

Earth's Final Moments Bible Study Guide

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This mobile version does not contain the book reference or page numbers for the

commentary, or a time-line of events. These are available in the desktop version.

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1 - The Origin, Purpose, and Importance of Prophecy

COMPILER'S NOTE: God reveals what the future holds that we may be prepared, that we may not be deceived, and that we may escape destruction. Many years ago, Christ sat with His followers on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem and revealed the events to take place at the end of earth's history. May we be open to truths He shared with spiritual ears to hear and eyes to see.

(1) WHAT TITLE DOES HE WHO RULES THE HEAVENS RIGHTFULLY CLAIM, AND WHAT IS HE CAPABLE OF DOING?

Isaiah 46:9, 10 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 45:21; 44:7, 8

He that ruleth in the heavens is the one who sees the end from the beginning—the one before whom the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread, and who, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, beholds the accomplishment of His own purposes of love and blessing. Though “clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne.” Psalm 97:2, R.V. And this the inhabitants of the universe, both loyal and disloyal, will one day understand. “His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.” Deuteronomy 32:4.

(2) WHAT IS THE END RESULT WHEN GOD REVEALS HIS THOUGHTS AND PURPOSE FOR THE FUTURE?

Isaiah 14:24, 27 The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand: ...For

the LORD of hosts has purposed, And who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, And who will turn it back?"

RELATED TEXTS: Daniel 2:21; 4:17; Acts 3:18

Let the idols, or any other claiming divinity, plead their own cause. Let them show what they have done for the world. Have they done anything to make it a better place in which to live? Have they brought in righteousness, mercy, justice, or truth? What can they reveal of the secrets of the remote past? Can they tell how the world came into being or how man came into existence? Let the idols predict, if they can, the nature of things to come. Let them attempt to open the future as if it were a book. God can, but not they. He knows the future as well as the past. Satan knows something of what is to come, but what he knows he has learned from what God has revealed. Also, he can partly predict the course that men under his control will take. But only God can actually foretell the future.

(3) WHEN PROPHETS ARE CALLED UPON BY GOD, WHAT DOES HE PUT IN THEIR MOUTH AND WHAT IS THEIR ROLE?

Deuteronomy 18:17, 18 "And the LORD said....I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren,

and will put My words in His mouth,
and He shall speak to them all that I
command Him...

RELATED TEXTS: Deuteronomy 5:5; 2 Samuel 23:2; Matthew 11:9, 10

Prophecy, this is the power to speak authoritatively for God, or on God's behalf, either by foretelling future events or by declaring God's will for the present (Ex. 3:10, 14, 15; Deut. 18:15, 18; 2 Sam. 23:2; Matt. 11:9, 10; 2 Peter 1:21). Prophecy is the means chosen by God to establish communication between Himself and man (Num. 12:6; Amos 3:7). The whole Bible has come to men by means of this gift (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21). Scriptures testify of Jesus, and the gift of prophecy is appropriately called the "testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 19:10; John 5:39; Rev. 12:17).

(4) WHY DOES GOD COMMUNICATE TO US THROUGH PROPHETS INSTEAD OF FACE TO FACE?

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you...

Exodus 33:20 But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

RELATED TEXTS: Exodus 33:18-23; 24:17

Before the entrance of sin, Adam enjoyed open communion with his Maker; but since man separated himself from God by transgression, the human race has been cut off from this high privilege. By the plan of redemption, however, a way has been opened whereby the inhabitants of the earth may still have connection with heaven. God has communicated with men by His Spirit, and divine light has been imparted to the world by revelations to His chosen servants.

Sin erects a barrier between man and God. If heaven seems far distant from earth, it is because sin has hung a veil of separation between man and God.

(5) WHO DOES GOD CALL AS MOUTHPIECES TO SHARE PROPHECY WITH THE REST OF MANKIND, AND FROM WHOM DO THEY RECEIVE IT?

2 Peter 1:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

RELATED TEXTS: Ephesians 3:5; Jeremiah 3:15; 1 Kings 17:24; Amos 3:7; Hebrews 1:1, 2

God committed the preparation of His divinely inspired Word to finite man. This Word, arranged into books, the Old and New Testaments, is the guidebook

to the inhabitants of a fallen world, bequeathed to them that, by studying and obeying the directions, not one soul would lose its way to heaven.

The Bible points to God as its Author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all “given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language.

Even the prophets who were favored with the special illumination of the Spirit did not fully comprehend the import of the revelations committed to them. The meaning was to be unfolded from age to age, as the people of God should need the instruction therein contained.

(6) WHAT METHOD DOES GOD OFTEN USE TO REVEAL THE FUTURE?

Numbers 12:6 Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among

you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.

RELATED TEXTS: Job 33:14-16; Daniel 2:28; 4:5; Joel 2:28

Visions, dreams, special divine illumination of mind, are ways in which this gift of prophecy works. Thus the human agent becomes the mouthpiece of God (2 Sam. 23:2; Matt. 3:3; 2 Peter 1:21). God intended that this important gift of the Spirit should be with His church to the end of time (Joel 2:28, 29; Rev. 12:17; 19:10). In fact, it is to be a mark of identification of God's true church in the last days (Rev. 12:17; 19:10). This is only reasonable, because God has been using this channel through which to reveal Himself and impart His messages to the world ever since the fall of Adam.

(7) FOR WHAT EPIC EVENT HAS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER PROVIDED ABUNDANT PROPHECIES THAT WE MAY BE PREPARED?

John 14:3 And if I [Christ] go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 26:64; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 22:12

How full is this language! If you attempted to measure it, you would find that in these words are measureless depths of meaning. We are now being fitted up to dwell in the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him.

(8) WHAT ILLUSTRATION DID CHRIST USE TO DESCRIBE HOW THE TIME OF THE LORD'S RETURN WILL SURPRISE THOSE WHO ARE NOT HEEDING THE PROPHECIES?

Revelation 3:3 ...Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 16:15; Luke 12:39, 40; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10

The world, full of rioting, full of godless pleasure, is asleep, asleep in carnal security. Men are putting afar off the coming of the Lord. They laugh at warnings. The proud boast is made, "All things continue as they were from the beginning." "Tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." 2 Peter 3:4; Isaiah 56:12. We will go deeper into pleasure loving. But Christ says, "Behold, I come as a thief." Revelation 16:15.

At the very time when the world is asking in scorn, “Where is the promise of His coming?” the signs are fulfilling. While they cry, “Peace and safety,” sudden destruction is coming. When the scorner, the rejecter of truth, has become presumptuous; when the routine of work in the various money-making lines is carried on without regard to principle; when the student is eagerly seeking knowledge of everything but his Bible, Christ comes as a thief.

(9) THE LORD REVEALED THE SIGNS MARKING THE PROXIMITY OF HIS RETURN, BUT WHAT SPECIFIC DETAILS DID CHRIST SAY WE WILL NOT KNOW?

Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 25:13; Mark 13:32

And why has not God given us this knowledge?—Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the work of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come. We are not to be engrossed with speculations in regard to the times and the seasons which God has not revealed. Jesus has

told His disciples to “watch,” but not for definite time.

His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening for the orders of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord; but no one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for “of that day and hour knoweth no man.”

(10) WHEN WE SEE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST'S AS DESCRIBED IN MATTHEW 24, WHAT WILL WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMING OF THE LORD?

Matthew 24:33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:32; Hebrews 10:37; James 5:9; 1 Peter 4:7

Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors.

Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. Coming events cast their shadows. The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Who can read the future?

Where is security? There is assurance in nothing that is human or earthly.

Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class is falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win.

(11) WHAT DID CHRIST SAY TO "BE" AND WILL BE THE RESULT OF STUDY OF THE PROPHECIES, ABIDING IN CHRIST, AND WATCHING FOR HIS RETURN?

Matthew 24:44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 25:10, 13; Philippians 4:5

We are incapable of looking into the future, which often causes us disquietude and unhappiness. But one of the greatest evidences we have of the loving-kindness of God is His concealment of the events of tomorrow. Our ignorance of the future makes us more vigilant and earnest today. We cannot see what is before

us. Our best-laid plans sometimes seem to be unwise and faulty. We think, “If we only knew the future!” But God would have His children trust in Him and be ready to go where He shall lead them. We know not the precise time when our Lord shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven, but He has told us that our only safety is in a constant readiness—a position of watching and waiting. Whether we have one year before us, or five, or ten, we are to be faithful to our trust today. We are to perform each day’s duties as faithfully as though that day were to be our last.

Satan sees that his time is short. He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced, until the day of probation shall be ended, and the door of mercy be forever shut.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don’t see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that God rules the heavens and sees the end from the beginning—the one before whom the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread.

I _____ that, because of His great love for us, God has given prophecies through His Holy Spirit through chosen servants who speak authoritatively on His behalf that we may be prepared for the future.

Because of the past perfect accuracy of the fulfillment of past Biblical prophecies, I _____ that I can trust God’s Word about the events of the final moments of earth’s history.

I _____ that mankind is rapidly polarizing under the banner they have chosen. I _____ to rally under the banner of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and I pray to be ready for His soon coming.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS - PRAYERS



2 - Warnings, Rejections, and a Broken Heart

COMPILERS NOTE: Shortly before the prophetic conversation with the disciples, Christ had made what is referred to as His "Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem. At that moment the crowds were shouting "Hosanna" and proclaiming Him as King. He knew in just a matter of days they would reject Him and shout "Crucify Him!" Knowing the time of His final rejection was at hand; His heart ached for His people. With a prophetic eye, He knew that their rejection of Him as the Messiah would result in their destruction, both spiritual

and physical. His heart was overcome with unrestrained grief. He mourned not only for those who were rejecting Him then but, looking down the portal of time, also for those who would choose to reject Him and His warnings until the close of time.

In love, Christ gave a dual prophecy of the signs of two events, the destruction of Jerusalem and His second coming. May the Holy Spirit give us ears to hear and surrendered hearts to heed the lessons He shared that solemn day on the Mount of Olives. His hand is stretched out still to save those who will accept His grace. Let us listen and heed His warnings that we do not experience the same fate that those in Jerusalem experienced.

(1) WHAT DID ISAIAH CORRECTLY PREDICT CONCERNING BOTH ISRAEL'S, AND MANY IN THE LAST DAYS OF EARTH'S HISTORY, ACCEPTANCE OF JESUS AS THE CHRIST?

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 50:6; 49:7; Matthew 26:67, 68

The people who rejected Christ were soon to see their city and their nation destroyed. Their glory would be broken, and scattered as the dust before the wind. And what was it that destroyed the Jews? It was the rock which, had they built upon it, would have been their security. It was the goodness of God despised, the righteousness spurned, the mercy slighted. Men set themselves in opposition to God, and all that would have been their salvation was turned to their destruction. All that God ordained unto life they found to be unto death. In the Jews' crucifixion of Christ was involved the destruction of Jerusalem. The blood shed upon Calvary was the weight that sank them to ruin for this world and for the world to come.

So it will be in the great final day, when judgment shall fall upon the rejecters of God's grace. Christ, their rock of offense, will then appear to them as an avenging mountain. The glory of His countenance, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire. Because of love rejected, grace despised, the sinner will be destroyed. By many illustrations and repeated warnings, Jesus showed what would be the result to the Jews of rejecting the Son of God. In these words He was addressing all in every age who refuse to receive Him as their Redeemer.

(2) BECAUSE HE LOVES US, WHAT IS NOT THE WILL OF GOD FOR ANY OF HIS WAYWARD CHILDREN?

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is...longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

RELATED TEXTS: Exodus 34:6; Psalm 86:15; Isaiah 30:18, 19; 1 John 1:9

It is a marvel that God will bear with the perversity of the children of men so long, bearing with their disobedience and yet suffering them to live, abusing His mercies, bearing false witness against Him in most wicked statements. But God's ways are not as our ways, and will we not marvel at His loving forbearance and tender pity and infinite compassion, for He has given an unmistakable evidence that this is just like His character—slow to anger, showing mercy unto thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments.

(3) WHAT PLEA OF LOVE DID GOD EXTEND TO ISRAEL, AND STILL EXTENDS TO EACH OF US TODAY, SO THAT WE CAN AVOID SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION?

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They

shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 1:19; 43:25, 26; 44:22; Micah 7:18, 19

The Lord God through Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitations to the needy. He will receive all. He welcomes all. He rejects none. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners. He will take the prey from the mighty, He will deliver the captive, He will pluck the brand from the burning. He will lower the golden chain of His mercy to the greatest depths of human wretchedness and guilt and lift up the debased soul contaminated with sin. But man must will to come, and cooperate in the work of saving his soul by availing himself of opportunities given him of God. The Lord forces no one. The spotless wedding robe of Christ's righteousness is prepared to clothe the sinner, but if he refuses it he must perish.

The record of the past can be blotted out with His [Christ's] blood, the page made clean and white. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" Isaiah 1:18.

(4) WHAT WAS THE FATE OF ISRAEL BECAUSE OF THEIR COMPLACENCY AND REFUSAL OF THE LORD'S COUNSEL, AND IS ALSO APPLICABLE TO US IN THE LAST DAYS IF WE CHOOSE THE SAME PATH?

Proverbs 1:30-32 They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them;

RELATED TEXTS: Proverbs 6:23; 1:22; Isaiah 5:20; Jeremiah 4:14

(5) WHAT SIGN OF COMPASSION DID CHRIST SHOW CONCERNING THE DESTINY OF GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE DURING HIS TRIUMPHAL ENTRY?

Luke 19:41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it

RELATED TEXTS: Hosea 11:8, 9; Matthew 23:37, 38

Christ's heart had said "How can I give thee up?" He had dealt with Israel as a loving, forgiving father would deal with an ungrateful, wayward child. With the eye of Omniscience He saw that the city of Jerusalem had decided her own destiny. For centuries there had been a turning away from God. Grace had been

resisted, privileges abused, opportunities slighted. The people themselves had been loading the cloud of vengeance which unmingled with mercy was about to burst upon them. With choked, half-broken utterance, Christ exclaimed, "O that thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." The irrevocable sentence was pronounced.

(6) HOW DID JESUS DESCRIBE THE ATROCITIES THAT WERE IN STORE FOR HIS PEOPLE BECAUSE OF THEIR REJECTION OF HIM AS MESSIAH?

Luke 19:43, 44 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 21:20-24

Jesus gazes upon the scene, and the vast multitude hush their shouts, spellbound by the sudden vision of beauty. All eyes turn upon the Saviour, expecting to see in His countenance the admiration they themselves feel. But instead of this they behold a cloud of sorrow.

The tears of Jesus were not in anticipation of His own suffering. Just before Him was Gethsemane, where soon the horror of a great darkness would overshadow Him. The sheep gate also was in sight, through which for centuries the beasts for sacrificial offerings had been led. This gate was soon to open for Him, the great Antitype, toward whose sacrifice for the sins of the world all these offerings had pointed. Nearby was Calvary, the scene of His approaching agony. Yet it was not because of these reminders of His cruel death that the Redeemer wept and groaned in anguish of spirit. His was no selfish sorrow. The thought of His own agony did not intimidate that noble, self-sacrificing soul. It was the sight of Jerusalem that pierced the heart of Jesus—Jerusalem that had rejected the Son of God and scorned His love, that refused to be convinced by His mighty miracles, and was about to take His life. He saw what she was in her guilt of rejecting her Redeemer, and what she might have been had she accepted Him who alone could heal her wound. He had come to save her; how could He give her up?

(7) WHAT WORDS OF LOVE DID CHRIST UTTER IN TEARS OF ANGUISH CONCERNING THOSE WHO WERE

REJECTING HIM THEN, AND FOR THOSE WHO REJECT HIM BEFORE HIS SECOND COMING?

Matthew 23:37 ...How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

Related Texts: Jeremiah 4:14; Matthew 22:3; John 3:15-17; 6:37; 2 Peter 3:9

Divine pity marked the countenance of the Son of God as He cast one lingering look upon the Temple and then upon His hearers. In a voice choked by deep anguish of heart and bitter tears He exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often I would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" This is the separation struggle. In the lamentation of Christ the very heart of God is pouring itself forth.

As his prophetic eye rests upon Jerusalem, he sees that as she was given up to destruction, the world will be given up to its doom. The scenes that transpired at the destruction of Jerusalem will be repeated at the great and terrible day of the Lord, but in a more fearful manner.

(8) WHAT STATEMENT OF PRIDE DID THE DISCIPLES SPEAK AS THE GROUP GAZED UPON THE MAGNIFICENT BEAUTY OF THE TEMPLE?

Mark 13:1 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!"

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Kings 6:1-10; 2 Chronicles 3 and 4

The Temple was the pride and joy of every Jewish heart. ...The Temple had now been in process of construction for nearly 50 years (John 2:20), and work on the entire complex of courts and buildings was not completed until about the year A.D. 63—only seven years before it was totally destroyed by the army of Titus.

