heaven-sent proclamation that the destruction of the earth predicted by the scriptures is now at hand. It will signal divine Judgment and with it, a cataclysmic and fiery bombardment that will ravage the earth beyond repair, breaking it into thousands of scattered fragments. (Is.24:19). *"You will make them like a blazing furnace on the day that you appear."* (Ps.21:9). Since the world and its people are destined for such an end, what reason is there for ignoring the salvation Jesus has sent in advance of it? Escape from this inevitable disaster—one so clearly documented in the Old Testament—is the very meaning of Christ.

The world will discover Christ too late. It is the sign in the sky that will convince them of the truth of the Bible. It will prove the truth of the fiery bombardment about to descend on the world and the Judgment that stands just behind it. That is why all the people of the world beat their breasts in fear when they see His sign appear in the heavens. (Mt.24:30). Scripture indicates that when the clouds that hide this sign arrive, they will first appear in the northern sky. *"Howl, gate; cry, City; shudder whole country of Palestine! For a cloud of smoke comes out of the north..."* (Is.14:31). When Jesus bursts through the cloud, he will flash across the earth from east to west: *"For the coming of the Son of Man will be like lightning striking in the east and flashing far into the west."* (Mt.24:27). In the last days, just before these terminal events, there will be little faith left anywhere on the globe. (Luke 18:8). This suggests that few Christians will be left alive at the end to witness the planet's final terrifying days, and, until it is too late, those who do see what is happening will have little faith that God is directing the world's events. But they will *know* the predictions, because when they see the sign of Jesus in the sky, the people who do exist

during these times will fully understand that the image which appears in the clouds above them is God's Only Son returning in judgment. That is why Jesus said that they will be engulfed in fear when the spectacle of His apparition suddenly materializes before them. *"Jesus said to his disciples: 'During that period after trials of every sort, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not shed its light, stars will fall out of the skies, and the heavenly hosts will be shaken. Then men will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. He will dispatch his messengers and assemble his chosen from the four winds, from the farthest bounds of earth and sky. Learn a lesson from the fig tree. Once the sap of its branches runs high and it begins to sprout leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you will know that he is near, even at the door.'" (Mk.13:24-30).*

31

Michael the Archangel

"At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; It shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations began. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; Some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace."
Dn.12:1-3

As they waited expectantly for the Messiah promised by Moses to appear before them, a tradition arose among the Jews that He would be preceded by the prophet Elijah. Issuing an oracle in the name of God, the prophet Malachi proclaimed, *"Know that I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before my day comes, that great and terrible day. He shall turn the hearts of fathers towards their children and the hearts of children towards their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a curse."* (Malachi 3:23-24). The expectation of Elijah changed the Jewish focus. Instead of keying on the Intercessor himself, they began to re-focus on the one who would precede Him and herald His coming. As the tradition grew, it became a major element in Jewish theology. Liturgically it was incorporated into the celebration of the Passover dinner where, on every Jewish table, an empty cup was always set aside for the prophet Elijah—in expectation of his impending visit. Despite the fact that Elijah has already come and gone, this empty cup still stands and waits whenever the Passover Seder is celebrated. Refusing to believe that Elijah made his return in the first century, the Jews still honor the tradition and continue to await his arrival. That wait will be rewarded. But not by the one they expect. Jesus said that Elijah made his appearance in the form of John the Baptist, so that prophecy is done with. (Mt.17:9-13). But there is another incarnation prophecy in scripture—and it concerns a heavenly figure even greater than Elijah—Michael the Archangel. *"At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people."* (Dan.12:1). This prophecy in the Book of Daniel indicates that God intends to raise up on earth, just as He did at the Intercessor's first appearance, a divine figure to be the harbinger of the Second Coming.

As soon as the Lawless Rebel has died and the final tribulations are drawing to a close, God's most powerful angel will appear in the flesh to lead a small band of Christian refugees from out of the north across the desert toward Jerusalem. (Dan.12:1, Is.16:1). Fleeing the persecutions, a small group of Christian fugitives will leave Rome, the capitol of Babylon, and begin a winding journey to Jerusalem. Stated literally, Isaiah's prophecy proclaims the route of flight. Directed by God, the lamb of the ruler of the country will leave Sela (Petra) by way of the desert, purposely wending his way to the mountain of the daughter of Zion. (Is.16:1). Leading this holy contingent will be Michael the Archangel, the guardian prince of the people of God—the angel revealed in the Book of Joshua to be the captain of God's army. (Dn.12:1, Jos.5:14). Greater than Elijah, Michael the Archangel is Elijah's commander. Scripture indicates that the Rebel will meet his death before Michael appears (Dn.12:1), and by the time Michael reaches Jerusalem and makes his triumphant entrance into that city, the Rebel's entire army will have been destroyed as well: *"At evening all was terror; before morning comes they are no more. Such was the lot of our plunderers, such the fate of our despoilers."* (Is.17:14). The 'morning' that Isaiah is talking about in this quotation is the daylight of the Second Coming—the brilliant reappearance of Jesus Christ flashing from east to west across the skies. Michael's expedition will represent the exodus of the Church, freed by the Rebel's proclamation, leaving its long captivity in Babylon and returning in triumph to the Jerusalem it was banished from by the decree of God almost 2000 years ago. The journey will lead away from Rome (symbol of the Church's dispersion to Babylon) through the eastern deserts, and finally to Jerusalem in Palestine which the holy contingent will approach from the east. Michael and his small entourage will represent the City of David returning to reunite itself with the city of Jerusalem, combining the long-divided twin Houses of Israel into a single entity. With Michael's appearance in Jerusalem, the Jews, so long blind, will suddenly regain their sight and see the Lord of Hosts. Falling to their knees in sorrow and joy, they will repent of their sins in His name. Instantly, unity between the two houses of Israel will be reestablished. The symbolism of this journey is immense—it will signify the end of the Babylonian exile and the final consummation of the ingathering. It is only at this point—at the very end of civilization—that the Jerusalem of Palestine will become the focal point for return. For it is here that God has decreed the Last Judgment to occur, and all mankind will be called to attend. That is why Jerusalem's rebirth in our century is so significant. The time for all these things is obviously close at hand. The wrath that proceeds this event will have been so intense that very little faith will still exist on earth in these last moments. *"But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"* (Lk.18:8). Just as darkness came upon the Jews two thousand years ago when they rejected the Sonlight that God had sent to them, so it will be with the world after they revolt

and reject Jesus and His words. Everything will be reversed. The pagans will go blind and the Jews will regain their sight. This darkness will represent a time of great spiritual famine for the world because during the night of the beast, the Son of God, vilified, persecuted and bitterly condemned, will have virtually disappeared from the world's view: *"They will stagger from sea to sea, wander from north to east, seeking the word of God and fail to find it"*. (Amos 8:12). At this point the harvest of the pagans will be over and the conversion of the Jews will be at hand.

In Jerusalem a group of Jews will be preparing themselves in the true holiness of the scriptures, unaware that Jesus and Michael are about to appear before them. There is a little-known prophecy in the Book of Chronicles which describes some of what will occur here at the time of the end. This prophecy concerns two Israelite leaders and it shows that the Jewish nation will be divided into two separate factions as the End approaches. The leaders of these two factions are represented in the Book of Chronicles by Ahab of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judea. (2 Chron.15-20). These two kings illustrate the two political philosophies that will hold sway in Israel during the last days. Ahab represents a future Israeli leader who will reject the spirit of true religion and choose to pursue a militant and worldly course much like the one which has been popularly embraced by many in Israel today. Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, images Ahab's polar opposite—a benevolent leader to come who will encourage the peaceful and compassionate righteousness commanded by scripture. In the end, the outcome defined in the pages of the Book of Chronicles will be repeated. The militant group will perish in battle while those who follow the peaceful directives of Jehoshaphat will have their eyes opened to see Jesus when He returns in glory. From the beginning, the Hebrew religion has always revolved around the Word of God.

Not only did the Ten Commandments form the spiritual heart of the Hebrew scriptures, they were materially palpable as well, residing in a carved acacia box called the 'Ark of the Covenant' which the Israelite priests kept secure in the holiest part of their temple. When the Ark of the Covenant disappeared at the time of the destruction of Solomon's temple 600 years before Christ was born, the stone tablets which were housed inside it, and on which the Ten Commandments were written, disappeared as well. With the sudden disappearance of the Ark, and the commandments it housed, a new focal point for worship had to be found. Facing the prospect of an empty temple with no 'Word of God' at its center, the Jewish priesthood raised up a replacement structure for worship in its place. It included a liturgy steeped in the outward manifestations of religion. The temple itself became the focus of God, not the commandments for which it was built. Blood sacrifice came to

dominate the theology. (Jer.7:22-23). The prophets considered this substitute liturgy a kind of idolatry—the pursuit of a false divinity of man-made altars and human traditions. (Amos 5:21-27; Is.1:11-20). Adding His voice to those of the prophets, Jesus also preached against this change, and He accused the leaders who had shunted Israel away from the commandments of *"shutting up the kingdom of heaven in men's faces, neither going in themselves nor allowing others to go in who want to"*. (Mat.23:13-14). Kindness, mercy and the forgiveness of enemies were not values heavily embraced by this leadership. By substituting an obsession for buildings and the artifacts which surrounded them, these leaders had downgraded the importance of the words of God and led all the people astray. The God that Jesus introduced us to was just the opposite of the material traditions created by the Sadducees and Pharisee's. Completely spiritual, there was nothing material about Him. He was not represented by temple buildings or walls, but by behavior. Man-made worship concentrates on material things and that is why it is the basis of everything liturgical. But the worship God actually wants from us, and for which He rewards with eternal life, are the spiritual acts of our heart—the mercy, compassion, kindness and love that we show to one another. This is the worship that determines the fate of our soul. That is why God said *"I want mercy, not sacrifice."* It is this statement by Jesus that defined the hidden division in the House of Israel—the division that split it into two groups as far as God is concerned—one faithful to God's message of righteousness and the other buried in the material traditions of the Law. *"That day, man will look to his creator and his eyes will turn to the Holy One of Israel. He will no longer look after the altars, his own handiwork, nor gaze at what his hands have made: the sacred poles and the solar pillars."* (Is.17:7-8). The term 'solar pillars' implies reverence to the sun and for this reason symbolically represents the worship of all things material. The sun, as a star, is the source of all material life. Thus it gives life to everything that is 'of the earth' or man-made. The division of the Jews in Israel in the last days will not be between those who support Christianity and those who do not; rather it will hinge between those Jews who are militant and follow the angry and violent ways of this world, and those who exhibit the kind of desire for peace and mercy that God sent Jesus to search for in human beings. Just as He has with Christians, Jesus will embrace those Jews who have returned to the compassionate and ethical framework of the Bible. The Jews that Michael will approach at the end will not yet be Christian, but they will be spiritually ethical because they will have looked beyond the traditions of their religion and structured themselves in its faith—in the behavior of God's Commandments. They will love their neighbors and have a deep yearning for peace. The division that distinguishes these two groups is evident in Israel even today. The candle-light peace demonstration that backdropped the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin early in November 1995 is starkly contrasted

by the militant zeal of those who replaced him. Having been eye-witnesses to all the chaos and catastrophe destined to occur as a result of the zealous militancy that is to envelop Palestine and the rest of the world in the last days, many Jewish citizens will understand that the only way they can fight the forces that confront them will be to do just what the Bible says to do-- put their complete trust in God, not in weapons of war. The followers of Ahab in the Chronicles prophecy represent a contingent of Jews whose intent will be to save Jerusalem through their own militant initiative; and the followers of Jehoshaphat those Jews who forego this temptation and hold fast to the ethics of the Bible, praying for salvation and trusting instead in God's power to save them in fulfillment of scripture's promise. As we have shown, a framework for these two coalitions in Israel already exists. And for a brief time, the peace advocates actually reigned there; but assassination robbed them of leadership and a majority in Israel voted back into power those whose trust lies in machine guns, not olive branches. But it is the latter who will remain alive to witness Michael when he comes to the city. Both 'Ahab' and 'Jehoshaphat'; are symbolic names.

The name 'Jehoshaphat' means 'God judges' and is symbolic of the last day—the day of Judgment. It is this name 'Jehoshaphat' which the prophet Joel gave to the valley in which the last Judgment of God is to take place: *"I am going to gather all the nations and take them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and there I intend to put them on trial for all they have done to Israel, my people and my heritage."* (Joel 4:2). The name, therefore, is strongly associated with both Judgment and with the last days. Pointing to events which are still unfolding in our own time, the Book of Chronicles states that the prophet Azariah spoke to Jehoshaphat's father, Asa, and told him: *"Listen to me, Asa, and all you of Judah and Benjamin" (the two tribes which today form modern Israel) "God is with you so long as you are with him. When you seek him he lets you find him; when you desert him, he deserts you." "Many a day Israel will spend without a faithful God, without priest to teach, and without law; but in their distress they will return to the Lord, the God of Israel; they will seek him, and he will let them find him."* (2 Chron.15:1-3). In this prophecy, the Holy Spirit was preparing Judea for its long isolation apart from God—the 2000 year separation which would come to pass because the leaders of Jerusalem had rejected the Righteous Priesthood of God's only Son. The Jews lost their right to administer the office of the priesthood over the House of Israel soon after Jesus was crucified. The Roman forces came into Jerusalem and destroyed both the temple and the altar. Not only robbing the Jews of its sacred site to conduct ritual sacrifice, the Roman forces also annihilated the Jewish priesthood as well.

Jesus had prepared the world to understand the meaning of this loss. *"I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit."* (Mt.21:38-43). As we have seen, both the priesthood and the altar of sacrifice immediately reappeared in the services of Christianity, but the Jews could not see this reproduction, steadfastly rejecting the ultimate and divine sacrifice Jesus had made to save the world. Looking instead for an altar of sacrifice to give the priesthood Mosaic meaning outside of Christ (and failing to find it), the Jews have never been able to bring their priestly office back into service. While there is some talk of rebuilding an altar and priesthood for Jewish animal sacrifices today, the Rock of Abraham upon which the Torah says the temple must be constructed remains far out of reach. So these prophecies in the Book of Chronicles detailing the Jewish exile and their separation from God are current. A fact we can see even more clearly as we explore them further. *"When that time comes no grown man will know peace, for many troubles will afflict all the inhabitants of the country. "Nation will be shattered by nation, city shattered by city, since God will afflict them with every kind of distress. But for your part, take courage, do not let your hands weaken, for your deeds will be rewarded."* (2 Chron.15:4-7). Azariah's prophecy shows that this long separation (the 2000-year diaspora) will be repaired at a time of intense world violence—a time when most of the major cities of the world will have been shattered into ruins on account of it.

After receiving these prophecies, Asa was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat. As we have seen, his is a symbolic name and succession—one that points to the true restoration of Judah. According to the Book of Chronicles, While Jehoshaphat and his followers remain in the city in prayer, his militant rival, Ahab, will lead a group of Jews into the Arabian desert to wage war on the enemies that confront Jerusalem, but they will be unsuccessful. They will be annihilated in the battle. (2 Chron.18:12-22). The prophet Zechariah has confirmed this passage concerning Ahab's defeat in the Book of Chronicles by revealing that one-half of the city will fall into the hands of its enemies in the last battle of Jerusalem, *"Half the city will go into captivity..."* (Zc.14:2). *The forces loyal to Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, will be spared. "...but the remnant of the people will not be cut off from the city."* (Zc.14:2). Having set his heart on seeking God, the Jehoshaphat of the future will tear down many of the barriers erected in the name of tradition that have stood between his people and God (all the 'sacred poles'). Instead, he will show kindness and mercy to those whom many Jews now consider their enemies. (2 Chron.19:3). Faithful to his peaceful course, he will appeal not to his army, but to God to protect Judea from the vast horde that will surround Jerusalem during the last days. (2 Chron.20:12). According to the Book of Chronicles, when those times arrive, a prophet will arise from the people and declare what will happen that day:

"Listen all you men of Judah, God says this to you, 'Do not be afraid, do not be daunted by this vast horde; this battle is not yours but God's. March out against them tomorrow, but you will not need to fight them. Take up your position, stand firm, and see what salvation the Lord has in store for you.'" (2 Chron.20:15-17). The following morning, "When the men of Judah reached the spot...where they could see the horde massed against them, they found only corpses lying on the ground; no one had escaped." (2 Chron.20:24). These words presage the events destined to occur in the land of Palestine just before the end—just before the Jews recognize that Jesus is God. They show that the battle of Armageddon will be God's alone. Men will not join in the fight. On that day, when they witness this miracle, the leader of the Jews and all of the people under his command will understand the truth, and it is then that they will recognize that the messenger who is approaching them in the name of the Lord from the Mount of Olives, comes directly from God. Filled with the Holy Spirit, they will welcome into the city, Michael and his holy entourage as they approach the Golden Gate.

The Jews were made blind because they rejected the Word that God had sent them—Jesus Christ. Paul said that this blindness was not permanent and only existed for the sake of the world's salvation. *"One section of Israel has become blind, but this will last only until the whole pagan world has entered, and then, after this, the rest of Israel will be saved as well."* (Rom.11:25.) Because they recognized Jesus when he first appeared, the pagans are being saved first. And once all the pagans have been saved, the Jews will have their veiled sight restored. When that happens, Paul said, it will mean the end of the world: *"Nothing less than a resurrection from the dead!"* (Rom.11:15). Because the Jews are so focused on re-establishing the promises of Moses in Palestine, it will take a calamitous sequence of events to alter their current persuasion and cause them to realize that there can be no Promised Land in this world. The Bible details a string of catastrophe's throughout the world during the last days easily violent enough to accomplish this change of perspective. The activities destined to occur in the Middle East and spread across the world during the reign of the beast will be more devastating than anything that has ever happened in the previous history of the human race. The world will become a wasteland. By the time Michael reaches the Mount of Olives, skies throughout the world will be covered in darkness; most of the world's cities will lie in smoldering ruins; the Jewish dissidents will have all died in battle; and so too, will have perished the beast and all his legions of armies. The final contingent of Jews who survive all these events, seeing the continuing bombardments from the heavens that portend the imminent destruction of even the earth itself, will have nothing else on their minds except their rescue by God. It will be clear to them, just as it is to everyone else in those times that this world is doomed and cannot be saved. *"I will display portents in heaven and on earth,*

blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of God dawns, that great and terrible day. " All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved, for on Mount Zion there will be some who have escaped, as God has said, and in Jerusalem some survivors whom the Lord will call." (Joel 3:4-5).

It is to these survivors—the faithful Jews led by the Jehoshaphat of the last days—that Michael the Archangel will be sent by God. When Michael reaches Jerusalem, and is greeted by its citizens, the veil that has hidden Jesus from the Jews will be lifted. This veil was implaced by the Lord, Himself, when He stood before the temple in Jerusalem 2000 years ago and announced: *"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I longed to gather your children as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you refused! So be it, your house will be left to you desolate, for I promise, you shall not see me any more until you say: 'Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord.'" (Mt.23:37-39).* This is the proclamation of recognition Jerusalem should have voiced for John the Baptist two thousand years ago, but God has sealed the words and reserved them for John's Commander, Michael, instead. *"Joshua had given the people the following order: 'Do not shout, do not utter even a word; let nothing be heard from you till the day when I say: Raise the war cry. Then you are to shout.'" (Joshua 6:10)* Seeing Michael and the small Christian group that accompanies him approach Jerusalem from the East, the historic shout will boom out among the inhabitants of the holy city. Using the words that Christ prophesied, they fall on their knees in worship to God's holy Son as they call out the proclamation that unseals the veil: *"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"*. (Mt.23:39). This proclamation is the war cry. It is the fulfillment of the prophecy which Joshua issued at Jericho. (Joshua 6:5-10). *"When you hear the sound of the trumpet, the whole people must utter a mighty war cry and the town wall will collapse then and there; then the people can storm the town."* When this war cry is sounded by Jerusalem's inhabitants it will break the solitude of the long Jewish night and bring the wall housing the sealed gate crashing to the ground—the last wall still standing in Jerusalem. (Joshua 6:20). *"Your arrogant lofty walls he destroys, he overthrows, he flings them in the dust."* (Is.25:12). This occasion in Jerusalem at the end of time is of such momentous importance that the Lord arranged a meeting at Jericho between Michael and Joshua before the battle there to show the world what God intended to instrument in the veils of its symbolism. *"When Joshua was near Jericho, he raised his eyes and saw a man standing there before him grasping a drawn sword. Joshua walked towards him and said to him, 'Are you with us or with our enemies?' The man answered, 'No, I am captain of the army of God, and now I come..." (Joshua 5:13-15).* Only this fragment of that historic meeting survives. But it tells

us everything. In the same way that Joshua and his forces were led to victory by God's most powerful heavenly commander, so, too, will be the occasion of the end. That same 'captain of the army of God' is the one called Michael the Archangel, come now in the final moments of earth's history to complete the Jericho prophecy. As the wall falls, the Jews will break into song in celebration of its collapse as they welcome Michael and the small band of Christian refugees who are with him as they approach Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives: *"That day, this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; to guard us he has set wall and rampart about us. Open the gates! let the upright nation come in, she, the faithful one whose mind is steadfast, who keeps the peace because she trusts in you."* (Is.26:1-3). Crashing to the ground, the stones which seal Jerusalem's Golden Gate will fall away amid the sounds of war cry and trumpet blast. At the collapse of this sealed gate, the Jews will pour through the new opening, chanting the words of the 118th Psalm, their hands filled with olive and palm branches as they line the road to welcome their Guardian Angel as he and his fellow travelers ascend the sacred pathway leading into the city. Those who are there will hear these words spoken: *"Alleluia! Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting! Hard-pressed, I invoked the Lord, he heard me and came to my relief...The pagans were swarming round me...In the name of the Lord I cut them down; they swarmed round me closer and closer...in the name of the Lord I cut them down...I was pressed, pressed and about to fall, but the Lord came to my help...The Lord is my strength and my song, he has been my saviour...Open the gates of virtue to me, I will come in and give thanks to the Lord...This is the Lord's gateway, through which the virtuous may enter...It was the stone rejected by the builders that proved to be the keystone; this is the Lord's doing and it is wonderful to see. This is the day made memorable by the Lord, what immense joy for us! Please Lord, please save us. Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!"* (Ps.118:1-29) It is not Jesus per se that the Jews will be welcoming here. It is His servant, Michael the Archangel, the messenger appointed by God to herald His coming. The prophecy calls for the Jews to welcome the *"one who comes to them in the name of the Lord"*. Since Jesus is the Lord, it is not Jesus that this prophecy represents. Instead, it fills the cup meant for Elijah with the wine it has awaited for thousands of years, and, in so doing, it completes the vision. The prophecy heralds the fulfillment of the long and anguished Jewish wait. Just as God sent Elijah in the form of John the Baptist to herald the first appearance of the Lord on earth, so He will send Michael at the end to proclaim a moment of even greater magnitude—Christ's Second Coming. (Dn.12:1).

It is important to note here that as this prophecy comes into greater understanding, false prophets will arise and pretend to be its fulfillment. That is why Jesus warned against

going out into the desert in search of Him. Jesus said that as the warfare and violence grow, so, too, will false prophecy, and He warned, *"If, then, they say to you, 'Look, he is in the desert', do not go there; or 'Look, he is in some hiding place', do not believe it; because the coming of the Son of Man will be like lightning striking in the east and flashing far into the west."* (Mt.24:26). Going into the desert in the quest of God will be useless. Daniel's scripture clearly shows that God will not even initiate Michael's appearance on earth until after the Rebel is dead and the warfare between the nations has left most of the world completely destroyed. (Dn.12:1). It would be pointless therefore, to expect to see him before these catastrophic events have been concluded. With the Jewish blindness at an end, the trumpet of Gabriel will sound, and Michael will call out the command (1 Thes.4:16). At that instant, Jesus will return in a flash of light that will be seen everywhere in the world by everyone at the same moment, bringing this world to an abrupt and conclusive end. (1 Thes.4:17). When Jesus comes, his appearance will be instantaneous everywhere on earth at the same time *"because the coming of the Son of Man will be like lightning striking in the east and flashing far into the west."* (Mt.24:27). Just as Jesus left the world by being lifted up in a cloud (Acts 1:9), so he will return in a cloud the same way that he left (Acts 1:11). But the clouds on which he returns will be the clouds of heaven. (Mt.24:30). At that instant the sky will be rolled back before our eyes and we will all be caught up in the air—those who have died and those who are still alive—and we will see all the angels and the throne of God just as Daniel described them. (Dan.7:9-10). *"At the trumpet of God the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds together with them, to meet the Lord in the air."* (1 Thes.4:16-17). This, of course, is the true moment of the rapture.

32

The Day of Reckoning

"Let the nations be roused, let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side." Joel 3:12

By the command of God and in accordance with the scriptures, a day has been set when all the people who have ever lived on earth are going to be brought before the law court of Christ and judged for the way each has lived their lives. *"For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed."* (Acts 17:31). The world is coming to an end and this court is being held because God has decreed a 'Day of Reckoning' as a result of sin. (Ez.7:1-4). *"Listen, you peoples, all of you. Attend, earth, and everything in it. God is going to give evidence against you. For look, God sets out from his holy place, he comes down from his sacred palace, he treads the heights of the earth. The mountains melt as he goes, the valleys are torn apart like wax before the fire..."* (Micah 1:2-4). *"Preceding him, a devouring fire, round him, a raging storm; he summons the heavens above and the earth below, to his people's trial"* (Ps.50:3-4). This day of trial is a day of Judgment for all mankind—a day when everyone who has ever lived on earth will be assembled before the throne of God and strictly assessed for their behavior in life. *"What will you do on that day of reckoning? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches?"* (Is.10:3). There is nowhere to go. No one can escape the trial God has set. And when it comes, who will be exonerated? *"Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it."* (Mt.7:13-14). According to the Bible the criterion God will use to judge us on that day will be the commandments of Jesus Christ. *"For all truth about us will be brought out in the law court of Christ, and each of us will get what he deserves for the things he did in the body, good or bad."* (2 Cor.5:10). Awaiting that day, the souls of all those who have ever died are being gathered together and held in a place decreed by God—ready to make their appearance when they will be called and brought before the court. The souls of the virtuous are being held in a special location, close to the altar of heaven; the martyrs underneath it and the others nearby. *"When he broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of all the people who had been killed on account of*

the word of God, for witnessing to it. They shouted aloud, 'Holy, faithful Master, how much longer will you wait before you pass sentence and take vengeance for our death on the inhabitants of the earth? Each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to be patient a little longer, until the roll was complete and their fellow servants and brothers had been killed just as they had been.' (Rv.6:9-11). *"After that I saw a huge number, impossible to count, of people from every nation, race, tribe and language; they were standing in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palms in their hands."* (Rv.6:9). John's vision shows that all the people who have ever died in Christ have been gathered together by the angels at a place near the throne of God where they are patiently waiting for the day of Judgment promised by the scriptures. They are waiting there for us—for God's roll to be completed and the rapture concluded. It is so that we can join them in their escape from that great and terrible day that Jesus came to warn us to change our lives—before the wrath that is bearing down on the world appears and shuts the doors to heaven forever. (Mt.16:27). That wrath—the tribulation that is the vanguard of Judgment Day—is the punishment that proves how unfortunate it will be for those who fail God's examination. *"There is an anger stirred to flame by evil deeds so you will learn that there is indeed a Judgment."* (Job 19:29). John said that when the Day of God arrives, there will be an immense gathering of the holy Host—all the dignitaries of heaven will assemble above the earth in the sky high over the city of Jerusalem. (Rv.4, Ps.7:7). Daniel revealed that a number of thrones will then be set in place and finally God Himself will come and take His seat in an incredible display of fire. (Dn.7:9-10). *"Then I saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. In his presence, earth and sky vanished, leaving no trace. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing in front of his throne..."* (Rv.20:11-12). Vanishing with the earth and sky will be the life we once thought so important. In its place will appear an event few on earth ever believed would really take place. *"A court will be held and the books opened."* (Dn.7:10). The Bible shows that the last Judgment is to be an awesome tribunal. A vast array of heavenly beings will be assembled in attendance as all the souls of the world are gathered in front of the throne of God. *"A thousand thousand waited on him, ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."* (Dn.7:10). This is when Jesus will return, coming on the clouds of heaven. He will be led into the presence of God who will confer on him complete sovereignty, glory and kingship. (Dn.7:13-14). The entire world will be placed at his feet and all Judgment shall be handed over to him. (Dn.7:14). *"The Father judges no one; he has entrusted all Judgment to the Son..."* (Jn.5:22). Jesus in his turn has given the power of judgment over to the Gospel he preached. (Jn.12:47-48). Thus it is Matthew, Mark, Luke and John that will determine our fate on the day of trial.