As Christ's attention was attracted to the magnificence of the temple, what must have been the unuttered thoughts of that Rejected One!

(9) TO THEIR AMAZEMENT, WHAT PREDICTION CONCERNING THE MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE DID CHRIST GIVE IN RESPONSE TO THEIR PRIDEFUL STATEMENT?

Matthew 24:2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone

shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:1; 23:38; Luke 21:5, 6

The disciples were filled with awe and wonder at Christ's prediction of the overthrow of the temple, and they desired to understand more fully the meaning of His words. Wealth, labor, and architectural skill had for more than forty years been freely expended to enhance its splendors. Herod the Great had lavished upon it both Roman wealth and Jewish treasure, and even the emperor of the world had enriched it with his gifts. Massive blocks of white marble, of almost fabulous size, forwarded from Rome for this purpose, formed a part of its structure.

And it was hard for them to grasp the import of Jesus' declaration concerning the destruction of the Temple, particularly in relation to recent events such as the Triumphal Entry and the Second Cleansing of the Temple, which seemed to them to presage the imminent establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

(10) WHAT QUESTIONS DID THE DISCIPLES ASK JESUS AND, IN OUR UNPRECEDENTED PERILOUS TIMES, MANY ARE ASKING TODAY?

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

RELATED TEXTS: Mark 13:3, 4; Luke 21:7

The Lord had told them that He would come the second time. Hence at the mention of judgments upon Jerusalem, their minds reverted to that coming...The future was mercifully veiled from the disciples. Had they at that time fully comprehended the two awful facts—the Redeemer’s sufferings and death, and the destruction of their city and temple—they would have been overwhelmed with horror. Christ presented before them an outline of the prominent events to take place before the close of time. His words were not then fully understood; but their meaning was to be unfolded as His people should need the instruction therein given. The prophecy which He uttered was twofold in its meaning; while foreshadowing the destruction of Jerusalem, it prefigured also the terrors of the last great day.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don’t see the

importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

From the prophetic event that day on the Mount of Olives and it's fulfillment, I _____ how the Jews turned away their only hope. By their rejection of Christ they turned away their only Source for security and defense. The Rock that would have been their foundation became an anchor that sank them to ruin.

I _____ that God is so longsuffering with mankind. He so patiently bears our perversity and rebellion. Even allowing us to live while abusing His mercies and often bearing false witness against Him.

I _____ that He gives us a time of probation and is still reaching out His hand offering grace to all who will accept His pardon.

I _____ that, on that day on the Mount of Olives, Christ didn't just weep for the Jewish nation, but also wept for the rejecters of God's grace in every age of world history.

I _____ to have an open mind and willing heart to accept and heed Christ's words and warnings that my fate will not resemble that of those that rejected Him then. It is my heart's desire to be ready for His glorious coming.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS - PRAYERS

[illegible]



3 - False Prophets and False Christs

COMPILER'S NOTE: Since His first coming, many have claimed to be the Christ returning. Since the beginning of the "time of the end" in 1844 (Daniel 12:9), there has been a steady increase in the number of these false Christs and false prophets. These deceptions are escalating the events that are the precursors to the time of trouble. The stage is being set for demons to perform great signs and wonders. Soon even Satan himself will claim to be Christ and these deceptions will escalate and climax during the 6th

plague. Let us heed Christ's warnings that we will not be deceived.

(1) IN WHOSE NAME AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE DID CHRIST WARN THAT IMPOSTORS WOULD APPEAR?

Matthew 24:4, 5 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

RELATED TEXTS: Mark 13:5, 6, 22, 23; Luke 21:8

Jesus, who gave His life to save *us*, has given us a warning as to what shall come to pass in the last days. The disciples came to Him privately to ask Him concerning the end of the world.

The warning of Matthew 24:5 applies specifically to the fall of Jerusalem and to the Jewish nation, which was particularly susceptible to this form of deception. In the days of the apostles there were many false messiahs. But later, in verses 23-27, in unmistakable language, our Lord speaks of [deceptions occurring prior to] His second coming.

(2) IN ADDITION TO FALSE CHRISTS, WHO ELSE DID CHRIST WARN THAT IN THE LAST DAYS WOULD RISE UP, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

Matthew 24:11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:30

In these days of peril we are not to accept everything that men bring to us as truth. As professed teachers from God come to us declaring that they have a message from God, it is proper to inquire carefully, How do we know that this is truth? Jesus has told us that “false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:11).

A true prophet is one who speaks for God. Accordingly, a false prophet is one who pretends to be speaking for God when in reality he speaks only the perverted thoughts of his own perverse heart (Isa. 30:10; Jer. 14:13–15; 23:16, 17, 21, 25, 30–32, 38; 29:8, 9; Eze. 13:2, 3, 10, 11). The false prophets are those who profess that it is possible for men to enter in by the broad gate and the broad way. They are the “thieves,” whose only purpose is to steal, to kill, and to destroy (John 10:7–10).

(3) WHAT BIBLICAL ACTION DOES SCRIPTURE ADVISE US TO TAKE TO PREVENT DECEPTION BY FALSE PROPHETS?

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether

they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

RELATED TEXTS: Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Jeremiah 29:8, 9

From this statement it is evident that it becomes us to be diligent Bible students that we may know what is according to the law and the testimony. We are safe in no other course of action. Jesus says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Christ has warned us to beware of false prophets who will come to us in His name, saying that they are Christ. Now, if you should take the position that it is not important for you to understand the Scriptures for yourselves, you will be in danger of being led away with these doctrines.

(4) WHAT IS THE FIRST AND MOST CRUCIAL BIBLICAL TEST IN DETERMINING THE VALIDITY OF A PROPHET?

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 7:15-23; Ezekiel 33:33; John 16:13, 14; 1 John

4:1-3; Deuteronomy 13:1-4; 18:21; Numbers 12:6; 23:20; 24:16; Acts 9:3; 10:9, 11; Jeremiah 1:9; 23:16; 28:9; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Daniel 10:8-18; 2 Samuel 23:2; 1 Corinthians 13:1, 2

We need not be deceived; for the Word of God gives us a test whereby we may know what is truth. The prophet says, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29:18. Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions, to mislead and mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions, as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them.

(5) WHAT DOES THE BIBLE ADVISE THAT WE EXAMINE IN THE LIVES OF PROPHETS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS THAT WILL REVEAL IF THEY ARE OF GOD?

Matthew 7:15-17 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 6:43; Psalm 92:12-14; Matthew 3:10

Teachers of falsehood will arise to draw you away from the narrow path and the strait gate. Beware of them; though concealed in sheep's clothing, inwardly they are ravening wolves. Jesus gives a test by which false teachers may be distinguished from the true. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," He says. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

We are not bidden to prove them by their fair speeches and exalted professions. They are to be judged by the word of God. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Isaiah 8:20; Proverbs 19:27. What message do these teachers bring? Does it lead you to reverence and fear God? Does it lead

you to manifest your love for Him by loyalty to His commandments? If men do not feel the weight of the moral law; if they make light of God's precepts; if they break one of the least of His commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of heaven. We may know that their claims are without foundation. They are doing the very work that originated with the prince of darkness, the enemy of God.

(6) INTO WHAT IMAGE WILL SATAN TRANSFORM HIMSELF THAT HE MAY BECOME THE ULTIMATE IMPOSTOR?

2 Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

RELATED TEXTS: Galatians 1:8;
Revelation 12:9

Everyone who has enlisted under the bloodstained banner of Christ has entered upon a warfare that demands constant vigilance. Satan is determined to keep up the warfare to the end. Coming as an angel of light, claiming to be the Christ, he will deceive the world. But his triumph will be short. No storm or tempest can move those whose feet are planted on the principles of eternal truth. They will be able to stand in this time of almost universal apostasy.

(7) WHAT TWO THINGS DOES CHRIST WARN NOT TO DO WHEN WE HEAR OF FALSE CHRISTS?

Matthew 24:23, 26 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it... "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 21:8; 17:23; Mark 13:21-23

Now, in unmistakable language, our Lord speaks of His second coming, and He gives warning of dangers to precede His advent to the world. "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

As one of the signs of Jerusalem's destruction, Christ had said, "Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." False prophets did rise, deceiving the people, and leading great numbers into the desert. Magicians and sorcerers, claiming miraculous power, drew the people after them into the mountain solitudes. But this prophecy was spoken also for the last days. This sign is given as a sign of the second advent. Even

now false christs and false prophets are showing signs and wonders to seduce His disciples. Do we not hear the cry, “Behold, He is in the desert”? Have not thousands gone forth into the desert, hoping to find Christ?

And from thousands of gatherings where men profess to hold communion with departed spirits is not the call now heard, “Behold, He is in the secret chambers”? This is the very claim that spiritism puts forth. But what says Christ? “Believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

(8) WHAT WILL BE THE METHODS OF DECEPTION USED BY SATAN AND THESE FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS?

Matthew 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 19:20; 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14

The enemy is preparing to deceive the whole world by his miracle-working power. He will assume to impersonate the angels of light, to impersonate Jesus Christ. So far as his power extends, he will perform actual miracles. Says the Scripture: “He ... deceiveth them that

dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do,” (Revelation 13:14) not merely those which he pretends to do. Something more than mere impostures are brought to view in this scripture.

But there is a limit beyond which Satan cannot go, and here he calls deception to his aid and counterfeits the work which he has not power actually to perform. In the last days he will appear in such a manner as to make men believe him to be Christ that has come the second time into the world. He will indeed transform himself into an angel of light. He will come personating Jesus Christ, working mighty miracles; and men will fall down and worship him as Jesus Christ. We shall be commanded to worship this being, whom the world will glorify as Christ.

(9) WHEN THESE EVIL AGENTS ARE PERFORMING THESE GREAT SIGNS AND WONDERS, WHO IS ACTUALLY DOING IT THROUGH THEM?

Revelation 16:14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 12:9; 1 Timothy 4:1

We need not be deceived. Wonderful scenes, with which Satan will be closely connected, will soon take place. God's Word declares that Satan will work miracles. He will make people sick, and then will suddenly remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed.

Keep a firm hold upon the Lord Jesus, and never let go. Have firm convictions as to what you believe. Let the truths of God's Word lead you to devote heart, mind, soul, and strength to the doing of His will. Lay hold resolutely upon a plain "Thus saith the Lord." Let your only argument be, "It is written."

(10) IN WHAT MANNER WILL CHRIST RETURN, AND IS THE ONE DECEPTION SATAN WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO COUNTERFEIT?

Matthew 24:30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:31; Daniel 7:13; Revelation 1:7

Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ's advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. "There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. . . .

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:24-27, 31; 25:31; Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world.

(11) WHO DID JESUS WARN THAT, IF POSSIBLE, WOULD BE DECEIVED BY THESE SATANIC AGENTS?

Matthew 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

RELATED TEXTS: 1 John 2:18, 26; Mark 13:22

The time is upon us when the miracle-working power of the arch deceiver will

be more decidedly revealed. And his deceptions will increase in their delusive attraction, so that they will perplex, and if possible, deceive, the very elect. The prince of darkness with his evil angels is working upon the Christian world, inducing those who profess the name of Christ to stand under the banner of darkness, to make war with those who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12).

Satan has come down in these last days to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. His satanic majesty works miracles in the sight of false prophets, in the sight of men, claiming that he is indeed Christ Himself. Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; therefore those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the law of Jehovah. The Lord tells us if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. The sheep's clothing seems so real, so genuine, that the wolf can be discerned only as we go to God's great moral standard and there find that they are transgressors of the law of Jehovah.

(12) HOW WILL WE SERVE THE LORD (VS 14), AND WHAT MUST WE CHOOSE (VS 15) THAT WE WILL NOT FALL PREY TO SATAN'S DECEPTIONS?

Joshua 24:14, 15 "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Samuel 12:24; Ephesians 4:15; 3 John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 13:6

We want the truth on every point, and we must search for it as for hid treasures. Dishes of fables are presented to us on every hand, and men choose to believe error rather than truth, because the acceptance of the truth involves a cross. Self must be denied; self must be crucified.

Therefore Satan presents to them an easier way by making void the law of God.

When God lets man have his own way, it is the darkest hour of his life. For a willful, disobedient child to be left to have his own way, to follow the bent of his own mind and gather the dark clouds of God's judgment about him, is a terrible thing.

God's children will have a fierce conflict with the adversary of souls, and it will become more exceedingly bitter as we approach the close of the conflict. But the Lord will help those who stand in defense of His truth.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that, as in the day of Christ, in the last days there will come many false christs and false prophets who have only one purpose in mind—my deception and destruction.

I _____ that I am not to accept anything presented to me as truth but I should test the spirits to make sure they fully agrees with the law and testimonies of God in His Word.

I _____ that God loves me so much He has provided His Spirit and His Word that I may not be deceived.

I _____ from Scripture that Satan will himself come impersonating Christ. The Scriptures make it clear that the true Christ will come in the same manner in which He left—in the clouds of heaven and I choose to heed the warning not to go out to see him or witness his miracles of deception.

***I _____ this day the One Whom I will
serve and, by His grace, will walk vigilant
in truth and want to be used by God to
share this vital message with others.***

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS - PRAYERS

[illegible]



4 - Deceiving Spirits and Doctrines of Demons

(1) IN THE FINAL DAYS, WHAT WILL SATAN'S REPRESENTATIVES ATTEMPT TO SECRETLY BRING INTO THE RANKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE?

2 Peter 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies...

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Timothy 3:13; 2:16, 17

The Christian is to be “rooted and grounded” in the truth, that he may stand firm against the temptations of

the enemy. He must have a continual renewal of strength, and he must hold firmly to Bible truth. Fables of every kind will be brought in to seduce the believer from his allegiance to God, but he is to look up, believe in God, and stand firmly rooted and grounded in the truth.

The fallacies of Satan are now being multiplied, and those who swerve from the path of truth will lose their bearings. Having nothing to which to anchor, they will drift from one delusion to another, blown about by the winds of strange doctrines. Satan has come down with great power. Many will be deceived by his miracles....But the statements of God's Word are plain. Plant your feet firmly on the platform of eternal truth. Reject every phase of error, even though it is covered with a semblance of reality.

(2) WHO ARE THE UNDERLYING SOURCES OF THESE DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES AND FALSE DOCTRINES?

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

RELATED TEXTS: 1Timothy 4:2;
Revelation 16:14; 2 Peter 3:17

Confederacies will increase in number and power as we draw nearer to the end of time. These confederacies will create opposing influences to the truth, forming new parties of professed believers who will act out their own delusive theories. The apostasy will increase. "Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Men and women have confederated to oppose the Lord God of heaven, and the church is only half awake to the situation. There needs to be much more prayer, much more of earnest effort, among professed believers.

(3) ONE OF THE MOST DECEPTIVE "DOCTRINES OF DEMONS" IN THESE LAST DAYS IS MODERN SPIRITUALISM-- THE BELIEF THAT THE DEAD ARE CONSCIOUS AND CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THE LIVING. WHAT DOES GOD CONSIDER THESE PRACTICES TO BE?

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because

of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.

RELATED TEXTS: Leviticus 19:31;
Ephesians 5:11, 12; 2 Kings 17:17; 1
Corinthians 10:21

The doctrine of man's consciousness in death, especially the belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. If the dead are admitted to the presence of God and holy angels, and privileged with knowledge far exceeding what they before possessed, why should they not return to the earth to enlighten and instruct the living? If, as taught by popular theologians, spirits of the dead are hovering about their friends on earth, why should they not be permitted to communicate with them, to warn them against evil, or to comfort them in sorrow? How can those who believe in man's consciousness in death reject what comes to them as divine light communicated by glorified spirits?

Here is a channel regarded as sacred, through which Satan works for the accomplishment of his purposes. The fallen angels who do his bidding appear as messengers from the spirit world. While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds.

(4) UPON WHAT SATANIC LIE CONCERNING DEATH IS THE DANGEROUS DOCTRINE OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM BASED?

Genesis 3:4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."

Related Texts: Genesis 2:17; John 8:44; Romans 6:23; 2:7; Ezekiel 18:20

Modern spiritualism and the forms of ancient witchcraft and idol worship—all having communion with the dead as their vital principle—are founded upon that first lie by which Satan beguiled Eve in Eden: “Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ... ye shall be as gods.” Genesis 3:4, 5. Alike based upon falsehood and perpetuating the same, they are alike from the father of lies.

We have reached the perils of the last days, when some, yes, many, “shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” Be cautious in regard to what you read and how you hear. Take not a particle of interest in Spiritualistic theories. Satan is waiting to steal a march upon everyone who allows himself to be deceived by his hypnotism. He begins to exert his power over them just as soon as they begin to investigate his theories.

(5) HOW MUCH DOES THE BIBLE CLEARLY STATE THAT THE DEAD KNOW?

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6 For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share In anything done under the sun.