Nothing on earth escapes the eyes of the Lord. Scripture has revealed that everything that has ever happened in the world has been written down in heavenly books. *"You had scrutinized my every action, all were recorded in your book, my days listed and determined, even before the first of them occurred."* (Ps.139:16). These volumes will be brought forth and opened in the courtroom. Among these will be a *"Book of Remembrance"* (Malachi 2:16) in which the names of all the virtuous are recorded. *"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life; the dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books."* (Rv.20:12). Anyone who lives a sinful life will have his name blotted out of God's book of remembrance. *"The Lord replied to Moses, whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book."* (Ex.32:33). *"Nothing impure can enter the kingdom of heaven, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."* (Rv.21:27). Anyone whose name does not appear in God's Book of Life will be thrown into the lake of fire. (Rv.20:15). This is why God made a way for us to get out of sin, so that our names would not be blotted out of the book that He had written. *"Therefore O House of Israel, I will judge you, each one of you according to his ways, declared the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses—then sin will not be your downfall."* (Ez.18:30). Throughout the scriptures God has made it known that repentance is essential to forgiveness and salvation. That is why Jesus preached *"a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins"*. (Mk.1:4, Mt.3:2). Jesus died on the cross so that we could offer repentance for our sins and be forgiven by God through our own contrition. It is the divine forgiveness that we receive from God as a blessing for our remorse which separates us from the Judgment and takes away the awful terror of the day that is now bearing down on us so quickly. Repentance in Jesus brings us to grace—a state which guarantees our names have been enscribed in God's eternal book and where no sin can be found in us. *"Happy is the man whose fault is forgiven, whose sin is blotted out; happy the man whom God accuses of no guilt, whose spirit is incapable of deceit."* (Ps.32:1-2). Through continued penitence, and by obedience to Christ's commandments, we are able to grow in grace and keep alive the eternal life God has freely given us; but if we turn away from him, and abandon his commandments, we will fall from grace—a fall that can erase our names from the Book of Life and plunge us back into death. That is why Jesus commanded us to live in love and humility. Only those who live their lives in Christ will keep their names in his book. *"He who overcomes will be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life, but will acknowledge his name before my father and his angels."* (Rv.3:5). Those who put off changing their ways, thinking that they can repent later—at the last minute—will be trapped by their sins because their end will come suddenly at a time

when they least expect it. Like those who abandon the Way, they will be turned out of the kingdom and have to share the same fate as the godless. *"It is the man who sins against me that I shall blot out from my book."* (Ex.32:33). If those who were once in Christ can suddenly find themselves outside of Christ (Lk.8:13, Mt.25:1-13), the need for perseverance in the Lord's word is obviously essential. Doubly so because many of the scribes and Pharisees of our time are promoting a Jesus foreign to the one who spoke the Gospel, showing that we have to be very careful how we hear. *"If your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven."* (Mt.5:20).

Despite everything written in the scriptures to the contrary, there are many who still cannot bring themselves to believe that any Judgment is coming. They say that God is too merciful and too good to judge a people that cannot possibly meet His perfection. Paul answered this, saying, *"It is written that 'God is true and every man a liar'. But if our own wickedness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us because we are so imperfect? Certainly not! If this were so, how could God judge the world?"* (Rom.3:4-6). The fact is, God is going to judge the world and that is why Jesus was bearing our faults in his own body on the cross so that we might die to our faults and live for holiness. (1 Peter 2:24). Jesus commanded us to change our lives and stop sinning. John said that we not only have to be baptised by water and the Holy Spirit, but by fire as well. (Mt.3:11). *"Gold is tested in the fire and chosen men in the furnace of humiliation."* (Sir.2:5). *"I am going to strike the shepherd so that the sheep may be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the weak. And it will happen throughout this territory—it is the Lord who speaks—that two-thirds in it will be cut off (will be killed), and the remaining third will be left. I will lead that third into the fire, and refine them as silver is refined, test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name and I shall listen; and I shall say: These are my people; and each will answer, 'The Lord is my God'."* (Zech.13:7-9). The trials we must bear when we make the changes that Jesus ordered are the elements of the Great Persecution which makes us eligible for God's kingdom—these are the trials that wash us in the blood of the Lamb. (Rv.7:14). *"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."* (James 1:12). *"We have to bear trials as a test."* (1 Peter 1:6-7). It is our share of the cross. (1 Peter 4:12-13). Jesus said that Satan had got his wish to *"sift us all like wheat"*. (Lk.22:31). Why did God grant Satan such a wish? Why do we all have to go through this testing? The answers to these questions may seem uncertain, but there are many quotations in scripture concerning these trials that test our faith. *"Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."*

(Ex.20:20). *"Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands."* (Dt.8:2). Jesus said he came down to seek out and rescue those who were His own. Trying to prevent this, Satan saturated the earth with his own seed, sowing many others in the night and scattering these everywhere among the children God was looking for. *"The kingdom of heaven can be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and grew, the darnel appeared as well. The servants went to the master of the field and said, 'Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?' 'Some enemy has done this', he answered...let them both grow up together till the harvest...then tie the darnel for the fire and gather the wheat into my barn."* (Mt.13:24-30). That is why God must weigh our true motives. *"A man's conduct may strike him as pure; God, however, weighs the motives."* (Pr.16:2). *"A child of God listens to the words of God; if you refuse to listen, it is because you are not God's children."* (Jn.8:47). And that is the trial—listening to the commandments of Jesus and putting into practice what we have heard, while the world around us lives in direct opposition to what He has preached. God has brought each of us to this world to find out what is in our inmost heart. *"The eyes of God are everywhere: observing the evil and the good."* (Pr.15:3). In doing this Jesus has shined a light into us that, while invisible to our eyes, is so brilliant as far as God is concerned that it cuts to the heart of the darkness and exposes the deepest parts of our soul to His view. *"The eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, observing every aspect of human behavior, seeing into the most secret corners."* (Sir.23:27). The Gospel is our test. It is the light of God probing deep into us. *"Having summoned up our sins you inspect our secrets by your own light."* (Ps.90:8). In the heat of this light wickedness burns to a crisp. This is why the Gospel of Jesus is described in scripture as a fire that has been burning across the earth ever since it was first preached. It has exposed the sins of the world and judged them in every person the word of Christ has ever touched. *"God has made himself known, has given Judgment, he has trapped the wicked in the work of their own hands."* (Ps.9:16). For those who have turned their lives over to the Gospel, the ordeal leads to salvation. *"You tested us, God, you refined us like silver, you let us fall into the net, you laid heavy burdens on our backs, you let people drive over our heads; but now the ordeal by fire and water is over, and you allow us once more to draw breath."* (Ps.66:10-12). God has given us complete free will to live and behave in this world as we please. *"He made man in the beginning and then left him free to make his own decision."* (Sir.15:14). Some live by Christ and others live by their own opinion, and God measures every move we make. *"I tell you this, for every unfounded word*

men utter they will answer on Judgment day, since it is by your words you will be acquitted and by your words condemned." (Mt.12:36-37). Every action has been written down in God's book of deeds—the book that God has brought to the trial. On that day all mankind will be judged by the words Jesus preached because the Lord has given the entire power of the Judgment over to the Gospel. (Jn.12:48). And by that Gospel's own declaration, the only loophole in this judgment will be the extent to which we have forgiven the people who have sinned against us. *"Do not judge and you will not be judged; because the judgements you give are the judgements you will get, and the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given."* (Mt.7:1-2). Those who choose to live outside this Gospel will have to answer for doing so even if their own conscience seems clear: *"There is a way that some think right, but it leads in the end to death."* (Pr.14:16). But everyone who listens to the Gospel will be saved. *"I tell you most solemnly, whoever keeps my word will never see death."* (Jn.8:51). *"Whoever listens to my words and believes in the one who sent me, has eternal life; without being brought to Judgment he has passed from death to life."* (Jn.5:24). Our conscience only tells us what is right or wrong. But right and wrong are subjective things. One conscience says one thing and another says something entirely different. This is why Jesus told us not to call him (or anything or anyone else) 'good'. There is nothing good but God alone. Jesus brought God's commandments to the earth. There is only the doctrine of Christ—that is God's only blueprint for salvation. If we are obedient to it and follow it very closely, we will find its reward. If we go by another measure, we will lose that reward. This is why the trials we undergo now in keeping Christ's commandments are so important. They allow us to escape the Day of Trial and eternal fire that looms ahead.

God has determined that the Judgment should take place here, on this planet—not in outer space somewhere or up in heaven. *"In the place where you were created, in the country where you were born, there I will judge you."* (Ez.21:30). The country of our birth is Babylon—this wicked world. And it is in the wreckage of Babylon that the judgment will occur. It will take place in the air above the Valley of Jehoshaphat. No one can say for certain where this valley is, but the name it carries applies literally to the Kidron Valley which separates the Mount of Olives from the temple mountain in the city of Jerusalem. Once the heavenly Host has assembled itself there in readiness, God will appear high over Jerusalem. (Ps.7:7). His arrival will coincide with an intense rain of fire and brimstone. *"For see how God comes in fire, his chariots like the tempest, to avenge his anger with burning, his threats with flaming fire. For by fire will God execute Judgment, and by his word, against all mankind. The victims of God will be many."* (Is.66:15-16). Everyone will be brought up in the air to meet with Him and the Judgment will begin. The world, meanwhile, having

broken into pieces under the weight of the cosmic bombardment raining onto it, will fall apart and disappear. Today, watching the nations of the world begin to coalesce around Jerusalem, we can see the seeds of this final moment begin to sprout. The primordial gathering of the nations around this ancient Middle Eastern city, elements of which are broadcast daily by our news media, is telling us that the day of God's final reckoning is near. So near, in fact, that some of these thrones may already be in place in the air above our heads—separate from us now only by the shroud which blocks spiritual light from our vision. The signs are unmistakable. The millennium is drawing to a close and Jerusalem has been rebuilt. The Jews are back in Palestine and God and Jesus are now approaching the earth. If we were able to peel away the sky and see what is beyond it, we would witness the fervent activity that has now begun to take place just past our eyes as all the Holy Ones of heaven take their assigned places and make ready the court of God for the earth's great trial.

At the very end, after the tribulations have ended, and the clock moved ahead to usher in the seventh day in advance—all the people of the world will be gathered together at the throne of God to stand in judgment. God will have His angels divide them into two groups. *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me. Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?' And the King will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.'" (Mt.25:31-40).* To the others—to those who are brought into judgment, the Lord will say, *"Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me."* (Mt.25:41-43). God has published all the answers to His final exam. He has posted them in scripture so that no one will be caught unawares. Since all Christians presumably know these questions (and their answers), who are all the people who have to ask? Who is it that God is saving that stand before Him so surprised? There is a serious enigma here. One whose final answer

seems to lie beyond the boundaries of creed. Jesus has called us into action, not to lip service. Those who act in accordance with His words will live forever. We have His word on that.

From the point of view of the earth what is coming is nothing less than absolute catastrophe. But for those who live in Christ, it means the beginning of the perfect world of God and with it an eternal life of magnificent joy. *"Once the oppression is over and the destroyer is no more, and those now trampling the country underfoot have gone away, the throne will be made secure in gentleness, and on it there will sit in all fidelity, within the tent of David, a judge careful for justice and eager for integrity."* (Is.16:4-5). Since no one can go into the kingdom until the day that Jesus returns to take us there, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and His coronation before God at the tribunal of the earth, must both occur beforehand. This means that the gates of the highest heaven will not be opened until *after* the final judgment has taken place. Then will come the marriage feast of the Lamb. *"Alleluia! The reign of the Lord our God Almighty has begun; let us be glad and joyful and give praise to God, because this is the time for the marriage of the Lamb."* (Rv.19:7). Those who say that good deeds don't count or that God doesn't judge His people by their behavior, need to look at the words written in Revelation concerning the linen of the Bride: *"His bride is ready, and she has been able to dress herself in dazzling white linen, because her linen is made of the good deeds of the saints."* (Rv.19:8). Almost every passage in the Bible tells the same story. *"God's solid foundation stone is in position, and this is the inscription on it: 'The Lord knows those who are his own' and 'All who call on the name of the Lord must avoid sin'."* (2 Tim.2:19). *"As scripture says, He was free in almsgiving, and gave to the poor: his good deeds will never be forgotten."* (2 Cor.9:9). The gates of heaven will not be opened for everyone. *"It is not those who say to me, 'Lord, Lord', who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven."* (Mt.7:21-27). There are some who say that, through faith, grace allows us to live in sin without penalty, because God can no longer see our sins—so obedience to the Gospel has no impact on salvation. But the picture of the coming judgment painted by the Bible does not support this view. At the End, all people will be divided into two groups as they stand before the throne of God—those who helped people on one side, and those who did not on the other. Jesus said, *"If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."* (Mt.19:17). *"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and, when he does, he will reward each one according to his behavior."* (Mt.16:27). Paul warned, *"Don't delude yourself into thinking God can be cheated: where a man sows, there he reaps: if he sows in the field of self-indulgence he will get a harvest of corruption out of it; if he sows in the field of the Spirit he*

will get from it a harvest of eternal life. We must never get tired of doing good because if we don't give up the struggle we shall get our harvest at the proper time. While we have the chance, we must do good to all, and especially to our brothers in the faith." (Gal.5:7-10). These terms define the narrow road to salvation that Jesus came from heaven to give to the world and every Christian should commit them to memory and enscribe them on their heart. Will God relax any of these standards at the Tribunal? Jesus said, "Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back."(Luke 6:36-38; Mat.7:1-2). Certainly He did not say this to derail the other commandments, but the latitude inherent in the proclamation proves God's immense mercy for those who are quick to forgive, and offers substantial confirmation that our faith will be rewarded if we never lose hope in His promise of eternal life.

PART 8

AGE OF DELIVERANCE

"The Father who is the source of life has made the Son the source of life; and, because he is the Son of Man, has appointed him supreme judge. Do not be surprised at this, for the hour is coming when the dead will leave their graves at the sound of his voice: those who did good will rise again to life; and those who did evil, to condemnation." Jn.5:26-29

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Armageddon's Hour

"Take the fig tree as a parable; as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you when you see all these things: know that he is near, at the very gates."
Mt.24:32-33

The world lives today in the final moments of an unprecedented age. Beckoning widely to us all stands a temporary window of reconciliation, opened by Christ and held unshuttered for almost 2000 years by the power of God. When will this divine window be closed and the cataclysm of judgment that scripture predicts lies immediately behind its shuttering come to pass? The exact date for the world's end has been divinely sealed and is known only to God. It will not be revealed in advance. That is because it sits on a sliding scale. Grace can defer the wrath and forstall the date of the world's extinction, but global apostasy will hasten its occurrence. More important than determining the exact day itself, then, is discovering how to change that day's impact on our personal lives. And the time for that is now. Anyone reading this book who has not already done so, has only a very short time to make peace with God, because the armies of Armageddon have already started to gather at the gates of a near horizon, called there by Jerusalem's restoration. Precisely what date that original schedule defined, we do not really know, but there are some calculations we can make that will allow us to determine a possible framework for its outside limits. There is nothing definitive, of course, but there are strong clues. One of these is the Law itself. And related to the Law is the Jewish calendar—a calendar still manifest in the world today. Every fall (at the time of Rosh Hashana) this calendar marks the Jewish New Year as it comes to pass, chronicling each successive year that pushes farther into the past the birth of Adam and Eve. The reason why the Jewish calendar can be used in determining a date for the end of the world is because it plots the world's biblical beginning, calculating the time-line, not of natural history, but of scriptural history from the moment Adam and Eve were first conceived on earth. Despite the fact that several calculations have appeared among Christian theologians trying to replicate a measurement for the human era in the way that the original Hebrews have done, none of those diverse calculations has taken root. Only the Jewish date

remains in popular use. While Christianity's calendar is far more important because it defines the term of the reconciliation, the Hebrew calendar cannot be simply dismissed. Defining a major key to prophecy, it traces the history of the earliest figures of the Bible, chronicling from the beginning, man's unfolding relationship with God. Therefore it must be seen as a calendar that measures the history on earth of the human soul—a history that scripture indicates is now almost six thousand years old.

Using the parable's of Christ as a guide, this era seems to define the 'seed' history of man. Entirely theological, it defines the date that God first began to till the soil to raise up souls in preparation for the incredible harvest of His salvation. Again, using the measurement defined in scripture by the Holy Spirit—that a thousand years to man are like a single day to God—we can convert this Hebrew chronology from thousand-year increments into God-days. These calculations reveal that, by Jewish reckoning, we are now, in our own time, nearing the end of the sixth millennium, i.e., the sixth 'God-day'. The advent of the seventh day (the seventh millennium), according to this measure, is less than 250 years away. The seventh day in Hebrew theology, remember, is the 'Day of God'—the 'Day of Rest'. It is the 'Sabbatical of God' (Lv.25:1)—the time when the earth and all its produce will be put to final rest. The day of Christ's wedding feast, it is also the 'Year of Jubilee'. And in millennial terms, it is not just any Jubilee year, but in closing God's harvest, it is the perfect Jubilee—the ultimate seventh day of God on earth when everything that belongs to God must be returned to Him irrevocably. (Lv.25:10). While the Christian calendar marks the age of Jesus Christ, and therefore delineates the conversion of the world into the righteousness of God ('wash and clean for two days and on the third day He shall appear before you'); the calendar followed by the Jews marks the age of the preparation of the soil for this conversion, providing a continuous measure extending from Adam's birth in the Garden of Eden right up to the present time. According to the Hebrew calendar, Adam and Eve were conceived in the Garden of Eden sometime in early October, 3761 B.C. Rosh Hashana, which marks this event every year, falls on a moveable date (due to the fact that it is measured on a lunar calendar); and it always occurs in either September or October. September 1998, for instance, will mark the year 5759 in the Jewish calendar. This means that in September of 1998, according to Jewish calculations, it will have been five-thousand, seven-hundred and fifty-nine years since Adam and Eve were created. (The accuracy of scientific chronology is irrelevant here because science cannot determine at what point God began to instill a spiritual soul into the developing creation. And as far as our use here is concerned, we are much more concerned with the end of the calendar than with its beginning).

Using the Jewish number, a simple calculation shows that only 243 years remain before the seventh 'day' (the seventh millennium on the Jewish calendar) begins. How can the year 6000 mark the beginning of the seventh day? Because our numbering system includes a 'zero'. By the time the year 1 appears on the calendar, 365 days have already passed, and we are beginning our 2nd year. Actually the new millennium does not begin until the first year of it appears. In other words, in the Christian millennium now approaching, the third millennium (or 'day') will actually begin on January 1, 2001, not in the year 2000. The principle is the same in the Jewish calendar. And the same principle applies to centuries and millennia. That is why we call the years of the 1900's the 20th century. The 20th century also marked the end of the second millennium of Christ. When the year 2001 begins, it will start the third millennium in the Christian calendar—the 'third day' of God. That means we are about to enter the millennium in which scripture has promised that God will return and make His ultimate appearance before us. In the same way, when the year 6000 (6001 actually) appears in the Hebrew calendar, it will signal the start of the seventh millennium. This, in God's terms, is the beginning of the seventh day—a day, which, from the very beginning, has marked a pivotal moment in Israel's theology. According to the Hebrew calendar, that seventh day will occur in October, in the Christian year 2240 A.D.—a year this world is likely never to see because God has determined to shorten the time.

Not only has the Bible specified that on the seventh day everything that belongs to God must be returned to Him, other prophecies have shown that He will return to the planet on the 'third' day. Both the seventh day and the third day are simultaneous possibilities, because there are two chronologies of time being kept by the two 'houses' of Israel. In the calendar of one of these 'houses' we have a 'seventh day' approaching, and in the calendar of the other 'house', a 'third day'. Both of these dates (the third day and the seventh day) are now imminent. They define two moments coincident by less than 250 years. Both dates define an open chronology of the 'Second Coming'. *"Go to the people and tell them to prepare themselves today and tomorrow. Let them wash their clothing and hold themselves in readiness for the third day, because on the third day God will descend on the mountain...in the sight of all the people."* (Ex.19:10-11). Because God is going to rescue the Jews in a spectacular theophany that restores their sight just before the End occurs, we must accept that the Jewish calendar has the imprint of the Holy Spirit; and for this reason, has a specific purpose in the plan of God. Although since altered by Christ, Hebrew chronology originally formed an integral part of the official calendar of the Mosaic Law.

That law, as we have seen, is a template God has followed from the beginning, superimposing date for date and precept for precept. Following the Hebrew calendar to its end, then, it is possible to conclude that a likely outside limit for the original date of the end of the world was probably the year 2240 A.D., the advent of the Hebrew 'seventh day'. God, however, changed everything when He sent Jesus to earth. He announced that the time must be cut short; otherwise, faith could not survive.

John decreed one millennium (a thousand years) for the mercy to reign, and the window of reconciliation to stay open (Rev.20:1-8); but faith has almost doubled Christ's offer of Atonement, pushing it in our time very near the outside limits set by scripture. (Joshua 10:13-14). This has brought it within just a few years of the beginning of the 'third day'. The prophet Hosea has indicated that this 'third day' is the date set by God for the rescue of the Jews: *"Come, let us return to God. He has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us; he has struck us down, but he will bandage our wounds. After a day or two he will bring us back to life, on the third day he will raise us and we shall live in his presence."* (Hos.6:1-2). So the two dates for the conclusion of the world set forth by scripture have dovetailed and both dates have a common focal point with the advent of the coming Christian millennium. The reign of Christ on earth (the Day of Atonement) will end, the Bible tells us, when the world's governments and people reject Jesus as God. This occurrence, in progress now, will be followed by the Great Tribulation. Because the wrath associated with the the end of the world will be so severe, the days of terror have been cut short. We can see evidence of that already. The swift unfolding of the Revolt in this century argues that the world does not have 242 years left. If the current pace of faith's collapse does not quickly reverse itself, Armageddon will occur much sooner than that. How soon, of course, will remain a secret because God does not intend to reveal it—not until the day that it happens. But with the rule of Christ already crumbling, 242 years now seems out of the question. Even a hundred years is highly questionable. In fact, every Christian today should assume that the world's end is going occur within their own lifetime—because for a great many of us it probably will. There are several dates in the next century that hold special significance. The year 2019, for instance, will mark the 70th year of Israel's reconstruction. The year 2030 will mark the 2000th anniversary of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. The significance of the year 2000, the prelude to the beginning of the 'third day' of Christ has already been discussed in this chapter. Yet, no matter how momentous the occasion, none of these dates will likely house Armageddon. God has made it clear that the end of the world will occur at a moment least suspected.

Not surprisingly, the historic term of human civilization on the planet has also been encompassed within the same 6000 year boundaries that are described by the Hebrew calculations. Throughout the pages of this book we have seen that this 6000-year period of time relates to our bondage to sin—and that this bondage has been defined biblically as the age of Babylon. The 6000 year history of the exile of God's people out of Eden and their subsequent enslavement by the people of this planet mirrors the 6000-year history of mankind's march from primitive farm life at the banks of the Euphrates river to the complex technological empires we live in today—a journey that has taken some of us even to the plains of the moon. Thus civilization's history books and the Bible both describe a similar time-frame. While both follow a nearly identical chronology, the dates given in the Bible are not literal. God has opened up a window for forgiveness that is not subject to a set end. Jesus altered the calendar. The wrath at the end of the world can be moved away by faith or brought closer by a life of sin. The revolt that is swirling across the earth today is just such a sinful lifestyle. And it has precipitated, in the last few years, exactly as scripture predicted, an explosion of armies, wars and genocide unprecedented in the entire history of man. All the anger we currently see on earth comes from the world's abandonment of the path of forgiveness and peace commanded by Christ. That is why it is essential that everyone turn back to God and repent. Only prayer and sincere repentance can slow down the processes which have brought the fires of Armageddon so close to us in this century.

Joshua's prophecy concerning the sun which delayed its setting for almost a whole day (Joshua 10:13-14) suggests that the millennium of Christ will last slightly less than two thousand years. In Joshua's prophecy the sun stood still in the sky so that one day was extended into almost two days. The term 'almost' in his quotation qualifies the prophecy. Considering that the year 2001 A.D. is now only a few years away, the sunset of the 'day' of Christ shining on earth would seem to be an imminent event. The 'night' Jesus predicted for the world should now be very close to us. Yet we do not know precisely which date God has defined as the initial moment of the millennium in the spread of the light of Christ on earth. The most obvious date of course, is the advent of the year 'One' in the Christian calendar—a date that was supposed to mark the birth of Christ, but which turned out by accident to mark something unknown. The serendipity of this 'mistake' points to an intercession by the Holy Spirit. The exact reason, however, still remains unclear. Although the year 2001 ushers in the 'third day' of Christ on earth, the inception of the millennium of Christ may well have begun later than January first in the year one A.D.—at Pentecost (30-33 A.D.), for instance. It was on Pentecost in either the year 30, or 33 A.D. that the darkness initiated by the crucifixion of Jesus was swept away by the Holy Spirit, who

brought the 'light of Christ' back to the planet in the form of the glorified Word of God. It was on this date that the Holy Spirit first appeared on earth and began entering into the people. Using the date of Pentecost as the dawn of the millennium would delineate the crucifixion as the pivotal event in the first war (Rev. 20), and trumpet victory in that war with the appearance of the Spirit.

A third important date in the war which preceded the millennium of Christ's Day of Atonement (Rev.19:11+), revolves around the death of Nero. His death was an instant in history coincident with the destruction of the Jewish temple (burned to the ground in 70 A.D.), and a moment in time that may well have included the first resurrection (Rev.20:5). That year, of course, by fulfilling all the warnings Jesus gave to the Jews, marks a very significant moment in God's victory on earth. Perhaps a few might even argue that the millennium's inception lay with the proclamation of Theodosius in 391 A.D., which officially defined Christianity's conquest of the world. God, of course, could pick any one of these dates and define it as the focus of Joshua's prophecy. This means that faith and prayer can extend the era of the millennium well beyond the days assigned for it in the Hebrew calendar. For instance, the two-thousandth anniversary of Theodosius' proclamation will not arrive until 2391 A.D. That date won't occur for almost 400 years. Jesus enraged the officials at the Sanhedrin because he interpreted the Old Testament in ways the Jewish leaders had never envisioned. God backed Jesus, not the legal experts. The same is true here. Faith and prayer can alter the history of the world. These holy processes can change the day of the end as well. Faith has stayed God's hand in the past (when Jonah preached to the Ninevites for instance). It can do the same again in the future. The important factor to consider in all this is that God can bring the End anytime He wants to—this very year if need be. All the legal elements of Hebrew prophecy are there for Him to do it if there is no repentance and re-conversion. As we can see at dusk, there exists a hazy twilight area that lies between the end of a bright day and the beginning of the darkness of the night, where night and day overlap. We seem to be in the fading light of this kind of a moment right now. The 'day' of Christ is ending and the 'night' of Satan is beginning. The 'Son' no longer stands still in the sky. The momentum of Christianity's reign on earth has faltered and its power to spark the souls of mankind is in the process of a political and social erosion never before witnessed. In John's prophecy (Rev. 20), the thousand years (God's 'day' of Atonement—His window for reconciliation) will end when Satan is released from his prison in the Abyss. He will come out and deceive all the nations in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, and mobilize them for war. His armies will be as many as the sands of the sea and they will come swarming across the globe with burning fire and terror in their van and train.