RELATED TEXTS: Ecclesiastes 9:10; Psalm 146:4; 6:5

A correct understanding of “what saith the Scriptures” in regard to the state of the dead is essential for this time. God’s Word declares that the dead know not anything, their hatred and love have alike perished. We must come to the sure word of prophecy for our authority.

Unless we are intelligent in the Scriptures, may we not, when this mighty miracle-working power of Satan is manifested in our world, be deceived and call it the workings of God; for the Word of God declares that, if it were possible, the very elect should be deceived. Unless we are rooted and grounded in the truth, we shall be swept away by Satan’s delusive snares. We must cling to our Bibles. If Satan can make you believe that there are things

in the Word of God that are not inspired, he will then be prepared to ensnare your soul. We shall have no assurance, no certainty, at the very time we need to know what truth is.

(6) TO WHERE DO THE DEAD GO DOWN AND REMAIN UNTIL THE LORD CALLS THEM FORTH?

Job 7:9, 10 As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, So he who goes down to the grave does not come up. He shall never return to his house, Nor shall his place know him anymore.

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 2:29, 34;
Ecclesiastes 3:20; Psalm 104:29

Upon the fundamental error of natural immortality rests the doctrine of consciousness in death—a doctrine, like eternal torment, opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the dictates of reason, and to our feelings of humanity. According to the popular belief, the redeemed in heaven are acquainted with all that takes place on the earth and especially with the lives of the friends whom they have left behind. But how could it be a source of happiness to the dead to know the troubles of the living, to witness the sins committed by their own loved ones, and to see them enduring all the sorrows, disappointments, and anguish of life?

How much of heaven's bliss would be enjoyed by those who were hovering over their friends on earth? And how utterly revolting is the belief that as soon as the breath leaves the body the soul of the impenitent is consigned to the flames of hell! To what depths of anguish must those be plunged who see their friends passing to the grave unprepared, to enter upon an eternity of woe and sin! Many have been driven to insanity by this harrowing thought.

(7) WHEN SPEAKING OF HIS FRIEND LAZARUS, WHAT COMPARISON DID CHRIST USE TO DESCRIBE THE STATE OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED?

John 11:11-14 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well" However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 13:3; 17:15; Matthew 27:52; Daniel 12:2; Job 14:12

The following comparisons demonstrate the suitability of sleep as a figure by which to represent death: (1) Sleep is a state of unconsciousness. "The dead

know not anything” (Eccl. 9:5, 6). (2) Sleep is rest from all outward activities of life. “There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave” (Eccl. 9:10). (3) Sleep renders conscious thought impossible. “His breath goeth forth ... his thoughts perish” (Ps. 146:4). (4) Sleep continues until one is awakened. “So man lieth down ... till the heavens be no more” (Job 14:12). (5) Sleep prevents association in the activities of those who are awake. “Neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done” (Eccl. 9:6). (6) Sleep renders inoperative the emotions of the soul. “Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished” (Eccl. 9:6). (7) Sleep comes normally and inevitably to all. “The living know that they shall die” (Eccl. 9:5). (8) Sleep causes all praise of God to cease. “The dead praise not the Lord” (Ps. 115:17; Isa. 38:18).

(8) WHEN CHRIST RETURNS, THE GREAT SHOUT IS HEARD, AND THE TRUMPET OF GOD SHAKES THE HEAVENS, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THOSE WHO "SLEEP IN JESUS"?

1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we

who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 15; Isaiah 26:19; Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:12-23

Christ represents death as a sleep to His believing children. Their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him.

(9) WHEN CHRIST RETURNS, WHAT WILL HE THEN GIVE TO BOTH THE LIVING AND THE DEAD “ACCORDING TO THEIR WORK”?

Revelation 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

Related Texts: Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6, 7; Daniel 12:2

Nowhere in the Sacred Scriptures is found the statement that the righteous go to their reward or the wicked to their punishment at death. The patriarchs and prophets have left no such assurance. Christ and His apostles have given no hint of it. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead do not go immediately to heaven. They are represented as

sleeping until the resurrection. (1 Thessalonians 4:14; Job 14:10–12). In the very day when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl broken (Ecclesiastes 12:6), man's thoughts perish. They that go down to the grave are in silence. They know no more of anything that is done under the sun. (Job 14:21).

Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality. "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.... So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:52–54). As they are called forth from their deep slumber they begin to think just where they ceased. The last sensation was the pang of death; the last thought, that they were falling beneath the power of the grave. When they arise from the tomb, their first glad thought will be echoed in the triumphal shout: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

(10) WHEN PEOPLE ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THE DEAD, WHO IS PERFORMING THESE “SIGNS” AND COMMUNICATING WITH THEM?

Revelation 16:14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world...

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Leviticus 19:31

The “familiar spirits” are not the spirits of the dead, but evil angels, the messengers of Satan. Ancient idolatry, which, as we have seen, comprises both worship of the dead and pretended communion with them, is declared by the Bible to have been demon worship.

The apostle Paul, in warning his brethren against participating, in any manner, in the idolatry of their heathen neighbors, says, “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.” 1 Corinthians 10:20....In their supposed worship of dead men they were in reality worshiping demons.

Modern spiritualism, resting upon the same foundation, is but a revival in a new form of the witchcraft and demon worship that God condemned and prohibited of old. It is foretold in the

Scriptures, which declare that “in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” 1 Timothy 4:1.

Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, points to the special working of Satan in spiritualism as an event to take place immediately before the second advent of Christ. Speaking of Christ’s second coming, he declares that it is “after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9.

(11) IN THESE TIMES OF GREAT DECEPTION WHEN WE CANNOT TRUST WHAT WE SEE AND HEAR, WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF TRUTH AND HOW LONG WILL IT ENDURE?

Psalms 119:160 The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 8:20; 40:8; 2 Timothy 3:16; Proverbs 30:5

A terrible condition of things exists in our world. The angel of mercy is folding her wings, ready to depart. Already the Lord’s restraining power is being withdrawn from the earth, and Satan is seeking to stir up the various elements in the religious world, leading men to place themselves under the training of

the great deceiver, who work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in the children of disobedience. Already the inhabitants of the earth are marshaling under the leading of the prince of darkness, and this is but the beginning of the end.

Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be overcharged with the cares of this life and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that Satan and his representatives will attempt to secretly bring heresies and false doctrine into the ranks of God's people with the goal to bring about our destruction.

I _____ that the underlying sources of these false teachings are Satan and his deceiving spirits and the only safe path is to make the truth in God's Word the foundation of my beliefs.

I _____ that the fundamental teaching of spiritualism is the lie that the living can communicate with the dead. I _____ that Satan will use this in attempt to separate me from truth.

I _____ that the Bible teaches that there is no awareness in death and they know nothing. They will be raise from their "sleep" at His second coming to receive their just reward.

I _____ to study to obtain a better understanding of this truth that I may not be deceived in these last days and to share this truth with others.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS - PRAYERS

[illegible]



5 - Wars, Disease, and Natural Disasters

COMPILER'S NOTE: It is important to realize that the past 100 years has seen a volume of disease, natural disasters, and the shedding of blood due to war that is more than the previous 6,000 years of earth's history. Bloodshed from world wars, wars since, and the current ongoing wars around the globe saturate our history books.

(1) WHAT DID CHRIST PREDICT CONCERNING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS AND EARTHLY KINGDOMS AS A SIGN OF HIS SOON COMING?

Matthew 24:6, 7 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 21:9; Jeremiah 8:15; Ezekiel 7:25-27

The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they realize that something great and decisive is about to take place, that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.

Prophecies are fulfilling. Strange, eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven. Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars and rumors of wars. The nations are angry, and the time of the dead has come, that they should be judged. Events are changing to bring about the day of God, which hasteth greatly. Only a moment of time, as it were, yet remains. But while already nation is rising against nation,

and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.

(2) WHEN WE HEAR OF POLITICAL STRIFE AND WARS, WHAT DID CHRIST SAY HIS PEOPLE SHOULD NOT DO?

Luke 21:9 But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately."

RELATED TEXTS: Jeremiah 25:32;
Revelation 3:10

Soon grievous troubles will rise among the nations—trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes. As never before we need to press together, serving Him who has prepared His throne in the heavens and whose kingdom ruleth over all. God has not forsaken His people, and our strength lies in not forsaking Him.

The Lord will raise up a standard for us against the enemy. We should believe that we have a helper in God, that we shall not be afraid, we shall not be filled with wonder and amazement; for we know that the God of Israel has been with His people from the very first—

from the very infancy of this world God has been with His obedient children. We must show that we have confidence in God, and make it manifest to the world that we can trust Him because we believe in Him.

(3) AT THE CLOSE OF TIME WHEN NATIONS ARE IN CONFLICT, WHO WILL SATAN DECLARE WAR AGAINST AND WHY?

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:12; 13:7; 11:7; Jeremiah 6:2; Micah 4:10

That the law which was spoken by God's own voice is faulty, that some specification has been set aside, is the claim which Satan now puts forward. It is the last great deception that he will bring upon the world. He needs not to assail the whole law; if he can lead men to disregard one precept, his purpose is gained. For "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10. By consenting to break one precept, men are brought under Satan's power. By substituting human law for God's law,

Satan will seek to control the world. This work is foretold in prophecy. Of the great apostate power which is the representative of Satan, it is declared, "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand." Daniel 7:25.

The warfare against God's law began in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.

(4) WHAT WILL BE THE REASON FOR SATAN'S "GREAT WRATH" AND INCREASED EFFORT TO DECEIVE AND DESTROY GOD'S PEOPLE?

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Peter 5:8; Luke 21:34-36; Hebrews 10:25

The work of Satan as an accuser began in heaven. This has been his work on earth ever since man's fall, and it will be his work in a special sense as we approach nearer to the close of this world's history. As he sees that his time is short, he will work with greater earnestness to deceive and destroy. He is angry when he sees a people on the earth who, even in their weakness and sinfulness, have respect to the law of Jehovah. He is determined that they shall not obey God. He delights in their unworthiness, and has devices prepared for every soul, that all may be ensnared and separated from God. He seeks to accuse and condemn God and all who strive to carry out His purposes in this world in mercy and love, in compassion and forgiveness.

(5) WHAT THREE PARTICULAR TYPES OF NATURAL DISASTERS DID CHRIST WARN WOULD ALSO BE SIGNS OF HIS COMING?

Matthew 24:7 ...and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 21:11; Mark 13:8; Job 5:20-22

We see and hear of confusion and perplexity, want and famine, earthquakes and floods; terrible outrages will be committed by men; passion, not reason, bears sway. The wrath of God is upon the inhabitants of the world, who are fast becoming as corrupt as were the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Already fire and flood are destroying thousands of lives and the property that has been selfishly accumulated by the oppression of the poor. The Lord is soon to cut short His work and put an end to sin. Oh, that the scenes ... of the iniquities practiced in these last days, might make a deep impression on the minds of God's professing people. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man shall be revealed.

The Lord is removing His restrictions from the earth, and soon there will be death and destruction, increasing crime, and cruel, evil working against the rich who have exalted themselves against the poor. Those who are without God's protection will find no safety in any place or position. Human agents are being trained and are using their inventive power to put in operation the most powerful machinery to wound and to kill.

We hear now of earthquakes in divers places, of fires, of tempests, of disasters

by sea and land, of pestilence, of famine. What weight do these signs have upon you? This is only the beginning of what shall be. The description of the day of God is given through John by the Revelator. The cry of the terror-stricken myriads has fallen upon the ear of John. "The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" The apostle himself was awed and overwhelmed.

(6) OF WHAT DID CHRIST SAY THAT THE INCREASE OF WARS, DISEASES, AND NATURAL DISASTERS WOULD MARK THE BEGINNING?

Matthew 24:8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. (ESV)

RELATED TEXTS: Romans 8:22; Psalm 48:6; John 16:21

Brethren, it is no time now for mourning and despair, no time to yield to doubt and unbelief. Christ is to us not a Saviour in Joseph's new tomb, closed with a great stone, and sealed with the Roman seal. We have a risen Saviour. He is the King, the Lord of hosts; he sitteth between the cherubim, and amid the strife and tumult of nations he guards his people still. He who rules in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial. He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be

overthrown, when the arrows of God's wrath shall strike through the hearts of his enemies, his people have the assurance that they are safe in his hands. In patience they are to possess their souls.

(7) AS WE REACH EARTH'S FINAL MOMENTS, WHAT PROMISE CAN THOSE WHO SEEK THE LORD CLAIM?

Job 5:20 In famine He shall redeem you from death, And in war from the power of the sword.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 33:18, 19; 34:9, 10; Matthew 6:31-34

In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off... But to the obedient is given the promise, "He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Isaiah 33:16. By this promise the children of God will live. When the earth shall be wasted with famine, they shall be fed. "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." Psalm 37:19.

Like the child, you shall receive day by day what is required for the day's need. Every day you are to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Be not dismayed if

you have not sufficient for tomorrow. You have the assurance of His promise, "So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." David says, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Psalm 37:3, 25. That God who sent the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith will not pass by one of His faithful, self-sacrificing children.

(8) WHAT WILL BE THE REACTION OF THE WORLDLY AS THEY SEE THE CALAMITIES RAGING ALL AROUND THEM?

Luke 21:26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

RELATED TEXTS: Deuteronomy 28:65-67; Isaiah 65:14; 1 Peter 5:7

Related Terrible calamities that from week to week are taking place, what do these things mean? The most awful disasters are following one another in quick succession. How frequently we hear of earthquakes and tornadoes, of destruction by fire and flood, with great loss of life and property! Apparently these calamities are capricious outbreaks of seemingly disorganized,

unregulated forces, but in them God's purpose may be read. They are one of the means by which He seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger.

The coming of Christ is nearer than when we first believed. The great controversy is nearing its end. The judgments of God are in the land. They speak in solemn warning, saying: "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matthew 24:44.

The earthly will soon pass away. In these days there is great destruction of earthly treasures. There are "earthquakes in divers places," and trouble and difficulties are seen on every hand. But it is our privilege to be preparing to become members of the heavenly family, children of the heavenly King.

(9) AS THE TERRORS OF LAST DAY EVENTS BRING SPIRITUAL AWAKENING, INSTEAD OF SELF PRESERVATION, WHAT SHOULD BE OUR MOTIVE FOR TURNING TO THE LORD AND RETURNING THANKS?

1 Chronicles 16:34 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Chronicles 29:11-13; Psalm 9:1, 2; 36:5-10

The shortness of time is frequently urged as an incentive for seeking righteousness and making Christ our friend. This should not be the great motive with us; for it savors of selfishness. Is it necessary that the terrors of the day of God should be held before us, that we may be compelled to right action through fear? It ought not to be so.

Jesus is attractive. He is full of love, mercy, and compassion. He proposes to be our friend, to walk with us through all the rough pathways of life. He says to us, I am the Lord thy God; walk with Me, and I will fill thy path with light. Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, proposes to elevate to companionship with Himself those who come to Him with their burdens, their weaknesses, and their cares. He will count them as His children, and finally give them an inheritance of more value than the empires of kings, a crown of glory richer than has ever decked the brow of the most exalted earthly monarch.

(10) WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM WHEN, IN THE LAST DAYS, THE WORLD IS PLAGUED WITH CALAMITIES AND PESTILENCES?

Psalm 91:2, 3 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My

God, in Him I will trust." Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
And from the perilous pestilence.

Note: Webster's Dictionary defines "pestilences" as: 1: a contagious or infectious epidemic disease that is virulent and devastating. Example is especially : BUBONIC PLAGUE 2: something that is destructive or pernicious."

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 91:4-16; Ezekiel 12:16

“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” Psalm 34:7. God commissions His angels to save His chosen ones from calamity, to guard them from “the pestilence that walketh in darkness” and “the destruction that wasteth at noonday.” Psalm 91:6. Again and again have angels talked with men as a man speaketh with a friend, and led them to places of security. Again and again have the encouraging words of angels renewed the drooping spirits of the faithful and, carrying their minds above the things of earth, caused them to behold by faith the white robes, the crowns, the palm branches of victory, which overcomers will receive when they surround the great white throne.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

As I look around I _____ that the signs Christ gave and their exponential increase. I _____ that the world is being destroyed by diseases and natural disasters.

I _____ that the strained relations between nations causing wars and rumors of wars. I _____ that God has held the four winds of great and final strife in check to provide me time to learn of what is coming and prepare.

I _____ that the Lord has provided these prophecies and that when the rest of the mankind's hearts are failing them, I _____ that I do not have to be terrified as I see them come to pass.

As the birth pangs of earth's final moments approach, I _____ that I may be among the "offspring" of the woman--those who are faithful to all of God's commandments.

I _____ that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, I will be faithful to share the gospel and warn others of what is to come.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS - PRAYERS

[illegible]



6 - Betrayal and Persecution

(1) WHAT WARNING GIVEN BY CHRIST DID PAUL LATER ECHO BY DESCRIBING WHAT ALL WHO FOLLOWS CHRIST WILL SUFFER?

2 Timothy 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

RELATED TEXTS: John 16:33; Romans 8:17; Matthew 23:34; Luke 21:12

Since the entrance of sin there has been “enmity” between Christ and Satan, between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of this world, and between those who serve God and those who

serve Satan (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:7–17). This conflict will go on until “the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ” (Rev. 11:15; Dan. 2:44; 7:27).

Paul warned the believers that “through much tribulation” they must “enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

Citizens of the heavenly kingdom may expect to have tribulation in this world (John 16:33), for their characters, ideals, aspirations, and conduct all bear silent witness against the evil of this present world (1 John 3:12). The foes of the heavenly kingdom persecuted Christ, the King, and they may be expected to persecute His loyal subjects (John 15:20). “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12).

(2) WHAT KIND OF TREATMENT DID CHRIST SAY THAT HIS TRUE FOLLOWERS CAN EXPECT?

Luke 21:12 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues [churches] and prisons....

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 21:16-19; Matthew 10:17, 18; Mark 13:9, 10

All who in that evil day would fearlessly serve God according to the dictates of conscience, will need courage, firmness,

and a knowledge of God and His word; for those who are true to God will be persecuted, their motives will be impugned, their best efforts misinterpreted, and their names cast out as evil. Satan will work with all his deceptive power to influence the heart and becloud the understanding, to make evil appear good, and good evil. The stronger and purer the faith of God's people, and the firmer their determination to obey Him, the more fiercely will Satan strive to stir up against them the rage of those who, while claiming to be righteous, trample upon the law of God. It will require the firmest trust, the most heroic purpose, to hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints.

(3) FOR WHAT PURPOSE DID JESUS SAY THAT THIS TYPE OF PERSECUTION IS ALLOWED?

Luke 21:12, 13 ...You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.

Related Texts: Psalm 119:46; Matthew 24:14; 2 Timothy 1:8; Revelation 12:17; 20:4

The time is not far off when the people of God will be called upon to give their testimony before the rulers of the earth.

Not one in twenty has a realization of what rapid strides we are making toward the great crisis in our history.... There is no time for vanity, for trifling, for engaging the mind in unimportant matters.

Kings, governors, and great men will hear of you through the reports of those who are at enmity with you, and your faith and character will be misrepresented before them. But those who are falsely accused will have an opportunity to appear in the presence of their accusers to answer for themselves. They will have the privilege of bringing the light before those who are called the great men of the earth, and if you have studied the Bible, if you are ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, your enemies will not be able to gainsay your wisdom.

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with, but let us not forget that the three great powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His purposes to pass.

(4) WHEN QUESTIONED BY SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS, WHAT DID THE LORD PROMISE TO PUT WITHIN

OUR MOUTH THAT OUR ADVERSARIES WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTRADICT?

Luke 21:14, 15 Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

RELATED TEXTS: Jeremiah 1:9; Proverbs 2:6; Ephesians 6:19

Persecution will spread the light. The servants of Christ will be brought before the great men of the world, who, but for this, might never hear the gospel. The truth has been misrepresented to these men. They have listened to false charges concerning the faith of Christ's disciples. Often their only means of learning its real character is the testimony of those who are brought to trial for their faith.

The Lord Jesus will give the disciples a tongue and wisdom that their adversaries can neither gainsay nor resist. Those who could not by reasoning overcome satanic delusions will bear an affirmative testimony that will baffle supposedly learned men. Words will come from the lips of the unlearned with such convincing power and wisdom that conversions will be made to the truth. Thousands will be converted under their testimony.

(5) WITH CONSCIENCE SEARED, WHAT THREE THINGS WILL MANY WHO FALSELY CLAIM CHRIST DO, AND THUS BECOME, AMONG THE WORST PERSECUTORS OF GOD'S FAITHFUL?

1Timothy 4:1, 2 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 20:30; 1 Timothy 1:19; 2 Timothy 4:3, 4; 1 John 2:19

Traitors to Truth Become Her Worst Persecutors. Much so-called Christianity passes for genuine, faithful soundness, but it is because those who profess it have no persecution to endure for the truth's sake. When the day comes when the law of God is made void, and the church is sifted by the fiery trials that are to try all that live upon the earth, a great proportion of those who are supposed to be genuine will give heed to seducing spirits, and will turn traitors and betray sacred trusts. They will prove our very worst persecutors. "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;" and many will give heed to seducing spirits.

(6) WHO WILL BE AMONG THOSE THAT SATAN WILL INSPIRE TO HATE, BETRAY, AND EVEN KILL US?

Luke 21:16, 17 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:10; 10:21, 22; Micah 7:5, 6; Mark 13:12

So bitter would be the enmity to the gospel that even the tenderest earthly ties would be disregarded. The Disciples of Christ would be betrayed to death by the members of their own households. “Ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake,” He added; “but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Mark 13:13. But He bade them not to expose themselves unnecessarily to persecution. He Himself often left one field of labor for another, in order to escape from those who were seeking His life. When He was rejected at Nazareth, and His own townsmen tried to kill Him, He went down to Capernaum, and there the people were astonished at His teaching; “for His word was with power.” Luke 4:32. So His servants were not to be discouraged by persecution, but to seek a place where they could still labor for the salvation of souls.

(7) WHO ARE WE NOT WORTHY OF RECEIVING IF WE DO NOT REMAIN FAITHFUL EVEN AMIDST PERSECUTION BY THOSE DEAREST ON EARTH TO US?

Matthew 10:37 He who loves father or mother more than Me (Christ) is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15; Philippians 3:8; Deuteronomy 13:6-8; Luke 14:26, 27

Of all persecution the hardest to bear is variance in the home, the estrangement of dearest earthly friends. But Jesus declares, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."

We shall find that we must let loose of all hands except the hand of Jesus Christ. Friends will prove treacherous, and will betray us. Relatives, deceived by the enemy, will think they do God service in opposing us and putting forth the utmost efforts to bring us into hard places, hoping we will deny our faith. But we may trust our hand in the hand of Christ amid darkness and peril.

(8) WHAT MEASUREMENT OF BLESSINGS CAN WE CLAIM WHEN WE HAVE TO FLEA HEART WRENCHING PERSECUTION FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE?

Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

RELATED TEXTS: Mark 10:29, 30; Luke 18:29, 30

Jesus is obviously speaking in figurative language. Approximately a year and a half before this, Jesus had observed that those who do the will of His Father in heaven are His “mother” and “sister” and “brother” (see Matt. 12:46–50). The “hundredfold” that Christians receive in this life consists in the joy of Christian fellowship and in the more real and intense satisfaction that comes with service for God. Paul speaks of “having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor. 6:10).

Natural affection for relatives and friends should not lead any soul who sees the light to reject the light, to dishonor God the Father and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Every possible excuse for disobedience will be framed by men who choose, as many

did in Christ's day, the favor of men rather than the favor of God. If one chooses wife or children, father or mother, before Christ, that choice will stand through eternal ages, with all its weight of responsibility.

The greater man's influence for good, under the control of the Spirit of God, the more determined will be the enemy to indulge his envy and jealousy toward him by religious persecution. But all heaven is on the side of Christ, not of antichrist. Those who love God and are willing to be partakers with Christ in His sufferings, God will honor.

(9) WHAT ETERNAL REWARD CAN WE CLAIM IF WE DO NOT COMPROMISE DUE TO SELF-PRESERVATION OR FAMILY PRESSURE?

Matthew 16:25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 16:24; 10:38, 39; 5:11; 1 Corinthians 2:9

The word for "life," here, is *psuchē* (see Matt. 10:28), frequently translated "soul" (Mark 8:36, 37). He who is bent on saving and preserving his physical life here will lose his "soul," or eternal life. He who is willing to sacrifice himself in service for God in this world will preserve his "soul" and enjoy life

everlasting in the world to come. Thus “the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation”; “the law of self-serving is the law of self-destruction”. He who is ready to cast away everything most dear in this life that stands in the way of his spiritual growth will find at length that he has lost nothing worthwhile and that he has gained the true riches (see Phil. 3:8–10). The world looks upon the way of self-denial and self-sacrifice as foolishness and waste, even as a small child might regard the casting of good grain into the ground a senseless waste. But the future world will reveal that the devotee of this present world was indeed foolish and that the child of God was truly wise. The final loss and destruction of the “soul” is described in Matt. 10:28.

(10) WHAT ULTIMATE REWARD CAN WE CLAIM WHEN WE ENDURE PERSECUTION AND HATRED FOR PUTTING GOD AS OUR SUPREME PRIORITY AND AUTHORITY?

Matthew 10:22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

RELATED TEXTS: Mark 8:35, 36; John 12:25

Obviously, the one who falls out of a race before reaching the goal can never

expect to receive the prize. To enter the race and to remain in it are both essential to winning the race. It is not sufficient to begin in the Christian way, we must remain in it “until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). We must “steadfastly set” our faces to the completion of the course marked out for us by God, even as did Jesus, “the author and finisher of our faith” (see Luke 9:51; Heb. 12:2).

(11) HOW WILL GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE THE ABILITY TO REMAIN FAITHFUL AND OVERCOME IN SUCH DREADFUL CIRCUMSTANCES?

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

RELATED TEXTS: John 15:5; Revelation 2:26; 3:5; 3:11, 12, 21

The disciples were not endowed with the courage and fortitude of the martyrs until such grace was needed. Then the Saviour’s promise was fulfilled. When Peter and John testified before the Sanhedrin council, men “marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13. Of Stephen it is written that “all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an

angel.” Men “were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.” Acts 6:15, 10. And Paul, writing of his own trial at the court of the Caesars, says, “At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me.... But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” 2 Timothy 4:16, 17, R. V.

(12) WHEN TESTED IN SUCH HORRENDOUS SITUATIONS, WHAT ARE WE TOLD NOT TO DO, AND WHAT REWARD WILL THE LORD GIVE TO THE FAITHFUL?

Revelation 2:10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 21:13; Daniel 3:16-18; Matthew 10:28

It was through one who declared himself to be a “brother, and companion in tribulation” (Revelation 1:9), that Christ revealed to His church

the things that they must suffer for His sake. Looking down through long centuries of darkness and superstition, the aged exile saw multitudes suffering martyrdom because of their love for the truth. But he saw also that He who sustained His early witnesses would not forsake His faithful followers during the centuries of persecution that they must pass through before the close of time. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer," the Lord declared; "behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation: ... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelation 2:10.

And to all the faithful ones who were striving against evil, John heard the promises made: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Verse 7; 3:5, 21.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

Because of the conflict between good and evil I _____ that the righteous will suffer persecution as Christ did.

I _____ that in earth's final moments we may be called to testify of our faith before governors and presidents and God will use this to reach many for His kingdom.

I _____ that the Lord has promised to give us the words to say and the courage to say them when the time is at hand.

I _____ that the Bible warns that we may receive persecution from those claiming to be Christians and even from those with whom we hold the strongest of earthly ties—our beloved friends and loved ones.

I _____ that God will abide in me that I may remain faithful not matter

the earthly cost and one day will receive a crown of life and be with the Lord forever never having to bear persecution again.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS - PRAYERS

[illegible]



7 - The Prevalence of Lawlessness in the Last Days

(1) WITH WHAT TWO PRINCIPLES DID CHRIST SUMMERIZE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WHICH ARE THE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S CHARACTER AND ETERNAL GOVERNMENT?

Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

RELATED TEXTS: Deuteronomy 11:22;
John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17

The first four commandments enjoin upon man the duty of loving God supremely and the last six present the requirement of loving our neighbors as ourselves. How many are truly, sincerely, and wholeheartedly doing this?

The Lord is coming in a little while, are we performing the duties that result from righteousness? Love is the basis of godliness. No man has love to God, no matter what his profession may be, unless he has unselfish love for his brother. As we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We shall not feel like letting the soul who is in the greatest peril, and in the greatest need, go unwarned, unlabored for, and uncared for.

There must first be love in the heart before a person can, in the strength and by the grace of Christ, begin to observe the precepts of God's law (Rom. 8:3, 4). Obedience without love is as impossible as it is worthless. But where love is present a person will automatically set out to order his life in harmony with the will of God as expressed in His commandments. (See John 14:15; 15:10).

(2) WHAT DOES THE LORD DESIRE AND PROMISE TO DO THAT WE MAY DEMONSTRATE LOVE TO HIM AND OTHERS?

Jeremiah 31:33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

RELATED TEXTS: Hebrews 10:16, 17; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Deuteronomy 30:6

The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart.

Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth “the fruits of the Spirit” [Galatians 5:22, 23]. Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked.

There are two errors against which the children of God—particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace—especially need to guard. The first is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring

themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility.

The opposite and no less dangerous error is, that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption. If the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience.

(3) WHEN GOD'S LAW IS WRITTEN ON OUR HEARTS, HOW WILL OUR LOVE FOR HIM BE JOYFULLY DEMONSTRATED AND THEN REVEALED TO THE WORLD?

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments. ...

John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

RELATED TEXTS: 1 John 2:3-5; 4:20: John 14:23; 1 Peter 1:23

Textual evidence is divided between "Keep my commandments" and the reading "you will keep my commandments." In the latter reading

the Greek verb is in the future tense, which may also be translated as an imperative, as in Matt. 22:37, 39. If translated thus, there is little difference between the readings. However, the indicative “you will keep” brings out the significant thought that obedience is the natural result of love. The parallel statement in John 14:23 are clearly in the indicative mood, and hence supports this thought.

Notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new covenant promise is fulfilled....

Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship.

(4) HOW LONG WILL THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS AND HOLY PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S TEN COMMANDMENT LAW LOCATED IN HIS WORD REMAIN IN EFFECT?

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 119:160;
Matthew 24:35; Deuteronomy 9:10;
Malachi 3:6

Many religious teachers say that Christ, by His death, freed us from the law; but not all take this view.... The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and man. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." The character of God is righteousness and truth, and such is the nature of His law. The psalmist says, "Thy law is the truth"; "all thy commandments are righteousness." And the apostle Paul declares, "The law is holy, and the commandments holy, and just, and good." Such a law, an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.

(5) HOW DOES THE BIBLE DEFINE SIN?

1John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. KJV

RELATED TEXTS: James 4:17; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Numbers 15:31; 1 Samuel 15:24

The only definition we find in the Bible for sin is that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). The Word of God declares, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “There is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:12). Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.

Sin is the transgression of God’s law, and the penalty of sin is death (Romans 6:23). There would have been no discord in heaven or in the earth if sin had never entered. Disobedience to God’s law has brought all the misery that has existed among His creatures. Why will not men be reconciled to God?

(6) ACCORDING TO MOSES, WHAT ARE WE DEMONSTRATING TOWARDS THE LORD WHEN WE BREAK HIS LAWS?

Deuteronomy 31:27 for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today,

while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?

RELATED TEXTS: Deuteronomy 31:26; Psalm 64:2; Proverbs 17:11; Hebrews 3:15; 1 Samuel 15:23

The work of apostasy begins in some secret rebellion of the heart against the requirements of God's law. Unholy desires, unlawful ambitions, are cherished and indulged, and unbelief and darkness separate the soul from God. If we do not overcome these evils, they will overcome us.

Obedience to the law is essential, not only to our salvation, but to our own happiness and the happiness of all with whom we are connected. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165), says the Inspired Word. Yet finite man will present to the people this holy, just, and good law, this law of liberty, which the Creator Himself has adapted to the wants of man, as a yoke of bondage, a yoke which no man can bear. But it is the sinner who regards the law as a grievous yoke; it is the transgressor that can see no beauty in its precepts. For the carnal mind "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

(7) WHAT DID CHRIST WARN WILL ABOUND IN THE LAST DAYS AS A SIGN OF HIS SOON COMING AND WHAT IS THE RESULT?

Matthew 24:12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 7:23; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Hebrews 1:9

In these last days, when iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold, God will have a people to glorify His name, and stand as reprovers of unrighteousness. They are to be a “peculiar people,” who will be true to the law of God when the world shall seek to make void its precepts; and when the converting power of God works through His servants, the hosts of darkness will array themselves in bitter and determined opposition.... There will be a constant conflict from the time of our determination to serve the God of heaven, until we are delivered out of this present evil world. There is no release from this war.

We must seek to have our faith strengthened. The iniquity that abounds must not for one moment lessen our faith and love for God or weaken our trust in His sure promises, else some mighty storm of temptation will sweep

us away from the true foundation. We have a great work to do, and we need greater faith.... Through communion with God our faith will be strengthened, and the trial of our faith may prove our signal triumph.

(8) HOW DOES PAUL DESCRIBE SOME OF THE MANIFESTATIONS OF LAWLESSNESS THAT WILL PREVAIL IN THE PERILOUS TIMES OF THE LAST DAYS?