This is the second war described by John, the war that borders the millennium of reconciliation on its ebbing side. The elementary stages of this second war began with the holocaust of the Jews in Europe during World War II. This attack was led by the seventh head of the beast—an emperor we know better as Adolph Hitler. Like the angry 'angel of the Abyss' ('Abaddon') in the Book of Revelation, (Rv.9:11), Hitler brought the first of the three troubles of the Wrath. The two remaining 'troubles', this Book informs us (Rv.9:13-19; 13:1-17), are so devastating, they will leave the world a burned-out desert. While much of the remaining disaster can be forestalled, the fact that the first trouble has already come and gone makes our situation today incredibly urgent. The Revolt must be reversed immediately. Every conversion (no matter how inconsequential it might look) is powerful in this regard. When the Lord had determined to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham pleaded with Him not to do it. (Gen.18:16-32). God agreed with Abraham's request, on one condition: "*I will not destroy (these cities) for the sake of even ten righteous souls*" (Gen.18:32). The condition, however, could not be met. On inspection there turned out to be not even ten pious souls in the entire city. As a result, there was no divine reprieve for Sodom and Gomorrah. Because the days have become so short, if a similar inspection in our own time reveals a corresponding per capita wickedness, our cities will share a similar fate. This is why the message has become so urgent. The epidemic of corruption and Christian apostasy that now surrounds us has reached into almost every household—threatening to consume completely the heart and soul of western civilization. Only conversion, faith and prayer can reverse this process. The story of Abraham's attempt to save Sodom and Gomorrah shows us that every person who turns back to Christ will not only save themselves from the fires of the last days, they will have a major impact on the continued survival of the entire world.

34

The Power of Faith

"That day, the branch of God shall be beauty and glory, and the fruit of the earth shall be the pride and adornment of Israel's survivors. Those who are left of Zion and remain of Jerusalem shall be called holy and those left in Jerusalem, noted down for survival."
Is.4:2-3

Throughout the pages of this book we have explored the consequences of sin -- the fate of a world the Bible calls 'Babylon' that is careening recklessly out of control toward catastrophe because it prefers evil to God. Nothing can avert the impact that is coming because it was structured long ago in the law as a penalty for wickedness. And the day for it to occur is now almost at hand. That is the bad news. The Good News is that God has given us a way, not only to defer this collision, but to escape its consequences entirely. There is a destruction coming, but it will annihilate us only if we reject the course Jesus outlined: sincere repentance and conversion in His name. God's whole purpose in sending His Christ was to give mankind the one and only opportunity there is to escape the fatal consequences of a coming wrath whose approach is now imminent. The Bible is filled with prophecies that describe in great detail the events surrounding the inception of the cataclysm, and these detail circumstances which are uncannily similar to those we have recently witnessed in the world around us. This book is a testimony to those events. We can also see images of this looming catastrophe in our own deaths. We all have to die. But what is coming is far more lethal, because it has the capacity to destroy not just our body, but our soul as well, committing to eternal flames the only link we have to immortal life. This means that we cannot escape the end of the world simply by dying. The end of the world will follow our soul wherever it goes unless we cover it with the Holy Spirit. And the only way to do that is to follow Jesus and do exactly what he said. *"I tell you most solemnly, whoever keeps my word will never see death"* (Jn.8:51). One of the more improbable discoveries Christians make when they start to study other faiths is that almost no other religion comes with an offer of eternal life. Those who come from a Christian base see this offer as an essential component of theology itself. Yet it is an offer that almost did not exist in religion before Jesus declared it possible. While the Pharisees of Christ's time believed in

resurrection, the Jewish leadership quickly squashed that notion entirely very soon after the crucifixion of Christ. As a result, there is little belief in Judaism today that life exists after death. (Anyone who doubts this need only ask a Jewish rabbi or scholar). Most ancient theologians were convinced that life after death was just a myth, and so their religions were all based on the here and now. They were all based on earthly peace and worldly success. This is what made Jesus so unique. He came down from heaven -- from the throne of the Father Himself -- and offered us what seemed to be the unofferable. *"Death was not God's doing, he takes no pleasure in the extinction of the living. To be -- for this he created all."* (Ws.1:12-14). With words like these, from the lips of prophets who could not even understand what they were saying at the time, God has shown us that He wants us to understand that death and life are in His own hands, and that neither are dictated by the terms of this world. Yet both are now dictated by the Son because God has put our lives in Christ's hands to do with as He pleases.

Jesus has dispensed God's offer of eternal life through the Word He preached. So the Good News is eternal life itself. And that is the best of all goodnews because it erases from our thoughts the agony of nothingness and a meaningless fate. And that imperishable life, Jesus promised, will be filled with true wealth and endless joy. He said that heaven's new world will encompass a beauty and happiness that cannot even be imagined here on this earth. It will feature eternal contentment in a land of perfection whose grandeur is beyond anyone's comprehension -- far greater than anything this earth has to offer. The journey Jesus has called us to make will not only free us from the shackles of our current bodily prison and release us from all sorrow and distress; we will make our entrance into God's new kingdom as members of the highest royal family in creation. Commoners in this life, we will find ourselves standing in the imperial majesty of the King Himself; wrapped in robes of state, and making our entrance into Christ's new kingdom in a grand procession of nobility. Victorious in battle, and heroes highly favored for perseverance in His word, we will comprise a prestigious and preeminent cortege as we make our stately march into the kingdom which He has generously promised to bestow upon us. His offer of peace gives us the opportunity not only to escape the disaster that is bearing down on this earth, but to achieve an immense hidden reward in doing so. He said that we would be repaid "a hundred times over" for our losses here on earth (Mat.19:29). Cloaked in robes of supreme royalty -- sons of the living God -- we are to be accepted as intimate members of the sovereign family of the Almighty Creator Himself -- princes and princesses for eternity in a city that 'glitters like a precious jewel of crystal-clear diamond' with brilliant colors of light reflecting everywhere throughout it the radiant glory of God. Earthly kingship and the royalty that surrounds such families are but dull and dingy replicas by comparison. These descriptions are not illusions. They have been revealed to us in scripture by a God who has informed us that He, Himself will wait on us and do our bidding in the land that He has prepared for all who obey His will. We know all of this through the Son's own voice -- a voice God

Himself sent down from heaven just so that we might understand these things. And it is that same voice that has mapped our escape, because it is only the power of Christ's Gospel that can separate us from Satan. *"A child of God listens to the words of God; if you refuse to listen, it is because you are not God's children."* (Jn.8:47). Those who reject Jesus have no radiant city to look forward to. No royal appointment. No treasure. No eternal life and no joy. Only disaster. Just a grave somewhere with some empty words written on a stone -- and with it the awful possibility of eternal damnation in the fires of an immense blazing lake. These are the facts of the truth Jesus came to tell us, and, according to God, the vision has to be announced. Because it is only by conversion, repentance and sincere prayer that any of the calamitous events of these final days can be altered -- either for the world or for ourselves. Considering the short time there is left to us, we should be praying constantly. Prayer accompanied by repentance and conversion has great power on earth, and those who have used this power have worked huge miracles in the name of God's holy Son. *"Whatever you ask for in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."* (Jn.14:13). *"I tell you most solemnly, anything you ask for from the Father he will grant in my name...Ask and you will receive..."* (Jn.16:23-24). *"...and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants us to live."* (1 Jn.3:22).

This world and God are opposites. That is why when we choose Jesus we must repent the kind of life we lived before the Gospel changed our lives. Baptism in Christ terminates our citizenship in this world and cements a new pilgrim status to our lives here. It sets us on a journey to the kingdom of heaven down the only path that leads there -- a path that Jesus mapped perfectly for us to follow. To God, flesh and Babylon are two parts of the same circumstance. For this reason, we must leave them both in the very same way -- and by the road Jesus dictated: Repentance and conversion. Natural death leads only to the grave, but baptism in the death of Christ has power to lift us up to eternal life, allowing us to be reborn in a second birth -- a birth by His word into the kingdom of God. By word were we born here and by word will be reborn anew into Christ's eternal kingdom: *"By the word of God the heavens were made, their whole array by the breath of his mouth...He spoke and it was created. He commanded and there it stood."* (Ps.33:6-9). Given this second chance to live again, our soul is freed from its bondage to the second death -- the second part of the death of the first-born creation -- the death that claims the soul. For this reason, once we are touched in the death of Christ (baptised), the grace we receive in return gives us great immunity to death. Like an immortal vaccination against the disease of death, our baptism in Christ will always 'take' if we complete the journey Jesus has mapped out for us. This touch of God comes in three parts. Through repentance, the water washes us in the grace of His forgiveness and gives our soul the opportunity to be reborn into a new kind of body that is eternal. The Spirit conceives within us the infant of that new body; and the divine meal of our obedience as we march through the fire, feeds this new body growing within us, and

raises it up to perfect maturity for eternal life in the presence of God. This opportunity for a second birth is what is meant by the term 'redemption'. It is through our faith in Him that we are redeemed -- a faith made manifest by a journey completed. Scripture says that it is because of the death of the first born (flesh-born) that everyone has to be redeemed (i.e., because all flesh is born to die). Our soul cannot live unless it is clothed in a body. For this reason, the death of the body imperils the soul. Baptism by the Spirit creates for us a new body, so that our soul is re clothed in a spiritual body of immortality. If we feed this new body the food of God -- the Gospel of Christ -- it will grow up to eternal maturity so that we will never have to die. The terminal wrath will have no effect on us. Since it is spiritual, our captivity in this world has been a captivity, not to flesh per se, but to the sin which has ruled our lives. Jesus is not the only one sowing seed in this world. The dragon's seed is here as well, and whichever of these two seeds takes root in our heart determines the 'ground' of our soul. All the pursuits and cares of this world, the Gospel says, are in partnership with Satan's sin. (Mt.13:22). So we must break with this world in order to break with sin. Breaking with sin (the way of this world) can only come through obedience to Jesus and his Gospel. *"If you do not stand by me, you will not stand at all."* (Is.7:9). That is why Christ declared that we must put aside our love affair with this world in order to be freed from the chains Satan has used to bind us to him.

There are two ways Jesus outlined for us to make this break. First, of course, by baptism (redemption). And second by changing the way we conduct our lives. Jesus preached *"a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins"*. (Mk.1:4). Through repentance, and because of the cross, the moment we are baptised our sins are washed away and we are wrapped in a robe of grace. But grace is a variable. (1 Peter 1:2). Grace is something we can grow in, or grow away from. In fact, we can even fall out of grace completely if we are wicked enough. The food of God builds grace, but the food of Babylon destroys it. That is why God insisted on repentance and confession as well as baptism as crucial elements in the faith of Christ. It is not enough that we be baptised -- we must also leave Babylon and all its sinfulness behind us. And that is an ongoing process -- a lifelong journey away from Satan's city. It is a journey through fire because everything in this world works against it. It is through this tribulation that we are tested and made fit for God. Jesus said that we must all be sifted by Satan. *"And it will happen throughout this territory...that two-thirds in it will be cut off (will be killed) and the remaining third will be left. I will lead that third into the fire, and refine them as silver is refined, test them as gold is tested. they will call on my name and I shall listen; and I shall say: 'These are my people'; and each will say, 'The Lord is my God'."* (Zech.13:8-9). Jesus said that those who believe and teach that this journey is not important or necessary to salvation are blind guides. Those who interpret God's commandments and decide by their own intellect which parts of His provisions they will obey and which ones they will disregard prove the concept of the 'narrow road' in Jesus' narrative. It is His instructions that constitute the narrow road -- the slim pathway that

we have been instructed by God to follow. True 'right' and 'wrong', then, are concepts whose entire measure is based on Christ's instructions. They have nothing to do with our evaluation of the data. The only 'good' is God and God is the Gospel Jesus preached. In order to make our break from Babylon complete then, we must obey Christ's commandments. When He wedded forgiveness to repentance, Jesus demonstrated that baptism is part of a vow that we make to God -- a vow that we will change our lives from the ways of Babylon and live instead in the ways of God's commandments. *"I must fulfill the vows I made you, God; I shall pay you my thank-offerings, for you have rescued my soul from Death to walk in the presence of God in the light of the living."* (Ps.56:12-13). To underscore this, Paul said, *"Don't delude yourself into thinking God can be cheated: where a man sows, there he reaps: if he sows in the field of self-indulgence he will get a harvest of corruption out of it; if he sows in the field of the Spirit he will get from it a harvest of eternal life. We must never get tired of doing good because if we don't give up the struggle we shall get our harvest at the proper time. While we have the chance, we must do good to all, and especially to our brothers in the faith."* (Gal.6:6-10).

In the Book of Ecclesiastes, Qoheleth wrote, *"He who obeys the command will come to no harm, and the wise man knows there will be a time of Judgment."* (Ec.8:5). These two are intimately related: God's commandments and the wrath. *"If I concentrate on your every commandment I can never be put to shame."* (Ps.119:6). *"He who despises the word will destroy himself, he who respects the commandment will be safe."* (Pr.13:11). In the first covenant there was no possibility of rescue because there was no allowance for failure. Since no one was perfect except God, everyone who failed to match His perfection died in sin. In His mercy Jesus brought us grace, allowing us to stumble and still succeed. Because of this, in the new covenant success is measured by progress rather than by perfection. *"Only the man who makes progress, as the blameless do, can be my servant."* (Ps.101:6). Those who make progress in the Gospel's commands are blameless in the eyes of God. Because Jesus has wrapped us in a robe of grace, God's commandments work in our favor instead of against us. His words do not destroy us the way those of Moses did in the first covenant. Because of the mercy of God's grace, Christ's words can build us into eternal life. This is why Jesus said that His words, when eaten (internalized) and digested (assimilated into action), constituted a 'food from heaven'. *"Happy is the virtuous man, for he will feed on the fruit of his deeds."* (Is.3:10). Scripture indicates that the word of God actually forms us and builds us. *"Your words are sweeter than honey. Thus your servant is formed by them, observance brings great reward."* (Ps.19:10-11). Even the heavens and the earth were made by the word of God. Everything was created instantly the moment He spoke. (Ps.33:6-9) For this reason, when we put the word of God into practice in our lives, it is the same as feeding the food of all creation into our soul. The scriptures have borne witness to this fact since the very beginning: *"Happy the man who cares for the poor and the weak: if disaster strikes, God will come to his help."* (Ps.41:1). If we neglect the

commandments and depend on God to rescue us simply because we have acknowledged Jesus as God, we put God to the test by choosing to remain in Babylon against His orders. Only in the journey of repentance and obedience which Jesus defined for us can we keep sin from re-staining our soul, and hold onto the grace we have received. The Bible shows that there are certain actions in Christ that we can take which perpetually wash such stains away and thereby work to keep our soul continuously sanctified. An early disciple of Christ, a writer in the 4th century named 'Origen' (author of the famous 'Hexapla' Bible -- a six-column scripture listing in parallel the six most important Bibles of the first three centuries) declared, after an intense investigation of scripture, that there were seven commandments that washed the Christian soul in a bath of perpetual forgiveness:

1. The first, of course, is the initial cleansing itself: *baptism*. When we are touched by water in this special event, our soul is washed in the blood of Christ, cleansing it of every stain there is. The anointing of water breaks our bondage to this corrupt flesh while our faith washes our soul in the spiritual water of God's forgiveness and grace.

2. The second is *repentance*. It is repentance, the Gospel tells us, that activates the power of the cross. "...and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Mk.1:4).

"Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'." (Mt.4:17).

"Humble yourself before you fall ill, and when you sin, repent. The man who acknowledges a fault wards off punishment." (Sir.18:21, 20:3).

Jesus proved our need to be continually repentant when he told the parable about the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee who praised himself for being cleaner than the sinful people around him—went unforgiven by God, but the publican who acknowledged his guilt and humbled himself before the Lord and begged the Lord's forgiveness, went home at rights with God. His sins were washed away according to Jesus, because he was repentant and humble. (Lk.18:9-14).

3. The third way that sins are forgiven is by the *forgiveness that we extend to others*. When He gave us the Lord's Prayer, Jesus revealed that the extent to

which we forgive others will have a tremendous impact on how God will forgive us for our own sins on the Day of Judgment. (Mt.6:12).

"Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either." (Mt.6:14-15). Jesus went to great lengths to emphasize this rule—a fact which shows how important it will be to us when the final accounting is made.

4. Another way that sin is forgiven, Origen said, is by *showing love to others*. Most of Christ's commandments were directives that we show compassion and kindness to other people, so almost every directive Jesus gave has some bearing on this rule.

When the former prostitute came into the Pharisees house and washed Christ's feet, he said that although her sins were many, the fact that they were all forgiven was demonstrated by the fact that she was showing such great love (doing good). (Lk.7:47). *"It is the man who is forgiven little who shows little love."* (Lk.7:48).

Good works, then, are a reflection of a forgiveness already received. By contrast, those who do not put the commandments into practice demonstrate that God has not yet forgiven their sins. This proves that while people can claim that they are saved, whether or not they really are, depends on the amount of love and kindness and compassion for others that comes out of them.

Jesus said this more succinctly, of course, when He proclaimed, *"By their fruits you will know them."* (Mt.7:15-20). This is why Peter wrote, *"Never let your love for one another other grow insincere, since love covers over many a sin."* (1 Peter 4:8).

A part of this love is giving to the poor. *"He who shuts his ear to the poor man's cry shall himself plead and not be heard."* (Pr.21:13). *"He who gives to the poor shall never want, he who closes his eyes to them will bear many a curse."* (Pr.28:27).

5. According to Origen, *confession* is the fifth mechanism scripture has decreed as a way to absolve our sins before God. *"He who conceals his faults will not prosper, but he who confesses and renounces them will find mercy."* (Pr.28:13).

In his first letter, the Apostle John wrote: *"If we say that we have no sin in us, we are deceiving ourselves and refusing to admit the truth; but if we acknowledge our sins, then God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and purify us from everything that is wrong."* (1 Jn.1:8-9).

John's words confirm the fact that we continue to stumble even though we have committed ourselves to follow the Lord; and for this reason, we must each live our lives in a constant state of repentance and humility as we make our journey to the kingdom of God. We must live perpetually in the kind of humility that keeps the cross activated.

Confessing our sins, scripture tells us, is essential to this process. *"At last I admitted to you that I had sinned; no longer concealing my guilt, I said, 'I will go to the Lord and confess my fault'. And you God, you have forgiven the wrong I did, have pardoned my sin."* (Ps.32:5).

6. When James wrote that sin was forgiven by *prayer*, he defined another process that helps to wash sins away—one that Origen overlooked. *"If one of you is ill, he should send for the elders of the church, and they must anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord and pray over him. The prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up again; and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. So confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, and this will cure you; the heartfelt prayer of a good man works very powerfully."* (James 5:13).

7. James also indicated that *evangelism* itself cured sins: *"My brothers, if one of you strays away from the truth, and another brings him back to it, he may be sure that anyone who can bring back a sinner from the wrong way that he has taken will be saving a soul from death and covering up a great number of sins."* (James 5:19-20).

8. Another way, Origen said, of covering over sins was *martyrdom*—a common event among Christians in the early days of the Church. When Jesus said that no greater love has any man than that he lay down his life for his fellow man, he made it clear that martyrdom was the greatest act of love that any person could show to another in this world.

There is one word that stands out boldly in the religion of Christ. That word is faith. In Jesus, faith will do anything. It is above all things and without it, none of the things listed

above will work. When Paul described the story of Abraham's righteousness through faith (Rom.4), he proved that even baptism cannot work without faith. It is faith that heals, and it is faith that brings the forgiveness of God into our souls. *"Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven.'" (Mt.9:2).* Faith is like the channel of a river. Where it is deep and wide, the water can flow through it in abundance. This is the way it is with the River that flows from the breast of Christ. Where our faith is deep, the waters of heaven flow into our heart like a flood. And as they come into us, they carry healing and eternal forgiveness into our souls in boundless abundance. These overflow our soul and pass into our body as well, and this is why the paralytic could get up and walk. The abundance of healing that comes from faith is beyond all measure. *"I tell you solemnly, if you have faith and do not doubt at all, not only will you do what I have done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Get up and throw yourself into the sea', it will be done. And if you have faith, everything you ask for in prayer you will receive."* (Mt.21:21-22). When Jesus sent Paul to preach to the pagans, He told him, *"I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light...and receive, through faith in me, forgiveness of their sins and a share in the inheritance of the sanctified."* (Acts 26:18). Origen, in his writings, did not give faith a separate category because he knew that everything he listed was dependent on it. And without it, there could be no listing at all.

But faith does not stand alone. Faith and faithfulness go together. The upright live by faithfulness to Christ's word. We live by the word of God and by our faith in that word. In those who are unfaithful, there can be no faith. Jesus said, *"If anyone hears my words and does not keep them faithfully, it is not I who shall condemn him...he who rejects me and refuses my words has his judge already: the word itself that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. For what I have spoken does not come from myself; no, what I was to say, what I had to speak, was commanded by the Father who sent me, and I know that his commands mean eternal life."* (Jn.12:47-50). Jesus shows here, that the kind of faith that leads to eternal life comes directly from faithfulness. Faith cannot exist outside of God's commandments—because these commandments, themselves, Jesus said, mean eternal life. (Jn.12:50). It is faith that draws us toward Christ's commandments. We can only come to God by the pathway that Jesus, Himself, has defined. The churches have no power to define the pathway to God; nor do theologians. Only Jesus. *"Trust no more in man, he has but a breath in his nostrils."* (Is.2:22). *"God says this: 'A curse on the man who puts his trust in man...'"* (Jer.17:5). The Bible is clear—we cannot invent our own salvation. And we cannot put our trust in the inventions of others, either. We must listen carefully to the one and only voice that defined God's salvation and do exactly as that voice commanded us to do. *"You*

search the scriptures, believing that in them you have eternal life; now these same scriptures testify to me, and yet you refuse to come to me for life." (John 5:39-40). We come to church to come to Jesus, that is true faith—and in that faith there is perfect faithfulness to God. It is this kind of faith that is the meaning of 'love' in the scriptures. It is just like in the story of the prostitute above. When the prostitute showed great compassion, Jesus said that she could do this only because her sins had been forgiven. Only when sins have been forgiven can a person show the kind of love that keeps the Gospel. This is a faith that leads to faithfulness. Those who are unable to show this love, have not yet received forgiveness. (Lk.7:48). They cannot be said to have faith, because there is nothing in them leading them to faithfulness. Again, Jesus said, "By their fruits you shall know them."

Everything that washes away sin holds back the wrath; and therefore all those who are faithful to Christ help to keep the tyranny of the last days away. That is why so many of the current visions call for faith and prayer. It is the inability to repent that will characterize the people who make the wrath inevitable on earth. *"You may be quite sure that in the last days there are going to be some difficult times. People will be self-centered and grasping; boastful, arrogant and rude; disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious; heartless and unappeasable; they will be slanderers, profligates, savages and enemies of everything that is good; they will be treacherous and reckless and demented by pride, preferring their own pleasure to God. They will keep up the outward appearance of religion but will have rejected the inner power of it. Have nothing to do with people like that. You must keep to what you have been taught and know to be true; remember who your teachers were, and how, ever since you were a child, you have known the holy scriptures—from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy."* (2 Tim.3:1-17).

35

Prelude to Eternity

"Therefore, expect me—it is God who speaks—on the day I stand up to make my accusation; for I am determined to gather the nations, to assemble the kingdoms, and to pour out my fury on you, the whole heat of my anger." Zeph.3:8

The power of Christ which engineered the Christian era on earth was not simply the result of potent government urgings commanding the promotion of Jesus as the religious cornerstone of the nations. It was propelled far more dramatically by the fact that so many people who lived in those times had a deep faith in the Good News that was being preached to them. This was the real millennium—the driving force that gave the reign of Christ on earth all of its power—a monumental acceptance of righteousness by so many rank and file citizens throughout the world. For almost two millenia, faith in Jesus Christ was the major philosophical movement on the planet. The Gospel of Christ attracted more people to it than any other teaching ever preached. (See Graph 1 in the Appendix). It's fervency was deep, and produced an era profoundly spiritual—an era in which faith in God encompassed all aspects of daily life from the 1st Century until our own. During that inspired period of Christian excitement, Jesus was proclaimed victoriously on earth and the broadcast of His message in loud and clear terms was supported by virtually all western governments—not merely because church leaders demanded it—but more, because the people, themselves, hungered for it. Men came out of the darkness into the light because, in the weight of their conscience, they wanted to please God and do good. Not everyone knelt to God, of course, but so many did that a deep undercurrent of religious passion enveloped the western world for almost 2000 years—sparking a fervor for Jesus that touched almost every household within reach of the Church. That was yesterday when the millennium of Christ reigned powerfully on our planet. Unfortunately, today we are watching that marvelous age grow now rapidly historic. A rebellion is in progress—a falling away from the faith of those times—the great revolt which Paul warned stood between the fervency of the Apostolic world and the insipid nonchalance now beckoning the appearance of the man of perdition. Today, the unabashed enthusiasm for Jesus that ruled millennial times has been replaced by a

disintegration of faith that is bringing all that previous passion to an embarrassed end. The Church and all its hierarchy are still here, but the ears of the populace who once were so attentive are now turning deaf to Christ. Not really wanting to hear what Jesus has to say, or believing that His Gospel is relevant to our times, most of the world's citizens have decided to turn their backs on His message and walk away. And, *"On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that even though the light of God has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds are evil."* (Jn.3:19). *"If I had not come, if I had not spoken to them, they would have been blameless; but as it is they have no excuse for their sin."* (Jn.15:22). *"If I had not performed such works among them as no one else has ever done, they would be blameless; but as it is, they have seen all this, and still they hate both me and my Father."* (Jn.15:24). The sympathetic support of the government for Christian doctrine is over. The nativity plays in the schools are gone. The wisemen of our time have long since abandoned their pursuit of the star of Bethlehem. All this has made John's warning suddenly viable to us: *"And now sentence is being passed on this world..."* (Jn.12:31). The grounds for this sentence—rejection itself.