2Timothy 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

RELATED TEXTS: Romans 1:20-32

But how is that law disregarded! Behold the world today in open rebellion against God. This is in truth a forward generation, filled with ingratitude, formalism, insincerity, pride, and apostasy. Men neglect the Bible and hate truth. Jesus sees His law rejected,

His love despised, His ambassadors treated with indifference. He has spoken by His mercies, but these have been unacknowledged; He has spoken by warnings, but these have been unheeded. The temple courts of the human soul have been turned into places of unholy traffic. Selfishness, envy, pride, malice—all are cherished.... Those who believe that word just as it reads are held up to ridicule. There is a growing contempt for law and order, directly traceable to a violation of the plain commands of Jehovah.

(9) IN THE FINAL DAYS OF EARTH'S HISTORY, WHAT TWO CHARACTERISTICS SHOW GOD'S LAWS ARE STILL IN EFFECT, WILL DISTINGUISH GOD'S FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS, AND INFURIATES THE DEVIL?

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:12; 1:2, 9; John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:4

Today, as in the days of Elijah, the line of demarcation between God's commandment-keeping people and the worshipers of false gods is clearly drawn.

“How long halt ye between two opinions?” Elijah cried; “if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” (1 Kings 18:21). And the message for today is: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities” (Revelation 18:2–5).

God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law. Even now they are appearing in every nation, among every tongue and people; and in the hour of deepest apostasy, when Satan’s supreme effort is made to cause “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,” to receive, under penalty of death, the sign of allegiance to a false rest day, these faithful ones, “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke,” will “shine as lights in the world” (Revelation 13:16; Philippians 2:15). The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine.

(10) WHAT IS THE "TESTIMONY OF JESUS" WHICH VALIDATES THE EXISTENCE OF TRUE PROPHECY IN THE LAST DAYS?

Revelation 19:10 "...the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Related Texts: Revelation 12:17

Testimony of Jesus Christ. Or, "witness of Jesus Christ." In the Greek this phrase may be understood either as the "testimony" (or "witness") Christians bear concerning Jesus or as the "testimony" (or "witness") that originates with Jesus and is revealed to His church through the prophets. A comparison *between Rev 12:17 and 19:10* clearly favors the latter interpretation. There the "testimony of Jesus" is defined as the "spirit of prophecy," meaning that Jesus is witnessing to the church through the medium of prophecy.

(11) WHEN THE GOVERNMENT JOINS WITH RELIGIOUS POWERS TO INACT LAWS FORCING THE OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS TRADITION OVER THE KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDS, LIKE HIS EARLY APOSTLES, WHAT WILL BE THE RESPONSE OF GOD'S FAITHFUL?

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 4:19; Colossians 2:8; Matthew 15:3; Mark 7:9

This principle we in our day are firmly to maintain. The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God's witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with knowledge of His word.

We are to receive this word as supreme authority. We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God's word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A "Thus saith the Lord" is not to be set aside for a "Thus saith the church" or a "Thus saith the state." The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.

We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way. We are to go forward in Christ's name,

advocating the truths committed to us. If we are forbidden by men to do this work, then we may say, as did the apostles, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

(12) WHAT DID THE LORD PREDICT THE WORLD WOULD BECOME LIKE IN THE LAST MOMENTS OF EARTH'S HISTORY? (VS 37)

Matthew 24:37, 38 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 17:26-28; 2 Peter 3:3-7

The Bible declares that in the last days men will be absorbed in worldly pursuits, in pleasure and money-getting. They will be blind to eternal realities. Christ says, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be...". So it is today. Men are rushing on in the chase for gain and selfish indulgence as if there were no God, no heaven, and no hereafter.

In Noah's day the warning of the flood was sent to startle men in their wickedness and call them to repentance. So the message of Christ's soon coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities, that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord's table.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that the Ten Commandments are a practical description of what it means to love God and to love my fellow man; and I _____ that they are the foundation of God's character and government.

I _____ that because the Ten Commandments are the basis of God's character they are eternal and will never change.

I _____ that I am not capable of my own power or produce or show love by keeping the commandments. It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit, and I _____ that the Lord will write them upon my heart so that it will be my joy to reflect His glory.

I _____ that lawlessness—rebellion against God’s laws, will abound in the last days and is one of many signs of Christ soon coming. I _____ that these are increasing at an alarming rate in the world around me.

I _____ that the final test of God’s true people in the last days will be to remain faithful to all ten of God’s commands. I _____ that no matter the level of persecution or pressure, by His Spirit, I will remain loyal to God no matter the cost.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS



8 – The Abomination of Desolation and Beginning of Trouble

COMPILER'S NOTE: Some of the events of these lessons occur simultaneously, overlap, or may be expounded upon in future lessons to provide a more in depth understanding. In this stage of “The Abomination of Desolation and the Beginning of Trouble”, all the signs discussed in the previous lessons escalate to the next chaotic level. As a wakeup call, God increasingly withdraws His protective power and allows judgments of destruction to fall upon different parts of the globe. Power

hungry government leaders impose their arbitrary philosophies and methodologies. The masses are controlled economically, politically, socially, and spiritually by self-serving laws imposed by power-hungry leaders.

The “mother” church reunites with nations, kingdoms, and powers worldwide. Her goal is to reunite the civil powers of the world with her ecclesiastical power—the union lost at the close of the dark ages when she received her “deadly wound”. Civil power is regained by the submission of presidents, kings, and other rulers of the world to her influence. Her ecclesiastical powers are regained as the protestant world end their "protest" and reconciled with the mother church. This process of reestablishment of the Papacy's religious influence over the world is the healing of her wound. The Bible prophecy of Revelation 13:3 is fulfilled as the world "wonders" after the beast "the mother of harlots" led by the "man of perdition".

Earth's intense labor contractions will trigger some climactic event that will become the critical breaking point. As wickedness and the calamities of the world escalate, the religious majority will realize that God is withdrawing His protective power and allowing His judgments to fall. Most of this religious

majority, not realizing that it would be desecrating God's 4th commandment, will pressure their political leaders to impose laws to force the masses into Sunday worship as dictated by the Papacy. Their conviction will be that, by this forced worship, God will be appeased and withdraw the falling judgments.

This law of forced worship is the second application of the prophetic "abomination of desolation" of which Christ warned in Matthew 24. The "abomination" is the attempt to replace the day of worship in forth commandment of the holy law of God with an unholy substitute--the seventh-day Sabbath for the first day of the week. The persecution inflicted by this law will be progressive according to Revelation 13:11-18 and eventually leads to the attempted "desolation".

In the meantime the Lord will pour out His Holy Spirit in an event the Bible calls "the Latter Rain." This is how the 3 Angels Messages of Revelation 14 will go around the world with the "loud cry" of Revelation 18. God does not want even one child of His to perish, so the gospel and the truth about His law, and the 4th commandment in particular, will go to the entire world. Every human alive will be able to make an informed decision to

give allegiance in either worship to God or to the Beast power. This will usher in "The Great Time of Trouble", which is studied in a future lesson and further elaborates on some of the topics just introduced.

(1) WHEN THE APOSTATE CHURCH AND WORLD GOVERNMENTS UNITE CALLING FOR "PEACE AND SAFETY" FROM THE WIDESPREAD CALAMITIES, WHAT WILL COME UPON EARTH AS LABOR PAINS UPON A PREGNANT WOMAN?

1Thessalonians 5:3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

RELATED TEXTS: Ezekiel 7:25, 26; Revelation 18:7, 8; Luke 21:34, 35

Prophecy is fast fulfilling. More, much more, should be said about these tremendously important subjects. The day is at hand when the destiny of every soul will be fixed forever. This day of the Lord hastens on apace. The false watchmen are raising the cry, "All is well"; but the day of God is rapidly approaching. Its footsteps are so muffled that it does not arouse the world from the deathlike slumber into which it has fallen. While the watchmen cry, "Peace and safety," "sudden

destruction cometh upon them,” “and they shall not escape”; “for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.” It overtakes the pleasure-lover and the sinful man as a thief in the night. When all is apparently secure, and men retire to contented rest, then the prowling, stealthy, midnight thief steals upon his prey. When it is too late to prevent the evil, it is discovered that some door or window was not secured. “Be ye also ready: for in an such hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” (Luke 12:40 KJV).

We have reached the period foretold in these scriptures. The time of the end is come, the visions of the prophets are unsealed, and their solemn warnings point us to our Lord’s coming in glory as near at hand.

(2) OF WHAT THINGS DID GOD DIVINELY WARN NOAH, LOT, THE CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM, AND HIS FOLLOWERS IN THE END OF TIME?

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

RELATED TEXTS: Daniel 2:21, 22;
Deuteronomy 29:29; Psalm 25:14, 15

Those who had faith in His message for their time, and who acted out their faith, in obedience to His commandments, escaped the judgments that fell upon the disobedient and unbelieving. The word came to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me." Noah obeyed and was saved. The message came to Lot, "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city." (Genesis 7:1; 19:14). Lot placed himself under the guardianship of the heavenly messengers, and was saved. So Christ's disciples were given warning of the destruction of Jerusalem. Those who watched for the sign of the coming ruin, and fled from the city, escaped the destruction. So now we are given warning of Christ's second coming and of the destruction to fall upon the world. Those who heed the warning will be saved.

(3) AS IN THE DARK AGES, IN THE END OF TIME, WITH WHOM WILL THE PAPACY JOIN TO REGAIN HER CIVIL POWER AND EARTHLY AUTHORITY TO FORCE THE "WINE OF HER FORNIFICATION" ON ALL MANKIND?

Revelation 17:2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were

made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 13:7; 17:12, 17, 18; 18:9; Jeremiah 51:6-9

Kings of the earth, that is, the political powers of earth, which place their authority and resources at the disposal of the "great whore" [Revelation 17:5] and through which she designs to realize her ambition to slay all of God's people [Revelation 13:15] and to rule over the "inhabitants of the earth". The "kings of the earth" are her accomplices in crime. The alliance between apostate Christianity and the political powers of earth is the means by which Satan proposes to unite the world under his leadership.

Fornication is a figure of the illicit connection between the church and the world or between the church and the state. The church should be married to her Lord, but when she seeks the support of the state, she leaves her lawful spouse. By her new connection she commits spiritual fornication.

As a result of the course followed by their leaders, the inhabitants of the earth are deceived into cooperating with the policy of the "great whore" (Revelation 17:1). "Made drunk" (17:2), that is, completely intoxicated. The

normal powers of reason and judgment have been stupefied and the spiritual perception benumbed. Compare Jer. 51:7; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10; Rev. 13:3, 4, 7, 18; 14:8; 18:3; 19:20.

(4) WHAT DUAL PROPHETIC EVENT DID CHRIST WARN WOULD OCCUR AT THE TIME OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALM, AND WILL ALSO MARK THE BEGINNING OF TROUBLE IN THE END OF TIME?

Matthew 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

Related Texts: Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11

Among the Jews an idol or other heathen symbol was often termed an "abomination" (1 Kings 11:5, 7; 2 Kings 23:13) or something offensive from a religious point of view (Ex. 8:26; Gen. 43:32; 46:34). The parallel passage in Luke reads, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20). The event foretold is obviously the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70, at which time the symbols of pagan Rome were set up within the Temple area. When the Jewish rebellion under Bar Cocheba was

suppressed in A.D. 135, the Romans erected a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the site of the former Jewish Temple, and Jews were banned from the city of Jerusalem upon pain of death.

The ruin of Jerusalem was a symbol of the final ruin that shall overwhelm the world. The prophecies that received a partial fulfillment in the overthrow of Jerusalem have a more direct application to the last days. We are now standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. A crisis is before us, such as the world has never witnessed. And sweetly to us, as to the first disciples, comes the assurance that God's kingdom ruleth over all. The program of coming events is in the hands of our Maker. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge.

(5) WHAT TERM DID CHRIST USE TO DESCRIBE THE DESECRATION OF GOD'S HOLY SANCTUARY IN JERUSALEM, AND WILL HAVE A DUAL FULFILMENT AT THE END OF TIME IN THE DEFILEMENT OF GOD'S HOLY DAY?

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

RELATED TEXTS: Daniel 11:31; 8:24; Ezekiel 7:20, 21

As the controversy extends into new fields and the minds of the people are called to God's downtrodden law, Satan is astir. The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it. The clergy will put forth almost superhuman efforts to shut away the light lest it should shine upon their flocks. By every means at their command they will endeavor to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and, in this work, Papists and Protestants unite. As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment keepers [the enactment of this law marks the final abomination of desolation]. They will be threatened with fines and imprisonment, and some will be offered positions of influence, and other rewards and advantages, as inducements to renounce their faith. But their steadfast answer is: "Show us from the word of God our error"—the same plea that was made by Luther under similar circumstances. Those who are arraigned before the courts make a strong vindication of the truth, and some who hear them are led to take

their stand to keep all the commandments of God. Thus light will be brought before thousands who otherwise would know nothing of these truths. *[See lesson 13 and the appendix for the significance of the day of worship].*

(6) WHEN VERBAL THREATS BY THE "IMAGE" OF THE BEAST POWER ARE NOT EFFECTIVE TO MANIPULATE GOD'S FAITHFUL, AND A CIVIL LAW FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP IS PASSED--THE "ABOMINATION", WHAT WILL BE THE FIRST PENALTY INFLICTED?

Revelation 13:17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 13:16

The time is coming when we cannot sell at any price. The decree will soon go forth prohibiting men to buy or sell of any man save him that hath the mark of the beast. In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be forbidden to buy or sell.

Religious powers, allied to heaven by profession, and claiming to have the

characteristics of a lamb, will show by their acts that they have the heart of a dragon and that they are instigated and controlled by Satan. The time is coming when God's people will feel the hand of persecution because they keep holy the seventh day.

Conscientious obedience to the word of God will be treated as rebellion. Blinded by Satan, the parent will exercise harshness and severity toward the believing child; the master or mistress will oppress the commandment-keeping servant. Affection will be alienated; children will be disinherited and driven from home. The words of Paul will be literally fulfilled: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12.

As the defenders of truth refuse to honor the Sunday-sabbath, some of them will be thrust into prison, some will be exiled, and some will be treated as slaves. To human wisdom all this now seems impossible; but as the restraining Spirit of God shall be withdrawn from men, and they shall be under the control of Satan, who hates the divine precepts, there will be strange developments. The heart can be very cruel when God's fear and love are removed.

(7) WHAT PRACTICAL WARNING DID CHRIST GIVE, BOTH TO THE JUDEAN

CHRISTIANS AND TO THOSE IN THE END OF TIME, TO AVOID DESTRUCTION WHEN THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION OCCURS?

Matthew 24:16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:17-20; Hebrews 11:7; Jeremiah 6:1

The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. *[See later lesson for details].*

(8) WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THOSE WHO DO NOT HEED THE PROPHETIC WARNINGS ABOUT EARTH'S FINAL EVENTS THAT, IN LOVE, GOD HAS PROVIDED?

Luke 21:26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 6:15, 16; 14:9-11; Hebrews 10:26-29

It will not be long until the gathering storm will burst upon the world that is so asleep in sin.... When the earth is reeling to and fro like a drunkard, when the heavens are shaking, and the great day of the Lord has come, who shall be able to stand? One object they behold in trembling agony from which they will try in vain to escape. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him" (Revelation 1:7). The unsaved utter wild imprecations to dumb nature—their god: "Mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne' " (Revelation 6:16).

(9) WHEN PERSECUTION AND DISTRESS FROM THE DESOLATION THAT CHRIST PREDICTED HAPPENS, WHAT ARE THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THE LORD THEIR ROCK TOLD NOT TO DO?

***Isaiah 44:8 Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.'* "**

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 41:10; Proverbs 3:25, 26

Angels of God are watching over us. Upon this earth there are thousands and tens of thousands of heavenly messengers commissioned by the Father to prevent Satan from obtaining any

advantage over those who refuse to walk in the path of evil. And these angels who guard God's children on earth are in communication with the Father in heaven. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones," Christ said; "for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt 18:10).

The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied.

(10) WHEN THE RIGHTEOUS REFUSE TO BREAK GOD'S COMMANDMENTS AND HAVE TO FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS FOR REFUGE, WHAT BASIC PHYSICAL NECESSITIES ARE PROMISED TO THEM?

Isaiah 33:16 He will dwell on high; His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; Bread will be given him, His water will be sure.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 33:15; 41:17; Psalm 34:10; Luke 12:29-31

While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the

righteous and supply their wants. To him that “walketh righteously” is the promise: “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.”

In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be forbidden to buy or sell. It will finally be decreed that they shall be put to death. See Revelation 13:11–17. But to the obedient is given the promise, “He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” Isaiah 33:16. By this promise the children of God will live.

(11) WHAT PROMISE OF PHYSICAL PROTECTION CAN THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL CLAIM WHEN THE FINAL ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION TAKES PLACE?