What the world is deserting today is the light which God dedicated to the world that holy night that changed the calendars when He consecrated with shepherds and angels His living temple on earth. That first Christmas was the signal to the world that God's promised light had come to earth. Built on a Hebrew template called the Feast of Lights, Christmas displays to the world a far brighter light—the Star of God. *"I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark; he will have the light of life'."* (Jn.8:12). Long before the Light of God appeared, the Law had foreseen His coming. Moses tried to prepare the people of Israel for that moment, warning that they had to listen and obey Him under penalty of death. The people waited in great expectation. Over the years, Hebrew tradition prepared a backdrop to highlight the moment. So it was, when the moment was near that in the dead of winter, on the 25th day of Chislev in the Jewish calendar, an eight-day celebration called the 'Festival of Lights' began. The Hebrew month of Chislev correlates with December, and the 25th day of that month with the celebrated birth of Jesus, both firm indications that Holy Spirit engineered the design that intertwines them. This Jewish 'Feast of Dedication' (Hannukah as it is also called) honors the rededication of the Jewish temple after it had been defiled by the forces of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The Festival of Lights proclaims the cleansing of the temple and its altar by Judas Maccabees in the aftermath of the Old Testament incident on which Daniel's 'Abomination of Desolation' was based. The Holy Spirit superimposed these two celebrations, touching one with the other in calendar time for good reason. The true re-purification of God's temple occurred,

not by the hand of a Maccabee, but with the birth of Jesus Christ. Born on earth in a dedication ceremony directed by God Himself, Jesus cleansed the temple with a whip and a cross—driving out its desecrators and bringing true worship to the altar of God. That is why the Church celebrates the birth of Jesus in the schematic framework of Hannukah. Moses, having been given authority by God to make the Old Testament the template for the new covenant, carefully chronicled a series of holy festivals and feast days, almost all of which now have Christian counterparts which have superseded and fulfilled what they originally stood for. The incognizant argument that Christian festivals were formed on pagan holidays is quite false. The fact is, virtually none were. All Christian holy days carefully follow the Hebrew schematic laid down by Moses and his heirs. Pagan holidays and festivals may have co-existed with Jewish events, but in the Church calendar all Christian holy days have been structured on Jewish and Hebrew feast days defined in the Old Testament by Moses and the prophets. Christmas (the Feast of Dedication) is no exception. And, as with all the other Hebrew and Christian date combinations, these two dates are united thematically. It was in December (the 25th day of Chislev) at the feast of Hannukah, that Jesus first revealed to the world the fact that He was God: *"It was the time when the feast of Dedication was being celebrated in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the Temple walking up and down in the Portico of Solomon. The Jews gathered round him and said, 'How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly'. Jesus replied: 'I have told you, but you do not believe me...the Father and I are one'."* (Jn.10:22-29). The Jews were furious at this reply and planned to stone Him for it, because, in language as plain as they would ever hear, Jesus had just let them know in a public proclamation that He was, indeed, the Christ. His December declaration is a proclamation we repeat with bells, carols and music every time the season surrounding this feast returns. In the same way and season that Jesus announced His Messiahship, we restate His revelation in public as emphatically as we possibly can, but we use a calendar that follows the sun, not the moon. Since the Hebrew calendar is based on lunar months and the Christian calendar on solar months, Hannukah and Christmas, though close, cannot be united. The Jewish date rotates around the Christian date like a floppy appendage. There is deep symbolism in this because the days of the Hebrew calendar, built on the reflected light of the moon are always in a state of flux, falling on a different day every year—imitating the traditions of the elders, which change this way and that because they are only a reflection of the light of God. Focusing on that symbolism, the Christian calendar follows the sun because it is fixed on the testimony of the Son of God, i.e., the direct Sonlight of heaven. Its days, therefore, are fixed and usually constant. Since one calendar offers fluctuating days and the other does not, it is impossible to assign a fixed Christian date that precisely coincides with the fluctuating Hebrew day—but in

this case, both are celebrated on the 25th day of their coincident winter months (Chisle/December).

So every December, on a 25th day, and honoring two versions of the temple flame, the celebrations of Christmas and Hannukah both appear and each are surrounded by a festival of lights. *"The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone."* (Is.9:1). The lights of Christmas signify that Jesus is the light of the world—a proclamation we repeat on every anniversary of the celebration of His birth. It is the Christian world's public prophecy affirming His Divinity. Our proclamation clarions throughout the world in the loudest terms, with bells and music, this message for all to hear and take notice: *"For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity...forever."* (Is.9:5-7). The feast of lights, therefore, is the day when proclamation and prophecy unite. Today, it has become a beacon increasingly ignored. The Christmas season has evolved into the holiday season; the music has become secular, the lights pagan, and a fantasy called Santa Claus now rides his sleigh across department store floors. A veil of blindness has descended on the land, because the lights of Christmas have begun to herald darkness instead of Jesus. Blind and leading the blind, society's false prophets—it's self-appointed watchmen—the reporters of the media who fill their newspapers and the airwaves with stories of the terror and mayhem of our times, fail to address the ethical collapse that has spawned all this disaster. *"...turning his gaze upward, then down to the earth, he will find only distress and darkness (the blackness of anguish) and will see nothing but night."* (Is.8:22). Such are the headlines of our times. They wail loudly about the distress but are blind to the cure.

When God mortised the relationship between the dates of Christmas and Hannukah, it was not a unique event in scripture—He did the same with Easter, structuring it on Passover. And again, Pentecost, which He superimposed on the Feast of Weeks. He did the same with the exile to Babylon, allowing both Hebrew temples, which formed the bookends of that dispersion, to burn to the ground on the very same calendar day. Making certain that future Jewish leaders would be able to grasp the fact that the exile to Babylon had two meanings and that each was related to the other, the Holy Spirit orchestrated the unique coincidence by date of the twin destructions of the Hebrew tabernacle. Solomon's temple was burned down on the 10th of Loos—a Hebrew lunar month that borders the end of

August in the Christian calendar. Its destruction sent the Jews into the captivity of Babylon. More than 650 years later on the very same Hebrew day, the 10th of Loos (August 29th in 70 A.D.), the temple of Herod was burned to the ground by the Romans who again deported the Jews into a second 'slavery of Babylon'—this time an exile so far-reaching and enduring that Rome came to supplant the whole meaning of Babylon. The fact that the Holy Spirit superimposed the new covenant's captivity of Babylon on top of its Old Testament counterpart went unseen to all but a few. But in the future when the a similar symbolism is repeated with Christmas, it should be more noticeable—especially since we now know there is divine precedent for it. On the 25th day of Chislev, in the year 167 B.C., a momentous sacrilege occurred. The altar in the Jerusalem temple was desecrated by the forces of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This event was memorialized by the prophet Daniel, who termed it the 'Abomination of Desolation'. Incredibly, three years to the day later (again on the 25th day of Chislev), the profaned temple was purified and the rights of the Hebrew altar were restored. Both events—the temple's desecration and its purification—occured in different years, but on the very same calendar day in the Old Testament. It was in response to the purification of this desecration that the leaders of Jerusalem memorialized the 25th day of Chislev as the Jewish Festival of Lights. And so it is that Christians, on the 25th day of December, celebrate the moment when Christ's arrival in the world purified the religion of God. Jesus' reign on earth—His victory over Satan—has been celebrated on that same day ever since. This date is a major sign for the future as well. Just as the desecration and purification of the temple at the time of Antiochus coincided on the same date in the Mosaic calendar, the Christian counterparts to these two events will mirror one another as well, but play out in reverse. The second has already occurred—the true purification of the altar. This is an event that we celebrate as having taken place on the 25th day of December in the city of Bethlehem almost 2000 years ago. The transgression of that cleansing, the Abomination that desecrates Christ's everlasting covenant has not yet occurred, but so that all will know it when it happens and understand just how intricately God is involved in what has occurred, the 'Abomination' spoken of by Daniel will be erected by the Beast on Christmas day, and that will bring this prophecy full circle.

We have seen many examples in this book how God has defined the new covenant of Christ on top of the framework of Moses. While the two covenants have seriously different rules, they superimpose on an identical framework—the Old Testament serving as a template for the new. This is why Jesus was so insistent with his disciples that the Old Testament be fulfilled in everything that He did. God gave Moses authority to architect the template, and then interwove Jesus into the framework which Moses had defined. That is why we see all

Christian holy days superimposed over the days in the Old Testament that God had earlier put in place for them under the guardianship of Moses. God's directive to Jesus that He fulfill the Mosaic template in precise terms did not disappear with the cross. It is a rule that God has decreed must be followed all the way to Armageddon. Since Jesus has informed us that the last days will be cut short for the sake of the survival of the elect, it seems unlikely that the momentous appearance of God will occur on the 25th of December in echo of the beast's abominating sacrilege. Yet a shortened period could still follow the Hebrew calendar framework, nonetheless. God may well 'purify' the beast's abomination of the communion offering by scheduling Christ's Second Appearance at the time of Yom Kippur. Such a 'time-shortening' would interconnect Daniel's prophecy with the Torah's schedule, entrancing the third and holiest day in harmony with the Mosaic schematic. For this reason we can prophetically assume that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will coalesce with the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles, close to the holiday of Yom Kippur—the highest holy day in the Hebrew chronology. Yom Kippur is the most important Hebrew holiday, and yet its counterpart is still not celebrated in the Christian Church as a defined holy day. This would seem a glaring omission. But it is not. Yom Kippur is not celebrated by Christians because the day's final fulfillment still lies in the future. That is not to say the season has been ignored, however. Just the opposite. The Feast of the Tabernacles corresponds to communion. And Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, nestled within the 7-day Tabernacle feast, corresponds to the Sonlight of Christ. This God-given 'Sonlight' is a 'day of Atonement' that will continue to radiate as long as the light of Christ shines on earth. Therefore, it constitutes a 'daylight' that has blazed steadily for almost 2000 years. The Godhead is Trinitarian, and each of its three parts has been given its own day of honor. This formula was developed and given pre-eminence in the Old Testament. God told the House of Israel, "Three times a year you are to celebrate a feast in my honor." (Ex.23:14). This declaration by the Spirit of God in scripture is the reason why in the Law of Moses three great feast days encircle the Hebrew calendar. These three holy occasions in Hebrew law are Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles. We have already seen that God has superimposed Christ's day, Easter, on Passover and the Holy Spirit's day of Pentecost on the Feast of Weeks. We must assume, then, that the Day of God (the Day of Judgment) will fall at some point within the 7-day celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, close to Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is the highest holy day in the Hebrew religion. It is the Day of God as specified by the Law of Moses and always falls in either September or October in the Christian calendar. The actual Day of God, of course, is that awesome moment in the future when God, Himself, will come and take His seat on a throne in the sky above the city of Jerusalem to sit in Judgment on all the people of the earth. In other words, it is the Day of the Second

Coming of Jesus Christ. It is clear that spiritual patterns exist quite frequently in the scriptures. The seasons, themselves, point to this fact. God created this world so that everything in it signals the plan of Christ. In spring, the time of new birth, the Easter of Christianity occurred. Christ freed mankind from sin. The first fruits of His harvest came 50 days later, on the day of the Feast of First Fruits (The Feast of Weeks), a day Christians call Pentecost. And in summer, at the heart of the yield, God's harvest of souls in great abundance produced a millennium of Christian rule in the world. Fall is a time of gathering and plowing. It is the time on earth when the harvest ends and the tares are taken to be burned.

It is in this season that the millennium will come to an end. Winter is desolation. It is the time of the Abomination and the destruction of the treaty. The beast will erect his desolating sacrilege, and terror will grip the earth. Most Christians search the pages of the Book of Revelation for an explanation of the things to come, but the secrets that this book contains cannot be opened without first using the key of Daniel. Jesus proved this when He spoke of the desecration of the altar: *"So when you see the disastrous abomination, of which the prophet Daniel spoke, set up in the Holy Place (let the reader understand) then those in Judaea must escape to the mountains..."* (Mt.24:15-16). The Lord has requested our 'understanding' in regard to the location of the 'Holy Place'. This highly unusual bracket in a declaration by Jesus is fascinating and it strongly suggests that this sanctuary is not in the place most readers think it is. The Holy Place in this prophecy is not a future or soon-to-be erected Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Nor is this a reference to the Roman destruction of Herod's temple just after Nero died. No 'object' of desolation was set up by Titus and his Roman forces following that destruction. In fact, it was not until many decades later that the Roman's constructed a pagan temple on the rock of Abraham. And when they did, there was little need for the kind of Christian flight in panic called for by Jesus. Daniel's words are about an event that we must 'understand', then, in terms of Jesus Christ. There are some Christians who feel that Jesus will come and renew His kingdom around the framework of a new Jewish state in Jerusalem—one in which the fallen temple of Herod has been rebuilt and Jewish sacrifices resumed. It is this kind of thinking that has kept the prophecies in the Book of Daniel sealed. The only way to unlock Daniel's words is to sever their ties to Moses—to do with them exactly what Jesus did with all the rest of the Old Testament. Leaving Moses behind and bringing Daniel's words to Jesus Christ and to the new covenant breaks the seals instantly; but it does so only when the liturgy of the sacrifice is understood in Christian terms. Christian liturgy plays a fundamental role in the world's continuance and is therefore much more important to world survival than many people think. The abolition of the peace

treaty and the end of the world are intricately tied to the Rebel's desecration of the liturgical elements of Christ's sacrifice. Jewish liturgy is not an issue here. The guardian is gone. Only the real Father remains. Jesus is not returning to rebuild the guardian. The Jews cannot bring Jesus to themselves, they have to leave the guardian behind and go to Him. And that is exactly what will happen in Jerusalem some day, but not until all of scripture has been completely fulfilled. First will come the Revolt against the Church, and after that the Wrath—a time of terror beyond human comprehension. At the helm of that wrath will be a monster unsurpassed in all of history—the man of Perdition—a beast similar to Adolph Hitler, but far worse. He will come to the world in the image of Satan himself. A man so cunning that he takes many unawares—just as Satan himself does. This tyrant will make war on Jesus Christ and in that war destroy the visible framework of the Christian Church. To understand the mammoth proportions of such a catastrophe, one has only to comprehend the population percentages in the territories destined to fall under the Rebel's future control: most of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and much of Africa. Perhaps even parts of the Caribbean and South America. Almost a billion Christians live in these areas today—a region boasting tens of thousands of churches. And the Man of Evil will attempt to destroy them all—the 'perpetual sacrifice', the 'sacrifice and oblation', 'the 'sanctuary citadel', the 'holy covenant', the 'Book of Truth'—all of it. Everything Daniel has described. Not just in Jerusalem, but in every part of the world under his control. This perpetrator of the 'disastrous iniquity' will desolate the real sanctuary—the sanctuary of Jesus Christ. Daniel's words are formed on Christian references, not Jewish references. They reflect the world's final war against Christianity—a war in which the Jews will play a strategic role, but not the central role. The center will remain forever in Christ. Knowing that, the Book of Daniel is unsealed.

Since the Book of Daniel has been clouded by God with divine instructions that it not be opened until the last days arrive, it's disclosure in our time is certain confirmation that the final sunrise may not be far away. The book of Daniel has remained sealed throughout Christian history—its words a mystery to all who have tried to penetrate its secret meaning. But all that has now changed. The locks on this book are being taken off, and this has coincided almost perfectly with the reconstruction of a Jewish nation in Palestine—the two events which the Bible has always maintained would be the ultimate clues that the destruction of the world was near at hand. Since the events which Daniel wrote about have already started to happen, there can be little question that the final countdown is now in progress. The 'he-goat' and the 'ram' have fought their first battle at the Euphrates and are now awaiting conditions which will launch the second. The days just past have produced

incredible warfare involving inconceivable violence and weapons, with whole kingdoms rising up and falling apart as the world molds itself into the final die cast by God and revealed by Daniel. *"Violence rules on earth and one tyrant cancels out another."* (Jer.51:46). As this turmoil unfolds, the power and influence of Christ's message on earth has begun to crumble and be rejected. Foreseeing these days, the writer of the Book of Chronicles said that a time would come when every man on the globe would be made to participate in the violence. (2 Chron.15:5). While the 20th century is part and parcel of the final days, it is just the beginning of the lawlessness—just a prelude to what lies ahead. Every sign in the world in this century has been a beacon pointing us to Armageddon. Just when we think that we have seen the most devastating events possible, something new happens to show us that worse events remain on the horizon. And each time something happens in the world, the media icons at the TV studios rush to the pundits to find out what it means. The answers they receive are always full of knowledge, but usually they are wrong. No matter how many times we try to analyze it, the future keeps surprising us. With the recent spate of western victories in the world a global peace that just a few years ago looked unattainable has begun to look suddenly possible. The war-minded nations of the earth are now talking about disarming—beating their nuclear weapons, as it were, into plowshares. But few have done so. The talk is there but not the resolve. And soon it will be too late. Daniel warns that at the very pinnacle of its triumph, the west will collapse and all hope for peace will disappear in the dust of its downfall. The Bible teaches us that peace on earth can only come from Jesus Christ. And it predicts that the world will abandon that peace, crush it, and destroy itself in warfare as it searches in vain for another. The optimistic views of peace are only an illusion anyway. (Ez.13:16). Even in this period of quiet the battles continue to rage all around us. The circumstances may have changed, but the hostility driving the anger has not gone away. It has gotten worse. *"Peace! Peace!" they say, but there is no peace.*" (Jer.6:14). *"Peace!" each says to his neighbor, while in his heart plotting a trap for him.*" (Jer.9:7). The silo's and the missiles that lie within them are not being torn down. On the contrary, more nations are adding to them. The violence that has enveloped the world in this century continues to grow, unchecked on a multitude of levels. That is because what the world has lost in this century is not its thirst for war, but its faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The one event which makes the end of the world so certain is the people's rejection of the message brought by Jesus. "On these grounds is sentence pronounced:that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil." (John 3:14-19). Paul defined this moment of rejection as the 'Great

Revolt'. We can see this Revolt in terms of church attendance world-wide, but only barely. It is much more visible in the world's change of behavior. This we can see clearly. There are still many people proclaiming their faith in Christ, but instead of converting their lives to His service, they are abandoning 'the Way' for a life in opposition to it. Vast numbers of Christians no longer bother even to attend church. When they do, it is only occasionally—on certain holidays, for instance, or when nothing else is going on. But the real collapse is not external. It is inside the heart. The failure to worship Christ comes from an internal failure of faith. And since it is faith alone that blocks the wrath, the secular revolution swirling around us today points to certain disaster. The violence, the sexual misconduct, the self-indulgence, the hostility against discipline, and the world's general abandonment of the teachings of the Gospel—this is what has exploded across the earth in our century. The outer shell of the religion is still in place, but its inner power is dissolving as we watch. The Bible has given us clear warning—this disintegration of internal faith is the very mechanism that will power the wrath which Jesus warned about. The wrath is the inevitable human consequence of Godlessness. Violence cannot come from Jesus Christ, it can only grow in His absence. This is the war. Rebellion, itself, then, is the mark of the beast. The war is this world versus God. The final moments of this war will find the front lines pushed back by the world's armies all the way to Jerusalem itself. *"See how your enemies are stirring, see how those who hate you rear their heads. Weaving a plot against your people they say, 'Come, we will finish them as a nation, the name of Israel shall be forgotten!' Unanimous in their plot, they seal a treaty against you...those who have said, 'Let us take for ourselves possession of the Dwellings of God!'"* (Ps.83:2-12). Everything concerning the last days is fixed on a metaphoric calendar detailed by Daniel. That calendar as we have shown, has roots in the ancient past—roots that began in the victories of Alexander the Great and which grew to fulness in Antiochus' desecration of the Jewish altar—an act whose corollary in our time presages the end of human civilization and the return of Christ. The period of time between the final victory of Alexander the Great and the coming of Antiochus was 156 years. Tracing Daniel's calendar, all the events he described will happen just as he has predicted them, and, since the Lord has decreed that the days of the end be cut short, we can expect the events of the last days to pass much more quickly than in Antiochus' time. And as they do, the world's assaults against the two Houses of Israel will escalate and grow increasingly violent—a violence that will ultimately touch every human being and which will not end until we are all in the air with Jesus.

All of these events are built on a framework which encompasses 6000 years. This time-frame started in Eden with the birth of Adam and Eve when God breathed His spirit into

man. And it all went awry when Satan rebelled and placed his stamp of rebellion on the new life God had created. Banished from that tranquil garden and scattered throughout the nations growing out of the Euphrates valley, these two fallen spirits began to sow their seed into the population that surrounded them. During the 5800 years that followed, modern civilization was born and a soil of God grew with it, eventually following Abraham out of Babylon's valley and settling within him and his family in the land of Canaan. His descendants went to Egypt and were rescued, but sin overtook them and finally they were all sent back to Babylon where God's whole purpose in all this was brought to fulfillment. In Jesus Christ God had led civilization to the millennium—the time of rescue. With the soil tilled and ready, the seed of righteousness was planted. The people of God were offered a way of escape. As that 6000 years now draws to a close, God's offer is drawing to a close with it. When the seventh day of God dawns in the world, the Law has declared, everything that belongs to God must return with Him to the kingdom He has prepared. From its very first day the Bible has always pointed us to the future, not the past. The clock that God has set before us measures 6000 total years and its hands now stand at 5758 in that measure. Pointing only to Jesus, the Bible is the story of how God has raised up the people of the world to meet His righteousness face to face—everyone brought by God to Christ's valley of decision. Human civilization began to form in Babylon almost 5800 years ago and now in that same valley forces are gathering which will bring all earthly promise to an end. Only those who choose to remain loyal to Jesus will be saved.

At this writing the second war between the west and Media/Persia has not been fought. This proves that we have not yet reached the point in history which corresponds metaphorically to the death of Alexander. Symbolically, this means that the western world still rules the earth. In Daniel's time-line we appear to be situated somewhere between the two victories of the west over the east—a time that would correspond in the ancient template to the middle of Alexander's reign. In that template, Alexander's sudden death prefigures the collapse of the governing influence of western civilization over the rest of the earth. When that collapse occurs, the political balance of the planet will change drastically; as nations in Europe, Asia and the Middle East coalesce into the framework of the ten nations of the Apocalypse. The East will rise to great power. Since these events are still in the future, several of the kingdoms governing the earth in the last days have not yet been formed, a fact which shows that we are now at the very beginning of the world's final rebellion against Jesus and his Gospel of peace. The prophet Daniel has outlined a sequence for the last days that can be plotted with surprising clarity once that progression is launched. This sequence begins with the war between the 'He Goat' of the West (who crosses the earth without

touching the ground), and the 'Ram' of the East whose two horns are defeated in the conflict. Since this event has now begun to unfold, we can follow the rest of Daniel's formula and watch as the events he wrote about—the final doors in scripture's prophecy—open before our eyes one by one. The unlocking of each these doors is the final proof that everything is going by the Book of God. Extrapolating Daniel's chronology, the future will unveil a series of events not unlike those listed below: Biblical references to these prophecies have already been given in previous chapters.

1. The Jews and Arabs will align. This alliance will not be peaceful because it will be born out of historic violence. It will occur in stages over a period of years and will build what Daniel calls 'the Kingdom of the South'. The major nations involved in this alliance will likely include Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Syria.
2. The south's opponent will be 'the Kingdom of the North'. This is a ten-nation republic later to be formed, similar to the now-defunct Soviet Union, and perhaps communistic, but incorporating an Asian and Moslem resolve unlike any previously seen in the old U.S.S.R.
3. The Moslem world will factionate into two powerful groups whose differences will one day erupt into civil war. This division will separate the militants from the moderates and will appear to fracture more or less along ethnic lines, with Persian forces on one side, and Arabs on the other.
4. In the embryonic stages of this division, a second Gulf War will erupt. Led by the military forces of the United States, the western world will be victorious. This war will solidify the alliance between the Arabs and Jews. It will set the boundary between North and South at the Euphrates river.
5. Following closely on this victory, at the height of its power, the political influence of the United States across the world will collapse. The world will splinter into four coalitions of governments. One of these will attenuate into the ten-nation confederacy of the east, the republic defined above which Daniel calls the 'Kingdom of the North'.
6. Isolated, the United States will give its support to the Arab-Israeli alliance that controls the southern Middle East. This coalition will constitute Daniel's 'Kingdom of the South'.
7. There will be a series of conflicts between Persian and Arab forces. Dominance in these wars will see-saw back and forth, but generally favor the Arab-Israeli alliance of the south.
8. A fateful military treaty aimed against the Persians will be signed between the Arabs and Jews. This will plunge the Jewish army into the middle of the Moslem civil war.
9. Following the signing of this treaty, the last in a sequence of Arab-Israeli pacts, the leader of 'Egypt' will be assassinated. A king of Egypt has already succumbed to an assassin's bullet in this century (fired by militant Moslems in retaliation for the first treaty signed in this sequence). So the

future figure may possibly involve his metaphoric counterpart—the leader of a spiritually militant Israel, for instance.

10. Against advice, Israel will use the terms of this treaty as an excuse to send its forces to the Euphrates river. This militant move is described in the Bible as a major act of rebellion and will be pushed by leaders who promote violence as the solution to the problems confronting Israel.
11. Heralding what is coming, cosmic signs will intensify. Frightening events will occur in the skies. The seas will roar and become unmanageable. Great earthquakes will strike population centers all across the earth. The signs that life's lease on the earth is about to be cancelled by God will increase dramatically. Yet few will repent.
12. Many false prophets will arise. Some will produce great signs and portents. They will advertise that Christ is hidden somewhere—in the desert or some other secret place known only to themselves. Jesus warned us not to listen to them.
13. Stationed at the banks of the Euphrates, the Jewish army will be decimated by a surprise assault from a massive eastern force which, under the leadership of a great northern king will sweep south and capture Jerusalem, inflicting terrible damage on the nation of Israel.
14. The angry reaction of the United States to this assault will move the northern king to make a treaty with the Jewish regime. As a result of this treaty he will withdraw his eastern forces from Jerusalem, and route them, instead toward western Europe and the America's.
15. Smashing Europe, he will carry his warfare across the Atlantic to the Western Hemisphere where he will make many conquests. These early victories will not sustain him and his army will be driven back to the Eastern Hemisphere by a strengthened U.S. force.
16. He will try to solidify his gains in Europe and Asia, but soon he will die and disappear.
17. In his place will appear a monarch bent on extorting the treasury of the Vatican. This will mark an ominous turn in events because it will be the first sign that the coming warfare is about to directly involve the Christian Church.
18. The short reign of this extortioner will end with his untimely death.
19. Taking his place will be the beast—the great Rebel of the End.
20. Coming from the far north, the beast will have his beginning in a very small following. Using intrigue and subterfuge he will quickly push to eminence a new small nation. Then, gaining control of two of the countries in the ten-nation confederacy, he will combine these three into a single nation. Swiftly thereafter, he will take command of the entire Asian republic.
21. Considering himself a part of that regime, the Rebel will align with Persia.

22. Launching a surprise attack on the Arab and Israeli forces, the Rebel will decimate the South, and take control of a part of Jerusalem. During this period he will come very close to ending the world, a fact clearly documented in the Bible. The lies told at the conference will be to no avail, however, because the appointed End is not yet.
23. Again, the United States will mobilize its forces. Backing down from a major confrontation with the Americans, the beast will abandon the part of Jerusalem that he has just conquered.
24. Going home enriched from his conquests, he will begin his attack on the Christian Church. All Jewish and Christian worship centers in the Eastern Hemisphere will be targeted by his armed forces.
25. After a brief period, the beast will decide to assault Jerusalem once again, but the outcome will be different this time. Prepared for his move, the ships of the U.S. will come and oppose his forces. There will be a battle and the Rebel will be worsted and have to retreat.
26. Furious at having been disciplined in this way, the Rebel will launch a major assault on the Christian establishment. He will burn down all Christian churches throughout his empire and order the deaths of everyone who refuses to renounce affiliation with these churches.
27. The world's ultimate declaration of war on the Christian Church will take place in a dramatic act of violence—the assassination of the Bishop of Christ.
28. Thwarted by the United States from attacking Jerusalem a second time, the Rebel will furiously assault the religious bastions of his own empire. His troops will enter the Vatican and make it a headquarters for warfare. Symbolising his victory over Rome (Babylon), the Rebel will enter St. Peter's Basilica and place himself on its throne, declaring himself a god, and demanding his own worship.
29. Issuing a proclamation that will end Christ's treaty with Babylon (a proclamation that will end forever the Hebrew exile to Babylon), the Rebel will instruct his forces to place the Abomination of Desolation above the altar in St. Peter's Basilica. This defilement, Daniel wrote, will put an end to the Perpetual Sacrifice (the Eucharist). Its consequences will be irreversible. From this point on, prayer will not alter the sequence to follow. This is the moment when everyone is warned to flee to the mountains.
30. A great earthquake will rip Jerusalem, severing the Mount of Olives, and dividing it into two parts. At about the same time, the Wailing Wall will collapse.
31. Nothing of the religious past will survive in the entire Eastern Hemisphere. The Rebel will destroy the Christian church and replace the traditional Moslem religion with one of his own which honors money and gold and ostentatious living. He will demand that everyone worship him as a god and obey his new theology.
32. A branding will be initiated in the areas controlled by the Rebel. It will delineate all who accept the madman's terms and agree to support and worship him.

33. Hounding those who still believe in Jesus, and who refuse to be marked, the Rebel's forces will chase them deep into hiding. Every cave in the country will be the scene of violence.
34. Having secured Rome for himself and made it his throne, the beast will resurrect the ancient Roman empire of the Caesars and bring it back to life.
35. His insanity will be such that he will decide to end the world on a whim because he has been blocked by those who oppose him. Ordering his armies toward Jerusalem on an assault of unprecedented dimensions, he will initiate the unthinkable.
36. Launching his missiles toward the U.S. and the rest of the world, the Rebel will precipitate a day of terror on earth. In the resulting firestorm, even the beast's own homeland, Magog, will be reduced to ashes.
37. With global fires fanned by the Rebel's own hand, the world will burn furiously in a wall of flames so vast the skies will be darkened by dense smoke from one end of the planet to the other.
38. The sign of Jesus glowing in the north will suddenly appear in the clouds of the darkened sky.
39. With their homelands ablaze, and the smoke of the fires darkening the sky, the world's entire military establishment will gather in the hills and valleys of Palestine, encircling Jerusalem.
40. Standing guard inside that hallowed city, a peaceful contingent of Jewish soldiers and citizens will prepare themselves for what seems to be inevitable annihilation. Praying and trusting that God will rescue them in fulfillment of the Promise, they will prepare for the final battle—the war the Bible calls Armageddon.
41. But there will be no fight that day. No war. Instead, suddenly, in the middle of the night out of the skies will come the fiery spears of God. The armies of the Rebel will disappear in the fury of God's own rocketry. So will the militants of Israel. In the morning everything will be silence and the armies will all be gone.
42. Leading a small band of Christian refugees from the burning North toward Jerusalem just after these other events have ended, will be Michael the Archangel. The Jews will expect Elijah, but they will get Michael instead.
43. When the citizens of Jerusalem see Michael and his group coming down the Mount of Olives, they will call out the fateful signal; "Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mt.23:39).
44. Hearing the shout, Michael will call out the command. Jerusalem's 8th gate—the 'Golden Gate' on the east side of the temple mount will collapse and fall open.
45. Upon hearing Michael's call, the angel Gabriel will blow his trumpet. Instantly the sky will separate and Jesus will brilliantly appear on the clouds of heaven in all His glory.

46. The world will disappear and be replaced by the thrones of Judgment. The books chronicling our lives will be read and everyone will be brought to task for the kind of life they lived when they were on earth.
47. The gates of heaven will be unlatched and those who are judged worthy will be allowed to enter God's paradise of eternal life. All the rest will be herded together and led to a great burning lake of sulphur . The fires of this lake will never go out.

Satan and his wickedness will be no more. His long war against God will be over. Since the ten-nation eastern coalition does not yet exist, there is still time for prayer—prayer that the world will turn away from its recent course toward annihilation, abandon its revolt against the Gospel and repent in the name of Jesus Christ. The power of prayer is more powerful than anyone can imagine. More powerful than all the armies in the world combined. When the secrets of the visions of Fatima were revealed, one of them, the second of the three, asked the world to pray for the conversion of Russia. As the years passed, this request seemed to grow more and more preposterous—as unlikely a scenario as could ever be imagined. Then suddenly, out of the blue, and at the height of its military power, it happened. The atheistic regime in Russia was out of power. Overnight, Leningrad became St. Petersburg once again. On the news a few months later, one could see the new president of Russia leading Easter services in a Christian church. The collapse of the communistic Soviet Union proves that it is still possible for the people to change an atheistic course and choose another way. But the only way that can work is Jesus Christ. As the world grows more antagonistic to Jesus, the closer the Anger will come. The Law declares that the only way that this wrath can be held back is for the churches to pitch their tents close to the Testimony of God (the Gospel of Jesus Christ). *"...the Levites are to pitch their tents round the tabernacle of the Testimony. In this way the wrath will be kept from falling on the whole community of the sons of Israel."* (Num.1:53). Two things are evident in this proclamation of the Law. One, the wrath of the last days is tied part and parcel to faith. And second, the fate of the entire earth is dependent on the church's adherence to the Word of God. The Revolt itself will bring the wrath.

Pure faith is so powerful that even after sin opens the door to the Avenger, one church on earth will remain shielded from the worst of the terror. Although the Rebel will rule much of the planet, scripture shows that his cruel grasp will not envelop everyone. The church 'in Philadelphia', for instance, will escape it: *"Because you have kept my commandment to endure trials, I will keep you safe in the time of trial which is going to come*

for the whole world, to test the people of the world." (Rv.3:10). Isaiah indicated that this church was somewhere 'in the islands of the sea'. (Is.24:15-16). A clue to its identity is offered in John's declaration that it was one of the seven churches to which he was writing. Since these seven are all metaphoric, Philadelphia can be seen as a metaphore for either a geographic location, or for a particular type of Christian behavior. It's true meaning probably involves both. In a world-wide Church that sits on the globe's seven continents, John's prophecy may allude to the one continent on earth destined to escape (almost to the last day) the Rebel's personal terror—the continent where Christ's faith is said to shine the brightest. Isolated in the islands of the sea, and protected by a military strong enough to counter the powerful lords of the East, that continent seems certain to be the Western Hemisphere, and to involve especially, the United States and probably Canada. Another, less widely shared meaning of this quotation in the Bible, however, is spiritual and implies that pure faith and perfect obedience leads to early selection by God. This interpretation has its roots in the popular quotation, 'the good die young'. It is also the driving mechanism for the prophecy of rapture.

A few hours before he was taken prisoner by the prince of this world, Jesus told his disciples, *"When I sent you out without purse or haversack or sandals, were you short of anything? 'No' they said. He said to them, 'But now if you have a purse, take it; if you have a haversack, do the same; if you have no sword, sell your cloak and buy one, because I tell you these words of scripture have to be fulfilled in me: He let himself be taken for a criminal."* (Lk.22:35-37). Just as each of us must duplicate the life of Jesus in our own lives, so must the Church as well. This means that the stages which Jesus had to pass through—coming to God, being baptised, being tempted by Satan, recovering and working in God's service, and then finally passing out of life by violence and hostility—must be repeated by the Church and by each of its members. Some are spared the final act of violence in their lives (see above), but most of us must pass through it: *"Up to the time of John it was the Law and the Prophets; since then, the kingdom of God has been preached, and by violence everyone is getting in."* (Lk.16:16). From that moment all the way up to the present time, *"the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence and the violent are taking it by storm."* (Mt.11:12). The destructive brutality of the world has become so rampant that it is rarely even recognized as violence to anyone but its victims—a drunk driver, a careless doctor or nurse, the transmission of diseases by sinful actions, merciless isolation, molestations and child abuse, greedy landlords and financiers, a system which shuts its doors in peoples faces and turns them out to face calamity. Despite all our efforts to dodge the disasters which loom at the end of our lives, most of us will be crucified by them—

especially when we are trapped in a system which has its eyes riveted on making money and blind to everything else. The Bible predicts that this kind of behavior leads directly to momentous physical calamity—especially devastating earthquakes: *"Listen to this, you who trample on the needy and try to suppress the poor people of the country. You who say, 'When will New Moon be over so that we can sell our corn; and sabbath, so that we can market our wheat? Then by lowering the bushel, raising the shekel, by swindling and tampering with the scales, we can buy up the poor for money, and the needy for a pair of sandals, and get a price even for the sweepings of the wheat? God swears it by the pride of Jacob, 'Never will I forget a single thing you have done'. Is this not the reason for the earthquakes, for its inhabitants all mourning, and all of of the land heaving like the Nile..."* (Amos 8:4-8). Most of the great earthquakes of the End have not yet arrived. Amos' words suggest that they will appear in concert with a time when the poor are being exploited in a way which is greater than at anytime in the past. As the world grows increasingly hostile to Jesus and to his commandments, people's greed for money and the trappings of wealth has increased dramatically. Along with it, the ranks of the homeless, poor and unemployed have rocketed in number. Complaining about the 'cost' of these outcasts, and defying grave warnings in scripture concerning the terrible consequences of such actions, business leaders have begun to lead a bold attack on welfare to the poor. Like Amos said, money has become their only object. They call it a 'bottom line', and think of nothing else. As a consequence, the gap between rich and poor has become enormous. Forty years ago there were no billionaires in the world. Today there are thousands. Millionaires, once scarce, now number in the millions. And all the while the ranks of the poor are burgeoning. Paralleling this polarization of wealth and poverty, the world has experienced an increase in rioting and growing civil unrest—all the turbulence and rage that Jesus warned would precede the last days. Very soon we can expect the great earthquakes to come—God's final warning that something even more terrible is about to happen. Amos' pronouncements will come true. How earthquakes can be related to greed is a mystery, but God has given His angels great power on earth to do His bidding. *"The angels are mighty heros who enforce God's word."* (Ps.103:20). It can be argued that the earthquakes will impact the poor just as terribly as they do the rich, but the same argument can be made for Armageddon as well. *"Creation is maintained by God's rulings"* (Ps.119:91), but it is utterly destroyed by sin. When the people leave the way of God, the wrath falls on the whole community, not just a part of it. A drunk driver does not only destroy himself, the innocent have to bear his burden as well. It is the same with the wrath as it is with the blessing. That is because the old covenant is a group covenant. When a large number people live in God's righteousness, an aura of blessing covers the community and good and bad alike both benefit from it. This is a law

built right into the creation itself and exists separate and apart from the Judgment. It is a law of justice that is dispensed throughout the entire world, because *"no nation is excluded from God's ownership."* (Ps.82:8). It was precisely because the old law was blind like this, impacting good and bad alike, that God sent Jesus to rescue the good. Jesus took us out of that law because it only responds to the group. If the majority sin, then all die. God freed us from that kind of justice and raised us up to a higher Judgment that is able to discriminate between good and bad and punish only those who are evil. Rejecting Christ's offer of higher justice, this world must succumb to the old rules. Scripture teaches that wickedness is bringing our planet to a violent end—a violence mirrored in the warnings and events which precede that end. Therefore, at a certain point, as a sign that this world's persistent tyranny against the poor and homeless has reached a peak, the earthquakes will come in fulfillment of the prophecy showing the nearness of God in the heavens as He makes His final approach to the Seat of Judgment now being erected for Him in the skies above Jerusalem. *"Quake earth, at the coming of your Master, at the coming of the God of Jacob..."* (Ps.114:7). Those whose greed caused all this or helped to promote it will have great reason to collapse in bitter anguish when that Day of God arrives and presents itself in full sight.

The end of the world will come in response to behavior. This is the essential meaning of the Revolt. *"This people's leaders have taken the wrong turning, and those who are led are lost."* (Is.9:15). Those who preach that all you have to do is mouth the name Jesus with an ascending tongue and God's salvation is yours no matter how you behave are wrong. The inscription written on the gate has never changed: *"It is not those who say to me, 'Lord, Lord', who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven."* (Mt.7:21). There are over one and a half billion Christians on earth at this very moment and all of them proclaim that Christ is their Lord. But for many, their behavior does not echo their mouth. Despite the size of the Church something must be very wrong inside it or our enemies would not have gained the kind of power in the last few years that has spurred God to begin turning out the lights. The proof of the Revolt is all around us. God is not pleased. He is wrapping up the harvest and bringing the world to its destiny with Armageddon because wickedness has risen to prodigious heights—inside the Church and out. *"To the man of discretion, wisdom means a watch on his own conduct, but the folly of fools is delusion."* (Pr.14:8). Delusion in religion is believing in our own idea of God and paying no heed to the words Jesus actually spoke. This error is addressed in the scriptures: *"Trust wholeheartedly in God, put no faith in your own perception."* (Pr.3:5). We cannot manufacture our own salvation. What we, ourselves think has no power to give life. *"Whether you turn to the right or the left, your ears will hear these words behind you,*

'This is the way, follow it.' (Is.30:21). Obeying Christ—this is faith. This is true belief. And this is eternal life. *"I tell you most solemnly, whoever keeps my word will never see death."* (Jn.8:51). But as for the veneer of lip service, there is no 'belief' in that. Just delusion. Trying to use magic incantations and catch phrases so that we can go on pursuing the 'good life', chasing after this world and its riches, has no power except blindness. The riches we pursue have bound the poor in a poverty so cruel that it cries out day and night for God's vengeance. It is only folly to chase after something like that. Jesus is not a watercolor to paint a thin veneer over a sinful life. Ezekiel said that we must rebuild the wall completely, not just plaster it over. Behavior is the key to both life and death because this world is about to be judged on its behavior. At this very moment the thrones of justice are being set in place. When the King comes, he will separate the wicked from the just, measuring how each behaved (Mt.25:31-46), and rewarding each one of us according to the conduct of our lives. (Mt. 16:27).

Because the Rebel's attack on Christianity will duplicate for the Church the events of Christ's passion, the quotations in scripture match. *"To arms! We will launch the attack in broad daylight."* (Jer.6:4). When this assault takes place, the preaching of the Gospel will be at its highest level ever. *"I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight."* (Amos 8:9). 'Noon' means that the attack will come when the light of Christ is shining at its brightest intensity. When the attack occurs, the world will know more about Jesus and His words than any people in past history. But suddenly, at its most brilliant point, a world in Revolt brings twilight. *"Despair! The daylight is fading already, the evening shadows lengthen."* (Jer.6:4). There will be churches everywhere but the faith inside them will disappear. So in the end, there will be darkness—a darkness that will mirror the charcoal skies of Armageddon. *"To arms! We will launch the attack under cover of dark..."* (Jer.6:4-5). In its assault on the Church, the world will duplicate the attack by the prince of this world on the person of Jesus Christ, whose ministry was about to peak when he was taken by the soldiers in the darkness at Gethsemane. (Jer.6:4-5). Instantly, the millennium will come to an end and the second war will begin. In that assault the Rebel will erect his abomination over the altar of Christ's sacrifice, abruptly terminating the treaty of peace which Jesus made with the world. This will bring God's harvest on earth to a sudden end. With the light of Christ in this world extinguished the rest of the disaster will take place under the cover of theological darkness. At what point this will happen, no one can tell. God has made these dates secret because repentance and conversion by the world can alter the timetable. If the prophecy of Joshua that the the light of Jesus Christ on earth will last 'almost two days' can be applied to the preaching of Christ on earth—an event which has

now lasted almost 2000 years—the time is very close indeed. The 2000th anniversary of 'anno Domini' is less than two years away. The 2000th anniversary of Pentecost will occur sometime between 2030 and 2033 A.D. We can assume, then, by Joshua's prophecy, if there is no sweeping repentance, that the Church will be under fierce attack by the time these latter years arrive. It must be remembered that these years do not mark the end of the world, they mark the end of the millennium. They usher in the days of Gog and Magog and all the hordes of the East—soldier's, John said, that will number like the sands of the sea, and whose goal is to burn the western world to a cinder. (Rv.20:8). The specter offered is that of an ocean of warriors stretching from Germany to China—armies from every country in Asia—amassing in the Middle East for combat against the west on a scale unheard of in human history. In the wake of their march across the world, only the flames and smoke of catastrophic ruin will remain of Babylon. Although the duration for their final assault has been precisely defined in scripture, the timetable for the warfare leading up to this period is not included in these numbers. The 'three and one half year' definition only details the world's military assault on the Church itself, it does not define the term of violence destined to overwhelm the nations. That will last a good deal longer. As far as the Rebel's religious assault is concerned, however, that may not even last the full 1290 days. Jesus said that the days of the end have been cut short for the sake of the survival of the elect. How much they have been shortened, or where the cuts have been made, no one can tell. At this point, world survival for even a hundred more years seems questionable. Even fifty years may be too long if there is no revival of faith. But as far as the actual Day is concerned, no one will know until the moment the sky rips open and the Son of God appears through the rent. All that we can do now is watch as the final episodes begin to unfold in the events around us, knowing that this day will come sooner than almost anyone suspects. It is a day completely dependent on the conversion of the Jews. *"My people refused to listen to me, Israel refused to obey me, so I left them to their stubborn selves to do whatever they pleased. If only my people would listen, if Israel would follow my ways, at one blow I would defeat their enemies and strike at all who attack them. Then those who hate God would cringe, their doom being sealed forever..."* (Ps. 81:11-15).

All the signs surrounding us now prove that scripture has told us the truth—that God's offer of reconciliation is real, and so is the disaster beyond that offer. Seeing these signs we can be certain that Christ is the Son of God, and that every word He spoke is accurate and will happen just as He announced. Yet not a single one of these signs have slowed the Revolt or prevented it from occurring. Who is listening? Disbelief is rampant and growing greater every minute. *"In the evening you say, 'It will be fine; there is a red sky',*

and in the morning, 'Stormy weather today; the sky is red and overcast'. You know how to read the face of the sky, but you cannot read the signs of the times." (Mt.16:2-3). That is why the war of the end, though predicted loudly and clearly from the very beginning will catch almost everyone unawares when it suddenly comes. Even many churchmen have closed their eyes. So when the invasion from the North occurs, it will arrive just as Jeremiah said it would and when it does, the world's reaction will be exactly as he predicted: "Announce it in Judah, proclaim it in Jerusalem! Sound the trumpet in the countryside, shout the message aloud: Mobilise! Take to the fortified towns! "Signpost the way to Zion; Run! Do not delay! I am bringing you a disaster from the North, an immense calamity. The lion is up from his thicket, the destroyer of nations is on his way, he has come from his home to reduce your land to a desert; your towns will be in ruins, deserted. So wrap yourselves in sackcloth, lament and wail, since the burning anger of God has not turned away from us. 'That day—it is God who speaks—the king's heart will fail him, the princes' hearts will fail them too; the priests will stand aghast, the prophets stupefied. People will say, 'Ah, Lord God, how utterly you deceived us by saying: You will have peace—even when the sword is at our throats!' When that time comes, this will be said to this people and to Jerusalem: From the bare heights a scorching wind blows from the desert on the daughter of my people—not to winnow or to cleanse! A wind, full of threats, comes at my command. Now I myself am going to pronounce sentence on them!' 'Look he is advancing like the clouds, his chariots like a hurricane, his horses swifter than eagles. Trouble is coming! We are lost!' Wash your heart clean of wickedness, Jerusalem, and so be saved." (Jer.4:1-14). The end of Babylon is the end of God's offer. His command is dire because the time has grown so short and wickedness is making it shorter still. That is why we must consider the little time there is left as our final opportunity to repent and to keep the commandments of Jesus which mean eternal life and to hold fast to the faith we have in the promise of God so that we do not lose the precious gift he has offered us. There is still time, but it is fading fast—and once gone, God's offer will never come again.

36

Victory!

"When you see these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your redemption is near at hand." Luke 21:28

The last battle has not yet been fought, but the war has already been won! This is the proclamation of the Almighty concerning the End. Thousands of years—scores of billions perhaps—have passed since the devil first declared war on the creation of God. And now, in a very short while, that conflict will be over for good. Billions of angels have gathered here, making ready for the victory celebration. The offer of peace has been made, a moment of atonement declared for those who wish to be saved from the catastrophe of Satan's act. Seconds pass and then the offer is withdrawn. Suddenly, the clouds are stirred by the feet of heaven's advancing cavaliers. In numbers beyond description they come, beckoned by the command of God. In power greater than all the universe can muster against them they come, ready to carry out the terminal censure. While the final battle ahead may seem to us the most terrible conflict in human history, the ferocious combat defining it will be the culminating moment in the will of God whose secret intention has been to redirect the violence of Babylon against itself. Aiming their weapons at the children of God, the soldiers of Satan will strike a mirror instead, and all the terror in their hands will fall on their own heads. It is in this fashion that Babylon will perish forever. Like wheat, beaten on a threshing stone, the grain of God will rise from the pounding alive and unharmed, the only survivors of the war's crushing savagery. *"When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion and cleansed Jerusalem of the blood shed in her with the blast of judgment and the blast of desolation, God will come and rest on the whole stretch of Mount Zion and on those who are gathered there..."* (Is.4:4-5). It has been revealed in the scriptures that this 'gathering' will be immense. It will stretch not only to the ends of the earth, but to the farthest reaches of the universe as well. *"In those days, after that time of distress...they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven."* (Mk.13:24-27). When that moment appears we will all be caught up together in the air above Jerusalem to stand before the throne of God. Those who have died will be one with those

who are still left alive, and all will stand before God together. This is the time of the last Judgment when the books of our lives will be opened and read, and the wicked will have to make an account for their sins. For those who have kept the Gospel, there will be no Judgment and no end. For these the end of the world will simply be like the changing of clothes. Like going from rags to the robes of state. Speaking of these robes Paul said, *"...there are heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies...If the soul has its own embodiment, so does the spirit have its own embodiment. This (exchange of clothes) will be instantaneous, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. It will sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable, and we shall be changed as well, because our present perishable nature must put on imperishability and this mortal nature must put on immortality...then the words of scripture will come true: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'*" (1 Cor.15:41-56). Victory is eternal life. Eternal life is the great triumph Jesus has brought into this doomed world, parcelling it out freely to those who believe in His righteousness and who choose to leave Satan's side and work peacefully for God according to His commands. *"Death, where is your conquest? Death, where is your sting?..."So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be laboring in vain."* (1 Cor.15:41-58). Babylon, this harsh and momentary world with all its violent cruelty will disappear forever. In its passing, a kingdom bathed for all eternity in the light of righteousness will appear to take its place—a kingdom whose royal citizens never die, but live forever in joy and everlasting peace. God so loved the people of this world that he sent His only Son down from heaven to offer those who would listen to Him the opportunity to escape death and gain eternal citizenship and stations of royalty in His new kingdom. *"Those judged worthy of a place in the other world and in the resurrection from the dead do not marry because they can no longer die, for they are the same as the angels, and being children of the resurrection they are sons of God."* (Lk.20:35-36). Defining the Lord's offer to us, the Bible tells us that God will favor the humble and the poor, and especially those who care for others. *"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted."* (Lk.14:11). *"Happy the man who cares for the poor and the weak; if disaster strikes, the Lord will come to his help."* (Ps.41:1). *"The Lord defends the simple, he saved me when I was brought to my knees."* (Ps.115:6). *"God is near to the broken-hearted, he helps those whose spirit is crushed. Hardships in plenty beset the virtuous man, but God rescues him from them all..."* (Ps.34:18-20). The nations of the earth and the hostile citizens they have gathered against the children of God will come to disaster together. *"God thwarts the plans of nations, frustrates the intentions of peoples; but God's plans hold good forever, the intentions of his heart from*

age to age. Happy the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen for his heritage." (Ps.33:10-13). "When that day comes, I shall set myself to destroy all the nations who advance against Jerusalem. But over the House of David and the citizens of Jerusalem I will pour out a spirit of kindness and prayer. They will look on the one whom they have pierced; they will mourn for him as for an only son, and weep for him as people weep for a first-born child." (Zech.12:9-10).

The Lord created this world with a word from His mouth. *"By the word of God the heavens were made, their whole array by the breath of his mouth...He spoke, and it was created; he commanded, and there it stood." (Ps.33:6-9).* That same word has formed the scriptures by the power of Jesus Christ—giving us a way to live forever. This means that the material creation has been formed out of the same substance as the Gospel of Christ. The two are identical. Having come from the same mouth, they both interact with one another in perfect harmony. That is why the judgments of God reside within the structure of material creation. When scripture tells us that creation itself will march with God in the final judgment of the earth, we can understand this by knowing that both issue from an identical source and both are under identical control. The word that formed creation is righteousness because all the Lord does is done faithfully and He loves virtue and justice. And what of the prophets and their word? *"When that day comes...I will rid the country of the prophets, and of the spirit of impurity." (Zech.13:2).* God has taken away all the instructors. There is only one Word of life and it comes entirely from Jesus. Prophecy announces what is not known, but in Christ everything is known, so the prophets sound now only as trumpets to acknowledge a truth that has already been stated and is greater than their own—the testimony of the Gospel. *"Thus says God, 'Let the sage boast no more of his wisdom, nor the valiant of his valor, nor the rich man of his riches! But if anyone wants to boast, let him boast of this: of understanding and knowing me. For I am God, I rule with kindness, justice and integrity on earth; yes, these are what please me.'" (Jer.9:22-24).* In the Lord we have the right now only to witness, not to teach. And what we witness to is true. Because it is only Jesus that is true. *"Trust no more in man..." (Is.2:22). "In my alarm, I declared, 'No man can be relied on!'" (Ps.116:11).* God has sent us one teacher from heaven. And *"the witness Jesus gave is the same as the spirit of prophecy." (Rv.19:10).* In the higher places of the Church we often see those whom Jesus warned about—those who like to muddy the clear water Jesus has given to us. *"You do not need anyone to teach you. The anointing he gave you teaches you everything." (1 John 2:27). "Do not put your trust in men in power or in any mortal man, He cannot save..." (Ps.146:3).* Call no man on earth 'teacher' said Jesus, *"...for you have only one teacher, the Christ." (Mat.23:10).* The Gospel he has

brought down to us must rule our every thought, and it must guide every move we make. *"God says, 'A curse on the man who puts his trust in man...A blessing on the man who puts his trust in God.'" (Jer.17:5).* It is not theology (the pronouncements of men) that makes us one with God—theology has had a divisive history on earth—it is only perfect trust in the Lord Himself and in the Gospel He preached that permits us to reach out to each other in the kind of love and compassion God wants. *"For he is the peace between us that makes aliens and Israel one; breaking down the barrier between them which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law, creating out of the two a new man."* (Eph. 2:14). And the commands from heaven are simple: *"Your duty is to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God."* (Lk.9:60). *"What God wants is for you all to be holy. Be at peace among yourselves. And this is what we ask you to do, brothers: warn the idlers, give courage to those who are apprehensive, care for the weak and be patient with everyone. "* (1 Thes.4:3, 5:14) *"Make sure that people do not try to take revenge; you must all think of what is best for each other and for the community. Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus."* (1 Thes.5:15-18).

Though God may have created this world in righteousness, that is not what we see in it now. Jesus said that the prince of this earth is Satan. God, Jesus said, created a place of rescue in the heart of Satan's domain, not for our pleasure, but only to lead to freedom the captive children of God whom Satan has held here condemned to death in the chains of sin. The terrible evils we see here, therefore, do not come from God. He is leading us around them and away from here. Jesus has come only to give us a way to escape what has become a den of iniquity in the service of Satan's spirit. Everything we see here that is not of Christ is in partnership with the devil's dark spirit. Jesus said this clearly and without equivocation, and yet there are many here who feel certain that there is no Satan, and express great shock at the outrages that continue so often to belie this thinking. They blame God for their own misjudgment. *"You say harsh things about me, says God. You say, 'It is useless to serve God; what is the good of keeping his commands or of walking mournfully before the Lord on the Sabbath? Now we have reached the point when we call the arrogant blessed; yes they prosper, these evil-doers; they try God's patience and yet go free.' This is what those who fear the Lord used to say to one another. But God took note and heard them: a book of remembrance was written in his presence recording those who fear him and take refuge in his name. On the day which I am preparing, says the Lord God Almighty, they are going to be my own special possession. I will make allowances for them as a man makes allowances for the son who obeys him. Then once again you will see the difference between an upright*

man and a wicked one; between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve him. For the day is coming now, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and the evil-doers will be like stubble. The day that is coming is going to burn them up, says the Lord God, leaving them neither root nor stalk. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will shine out with healing in its wings; you will leap like calves going out to pasture. You will trample on the wicked, who will be like ashes under your feet on the day I am preparing, says the Lord God Almighty." (Malachi 3:13-21; 4:1-3). "Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. for it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man." (Lk.21:34-36).