Psalm 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 9:4; Psalm 71:3; 91:1-16

Josephus, the Historian from that time period, said (War vi. 9. 3 [420]), more than one million people perished during and after the siege of the city and 97,000 more were taken captive. However, during a temporary respite, when the Romans unexpectedly raised their siege of Jerusalem, all the Christians fled, and it is said that not one of them lost his life. Their place of retreat was Pella, a city in the foothills east of the Joran River, about 17 mi. (27 km.) south of the Lake of Galilee.

Oh, that we could all realize the nearness of heaven to earth! When the earthborn children know it not, they have the angels of light as their companions; for the heavenly messengers are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation.

A silent witness guards every soul that lives, seeking to win and draw him to Christ. The angels never leave the tempted one a prey to the enemy who would destroy the souls of men if permitted to do so. As long as there is hope, until they resist the Holy Spirit to their eternal ruin, men are guarded by heavenly intelligences.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the

importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that prophecy is fulfilling and the day of the Lord is fast approaching. In the midst of perilous pestilence and exponentially increasing natural disasters I hear the world calling for “Peace and safety” and the path of destruction is clearly before us.

In the news and all around I _____ that polarization is taking place between the spiritual and worldly things.

I _____ that Satan is cleverly uniting the civil powers of the earth under the banner of the “man of perdition”, who has a form of godliness but denies the power thereof, in an attempt to unite the world under his leadership and ultimate control.

I _____ that the purpose of this plan is to deceive the masses into the breaking of the one commandment God has told all mankind to “Remember” in honor and loyalty to Him.

I _____ that the stage is being set for forced false worship by civil legislation and will bring about this plan which the Bible calls the “abomination of desolation”.

I _____ that God's love is revealed in these prophecies to me so that when the economic persecution comes and escalates to the threat of death I can be prepared.

***I _____ that, by the grace of Christ
and my love for Him, I will remain
faithful to all of His commandments
and be among those who give the
faithful testimony of Jesus to the world.***

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS

[illegible]



9 - The Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit

COMPILER'S NOTE: The “Abomination of Desolation” will be a wakeup call to the sleeping church which is represented by the five wise virgins of the parable of Matthew twenty-five. Those that have been preparing their hearts, seeking the Lord, and asking for the Latter Rain of the Spirit will be woken up. Those receiving this special anointing of the Holy Spirit will be the ones empowered in a supernatural way to, in holy boldness, take the gospel of the three angels messages to the world with exponential results.

(1) WHAT DOES GOD GIVE OUR LAND TO PRODUCE FOOD AND IS SYMBOLIC OF THE OUTPOURING OF HIS SPIRIT FOR THE HARVEST OF SOULS IN EARTH'S FINAL MOMENTS?

Deuteronomy 11:14 then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil.

RELATED TEXTS: Leviticus 26:4; Jeremiah 5:24; Joel 2:23

The first rain. This was the autumn rain, which fell at the time of planting the winter crops, to sprout the seed and give it a good start before the cold of winter set in. It fell in the eighth month, our late autumn (see Ezra 10:9, 13). In a land dependent on rain the seed would not sprout unless the rain fell in its season (Lev. 26:4).

The latter rain. This fell in the spring before the harvest, during our months of March and early April, and brought the crop to full maturity.

In the time of the end, when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls

in Eastern lands at seed-time and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The out-pouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time, the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church, that will be the latter rain.

(2) AS HE DID TO THE EARLY CHURCH, WHAT WILL GOD IMPART TO HIS LAST DAY CHURCH BY HIS SPIRIT THAT WE MAY BECOME EFFECTIVE WITNESSES IN TAKING THE "LOUD CRY" OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH?

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Related Texts: Luke 10:19; Acts 6:8; Micah 3:8; Zechariah 4:6

For the carrying on of His work, Christ did not choose the learning or eloquence of the Jewish Sanhedrin or the power of Rome. Passing by the self-righteous Jewish teachers, the Master Worker chose humble, unlearned men to proclaim the truths that were to

move the world....That they might have success in their work they were to be given the power of the Holy Spirit. Not by human might or human wisdom was the gospel to be proclaimed, but by the power of God.

We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the day of Pentecost. If they needed the Spirit's power at that time, we need it more today. All manner of false doctrines, heresies, and deceptions are misleading the minds of men; and without the Spirit's aid, our efforts to present divine truth will be in vain.

At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the "latter rain," or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.

(3) WHAT HISTORIC DAY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH MARKED THE POWERFUL MANIFESTATION OF THE FORMER OR EARLY RAIN?

Acts 2:1-4 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one

accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 2:41; 20:16

At the end of time, the work will be similar to that of the Day of Pentecost. As the “former rain” was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the upspringing of the precious seed, so the “latter rain” will be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest. “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Hosea 6:3. “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.” Joel 2:23. “In the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh.” “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Acts 2:17, 21.

The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are “the times of refreshing” to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus.” Acts 3:19, 20.

(4) WHAT IS OUR PART TO DO IN THE CONVERSION PROCESS THAT WE MAY RECEIVE THE "REFRESHING" OF THE SPIRIT FROM THE LORD?

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 2:38, 39;
Matthew 4:17; Luke 24:47

A solemn responsibility rests upon those who know the truth, that all their works shall correspond with their faith, and that their lives shall be refined and sanctified, and they be prepared for the

work that must rapidly be done in these closing days of the message. They have no time or strength to spend in the indulgence of appetite. The words should come to us now with impelling earnestness: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3:19. There are many among us who are deficient in spirituality and who, unless they are wholly converted, will certainly be lost. Can you afford to run the risk?

Let everyone examine himself to see whether he be in the faith. Let the people of God repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. Let them ascertain wherein they have failed to walk in the way that God has marked out, wherein they have failed to purify their souls by taking heed to His counsels.

(5) TO WHOM DOES GOD GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Acts 5:32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 5:29; Romans 6:16; 1 Peter 1:2

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service.

We must pray as the apostles prayed when the Holy Spirit was poured upon them. We need a baptism of the Spirit of God. We are not safe for one hour while we are failing to render obedience to the Word of God.

(6) IN ADDITION TO SINCERE REPENTANCE AND OBEDIENCE, WHAT IS A THIRD CRITICAL ASPECT OF PREPARING TO RECEIVE THE LATTER RAIN OF THE SPIRIT?

Zechariah 10:1 Ask the LORD for rain In the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, Grass in the field for everyone.

RELATED TEXTS: James 5:16; Joel 2:23; Matthew 7:7, 8

Through the merits of Christ we have access to the throne of Infinite Power. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all

things?” Romans 8:32. The Father gave His Spirit without measure to His Son, and we also may partake of its fullness. Jesus says, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” Luke 11:13. “If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.” “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” John 14:14; 16:24.

The first disciples went forth preaching the word. They revealed Christ in their lives. And the Lord worked with them, “confirming the word with signs following.” Mark 16:20. These disciples prepared themselves for their work. Before the day of Pentecost they met together, and put away all differences. They were of one accord. They believed Christ’s promise that the blessing would be given, and they prayed in faith. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely; they were weighted with the burden for the salvation of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.

So it may be now. Instead of man’s speculations, let the word of God be

preached. Let Christians put away their dissensions, and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them in faith ask for the blessing, and it will come. The outpouring of the Spirit in apostolic days was the “former rain,” and glorious was the result. But the “latter rain” will be more abundant. Joel 2:23.

(7) WHAT IS WITHHELD FROM THOSE WHO REBEL IN SPIRITUAL ADULTERY AGAINST GOD BY PLACING IDOLS OF THIS WORLD ABOVE HIM?

Jeremiah 3:3 Therefore the showers have been withheld, And there has been no latter rain. You have had a harlot's forehead; You refuse to be ashamed.

RELATED TEXTS: Jeremiah 14:22; 5:3; 6:15; Isaiah 5:6; Amos 4:7

Many and varied are the idols which we cherish; idols that engross the mind and harden the heart, so that sacred things are not rightly valued. Oh that the lessons given to ancient Israel might so impress our hearts and affect our lives that we would fully turn from idols, to serve the living God.

It is impossible for man to love God with all his heart and yet to have other gods before the Lord. This supreme love to God does not consist in a mere

acknowledgment of his universal power, and the offering of a prescribed form of worship to him, while the heart finds delight in serving idols. Self-love, love of the world, or an undue affection for any created thing, is idolatry in the sight of God, and separates the affections from him. God requires the heart's best and holiest affections, and he will accept nothing less. He must reign supreme in the mind and heart.

(8) FOR WHAT IS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER WAITING PATIENTLY, THAT HE MAY RECEIVE THE PRECIOUS FRUIT OF THE EARTH?

James 5:7, 8 ... See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 8:15; Galatians 5:22, 23; 5:5

The lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ's parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not

appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death.

Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude.

Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God.

Unless the members of God's church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping. Unless they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need.

(9) WHAT IS THE LORD WILLING AND ANXIOUS TO DO THROUGH HIS SPIRIT-FILLED FOLLOWERS WHEN THE HARVEST IS RIPE?

***Mark 4:29 ...when the grain ripens,
immediately he puts in the sickle,
because the harvest has come."***

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:14-17;
Joel 3:13, 14

The third angel's message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place.... Today you are to have your vessel purified, that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord—fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Instead of living in expectation of some special season of excitement, we are wisely to improve present opportunities, doing that which must be done in order that souls may be saved. Instead of exhausting the powers of our mind in speculations in regard to the times and seasons which the Lord has placed in His own power, and withheld from men, we are to yield ourselves to the control of

the Holy Spirit, to do present duties, to give the bread of life, unadulterated with human opinions, to souls who are perishing for the truth.

(10) WHAT IS THE "FRUIT" THE FATHER LONGS TO IMPART WITHIN US THAT WE MAY RECEIVE THE LATTER RAIN AND TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD?

Galatians 5:22, 23, 25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ... If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 1:3; 92:14; John 15:5

Christ declares: "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." John 15:8. God has endowed us with faculties and has entrusted us with talents in order that we may use them for Him. To every man is given his work—not merely work in his fields of corn and wheat, but earnest, persevering work for the salvation of souls.

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives

them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence.

We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door.

(11) WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE FINALLY SOUGHT AND RECEIVED THE LATTER RAIN OF HIS SPIRIT, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ALL THE EARTH THROUGH THESE MESSENGERS?

Revelation 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 60:1-3; Matthew 5:14-16

The end of all things is at hand. God is moving upon every mind that is open to

receive the impressions of His Holy Spirit. He is sending our messengers that they may give the warning in every locality. God is testing the devotion of His churches and their willingness to render obedience to the Spirit's guidance.

Knowledge is to be increased. The messengers of Heaven are to be seen running to and fro, seeking in every possible way to warn the people of the coming judgments and presenting the glad tidings of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. The standard of righteousness is to be exalted. The Spirit of God is moving upon men's hearts, and those who respond to its influence will become lights in the world. Everywhere they are seen going forth to communicate to others the light they have received as they did after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And as they let their light shine, they receive more and more of the Spirit's power. The earth is lighted with the glory of God.

This message will close with power and strength far exceeding the midnight cry. Servants of God, endowed with power from on high, with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, go forth to proclaim the message from heaven.

(12) HOW DOES THIS VERSE DESCRIBE THE SPIRIT-FILLED PROCLAMATION OF THE FINAL WARNING MESSAGES?

Revelation 18:2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:7, 9

The prophecies of the eighteenth of Revelation will soon be fulfilled. During the proclamation of the third angel's message, "another angel" is to "come down from heaven, having great power" and the earth is to be "lightened with his glory" [Revelation 18:1]. The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously and universally bless consecrated human instrumentalities, that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and testimony, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with His unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea.

Those who have held the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end will be wide awake during the time that the third angel's message is proclaimed with great power. During the loud cry, the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation so

abundantly that light shall be communicated to every city and town. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of salvation. So abundantly will the renewing Spirit of God have crowned with success the intensely active agencies, that the light of present truth will be seen flashing everywhere.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that the symbolism between literal rain and the rain of the Spirit as it happened in the early church, and how it will happen in God's true church in the final moments of earth's history.

I _____ that is only by the power received by the Holy Spirit that equips the human vessel to effectively share the light of the gospel with others and I desire this even now in my life.

I _____ that Christ uses humble and God qualifies them to proclaim the gospel.

***I _____ that I am among those who
go forth filled with the latter rain
proclaiming the loud cry in earth's final
moments.***

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS

[illegible]



10 - The Loud Cry of the First Angel

COMPILER'S NOTE: We are told in Matthew 24:14 that the gospel will be preached to the whole world, then the end will come. What message is so significant and must be taken to the entire globe? Revelation 14:6-13 contains the messages that are of such great importance. They are God's last plea of love to His earthly children in effort to prevent our deception and eternal destruction. We are told in Revelation 18:2 that these messages will go out as a "loud cry" to the world. It is God's longing that every earthly child to be spared from destruction (2 Peter 3:9). In this lesson we will see how the great

controversy between good and evil began, has continued, and will close over the issue of worship.

The original word used for “angel” means messenger. = **G32** *From ἀγγέλλω aggelō (probably derived from G71; compare G34; to bring tidings); a messenger; especially an “angel”; by implication a pastor: - angel, messenger. (Strong’s Concordance).*

Will you accept this warning and choose allegiance to Him? Will you be ready for His return? Will you be one of His "Angels" to take this message of love and warning to the rest of the world?

(1) WHAT MESSAGE OF GOD'S KINGDOM DID CHRIST SAY WOULD BE PREACHED TO THE WHOLE WORLD JUST PRIOR TO HIS RETURN?

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

RELATED TEXTS: Mark 16:15; Revelation 14:6; Colossians 1:23

This warning is brought to view in Revelation 14. Here is a threefold message represented as being proclaimed by heavenly beings and immediately followed by the coming of the Son of man to reap “the harvest of the earth.”

The angels are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, proclaiming to the world a message of warning, and having a direct bearing upon the people living in the last days of this earth's history. No one hears the voice of these angels, for they are a symbol to represent the people of God who are working in harmony with the universe of heaven.

The remnant people of God must be a converted people. The presentation of this message is to result in the conversion and sanctification of souls. We are to feel the power of the Spirit of God in this movement. This is a wonderful, definite message. It means everything to the receiver, and it is to be proclaimed with a loud cry. We must have a true, abiding faith that this message will go forth with increasing importance until the close of time.

(2) TO WHOM MUST THESE GOSPEL MESSAGES OF THE THREE ANGELS BE PROCLAIMED?

Revelation 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 28:19, 20; 10:27, 28

The gospel message proclaimed by Christ's disciples was the announcement of His first advent to the world. It bore to men the good tidings of salvation through faith in Him. It pointed forward to His second coming in glory to redeem His people, and it set before men the hope, through faith and obedience, of sharing the inheritance of the saints in light. This message is given to men today, and at this time there is coupled with it the announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. The signs which He Himself gave of His coming have been fulfilled, and by the teaching of God's word we may know that the Lord is at the door.

This message is a much greater work than many realize...."Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". In this work we are to study simplicity. This message is a testimony message. Received into honest hearts, it will prove an antidote for all the world's sins and sorrows. No conditions of climate, of poverty, or ignorance, or of prejudice can hinder its efficiency, or lessen its adaptability to the needs of mankind.

(3) WHAT DID LUCIFER, NOW CALLED SATAN, ATTEMPT TO DO IN HEAVEN WHICH BEGAN THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL?

Isaiah 14:13 For you [Satan] have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...

RELATED TEXTS: Ezekiel 28:12-15; Isaiah 47:10

The desire for self-exaltation was the cause of the downfall of Lucifer. Before his fall he was the most beautiful and the wisest of all the angels of heaven. He took surpassing pride in the honor God had bestowed upon him, but sought still greater glory for himself.

Lucifer aspired to be like God in position, power, and glory, but not in character. He desired for himself the homage the angelic host gave to God. Only a created being, he sought honor due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections of the angelic host, he sought for himself first place in those affections.

(4) WHAT UNDESERVED SIGN OF ALLEGIANCE AND ABSOLUTE SUBMISSION DOES SATAN SEEK FROM ALL CREATED BEINGS AND EVEN FROM CHRIST?

Matthew 4:9 And he [Satan] said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 4:8; Ezekiel 28:2

Satan said to Christ, Fall down and worship me. In Oriental lands even today prostration is the sign of absolute submission and fealty. This diabolical proposal—that God incarnate should worship the devil—constitutes the climax of blasphemy. The great issues at stake and the unholy boldness of the proposal seem to represent the maximum limit of diabolical ingenuity.

In the crisis soon to come, the inhabitants of the earth will be called upon to make their choice, as did the three Hebrew worthies in days of old, between the worship of the true God and that of false gods (Dan. 3). The message of the first angel is designed to prepare men to make the proper choice and to stand firm in the time of crisis.

(5) AS HISTORY CLOSES AND THE FIRST ANGEL'S MESSAGE IS PROCLAIMED, WHAT IS THE FIRST ACTION THE ENTIRE WORLD IS CALLED TO DO?