At that moment the nation-city called Babylon will cease to exist. Formed by the tares which Satan sowed in the night while all were asleep (Mat.13:24-30), the city of Babylon and all its godless seed will disappear forever. *"Now heaven, celebrate her downfall, and all you saints, apostles and prophets: God has given judgment for you against her. Then a powerful angel picked up a boulder like a great millstone, and as he hurled it into the sea, he said, 'That is how the great city of Babylon is going to be hurled down, never to be seen again.'" (Rv.18:20-21).* With Babylon gone, the gates of the new kingdom will be opened. Those judged worthy to pass through her gates will be ushered in by God in a grand procession amid an immense gathering of angels; and Jesus, Himself, will wait on those who have been resurrected. It will be the day of a great feast—the marriage feast of the Lamb. *"After this I seemed to hear the great sound of a huge crowd in heaven, singing, 'Alleluia! Victory and glory and power to our God! He judges fairly, he punishes justly, and he has condemned the famous prostitute who corrupted the earth with her fornication; he has avenged his servants that she killed'. Then a voice came from the throne; it said, 'praise our God, you servants of his and all who, great or small, revere him'. And I seemed to hear the voices of a huge crowd, like the sound of the ocean or the great roar of thunder, answering, 'Alleluia! The reign of the Lord our God Almighty has begun; let us be glad and joyful and give praise to God, because this is the time for the marriage of the Lamb. His bride is ready, and she has been able to dress herself in dazzling white linen, because her linen is made of the good deeds of the saints.' The angel said, 'Write this: Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb', and he added, 'All the things you have written are true messages from God'. Then I knelt at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'Don't do that: I am a servant just like you and all your brothers who are witnesses to Jesus. It is God*

that you must worship." (Rv.19:1-10). All that the Lord has promised will come to pass. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, 'You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he, himself will be their God...There will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone.' Then the One sitting on the throne spoke: 'Now I am making the whole of creation new' he said. 'Write this: that what I am saying is sure and will come true.' And then he said, 'It is already done.'" (Rv.21:4-5).

THE END

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- 3761 B.C. According to Jewish tradition, the date Adam & Eve were created in the Garden of Eden.
The Jewish New Year is based on this year.
(October, 1995 for instance, will be 5756 in the Jewish calendar).
Cain, Able and Seth.
The Patriarchs before the flood, including Enoch and Methuselah.
The flood destroys Eden.
Noah and the ark.
Noah's 3 sons, Japheth, Ham and Shem repopulate the earth.
The tower of Babel & the dispersion of Babylon throughout the world.
- 1850 B.C. Abraham and his family arrive in Canaan.
Hagar, Abraham's slave mistress gives birth to Ishmael.
Hagar and Ishmael banished from Abraham's camp and return to Euphrates.
Ishmael's blood descendants are the Arabs.
All Muslim's, including the Persians trace ancestry to Abraham through Ishmael as well.
In her 90's, Sarah gives birth to Issac.
Issac's wife gives birth to Esau and Jacob.
Esau sells his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentils.
Jacob wrestles with an angel so God changes his name to 'Israel' (A rebel allowed to survive).
Jacob (Israel) has 12 sons:
Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamine.
- 1720 B.C. Joseph, Jacob's youngest son, sold into slavery to Egypt by his brothers.
Joseph has two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.
Joseph saves his father and his 10 brothers from famine—making a home for them in Egypt.
Joseph elevated to Patriarch, removing him from the other tribes of Israel.
Jacob elevates Ephraim and Manasseh to same status as his sons, creating the 12 tribes of Israel (13 tribes, actually, but Levi was elevated to status of priesthood, leaving 12 to divide up the land).
Hebrew captivity in Egypt (500 years).
- 1250 B.C. Moses leads the exodus.
- 1210 B.C. The 12 tribes of Israel reach the Promised Land.
Joshua invades Palestine.
The time of the Judges (200 years).
The temple at Shiloh (The first Hebrew temple in the Promised Land).
- 1040 B.C. The birth of Samuel the prophet.
- 1000 B.C. David becomes king of Judah.
David defeats House of Saul, Reigns as king over all Israel.
- 950 B.C. Solomon, David's son made king of Israel.
The Temple of Solomon built in Jerusalem.
- 931 B.C. Solomon dies.
Jeroboam, an interloper & Solomon's son, Rehoboam fight for his throne.
The schism. The 12 Tribes of Israel split into 2 houses.
1. The House of Israel (the 10 northern tribes) follow Jeroboam.
2. House of Judah (the 2 southern tribes—Benjamine & Judah) follow Rehoboam.

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 941 B.C. The call of Isaiah
Appearance of the prophet Micah
- 721 B.C. The House of Israel (the 10 northern tribes) are taken into captivity by Assyrian invaders, and disappear into the lands of the far North, vanishing from the world scene.
- 630 B.C. The appearance of the prophet Zephaniah
- 627 B.C. The call of the prophet Jeremiah
- 600 B.C. The prophet Habakkuk
- 598 B.C. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin taken to Babylon.
The prophets Jeremiah & Ezekiel.
Jeremiah takes the Ark of the Covenant to the Dead Sea & buries it in a cave.
- 587 B.C. On the 10th of Loos, Solomon's temple burned down by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
More deportations to Babylon.
- 539 B.C. The handwriting on the wall.
Cyrus the Persian conquers Babylon.
- 538 B.C. The Edict of Cyrus freeing the Jews from Babylonian captivity.
- 537 B.C. The second Jerusalem temple started. The walls rebuilt.
- 530 B.C. Daniel the Prophet in the court of the king of Babylon.
- 520 B.C. The Second Temple built (after the return from Babylon) 520-515 B.C.
The prophet Zechariah
The prophet Haggai
- 400 B.C. Ezra and Nehemiah.
- 340 B.C. The Book of Chronicles (both)
The prophet Joel
- 333 B.C. The prophet Jonah
Tobit
- 331 B.C. Alexander the Great conquers Syria and Arbela; ends the Persian empire.
- 323 B.C. Alexander the great dies in Babylon (i.e., in present-day Iraq).
- 319 B.C. Judea ruled by Egypt (the Lagides).
- 270 B.C. The Greek Bible (Septuagint) translated at Alexandria Egypt by 70 Hebrew scholars. This translation was authorized by the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem in order to give Jewish exiles a scripture in the language of their exile.
- 250 B.C. Active Hellenization of Palestine.
The Book of Esther
The Book of Ecclesiastes
- 197 B.C. Antiochus the Great conquers Jerusalem.
Judea ruled by Syria (The Seleucids).
- 189 B.C. Antiochus III (the Great) defeated at Magnesia by the western general Scipio
His son Antiochus IV Epiphanes held hostage in Rome
- 187 B.C. Antiochus the Great killed during the pillage of the temple of Elmais
Seleucus IV Philopator (son of Antiochus the Great) becomes king

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 175 B.C. Antiochus IV Epiphanes has Heliodorus assassinate his brother Seleucus IV Philopator. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (a precursor of the beast) comes to power. Jason, working with Antiochus, becomes high priest. He introduces Greek reforms into Jerusalem.
- 172 B.C. Menelaus, another Antiochus friendly priest, appointed high priest to replace Jason. Onias, High Priest of Jerusalem Temple assassinated by Menelaus.
- 167 B.C. The Great Persecution of the Jews begins.
Massacres at Jerusalem.
The Syrians build the Citadel to guard the temple.
Decree issued abolishing Jewish practices and establishing cult of Zeus in Temple.
In December, the first pagan sacrifices abominate Jewish altar.
- 166 B.C. The priest Mattathias takes refuge in Modin with his five sons (The Maccabees). This priest gives the signal for the attack. The Hassidæans join him. Judas Maccabæus leads the revolt after Mattathias dies.
- 164 B.C. In December, the temple purified. The feast of Lights (Hannukah) begins.
The Jewish persecution ends.
Death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
The Book of Daniel in its present form.
- 145 B.C. The Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes appear.
- 63 B.C. Pompey of Rome conquers Jerusalem.
- 50 B.C. Ben Sirac writes the Book of Ecclesiasticus.
- 37 B.C. Herod the Great king of Judea. Appointed by Roman Senate.
- 31 B.C. Augustus becomes emperor of Rome.
- 20 B.C. Herod begins construction of massive Jewish Temple.
- 6 B.C. Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.
Massacre of the innocents by Herod.
Joseph and Mary take Jesus to Egypt.
- 4 B.C. Herod the Great dies.
Joseph & Mary leave Egypt and take Jesus to Nazareth in Galilee & settle there.
- 6 A.D. Caesarea, a town on Mediterranean coast, made capital of Judea by the Romans. Jesus (12 years old) questions the scholars and doctors of the Law for 3 days in Jerusalem.
- 14 A.D. Augustus, emperor of Rome, dies.
- 27? A.D. John the Baptist starts his ministry.
Jesus begins his ministry.
- 30? A.D. Jesus crucified.
(The crucifixion of Jesus occurred in either 30 A.D. or 33 A.D.).
- 36 A.D. Martyrdom of Steven in Jerusalem.
- 37 A.D. Tiberius, emperor of Rome, dies; Caligula becomes emperor.
- 39 A.D. Paul in Damascus.
- 41 A.D. Caligula assassinated.
- 43 A.D. Paul and Barnabus in Antioch.
Agrippa beheads James—imprisons Peter.
- 43 A.D. Agrippa beheads James; imprisons Peter.

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 48 A.D. Christian Council of Jerusalem.
Pagan converts exempt from Jewish Law practices, setting them free from the Torah.
- 50 A.D. First Gospel written down?
Paul's letter to the Thessalonians.
- 54 A. D. Nero becomes emperor.
- 57 A.D. Paul's letter to the Philipians?
First Letter to the Corinthians.
Letter to the Galatians.
Second Letter to the Corinthians.
- 58 A.D. Paul's letter to the Romans.
James made head of the Jerusalem church.
- 60 A.D. Paul's voyage as a prisoner to Rome.
- 61 A.D. Paul in prison in Rome until 63.
Letters to Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon, possibly Philipians.
Acts of the Apostles; Gospel of Luke (between 61 and 63 A.D.)
- 62 A.D. James, head of Jerusalem church stoned to death.
Succeeded by Simeon, said by some to be the son of the Virgin Mary's brother.
- 63 A.D. Paul set free. Some traditions say he made a trip to Spain.
- 64 A.D. First letter of Peter.
The Gospel of Mark?
- 65 A.D. Paul's first letter to Timothy and Possibly to Titus.
The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles?
Scholars say that this Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles were produced as Paul's defense against a renewed attack on Christianity by Nero.
- 66 A.D. Jews defeat a Roman battalion and set up a rebel government in Jerusalem.
Major exodus of people of importance from Judea.
A great fire, said to have been let by Nero destroys most of Rome
Nero said to blame the large Christian community in Rome for the fire
Nero launches purge of Roman Christians.
- 67 A.D. Peter crucified in Rome (64 or 67).
Vespasian with 60,000 man Roman 10th Legion attacks Galilee.
Paul imprisoned in Rome.
Paul's letter to the Hebrews.
Second letter to Timothy.
Paul beheaded in Rome.
- 68 A.D. Nero dies.
- 69 A.D. Vespasian returns to Rome to become emperor in Nero's place.
Before leaving his post on the Mt. of Olives, Vespasian turns the battle of Jerusalem over to his son Titus.
- 70 A.D. Titus lays siege to Jerusalem and destroys it.
August 29 (the 10th of Loos), the temple burned and razed to the ground.
Many Jews taken into slavery.
- 73 A.D. The siege of Masada. The Jewish war ends.
Jewish Rabbi's establish Academy of Jamnia, later begin work on Hebrew Bible.
Rabbi's Begin work on Talmud, codifying Jewish oral law into writing.
Greek (Old Testament) scriptures officially renounced by Jewish Rabbi's

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 95 A.D. John exiled to Patmos.
Final draft of Book of Revelation.
- 100 A.D. John dies at Ephesus.
- 107 A.D. Simeon martyred in Jerusalem.
- 132 A.D. Second Jewish revolt.
Jewish zealot, Simeon Ben Koseba proclaimed 'Messiah' by Rabbi Akiba who renames him Bar Kokeba (Son of the Star).
- 135 A.D. Second revolt put down by Roman army, Ben Koseba killed.
Jews forbidden to enter Jerusalem. Judea ceases to exist as far as Jews are concerned.
The Temple mount in Jerusalem made into a sanctuary for Zeus and Hadrian (emperor worship).
Temple of Zeus erected near cave at Bethlehem—the birthplace of Jesus.
- 311 A.D. Eastern Roman emperor, Galerius, declares religious freedom for Christianity in his part of the empire.
- 313 A.D. Constantine issues Edict of Milan granting toleration to Christianity in western Roman empire.
Constantine becomes Christian, is the first Christian emperor.
Constantine's mother builds Christian churches in Jerusalem, including Church of Holy Sepulchre.
- 325 A.D. Council of Nicea. The doctrine of the Trinity to counter the heresy of Arius which states that Jesus, though divine, is not God's equal.
- 391 A.D. Theodosius orders all Roman pagan temples closed. He issues a proclamation declaring Christianity the official religion of the Roman empire. Paganism is outlawed. His decree terminates the Olympic Games and the temples associated with them at Mt. Olympus. From this moment on, the only god allowed anywhere in the Roman empire is the God of the Christians.
- 410 A.D. German invaders conquer Rome. They adopt Christianity.
- 476 A.D. Western Roman empire ceases to exist. Barbarian rule of Rome by German kings. Converting to Christianity, these barbarian kings extend the domain of the Church into northern Europe, dissolving the Teutonic and Celtic religions that formerly held sway there.
- 615 A.D. Persian Sassanid Empire conquers much of the Eastern Roman Empire. Their armies reach the Bosphorus (separating Turkey from Europe), before being driven back and defeated.
- 632 A.D. Mohammed dies. Muslim religion born.
- 650 A.D. Muslim Arabs sweep to victory in a great march west to destroy the 'infidels' of Christianity.
Arabs conquer Mesopotamia, Persia, Palestine, Egypt and the islands of the Mediterranean.
Arabs push west, conquer North Africa.
Arabs unable to conquer Asia Minor (Turkey).
- 711 A.D. Arabs conquer Spain, push into France.
Arabs defeated by Christian's in France at battle of Tours (732).
- 800 A.D. Germany's king Charles the Great (Charlemagne) founds the Holy Roman Empire.
- 859 A.D. Muslim Arabs conquer Sicily and invade Italy, advancing toward Rome before being pushed back.
- 1054 A.D. Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics split into two separate churches. East and West divided.
- 1071 A.D. Seljuk Turks invade and conquer Asia Minor, renaming it Turkey.
They convert Turkey to Muslim empire, reducing territory of Greek Christian church by half.
This Islamic 'Ottoman empire' invades Europe but is driven back to Turkey after reaching Vienna.
- 1096 A.D. First Crusades begin. Christian wars against Islamic control of Jerusalem.
- 1099 A.D. Crusaders capture Jerusalem, give Christians control of the holy city.
- 1187 A.D. Saladin recaptures Jerusalem, returning city to Islamic rule.

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 1291 A.D. Christians lose battle of Acre, leave entire Middle East to Muslim rule.
- 1492 A.D. Columbus discovers American continent.
- 1517 A.D. Luther, a Catholic priest, breaks from Roman Catholic church, posts 'thesis' on church door.
 Decrees salvation by faith alone. Says theological rules cannot save.
 Nullifies church sacraments.
 Declares Bible above both church and Pope as highest authority on earth.
 Decrees right of individual interpretation of scripture.
 Rejects Greek Old Testament and declares its books invalid—promotes Hebrew O.T.
- 1529 A.D. Lutheran Protest drawn up. Protestant churches born.
- 1545 A.D. Catholic Council of Trent (1545-1563) tries to reform Roman church and quell the protest to no avail.
 This Vatican Council decrees faith necessary, but retains church sacraments as essential components of the Christian religion.
- 1563 A.D. Fierce religious wars between all the burgeoning new faiths spreads throughout Europe (1563-1648).
 Colonization of America speeded by those seeking freedom from European religious turmoil.
 Democracy (an ancient Greek form of rule by the people) rediscovered.
- 1775 A.D. Constitutional Congress in America led by Thomas Jefferson restates a 'rule of Democracy' that is closely tied to Christian ethics.
- 1776 A.D. United States of America founded.
- 1830 A.D. Mormon church founded by Joseph Smith in Fayette N.Y.
- 1865 A.D. American Civil War ends.
 Slavery abolished
- 1896 A.D. Olympic Games reappear in the world. They had been absent since the Roman emperor Theodosus cancelled them and closed their associated pagan temples in 396 A.D (1500 years earlier).
- 1901 A.D. Pentecostal movement begins. Aimee Semple MacPherson; Billy Sunday; etc.
- 1903 A.D. Airplane invented - Orville & Wilbur Wright
- 1908 A.D. Comet strikes Russia. Thousands of miles of forest levelled.
- 1914 A.D. Germany leads the planet into world war (the first world war in history).
- 1917 A.D. British (Allenby) takes Jerusalem—Islamic rule in Palestine ends. Turkish Ottoman empire is destroyed.
 Balfour Treaty allows Jews to return to Holy Land ending 1800 year lockout.
 Fatima Visions in Portugal—Lucia de los Santos—5/13
 Communists sieze power in Russia—10/13.
 They set up a secular state there after overthrowing the Czar and breaking apart the former monarchy's Christian church affiliations.
 USA declares war on Germany
- 1918 A.D. Pandemic flu kills 50 milolion worldwide
 Germany defeated. World War I ends—11/1
- 1929 A.D. Mussolini secularizes Italy, evicting church from state government
 Coins phrose: "Separation of church and state".
 Forms Vatican City as symbol of separation
 Sets stage for cancellation of Constantine's edic of Milan
 Cancels Theodosus' decree in the site whre it originated.
 A great depression sweeps the world.
- 1930 A.D. Secular, totalitarian regimes rise to cover Europe and Asia (Spain, Russia, Germany, Italy, Eastern Europe, China, Japan, etc) as Christian authority is stripped from many governments.

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 1933 A.D. Adolph Hitler comes to power in Germany (7th head of the beast)
- 1939 A.D. Adolph Hitler leads Germany and the world to the brink of a second world war. The 'Holocaust' begins. At least nine million Jews systematically executed by Hitler and his draconic associates over the next 6 years.
- 1941 A.D. Japan makes World War II global by attacking the U.S. at Pearl Harbor and assaulting Southeast Asia. This is the first major eastern attack on western civilization in almost a thousand years. U.S. declares war on Japan and Germany simultaneously.
- 1945 A.D. Atom Bomb invented and dropped by U.S. on two Japanese cities. The "unknown light" foreseen by Lucia of Fatima World War II and the Jewish Holocaust come to an end.
- 1947 A.D. UN votes to partition Palestine into 2 states, giving Jews a homeland for 1st time since 135 A.D. "Cold War" begins—pits Communism versus Democracy. World civilization alerted to 'doomsday clock'—with close to midnight by Bulletin of Atomic Scientists.
- 1948 A.D. Jewish nation of Israel founded by U.N. mandate—5/14.
- 1949 A.D. Jordan occupies West Bank
Egypt occupies Gaza.
Neither grant Palestine autonomy to the lands.
- 1950 A.D. Communists launch war in Korea.
- 1953 A.D. Hydrogen bomb invented. Several exploded in S.Pacific. Thousands are stockpiled in underground silo's in massive arms race with Soviet Union. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists advances the hands on its 'doomsday clock' up to a point only 2 minutes before midnight.
- 1954 A.D. Supreme Court orders school desegregation
- 1957 A.D. Federal troops sent into Little Rock Arkansas to enforce federal desegregation order.
- 1960 A.D. World population reaches 3 billion people.
- 1963 A.D. God and prayer outlawed from U.S. school system by Supreme Court. —6/18
Martin Luther King leads freedom march to Washington D.C.—8/28
John Kennedy assassinated in Dallas Texas—11/23.
- 1964 A.D. Good Friday earthquake and tidal wave—both argest n USA history—3/27
Vietnam War essentially begins with Gulf of Tonkin incident —President Johnson
PLO formed to destroy Israel
- 1966 A.D. Drug crises sweeps America. Millions of youth begin smoking marijuana; use heroin, LSD, etc.
Vietnam War rages
- 1967 A.D. Israel's 6-day war —defeats neighboring Arab countries—Egypt, Jordan, Syria.
Israel occupies Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank and Golan Heights
Vietnam war continues to rage
- 1968 A.D. Martin Luther King assassinated—4/4
Robert Kennedy Assassinated—6/5
Vietnam war continues to rage.
Nixon replaces Johnson as president of USA—11/2
- 1969 A.D. U.S. astronauts land on the moon.
Vietnam war contines to rage
- 1972 A.D. Vietnam war rages on
Nixon/Agnew re-elected
Watergate break-in climaxes Nixon Vietnam protest paranoia

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 1973 A.D. Vietnam war ends. 50,000 U.S. dead; 153,000 wounded—1/27
U.S. Supreme Court legalizes unrestricted abortions.
Watergate hearings begin
Yom Kippur war—Israel defeats Egypt/Syria invasion of Israel—10/6
- 1974 A.D. Nixon escapes impeachment by resigning presidency. Ford president
- 1975 A.D. Communists drive USA out of Vietnam.
- 1977 A.D. Menachim Begin elected Prime Minister of Israel
Begin favors Ariel Sharon plan for building Israeli Settlements in Arab lands
Settlement constructions begin in Egypt Sinai, Gaza and Jordan's West Bank
- 1978 A.D. Israel invades South Lebanon but withdraws in favor of 6000-man U.N. force.
Pope John Paul II of Poland elected—1st non-Italian Pope—Charismatic and beloved by world.
Jimmy Carter elected USA president.
- 1979 A.D. Israel Begin & Egypt Anwar Sadat sign peace treaty brokered by Jimmy Carter, US president.
Treaty ends 30 years of warfare between Israel and Egypt
Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini captures U.S. embassy in Tehran. Takes 93 employees prisoner.
- 1980 A.D. Mt. St. Helen's explodes—5/18
Israel annexes East Jerusalem, claiming all of city & affirming it their capitol.
- 1981 A.D. Reagan inaugurated president.
Iran releases captured embassy employees
Pope shot in St. Peters square by Turkish gunman on Fatima day—5/13 (Attack opens book of Daniel)
Virgin Mary appears in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia
Israel destroys atomic reactor in Iraq—6/7
Anwar Sadat, Egyptian president, assassinated in Cairo—10/6
AIDS plague begins.
- 1982 A.D. Israel returns Sinai to Egypt
Israel removes settlers from their homes in Sinai
Ariel Sharon invades Lebanon. —6/6
Lebanese refugees massacred in Beirut—9/14. Sharon put on trial in Jerusalem—exonerated
(Habakkuk 2:16-17 prophecy)
Britain legalizes homosexuality
- 1984 A.D. U.S. Congress rejects bill to allow prayer in public schools.
- 1986 A.D. World drug crises continues to mount. 'Crack' cocaine use and urban crime become rampant.
Russian nuclear reactor explodes in Chernobyl
U.S. Space Shuttle Challenger explodes
- 1989 A.D. Violence in Israel over occupation of Gaza and West Bank
- 1990 A.D. Hubble Space Telescope launched—searches for cosmic signs in the heavens
- 1991 A.D. Gulf War near the Euphrates contemporizes the visions of Daniel.
Troops fly across world to Euphrates river without feet touching the ground.
Iraq Scud missiles hit Israel
Saddam Hussein defeated but allowed to remain in power in Iraq.
Slovenia secedes from Yugoslavia after bitter fighting.
- 1992 A.D. Soviet Union dissolves—Democracy sweeps to victory over communism.
Berlin wall comes down as E. Europe ends Cold War.
Leningrad renamed St. Petersburg. Fatima vision fulfilled.
Yitzhak Rabin elected Prime Minister of Israel —6/23
Bosnia-Herzegovina vote to secede from Yugoslavia blocked. War begins. Sarajevo destroyed in siege.
- 1993 A.D. Peace agreement signed between PLO and Israel—Rabin brokered peace.—9/13
Limited Palestinian self-rule authorized

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 1994 A.D. The 2000th Anniversary of the birth of Jesus (Possibly 1996 A.D.).
 U.S. Supreme Court outlaws the Ten Commandments from courthouse display.
 In one of the most startling 'signs from the heavens' during this century, cometary fragments the size of mountains bombard the planet Jupiter in a cosmic display of ominous portentions.
 Evangelical Christian political power makes itself heard in US—gives congress to Republicans.
 Carl Rove "contact sport" politics employed
 President Clinton brokers peace between Israel and Jordan—10/26
- 1995 A.D. NATO warplanes bomb Bosnia Serbs in attempt to quiet Balkan unrest
 U.S. Supreme Court bans school prayer
 U.N. Science Council issues apoclyptic warning over Global Warming.
 Holes in Ozone layer lead to pandemic increase of skin cancers
 Yitzhak Rabin assassinated by Israeli extremist who favors settlements in Arab lands.
- 1996 A.D. The 2000th Anniversary of the birth of Jesus (Possibly 1994 A.D.).
 The president of Russia leads Easter mass in resurrected Moscow church.
 Israel-Palestine resume fighting after Rabin assassination
 May 14 - U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of sweeping gay rights.
 Nov. 4 - U.S. Supreme Court re-affirms decion to ban school prayer.
 Hubble Space telescope discovers over 50 billion new galaxies
 Netanyahu elected Prime Minister of Israel—5/29
 U.S. Supreme Court reaffirms ban on school prayer—11/4
- 1997 A.D. April - Comet Hale-Bop appears in dazzling celestial display.
 The U.S. Supreme Court Outlaws Religious Freedom Act,—6/25
 kills Federal measure Congress had enacted to protect the freedom of religion in America.
 U.S. Supreme Court forbids Internet Decency Act from becoming law.—6/26
- 1998 A.D. President Clinton argues against the School Prayer Ammendment.—5/30
 Right to Prayer Amendment defeated in U.S. Congress.—6/5
 Los Angeles court rules against man who purchased rental space on school billboard, saying he may not post the Ten Commandments there.
 Scores of Churches burned down across the United States
 Explicit sex talk and savage violence rampant on family TV shows and in movies.
 The U.S. House of Representatives votes to impeach President Clinton for immoral behavior in office.—12/20
 Belarus and Russia agree to unite their countries into a single state.—12/25
 Pacific Ocean's largest 'El Nino' current wreaks havoc on earth, producing sweeping fires, famine and drought in many places; huge floods in others.
 U.S. spacecraft lands on Mars
- 1999 A.D. World population tops 6 billion people.
 Coming millenium is dreaded.
 Year-2000 computer failure fears across the world dominate newspaper headlines.
 'End of the world' prophecies flourish in magazines, books and on the internet.
 Hate crimes grow - mass shootings occur in schools, church and synagouge.
 Great earthquakes in Turkey and Taiwan leave thousands dead.
 500-year flood devastates eastern U.S.A.
 Wars and rumors of war continue unabated
 include Kosovo, Indonesia, Timor, Somalia, Cechnya and Iraq.
 The year 5760 in the Jewish calendar begins. —9/10
 (241 years remain until the year 6001 -- i.e., the 7th day begins
 Muslim Albanians flee Balkan warfare
 60,000 NATO troops; 20,000 American soldiers try to quell violence
- 2000 A.D. The 2000th year in the Christian calendar.
 Vatican reveals 3rd prophecy of Fatima to world (assassination of Pope) —5/13
 Netanyahu loses landslide election to Ehud Barak. Hard liners take power in Israel —5/17
 Resurgence of Intifada in Israel. Bloody era in Israeli-Palestinian fighting begins—Sept.
 Ariel Sharon increases Israeli settlements in occupied Arab territor for security.

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 2001 A.D. The 'third day' of Christ begins - i.e, the millennium of Christ's Return: Ex.19:10-11; Hos.6:2.
 Official beginning of 3rd millenium of Christianity
 Arab-Israel peace process disintegrates
 U.S. Supreme Court reaffirms ruling making 10 Commandment displays illegal on public land or property
 9/11—N.Y. Twin Towers fall in flames to Muslim terrorists from the East. Pentagon damaged.
 Handwriting on the wall of Babyon as East attacks West. (Dn.5:23-28).
 President Bush compares 9/11 to "Pearl Harbor". U.S. on war footing.
 Major business recession begins, sparked by fall of World Trade Center towers.
 Stock market crash—tech stocks collapse
- 2002 A.D. President Bush gives Christians strong vocal support, countering secular attacks
 Israel invades Paletinian towns—declares war on terrorism —3/29
 Palestinian terrorists capture Bethlehem Church of Nativity (Christ's brithplace) Turn it into fortress.
 Church of Nativity riddled with bullets and artillery shells during protracted seige.
 U.S. Supreme Court ok's Child Pornography virtual images—Rules them legal—4/16
 California Court rules U.S. 'Pledge of Allegiance' unconstitutional—must be banned.
 Congress ok's American Domestic Defense Office (Homeland Security)
 Business community rocked with major scandals and corporate fraud. Enron, etc.
 Bush declares rage—wants to invade Iraq & topple Saddam Hussein.
 U.N. votes to send inspectors back into Iraq to search for weapons of mass destruction.
 U.N. cool to U.S. intent to invade Iraq.
 Homosexual child-sex charges shroud U.S. Catholic Church in scandal
 President Bush authorizes massive U.S. troop buildup in Middle East.
 North Korea announces intent to reopen atomic reactors—December
 Four U.S. naval carrier groups (the "Ships of Kittim") ordered to Middle-East.
- 2003 A.D. Palestine West Bank nears collapse as Israeli tanks combat units, and warplanes continue war.
 North Korea threatens war against U.S.—pushes hard its nuclear agenda.
 150,000 U.S. troops ordered to Middle East—1/12
 Ariel Sharon, pro-war hard liner, elected Prime Miinister of Israel.—1/28
 U.S. space shuttle Columbia disintegrates on re-entry. Wreckage falls all over Texas.
 Western world alliance threatened with collapse over NATO-U.N. rift.
 American Pledge of Allegiance ban upheld by Circuit Court of Appeals—2/28
 U.S. invades Iraq—Second Gulf War begins—3/19
 Statue of Saddam Hussein falls—4/9
 Looters sack Baghdad.—4/14
 Christian Easter services conducted in Saddam Hussein's palace—4/20
 King of Sheshak last to drink from the cup of Jeremiah. (Jer.25:14-30)
 On aircraft carrier in San Diego, President Bush declares end to combat, but not the war.
 Combat in Iraq continues.
 U.S. Supreme Court legalizes anti-sodomy laws—declares gay behavior legal—6/26
 American Combat deaths in Iraq (149) surpass first Gulf War totals—7/18 (Dn.8:3)
 Sign of war in the sky
 Planet Mars (the war God planet) makes closest pass to earth in 60,000 years—8/27
 Israel begins to construct security fence to wall off Palestine & protect settlements
 Crosses on public lands dismantled across the United States per court orders.
 Italy orders crucifix removed from school.
 Episcopal Church ordains 1st openly gay bishop—11/2
 Explosions on sun largest ever witnessed—11/4
 Massachusetts ruling paves way for gay marriage—11/18
 U.S. combat deaths total 472—12/3
 Israeli wall through Palestine speeds toward completion—12/31
- 2004 A.D. San Francisco mayor ok's gay marriage in California in defiance of state law—thousands married-2/12
 U.S. Supreme Court bans use of public funds for education leading to religious degrees—2/27
 Crucifixion movie "Passion of Christ" sparks Anti-christ protests across the nation.
 Arab founder of Hamas assassinated in Gaza by Israel—3/21
 Gulf war insurgency begins—kidnappings, beheading and militia counterattacks begin—April
 U.S. ok's forbidden Israeli settlements in Palestine in treaty with Sharon called the "Gaza Pact".—4/14
 (On these settlements, see: Jer.42:13-18; 44:12-14)
 U.S. Army accused of torture—Abu Graib prison atrocities surface.—5/2
 Massachusetts legalizes gay marriage—5/17
 U.S. Supreme Court refuses to rule on "Pledge of Allegiance" .
 New Iraqi government established—6/28. War continues.

Appendix 1—Chronology

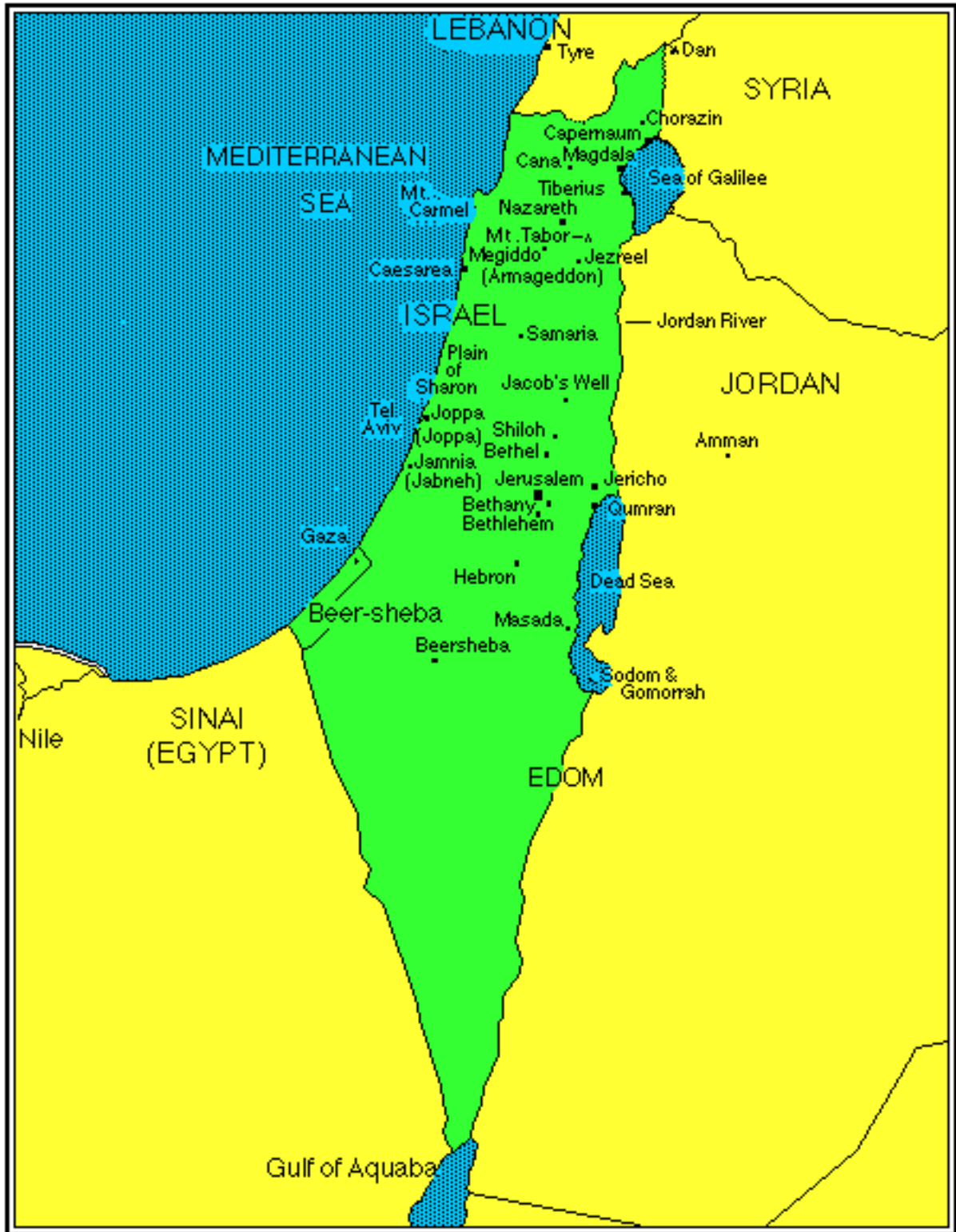
- 2004 Contd Los Angeles removes obscure cross from county seal under threat of ACLU Anti-Christ lawsuit.
 U.S. Supreme Court strikes down law prohibiting Child Pornography.—6/29
 World Court at Hague rules Israel's Wall illegal—7/9
 Muslim extremists attack Russian schoolchildren—blow up hundreds.
 Congress rejects amendment to "support God"—9/28
 Christian block helps President Bush win reelection to 2nd term—11/2
 Yassar Arafat, Palestinian leader, dies in French hospital—11/11
 Largest Tsunami in history sweeps across Indian Ocean—kills up to 300,000 people—12/26
 Second Gulf War continues—1324 Americans dead.
- 2005 A.D. Mahmoud Abbas chosen president of Palestine—1/29
 U.S. cancels search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—1/12
 President declares "Bush Doctrine"—Democracy to rule globe—by force if necessary—1/20.
 Iraq election a success. Voter turnout exceeds 60%—1/30
 Sharon and Abbas meet in landmark summit & pledge peace & a return to 1993 Oslo Accords—2/8
 Sister Lucia of Fatima dies—2/13
 Israeli cabinet approves eviction of 8500 Jewish settlers from Gaza strip.
 Syria moves its troops out of Lebanon under pressure from West—3/8
 California judge ok's gay marriage—3/15
 Gulf War's 3rd year begins—3/19
 Pope John Paul II dies in Rome. Ceremonies last for days before world-wide TV audience.—4/2
 Pope Benedict voted to govern 1.1 billion Catholics
 U.S. Supreme Court reaffirms 10 Commandment ban except in Texas.—6/27
 Canada and Spain legalize gay marriage—June
 Israel evicts Gaza settlers—August
 Hurricane Katrina ravages New Orleans. City extinguished. Population relocated across nation.
 Tens of thousands sit on bridges for days. President Bush unaware of catastrophe for a week.
 Gulf Coast decimated. Rebuilding efforts stall as assistance & funds evaporate.
 Ban on U.S. "Pledge of Allegiance" upheld by San Francisco Court of Appeals.
 Earthquake centered in Pakistan rocks 3 nations. 80,000 dead, 3.5 million homeless.—10/18
 Iran president issues call to "Wipe Israel off map"—10/28
 Muslim teenagers riot in France, set fires across nation.
 Allstate Insurance announces 8 of the 10 largest disasters in U.S. history happened in last 4 years.
 Kansas Board of Education votes to approve "Intelligent Design"—11/8 Rule later overturned.
 White House claims torture tactics and illegal spying ok.
 Controversy over Christmas name change to "holiday"—secularization of Christmas grows.
 Pennsylvania judge bars "Intelligent Design", calling it a limited sectarian belief, not science.—12/19
 Britain (N. Ireland, Scotland, England & Wales) legalizes gay marriage.—12/19-21
 Christmas and start of Hannukah fall on same day this year. 1st time since 1959.
- 2006 A.D. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon suffers massive stroke—1/4
 Iran announces intent to build nuclear weapons
 U.S. Supreme Court ok's assisted suicide in Oregon—1/17
 Terrorist group Hamas elected to control Palestine. Peace process ends abruptly.—1/26
 Bombing of Mosque in Iraq brings country to edge of civil war between Shiite and Sunni Muslims.
 Gulf War's 4th year begins—3/19
 Over 2300 American's + 200 coalition forces killed, 200,000 to 600,000 Iraqi civilian deaths
 estimated. Journalist deaths in Iraq top Vietnam total.
 Evangelical leaders meet in Washington to discuss war on Christianity in America.
 Eastern world security alliance gains 7th nation—4/25
 Iran joins Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Ubekistan, Tajikstan and Kazakhstan in mutual defense pact.
 Take-down order of San Diego Veteran cross blocked by U.S. Supreme Court pending ruling.
 California judge allows "In God We Trust" to remain on U.S. coins—cites "ceremonial deism law.—6/12
 Anglican Church in England rules against Episcopalian Church ordination of gay bishop.—6/27
 Israel attacks Palestine—jails 1/3rd of Hamas cabinet over kidnapping of soldier—6/29
 New York state's highest court rejects gay marriage.
 Israel strikes Lebanon in major assault after soldiers kidnapped at border.—full-scale war unfolds—7/12
 Cease fire between Israel & Hezbollah in Lebanon war leaves both nations in flames—8/14
 Episcopal church in Pasadena targeted by IRS for preaching against war—9/16
 Muslims riot, set fires across the world after Pope Benedict says their religion promotes violence.
 NY Times prints full-page advertisement condemning God and Christianity—9/24
 Democrats sweep both houses of congress in anti-war ticket victory.—11/7
- 2019 A.D. The 70th anniversary of the rebuilding of Israel.

Appendix 1—Chronology

- 2030 A.D. The 2000th Anniversary of the Crucifixion of Jesus. (Possibly 2033 A.D.).
The 2000th Anniversary of the first Pentecost.
- 2070 A.D. The 2000th Anniversary of the destruction of Herod's Temple. The 2000th anniversary of the Jewish dispersion to Rome (the diaspora).
- 2240 A.D. At the beginning of the 7th month in the Hebrew calendar (in September).
The dawn of the 7th Millennium in the Jewish calendar -- the year 6001. (creation's 7th day begins).

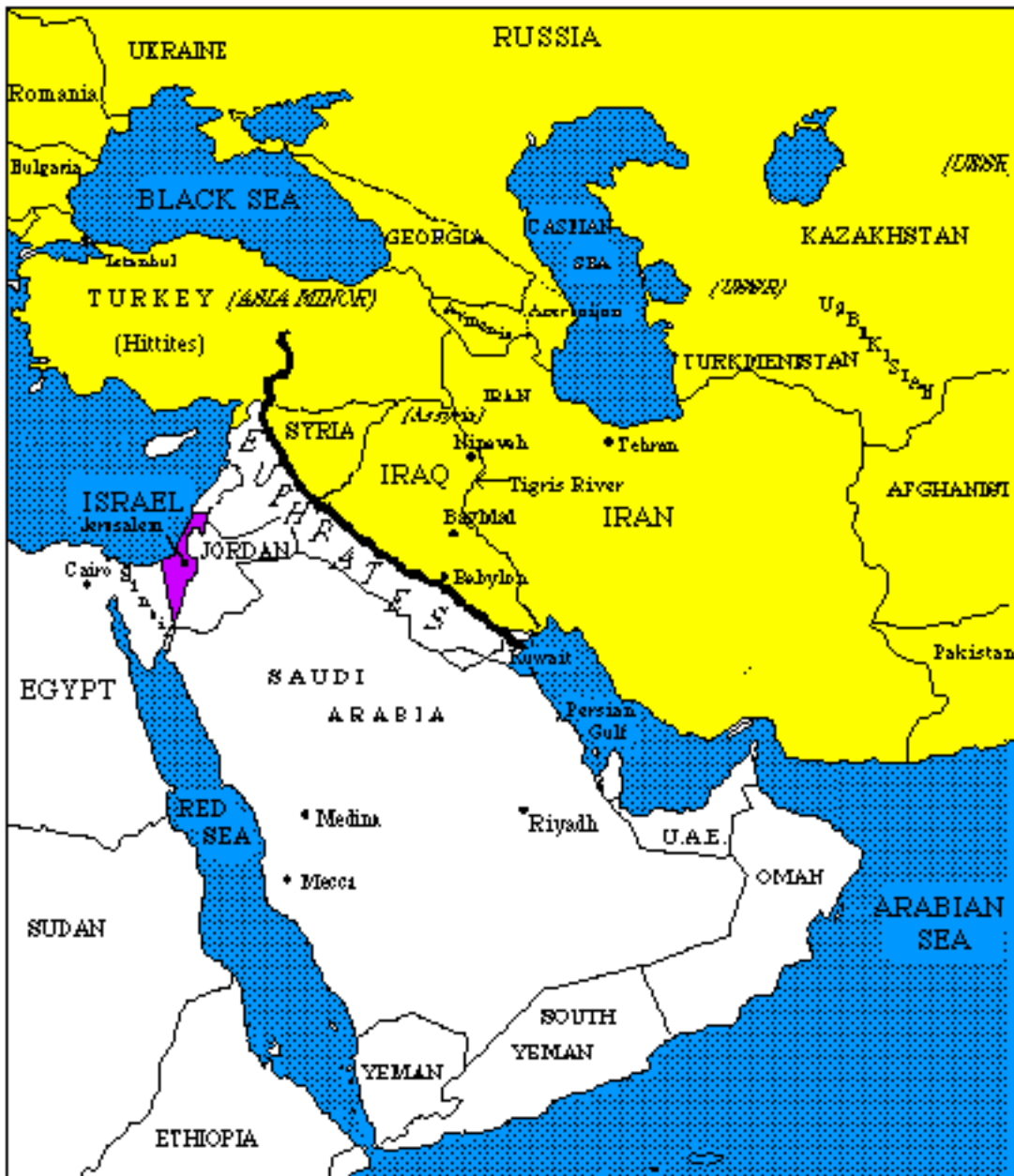
According to scripture, the seventh day is a day of rest. As such its arrival will officially end the 6000-year "toiling of the nations". The importance of this date was made arbitrary by the prediction by Jesus that the days of the end will become so wicked that God will have to cut them short. Therefore, it seems certain that the end of the world will occur before this date, i.e., sometime before 2240 A.D.

HISTORIC ISRAEL—THE HOLY LAND



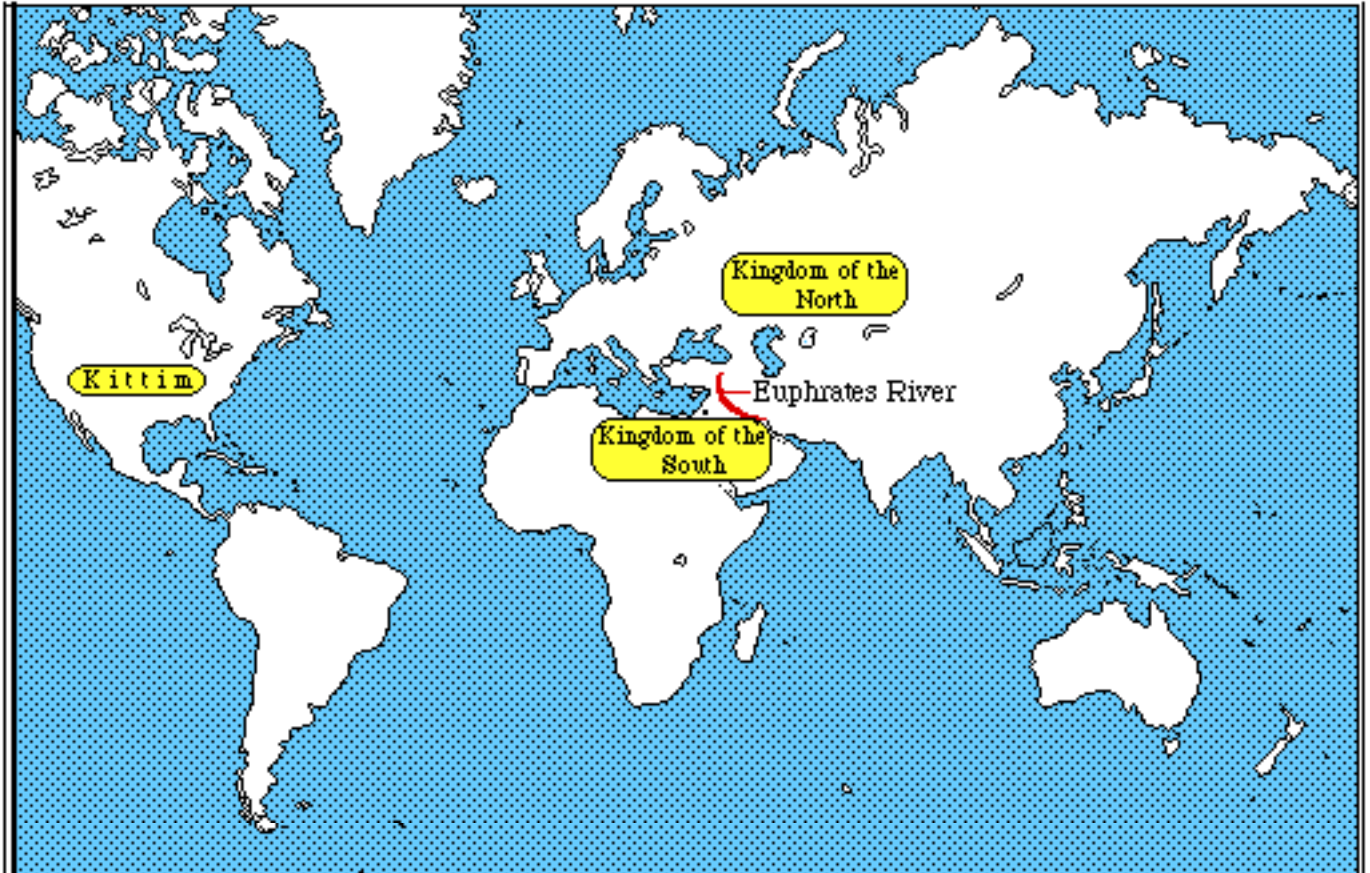
THE LAND OF ISRAEL and the nations which surround it. Place names used are those which are either biblical or most familiar. Most areas and towns in the land of Palestine carry multiple names, owing to a long succession of conquering armies.

EUPHRATES RIVER AND THE MIDDLE EAST



THE EUPHRATES RIVER VALLEY and the nations which surround it—the battleground for the world's last war. Scripture predicts that this river will be the initial division between the North and the South when the nations of the world begin to align in preparation for the battle of Armageddon. At the end of the fighting, just before the last battle, Jesus will return with His Father in the glory of all the angels to take His throne at the moment of Judgment in the skies high above Jerusalem.

THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH THE TWO KINGDOMS IN THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL



WORLD MAP showing the likely relationship between the kingdoms of the North and South as described by the prophet Daniel when they ultimately align the Euphrates River in preparation for the great warfare of the last days. The 'ships of Kittim' will oppose the kingdom of the North as the dragon of scripture mounts its final attack against the people of God.

EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN



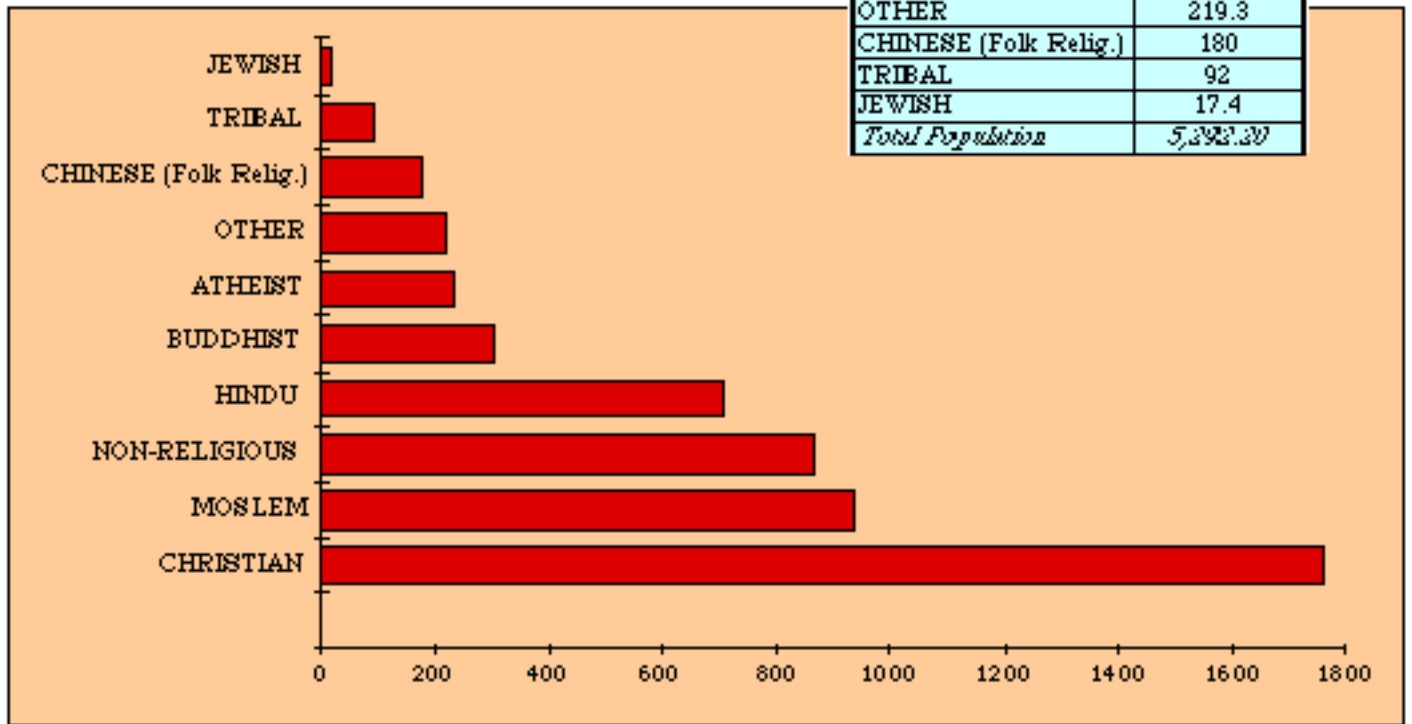
THE LANDS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA will be heavily involved in the activities of the 'beast' when he rises to power. This great Rebel, and the eastern king who precedes him will conquer most of the countries visible on this map. Ultimately, the beast will set up his headquarters in Rome and it will be his attempt to move it from there to Jerusalem that will be the mechanism for the final gathering of the world's armies at Armageddon.