Revelation 14:7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

RELATED TEXTS: Job 28:28; Proverbs 14:26, 27; 3:7, 8; 16:6

Fear. Gr. phobeō, “to fear,” “to reverence.” Phobeō is used here not in the sense of being afraid of God, but in the sense of coming to Him with reverence and awe. It conveys the thought of absolute loyalty to God, of full surrender to His will. The message to fear God is especially timely in the period represented by the preaching of this angel, for men are worshiping gods of materialism and pleasure and many others of their own and devising. Glory. Gr. doxa. Here doxa doubtless signifies “honor,” “praise,” “homage.” Compare Ps. 115:1; Isa. 42:12; 2 Peter 3:18; Jude 25.

(6) IN THE SECOND PART OF THIS FOUR PART PLEA, WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO GIVE GOD I?

Revelation 14:7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 29:2; Exodus 33:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 10:31

We are all living on probation. Those who have passed into their graves have been tested and tried, to see if they would realize their responsibility to serve God. A desire to glorify God should be to us the most powerful of all

motives. It should lead us to make every exertion to improve the privileges and opportunities provided for us, to use wisely the Lord's goods. It should lead us to keep brain, bone, and muscle in the most healthful condition, that our physical strength and mental clearness may help us to be faithful stewards. Selfish interest must ever be held subordinate; for if given room to act, it contracts the intellect, hardens the heart, and weakens moral power.

In every place let those around you see that you give God the glory. Let man be put in the shade; let God appear as the only hope of the human race. Every man must rivet his character-building to the eternal Rock, Christ Jesus; then it will stand amid storm and tempest.

(7) WHAT IS THE THIRD ACTION THAT WE ARE RIGHTFULLY CALLED TO RENDER TO GOD AS OUR CREATOR?

Revelation 14:7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

RELATED TEXTS: Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 86:8, 9; 96:5-9; Acts 4:24

The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that

to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. "All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens" (Psalm 96:5). "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: ... I am the Lord; and there is none else" (Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18).

(8) WHAT HOUR HAS COME OF WHICH WE ARE TO URGENTLY WARN THE WORLD TO PREPARE?

Revelation 14:7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come...

RELATED TEXTS: Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; Isaiah 58:1; Revelation 18:10

The announcement, "The hour of His judgment is come," points to the closing work of Christ's ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour's intercession shall cease and He shall return to the earth to take His

people to Himself. The work of judgment which began in 1844 (see Daniel 8:14) must continue until the cases of all are decided, both of the living and the dead; hence it will extend to the close of human probation. That men may be prepared to stand in the judgment, the message commands them to “fear God, and give glory to Him,” “and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the word: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” In order to be prepared for the judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the judgment.

(9) IN HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE JUDGMENT SCENE, WHAT DID DANIEL SAY WOULD BE OPENED TO DECIDE THE FATE OF EVERY HUMAN BEING?

Daniel 7:9, 10 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued

And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 20:11, 12; Malachi 3:16-18

Thus was presented to the prophet's vision the great and solemn day when the characters and the lives of men should pass in review before the Judge of all the earth, and to every man should be rendered "according to his works." The Ancient of Days is God the Father.

Every man's work passes in review before God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel.

The law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment. Says the wise

man: “Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment.” Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. The apostle James admonishes his brethren: “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” James 2:12.

(10) WHEN WE ARE WARNING THE WORLD OF THE COMING JUDGMENT, WHO CAN WE TELL THEM WILL BE THEIR LAWYER, AND WHAT HAS HE DONE TO PAY THE PRICE?

1John 2:1, 2 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24

Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” 1 John 2:1. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the

uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 9:24; 7:25.

(11) WHO IS ELLIGABLE FOR THE PARDON FROM SIN AND DESTRUCTION THAT GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON SO GENEROUSLY OFFER?

John 3:16, 17 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9, 10

All the plan of redemption is expressed in these precious words: “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Christ actually bore the punishment of the sins of the world that His righteousness might be imputed to sinners, and through repentance and faith they might become like Him in holiness of character. He says, “I bear the guilt of that man’s sins. Let Me take the punishment and the repenting sinner stand before Thee innocent.” The

moment the sinner believes in Christ, he sinner stands in the sight of God uncondemned; for the righteousness of Christ is his: Christ's perfect obedience is imputed to him. But he must co-operate with divine power, and put forth his human effort to subdue sin, and stand complete in Christ.

God's love embraces all mankind, but directly benefits only those who respond to it (John 1:12). Love requires reciprocity in order to be fully effective. But significantly, God's love embraces those who reject it as well as those who accept it. None of the lost can accuse God of not loving them. To assert that God has predestined certain persons to be lost irrespective of their own choice in the matter is to say that He hates them. It is to stigmatize Him as unjust and place upon Him the blame for their fate.

(12) HOW CAN WE ACCEPT THE FORGIVENESS THAT CHRIST OFFERS US AND TO BE CLEANSED FROM SIN AND FREED FROM GUILT?

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 51:1-12;
Proverbs 28:13; 3:5, 6

Satan will come to you saying, you are a sinner. But do not let him fill your mind with the thought that, because you are sinful, God has cast you off. Say to him, "Yes; I am a sinner, and for that reason I need a Saviour." I need forgiveness and pardon, and Christ says that if I come to Him I shall not perish. In His letter to me I read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

The moment you grasp God's promises by faith and say, I am the lost sheep that Jesus came to save, a new life will take possession of you, and you will receive strength to resist the tempter. But faith to grasp the promises does not come by feeling. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). You must not look for some great change to take place; you must not expect to feel some wonderful emotion.

Take God's word on trust, saying, He loves me: He gave His life for me; and He will save me.... Look away from yourself to Jesus. Embrace Him as your Saviour. Cease to bemoan your helpless condition. Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, you will be inspired with hope and will see the salvation of God. When you feel tempted to mourn, force your lips to

utter the praises of God. “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4). Is He not worthy of praise? Then educate your lips to talk of His glory and to magnify His name.

Today the Lord says to you, "Be not discouraged, but cast your burdens upon Me. "You cannot carry your own sins. I will take them all.... If you will trust in Me, you will not lack any good thing....Never has a soul that trusts in Jesus been left to perish. “I, even I, am he,” the Lord declares, “that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that Revelation reveals that in the last moments of earth's history a three part message must go to the world. The first one is the call to worship God and give Him glory as our

Creator and that the hour of His judgment has come.

I _____ that the Bible teaches that the great controversy started in heaven by Lucifer was over the issue of worship, has always been over worship, and will end over who we choose to worship.

I _____ that Jesus my Saviour came and paid the price for my sins and will be my Advocate in the judgment. I have peace to know that as long as I walk with Him I have nothing to fear.

I love the Lord and _____ that I am among God's Spirit filled messengers given the privilege to loudly proclaim these last day messages of truth to the world.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS

[illegible]



11 - The Loud Cry of the Second Angel

COMPILER'S NOTE: In this lesson we will identify "Babylon the Great" the "Mother of Harlots", so that the fornication of her false doctrines and practices can be avoided. These truths about Babylon were loudly proclaimed by the reformers of all protestant denominations until a century ago. Because these truths have not been revealed to the past several generations, many may find this information both enlightening and shocking. The "Mother of Harlots" is also referred to as "the Beast" in Revelation 14:9.

The next lesson will give some identifying characteristics and an even more in-depth

study identifying the Beast and the Image of the Beast can be found in the appendices of this study guide.

It is extremely important to emphasize that there are many heaven-bound people in these apostate organizations. These are God loving and fearing Christians who are innocently being deceived. It is not the innocent followers but rather the blasphemy of her leaders and the "abominations and the filthiness of her fornication"--her false doctrines and practices that are an abominations to God.

In this lesson we will also learn the good news that God loves every earthly child and He is calling those with open and honest hearts to truth. He longs for them to come out of association with apostate churches that they may avoid spiritual and ultimately physical destruction.

(1) WHAT DID GOD DO TO THE LANGUAGES OF THE PEOPLE AT THE TOWER OF BABEL, THUS MAKING THE TERM "BABYLON" SYNONYMOUS WITH CORRUPTION AND CONFUSION?

Genesis 11:9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

RELATED TEXTS: Genesis 10:5;

Revelation 14:8; Isaiah 21:9

H894 בָּבֶל bâbel baw-bel' From H1101; confusion; Babel (that is, Babylon), including Babylonia and the Babylonian empire: - Babel, Babylon. (Strong's Concordance)

The men of Babel had determined to establish a government that should be independent of God. ...Their confederacy was founded in rebellion; a kingdom established for self-exaltation, but in which God was to have no rule or honor. Had this confederacy been permitted, a mighty power would have borne sway to banish righteousness—and with it peace, happiness, and security—from the earth. For the divine statutes, which are “holy and just and good” (Romans 7:12), men were endeavoring to substitute laws to suit the purpose of their own selfish and cruel hearts.

The schemes of the Babel builders ended in shame and defeat. The monument to their pride became the memorial of their folly. Yet men are continually pursuing the same course—depending upon self and rejecting God’s law. It is the principle that Satan tried to carry out in heaven; the same that governed Cain in presenting his offering.

(2) WHAT ARE THE METAPHORS USED IN THESE VERSES TO DESCRIBE THE DAUGHTER OF ZION—THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

Jeremiah 6:2 I have likened the daughter of Zion To a lovely and delicate woman.

Revelation 21:9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 62:5; Revelation 22:17; 12:6, 13, 14

In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people [His church], the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary. "Fear not," He says; "thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." Isaiah 54:4, 5; Jeremiah 3:14.

(3) IN THE SECOND LOUD CRY MESSAGE, WHAT TITLE IS USED TO DESCRIBE THE APOSTATE CHURCHES (IMPURE WOMEN) WHO ARE BUILDING THEIR OWN "TOWERS"? WHAT

ADJECTIVE IS USED TO DESCRIBE THE MAGNITUDE OF THEIR SPIRITUAL APOSTACY?

Revelation 17:5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT...

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:8; 18:2, 10, 21

Although, in one sense, mystical Babylon may be considered as representative of apostate religious systems throughout history, “Babylon the great” in the book of Revelation designates, in a special sense, the united apostate religions at the close of time. In ch. 17:18 mystical Babylon is called “that great city” (Rev. 16:19; 18:18). Here, doubtless, Babylon is referred to as “great” in view of the fact that this chapter deals most particularly with Satan’s great final effort to secure the allegiance of the human race through religion. “Babylon the great” is the name by which Inspiration refers to the great threefold religious union of the papacy, apostate Protestantism, and spiritism. The term “Babylon” refers to the organizations themselves and to their leaders, not so much to the members as such. The latter are referred to as “many waters” (Rev. 17:1, 15) and as the “inhabitants of the earth” (Revelation 17:2; 8).

Many of the Protestant churches are following Rome's example of iniquitous connection with "the kings of the earth"—the state churches, by their relation to secular governments; and other denominations, by seeking the favor of the world. And the term "Babylon"—confusion—may be appropriately applied to these bodies, all professing to derive their doctrines from the Bible, yet divided into almost innumerable sects, with widely conflicting creeds and theories.

(4) WHAT CHARACTER REVEALING TITLES ARE USED TO DESCRIBE THE LEADING RELIGIOUS POWER CALLED "BABYLON THE GREAT" BECAUSE OF THE ABOMINATIONS SHE COMMITS?

Revelation 17:5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:8; 16:19

Babylon is said to be "the mother of harlots." By her daughters must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world. The message of Revelation 14, announcing

the fall of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of the judgment, it must be given in the last days; therefore it cannot refer to the Roman Church alone, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries.

Furthermore, in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. According to this scripture, many of God's people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith.

In the professedly Christian world many turn away from the plain teachings of the Bible and build up a creed from human speculations and pleasing fables, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. Men hang with admiration upon the lips of eloquence while it teaches that the transgressor shall not die, that salvation may be secured without obedience to the law of God. If the professed followers of Christ would accept God's standard, it would bring them into unity; but so long as human wisdom is exalted above His Holy

Word, there will be divisions and dissension. The existing confusion of conflicting creeds and sects is fitly represented by the term "Babylon," which prophecy (Revelation 14:8; 18:2) applies to the world-loving churches of the last days.

(5) WHAT ARE TWO OTHER UNMISTAKABLE IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF "BABYLON THE GREAT" THAT ARE GIVEN BY SCRIPTURE?

Revelation 17:6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

Revelation 17:18 And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 18:21, 24; 19:2; Daniel 7:21

In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy,—the Inquisition. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils, Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees, and writing the

history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes. “Babylon the great” was “drunken with the blood of the saints.” The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power throughout the dark ages.

Babylon is further declared to be “that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Revelation 17:4–6, 18. The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty seen of Rome.

Popery had become the world's despot. Kings and emperors bowed to the decrees of the Roman pontiff. The destinies of men, both for time and for eternity, seemed under his control. For hundreds of years the doctrines of Rome had been extensively and implicitly received, its rites reverently performed, its festivals generally observed. Its clergy were honored and liberally sustained. Never since has the Roman Church attained to greater dignity, magnificence, or power.

(6) WHAT DID THE REBELLIOUS ANGEL NAMED “LUCIFER” SAY IN HIS HEART

AND THEN ATTEMPT TO ACOMPLISH WHICH BEGAN THE GREAT CONTROVERSY?

Isaiah 14:13, 14 For you [Lucifer] have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 37:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Ezekiel 28:12, 15

The literal “king of Babylon” would thus presume to usurp the control of the gods—that is, supreme authority—over the affairs of earth. As king of mystical Babylon Satan would similarly aspire to control the councils of heaven, that is, to rule the universe of God.

(7) WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF BLASPHEMY AND, LIKE IN THE EXAMPLE OF LUCIFER, IS OPENLY PROCLAIMED AND PRACTICED BY THE LEADER OF THE "MOTHER" APOSTATE CHURCH?

John 10:33 The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

Daniel 7:11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Kings 19:22; Leviticus 24:11-14

Ecclesiastical literature, written by her own leaders, are replete with exhibits of the arrogant, blasphemous claims of the papacy. Typical examples are the following extracts from a large encyclopedic work written by a Roman Catholic divine of the 18th century:

“The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God...

“The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions. ...

“The Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief of kings, having plenitude of power, to whom has been entrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom. ...

“The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws. ...

“The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man but of God, and he acts as vicegerent of God upon earth with most ample power of binding and losing his sheep.

“Whatever the Lord God himself, and the Redeemer, is said to do, that his vicar does, provided that he does nothing contrary to the faith”

(translated from Lucius Ferraris, “Papa II,” Prompta Bibliotheca, Vol. VI, pp. 25–29).

While the Protestant world is becoming very tender and affectionate toward the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3), shall not God’s people take their place as bold and valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ to meet the issue which must come, their lives hid with Christ in God?

(8) WHAT TWO TITLES ARE GIVEN BY SCRIPTURE TO THE LEADER OF THE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION CALLED THE "MOTHER OF HARLOTS" WHO ATTEMPTS TO EXALT HIMSELF AS GOD?

2Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 7 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped,

so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. ...For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work...

RELATED TEXTS: Daniel 7:8, 11, 20

The apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, foretold the great apostasy which would result in the establishment of the papal power. He declared that the day of Christ should not come, "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." And furthermore, the apostle warns his brethren that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work." 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 7. Even at that early date he saw, creeping into the church, errors that would prepare the way for the development of the papacy.

(9) WHAT DOES THE APOSTATE MOTHER CHURCH OF "BABYLON" POSSESS IN HER HAND AND TRY TO DO TO ALL NATIONS?

Revelation 17:4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden

cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

Revelation 14:8 And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 2:20-23;
Proverbs 22:14

Before the last developments of the work of apostasy there will be a confusion of faith. There will not be clear and definite ideas concerning the mystery of God. One truth after another will be corrupted. Every species of delusion is now being brought in. The plainest truths of God's Word are covered with a mass of man-made theories. Deadly errors are presented as the truth to which all must bow. The simplicity of true godliness is buried beneath tradition. If we turn from the testimony of God's word, and accept false doctrines because our fathers taught them, we fall under the condemnation pronounced upon Babylon; we are drinking of the wine of her abomination.

(10) AS IT WAS IN CHRIST'S DAY, WHAT WILL THE TEACHERS OF THE LAST-DAY APOSTATE CHURCHES PROCLAIM TO BE ABOVE THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD,

THUS RENDERING THEIR WORSHIP IN VAIN?

Mark 7:6-8 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men...

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 15:6-9;
Colossians 2:8

Satanic agencies have made the earth a stage for horrors which no language can describe. War and bloodshed are carried on by nations claiming to be Christian. A disregard for the law of God has brought its sure result. The great conflict now being waged is not merely strife of man against man. On one side stands the Prince of life, acting as man's substitute and surety; on the other, the prince of darkness, with the fallen angels under his command.