THE WORLD'S MAJOR RELIGIONS BY SIZE

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE WORLD
(In Millions)
Adapted from the World Almanac 1992

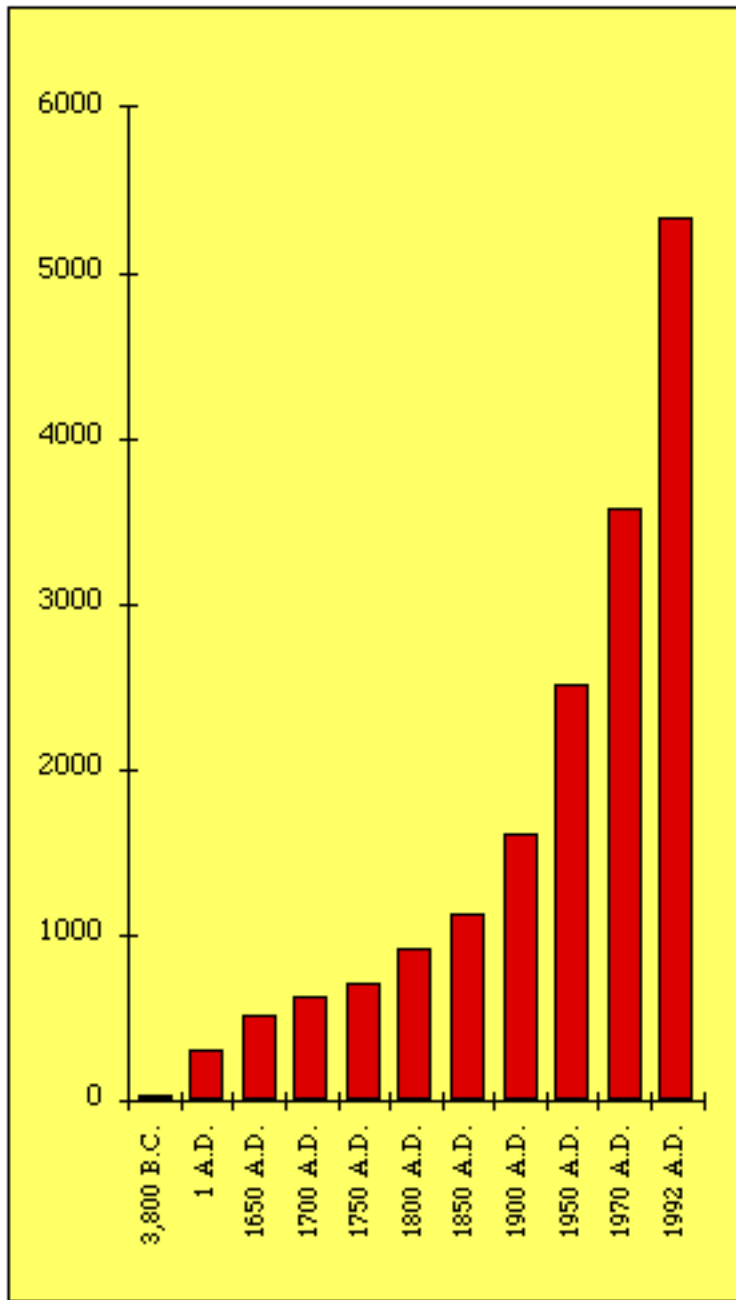
Worldwide (In Millions)

CHRISTIAN	1758.8
MOSLEM	935
NON-RELIGIOUS	866
HINDU	705
BUDDHIST	303
ATHEIST	233
OTHER	219.3
CHINESE (Folk Relig.)	180
TRIBAL	92
JEWISH	17.4
<i>Total Population</i>	<i>5,392.30</i>



Some may find it surprising to discover that Christianity is not a minority religion in the world. As this graph illustrates, Christians far outnumber all other faiths and groups. Statistics from the World Almanac in 1992 showed that at the height of the millenium, the Christian population on earth measured one-third of all the world's inhabitants.

6000 YEARS—THE AGE OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION

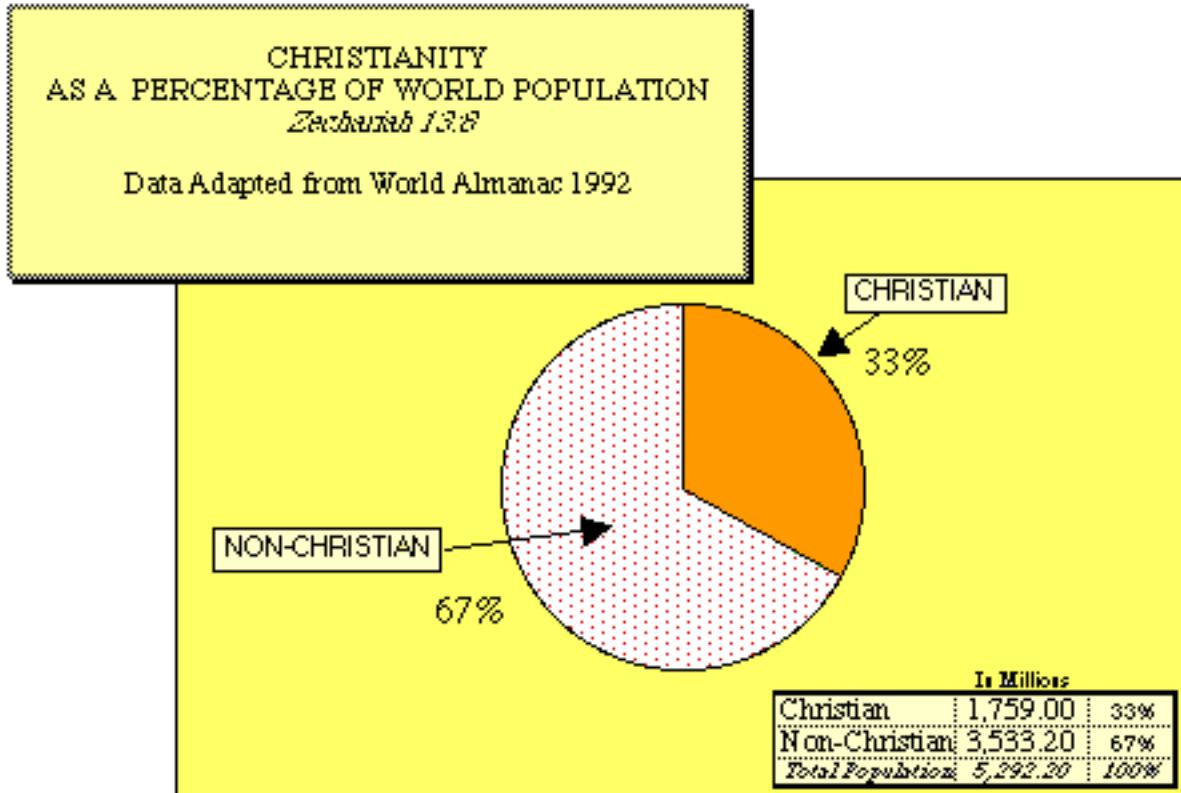


The 6000 Years
 World Population Growth
 During the Biblical Era
 3,800 B.C. to 1992
 Adapted from World Almanac - 1986

Biblical Year	Christian Year	Population In Millions
0	3,800 B.C.	25
3751	1 A.D.	300
5411	1650 A.D.	510
5461	1700 A.D.	625
5511	1750 A.D.	710
5561	1800 A.D.	910
5611	1850 A.D.	1,130
5661	1900 A.D.	1,600
5711	1950 A.D.	2,510
5761	1970 A.D.	3,576
5753	1992 A.D.	5,333

JESUS CHRIST APPEARED ON EARTH very early in the history of human civilization as far as the world's population is concerned. The Bible says that God sent Jesus down from heaven when all was in readiness for harvest. As the figures above show, because of the logarithmic nature of the world's population growth, Christ's message has been able to touch virtually all of humanity in only 2000 years.

ONE-THIRD SHALL BE PURIFIED

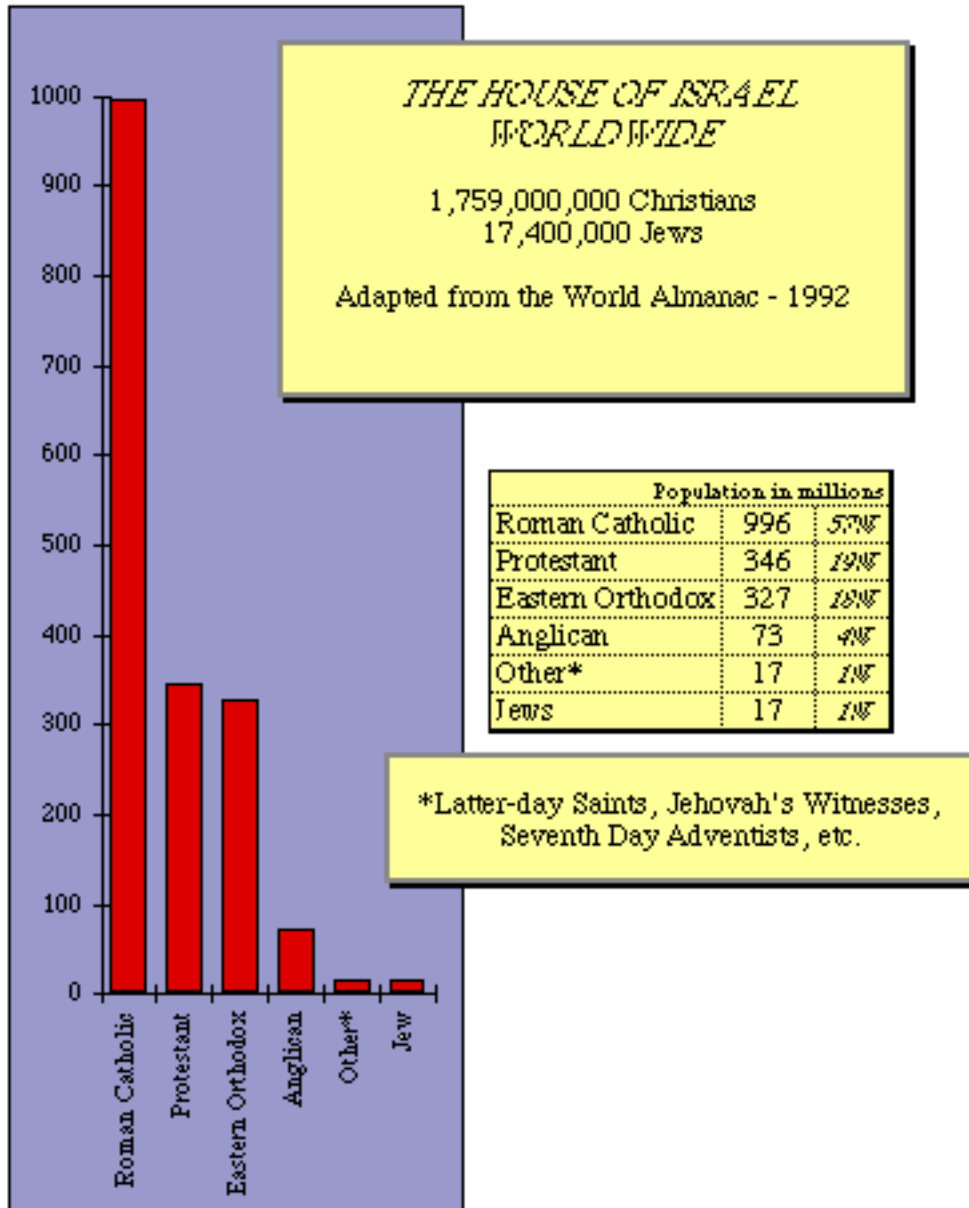


PROPHECY

"**Awake sword, against my shepherd** and against the man who is my companion—it is the Lord God almighty who speaks. I am going to strike the shepherd so that the sheep may be scattered...and it will happen throughout this territory that two-thirds in it will be cut off and the remaining third will be left. I will lead that third into the fire, and refine them as silver is refined, test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name and I shall listen; and I shall say: 'These are my people; and each will say, 'The Lord is my God'."

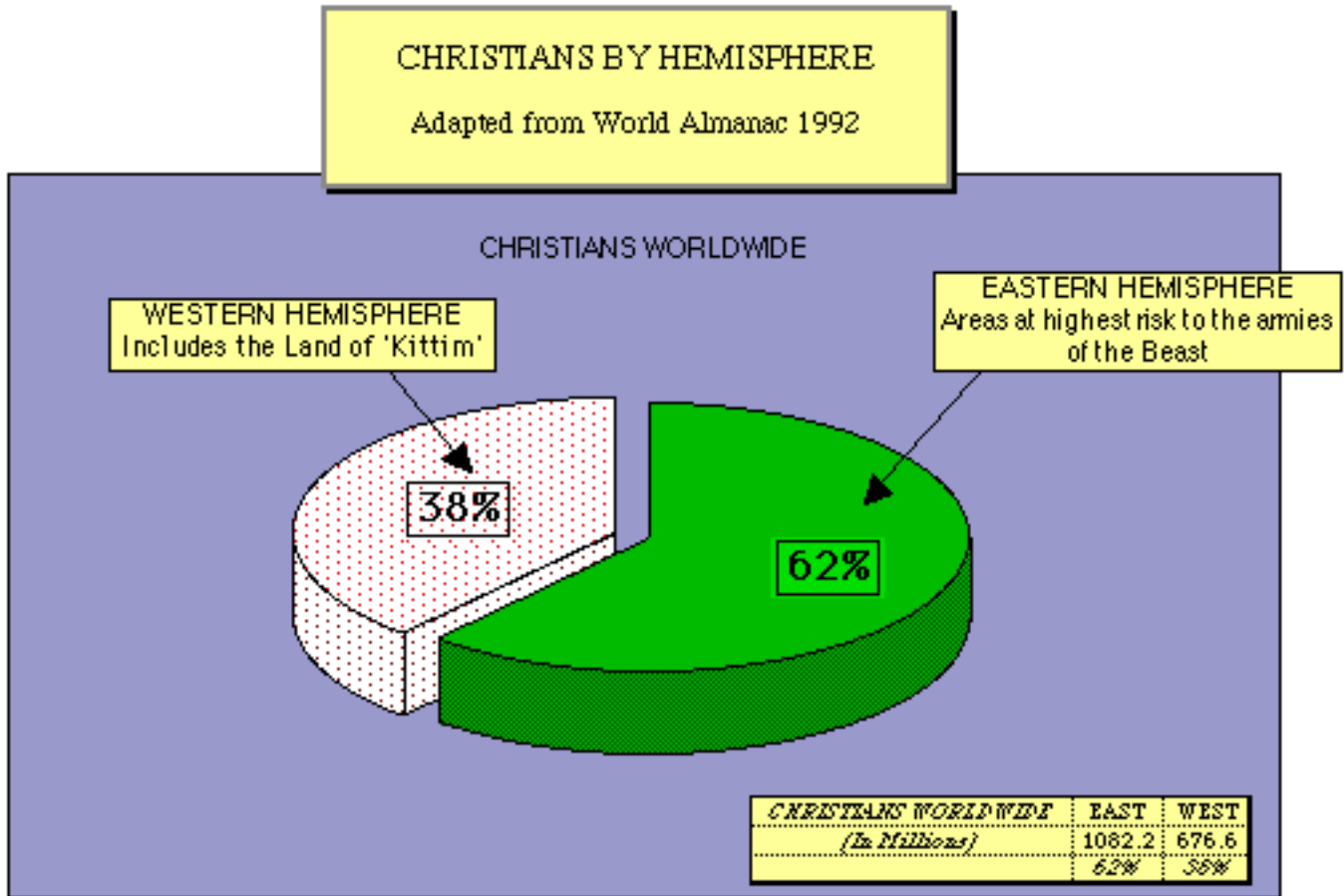
Zechariah 13:7-9

THE DIVIDED HOUSE OF ISRAEL AT THE PEAK OF THE MILLENIUM



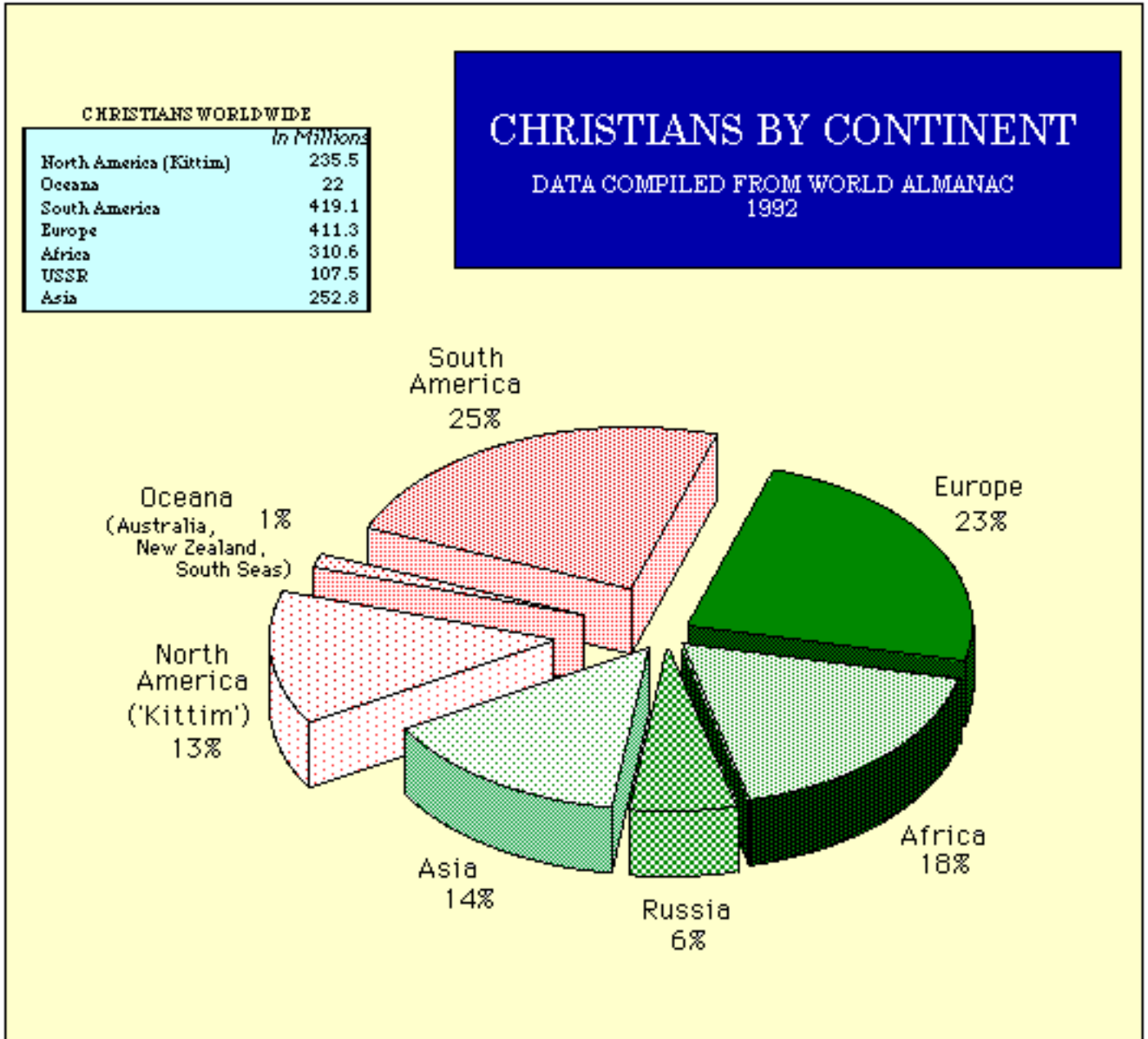
THE MILLENIUM AT ITS PEAK. One third of the population of the earth had joined the House of Israel according to 1992 World Almanac statistics. Today, as more and more people forsake their pledge, and join the growing secular movement, these numbers have begun to decline and are expected to drop drastically—falling most precipitously, it is prophesied, during the years of the terrible tribulation predicted by the Bible just before world's end.

CHRISTIANS IN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN HEMISPHERES

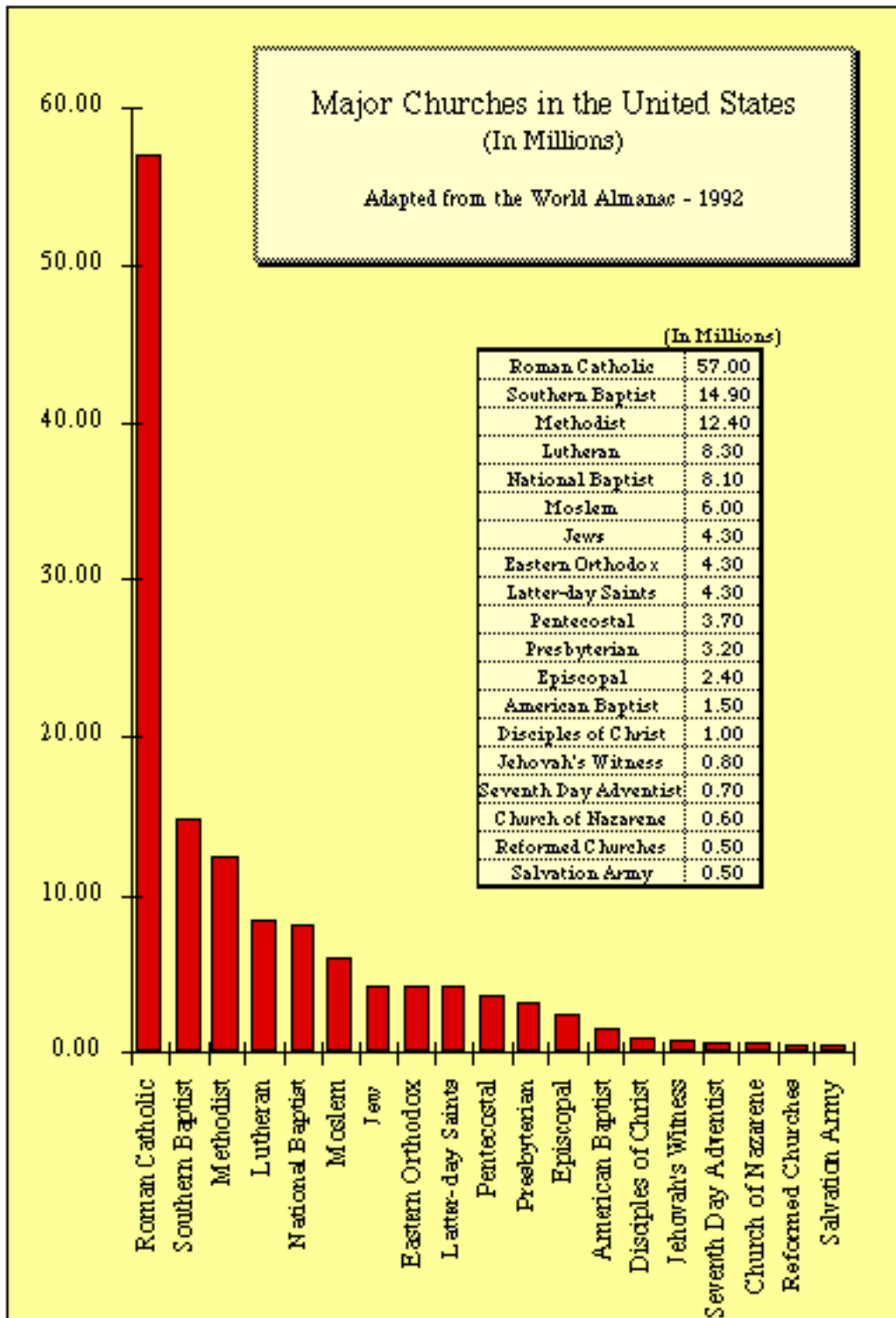


According to the Bible, the 'beast' is destined to rise in the Eastern Hemisphere, somewhere near the Black Sea. Daniel has prophesied that he, and the kings and nations surrounding him will turn the lands of this hemisphere into rubble in their mad and violent rampages, so heinous that scripture terms this combat the 'tribulation'. These militant campaigns will harshly impact the entire House of Israel and include even the subjugation of large areas of the Western Hemisphere. The ships of a western nation called 'Kittim' are destined to halt the advances, but nothing at that point will be able to prevent what follows, because all these events, the Bible says, will set the stage for the world's final end.

CHRISTIANS IN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN HEMISPHERES, BY CONTINENT

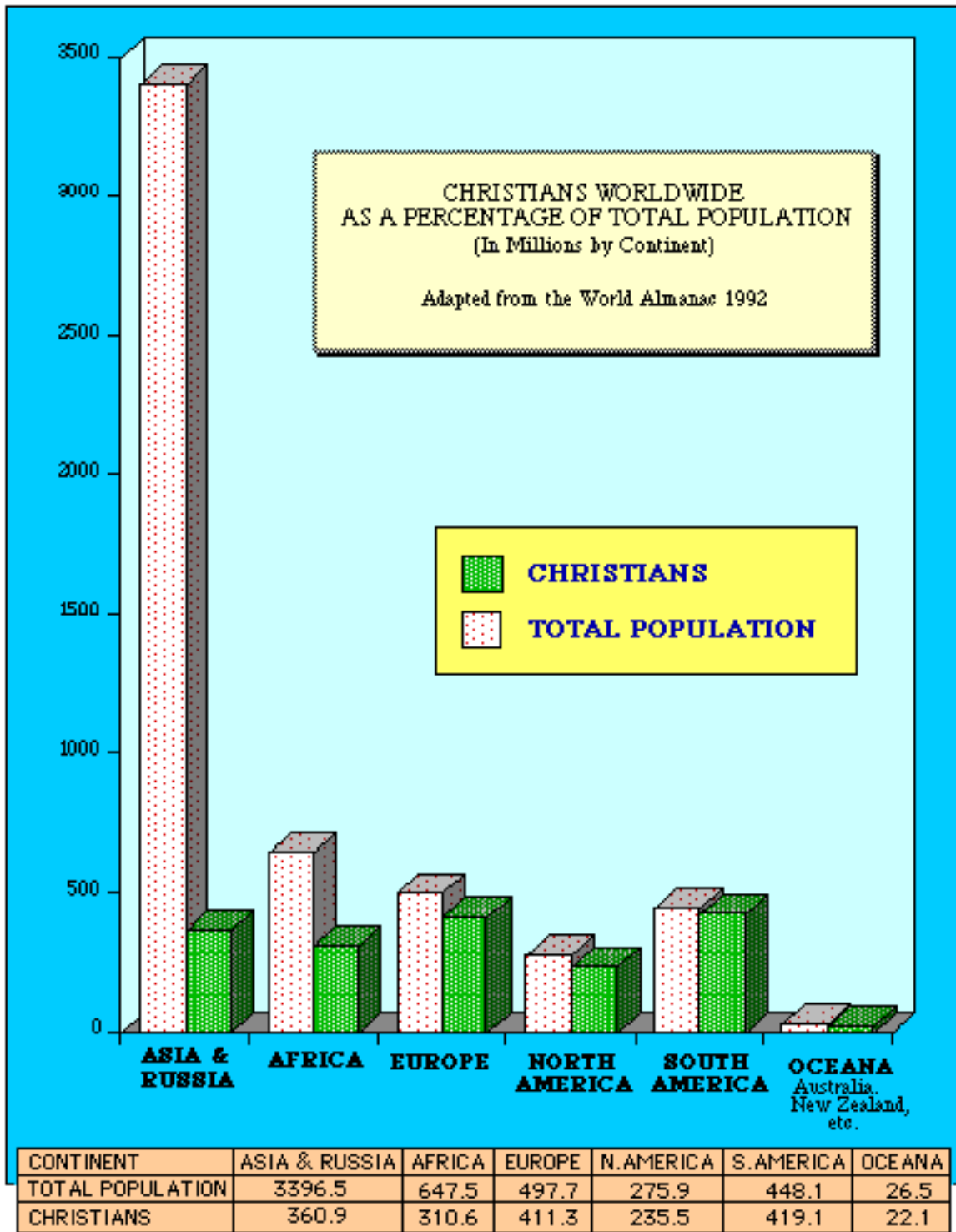


Like the 'Seven Hills' in the Book of Revelation, the seven continents of the world form 'Babylon', captive home to the widely scattered tribes of the House of Israel. In this graph showing the relative distribution of Christians worldwide, Russia, which sits half in Europe and half in Asia has been substituted for Antarctica, whose population is too small to measure.



MEDIA ACCOUNTS tend to promote the idea that Christians constitute a minority religious population in America. Statistics from the World Almanac show that just the opposite is true. Christians are, by far, the most populous religious body in the United States. That is why the religious vote here remains such an important issue in public politics.

CHRISTIANS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION



One can easily see in the graph above how the 'Great Rebel' of the last days will be able to mount an attack using eastern forces against Christians. The non-Christian population of Asia dwarfs that of most of the rest of the world. Christians constitute the vast majority of the population in Europe, Oceania and the America's, but even in these countries, a recent and serious movement away from Christianity toward a more worldly secularism has begun to surface and grow.