There will be a sharp conflict between those who are loyal to God and those who cast scorn upon His law. The church has joined hands with the world. Reverence to God's law has been subverted. The religious leaders are

teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. As it was in the days of Noah, so it is in this age of the world. But shall the prevalence of disloyalty and transgression cause those who have revered the law of God to have less respect for it, to unite with the powers of earth to make it void? The truly loyal will not be carried away by the current of evil. They will not throw scorn and contempt on that which God has set apart as holy. The test comes to everyone. There are only two sides. On which side are you?

(11) WHAT IS GOD'S PLEA TO THE HONEST OF HEART WHO HAVE BEEN MISLED INTO THE TRADITIONS AND FALSE DOCTRINES OF THE MOTHER OF BABYLON AND MANY OF HER APOSTATE DAUGHTER CHURCHES?

Revelation 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her [Babylon], my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

RELATED TEXTS: Jeremiah 51:6, 45; Isaiah 48:20; 2 Corinthians 6:17

Almost until the very close of time, apparently, some—perhaps many—of God's people have not heard the call to come out of mystical Babylon (the false church, her daughters, and the confusion of her false doctrines based on tradition).

In the last work for the warning of the world, two distinct calls are made to the churches. The second angel's message is, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." [Revelation14:8]. And in the loud cry of the third angel's message [Revelation14:9] a voice is heard from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." [Revelation18:4].

When do her sins reach unto heaven? When the law of God is finally made void by legislation. Then the extremity of God's people is His opportunity to show who is the governor of heaven and earth. As a Satanic power is stirring up the elements from beneath, God will send light and power to His people, that the message of truth may be proclaimed to all the world.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel

challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ about the terms of endearment that Christ used to refer to the women--His bride and true church, and that impure “women” are apostate churches who are building their “towers” on the foundation of false doctrines.

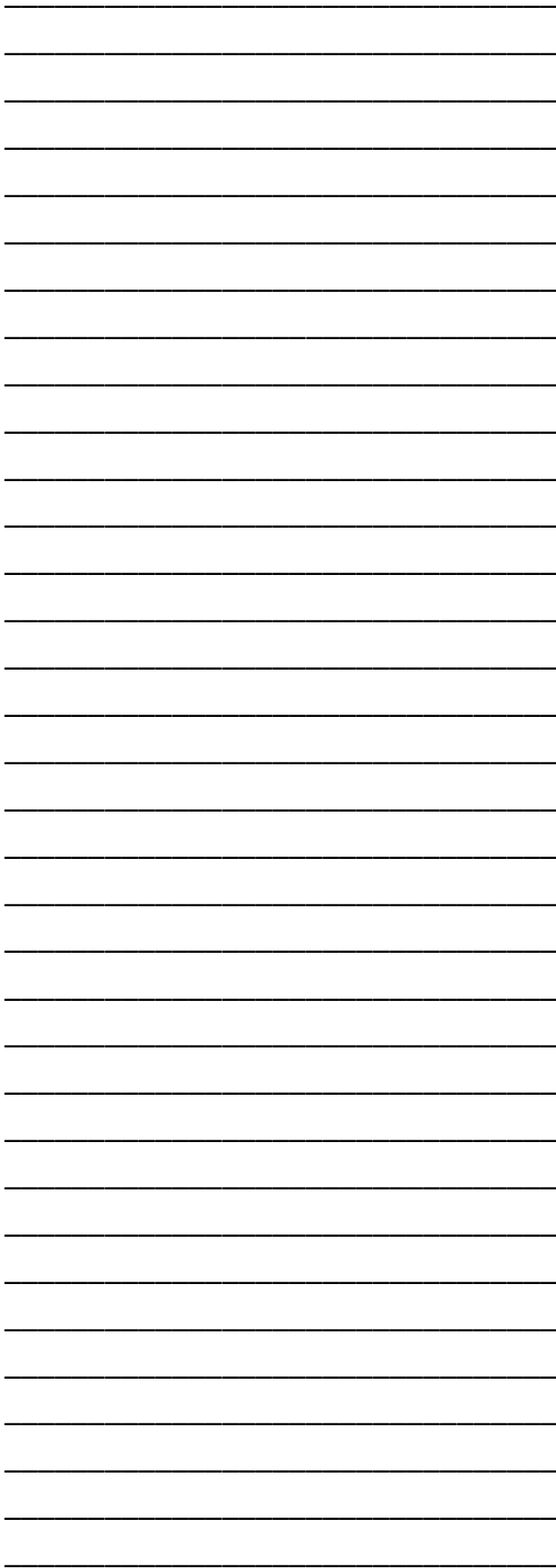
I _____ that the term “Babylon” is synonymous with corruption and confusion and why God’s Word uses this term to describe the majority of the churches in these last moments of earth’s history. I _____ to now know this Biblical truth.

From the blasphemous claims and him claiming to be God, I _____ that the Pope is head of the Beast power and is “the son of perdition” and “man of sin” that Paul warned would come.

By God’s grace, I _____ not to drink in the wine of her fornication and abominations of her false doctrines, traditions, and practices.

I _____ that God loves me and has given this warning that I may not be deceived and ultimately destroyed. I _____ about His coming and the removal of all sin and suffering from the earth.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS





12 - The Loud Cry of the Third Angel

COMPILER'S NOTE: The second angel identified the evil “women” as Babylon which is comprised of the apostate mother church and her daughters. Today almost all protestant denomination are, according to prophecy (Revelation 13:3), following after their "mother" by accepting her doctrines which are in rebellion against God's eternal law. With a heart of love and mercy, God gives the third angel's message. His longing is that none of His earthly children are lost.

The third angel's message is given which contains the most sobering warning and

fearful consequence given in the Bible. The third angel's message is a warning that will enlighten all people to the critical issues involved in the increasing and final struggle of the great controversy. It will enable all of mankind to make an intelligent choice which will decide the eternal destiny.

(1) WHAT IS ANOTHER NAME FOR THE "MOTHER" ORGANIZATION OF SPIRITUAL "BABYLON", TO WHOM THE THIRD ANGEL WARNS US NOT TO GIVE OUR WORSHIP?

Revelation 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast...

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 16:2; 17:7; 20:4, 10

In Revelation is described a beast, "like unto a leopard," to which the dragon gave "his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Revelation 13:2). This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman Empire. Of the leopard like beast it is declared: "There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.... And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell

in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Revelation 13:5-7). This prophecy, which is nearly identical with the description of the little horn (Daniel 7:8, 20), unquestionably points to the papacy.

(2) WHAT IS THE "NUMBER" OF THE MAN WHO IS THE LEADER OF THE BEAST POWER?

Revelation 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 15:2

The number alone cannot identify the beast since numerous names can add up to 666. However, inasmuch as the beast has already been identified in Scripture [see appendices], the number 666 must have a relationship to this power. Otherwise there would be no valid reason for the angel giving John the information contained in v. 18, at this point in the prophetic narrative.

An interpretation that gained currency in the period following the Reformation was that 666 stood for Vicarius Filii Dei, meaning “vicar of the Son of God,” one

of the titles for the pope of Rome [see the inscription on one of his crowns]. The numerical value of the component letters of this title totals 666 as follows:

Vicarius Filii Dei

V = 5; I = 1; C = 100; A = 0; R = 0; I = 1; V
(U=V) = 5; S = 0; F = 0; I = 1; L = 50; I = 1;
I = 1; D = 500; E = 0; I = 1

TOTAL = 666

["0" means there is not a Roman numeral given to that letter]

(3) FROM WHOM DOES THE BEAST RECEIVE HER POWER, THRONE, AND GREAT AUTHORITY?

Revelation 13:2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 20:2

The line of prophecy in which these symbols are found begins with Revelation 12, with the dragon that sought to destroy Christ at His birth. The dragon is Satan (Revelation 12:9); he it was that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the

Christian Era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. Thus while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome.

(4) IN THE END-TIME PROPHECY OF DANIEL, WHAT ARE WE TOLD THAT "HE", THE LEADER OF THE BLASPHEMOUS POWER CALLED THE BEAST, WILL "THINK" TO CHANGE?

Daniel 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws...

RELATED TEXTS: Daniel 11:30-37; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4

The first angel of Revelation 14 calls upon men to “fear God, and give glory to him,” and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law....

Without obedience to His commandments, no worship can be pleasing to God; for “this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (1 John 5:3).

But the Scriptures plainly predict that the man of sin should exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, and should “THINK TO

CHANGE TIMES AND LAWS.” 2

Thessalonians 2; Daniel 7:25. It is not said that he should be able to change them; but he should think to do it; or, as the Catholic version reads, “He shall think himself ABLE to change times and laws.” They are not the times and laws of men which he thinks to change, for these he might be able to change, as other powers have done; but it is an act of arrogance in which he does not succeed.

The papacy has attempted to change the law of God [Exodus 20:3-17]. The second commandment [of the catholic Bible] forbidding image worship, has been dropped from the law, and the fourth commandment has been so changed as to authorize the observance of the first instead of the seventh day as the Sabbath.

But papists urge, as a reason for omitting the second commandment, that it is unnecessary, being included in the first, and claim that they are giving the law exactly as God designed it to be understood. This cannot be the change foretold by the prophet. An intentional, deliberate change is presented: “He shall think to change the times and the law.” The change in the fourth commandment exactly fulfills the prophecy. For this the only authority claimed is that of the

church. Here the papal power openly sets itself above God [with trying to change the only law dealing with time].

(5) WHAT IS THE FIRST CHARACTERISTIC OF "ANOTHER BEAST" WHO JOINS THE FIRST BEAST TO PERSECUTE GOD'S FAITHFUL?

Revelation 13:11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

“And he had two horns like a lamb.” The lamblike horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States when presented to the prophet as “coming up” in 1798 (see appendices). Among the Christian exiles who first fled to America and sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance were many who determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty. Their views found place in the Declaration of Independence, which sets forth the great truth that “all men are created equal” and endowed with the inalienable right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” And the Constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-government, providing that representatives elected by the

popular vote shall enact and administer the laws.

Freedom of religious faith was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Republicanism [defined as self-government by the people] and Protestantism [placing the Bible as the highest authority] became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity. The oppressed and downtrodden throughout Christendom have turned to this land with interest and hope. Millions have sought its shores, and the United States has risen to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth.

(6) WHAT IS THE SECOND CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS LAMB-LIKE BEAST?

Revelation 13:11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 20:2

The beast with lamblike horns “spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed; ... saying to

them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” Revelation 13:11–14.

(7) HOW DOES SCRIPTURE DESCRIBE THE APOSTATE DAUGHTER CHURCHES THAT MIMIC THE SPIRITUAL AND CIVIL COHERSION OF THE BEAST?

Revelation 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:11; 13:11, 14, 15

When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.

The “image to the beast” represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall, seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas.

But what is the “image to the beast”? And how is it to be formed? The image is made by the two-horned beast, and is an image to the beast. It is also called an image of the beast. Then to learn what the image is like and how it is to be formed we must study the characteristics of the beast itself—the papacy [see the appendices for a deeper study].

(8) WHAT DID THE BEAST GIVE TO HER “IMAGE” THAT IT MAY HAVE THE POWER TO “SPEAK” AND PERSECUTE GOD’S FAITHFUL?

Revelation 13:15 He [The Beast] was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 13:14

The lamblike horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. The “speaking” of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities. By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak “as a dragon” and

exercise “all the power of the first beast” plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the leopard like beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns “causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast” indicates that the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy.

Such action would be directly contrary to the principles of this government, to the genius of its free institutions, to the direct and solemn avowals of the Declaration of Independence, and to the Constitution. The founders of the nation wisely sought to guard against the employment of secular power on the part of the church, with its inevitable result—intolerance and persecution.

The Constitution provides that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” and that “no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” Only in flagrant violation of these safeguards to the nation’s liberty, can any religious observance be enforced by

civil authority. But the inconsistency of such action is no greater than is represented in the symbol. It is the beast with lamblike horns—in profession pure, gentle, and harmless—that speaks as a dragon. “Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast.” Here is clearly presented a form of government in which the legislative power rests with the people, a most striking evidence that the United States is the nation denoted in the prophecy [see appendices].

(9) IN THE FINAL AND MOST FEARFUL WARNING THAT IS DELIVERED BY THE THIRD ANGEL, WHAT ACT OF HOMAGE IS GOD'S FAITHFUL TOLD NOT TO RENDER TO THE "BEAST" OR TO HER "IMAGE"?

Revelation 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 4:9; Luke 4:7; Isaiah 47:10

The Roman Church has not relinquished her claim to supremacy; and when the world and the Protestant churches accept a sabbath of her creating, while they reject the Bible Sabbath, they virtually admit this assumption [see

appendices]. They may claim the authority of tradition and of the Fathers for the change; but in so doing they ignore the very principle which separates them from Rome—that “the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants.” The papist can see that they are deceiving themselves, willingly closing their eyes to the facts in the case. As the movement for Sunday [worship] enforcement gains favor, he rejoices, feeling assured that it will eventually bring the whole Protestant world under the banner of Rome.

Romanists declare that “the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] Church.” [Mgr. Segur, Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today, page 213].

The enforcement of Sunday-keeping on the part of Protestant churches is an enforcement of the worship of the papacy—of the beast. Those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false instead of the true Sabbath are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded. But in the very act of enforcing a religious duty by secular power, the protestant churches would themselves form an image to the beast; hence the enforcement of Sunday

keeping in the United States would be an enforcement of the worship of the beast and his image.

(10) WHAT WILL BE RECEIVED BY THOSE WHO, WILLING OR DUE TO PERSECUTION, WORSHIP THE BEAST POWER AND IT'S IMAGE?

Revelation 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:11; 13:15-17; 16:2; 19:20

An idol sabbath has been set up as the golden image was set up on the plains of Dura, and, as Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon issued a decree that all who would not bow down and worship this image should be killed, so a proclamation will be made that all who will not reverence the Sunday institution will be punished with imprisonment and death. Thus the Sabbath of the Lord is trampled underfoot. But the Lord has declared, "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and write grievousness which they have prescribed" [Isaiah 10:1].

Roman Catholics leaders, in their publication, "Catholic Catechism of Christian Religion", acknowledge that the change of the Sabbath was made by

their church, and declare that Protestants by observing the Sunday are recognizing her power. In the Catholic Catechism of Christian Religion, in answer to a question as to the day to be observed in obedience to the fourth commandment, this statement is made: “During the old law, Saturday was the day sanctified; but the church, instructed by Jesus Christ, and directed by the Spirit of God, has substituted Sunday for Saturday; so now we sanctify the first, not the seventh day. Sunday means, and now is, the day of the Lord.”

As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite “the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; ... because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the church’s power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.” [Henry Tuberville, An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine, page 58]. What then is the change of the Sabbath, but the sign, or mark, of the authority of the Roman Church—“the mark of the beast”?

(11) WHERE IS THE MARK OF THE BEAST RECEIVED?

Revelation 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast

and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 13:16; 20:4

An apostate church will unite with the powers of earth and hell to place upon the forehead or in the hand, the mark of the beast, and prevail upon the children of God to worship the beast and his image. They will seek to compel them to renounce their allegiance to God's law, and yield homage to the papacy. Then will come the times which will try men's souls; for the confederacy of apostasy will demand that the loyal subjects of God shall renounce the law of Jehovah, and repudiate the truth of His word. Then will the gold be separated from the dross, and it will be made apparent who are the godly, who are the loyal and true, and who are the disloyal, the dross and the tinsel.

The Sabbath is the sign of God; it is the seal of His law. Isaiah 8:16. It is the token of His authority and power. It is a sign whereby we may know that He is God, and therefore it is appropriately said to be placed in the forehead. The worshipers of the beast (Revelation 13) are said to receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. As the forehead represents the intellect, the location of mental reasoning and choice, the hand represents power, or action...

Compulsory or forced worship is not acceptable to God; His servants are sealed only in their foreheads. But it is acceptable to wicked powers; it has always been craved by the Romish hierarchy.

(12) WHEN IS THE MARK OF THE BEAST RECEIVED?

Mark 7:9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 4:19; 5:29; 1 Samuel 15:24; Mark 7:7-9; Revelation 18:3

When Seal of God is refused—if the light of truth has been presented to you, revealing the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and showing that there is no foundation in the Word of God for Sunday observance, and yet you still cling to the false sabbath, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls “My holy day,” you receive the mark of the beast. When does this take place? When you obey the coming civil decree that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God.

(13) WHAT DOES GOD DO IF, IN THE TIMES OF OUR IGNORANCE, WE HAVE BROKEN HIS LAW, AND WHAT ARE WE TO DO WHEN WE LEARN TRUTH?

Acts 17:30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Timothy 1:13; Hosea 4:6; James 4:17; Hebrews 10:26

There are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshiping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept

the sign of allegiance to Rome—“the mark of the beast.” And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive “the mark of the beast.”

She has filled up the measure of her guilt, and destruction is about to fall upon her. But God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and “receive not of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4). Hence the movement symbolized by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard: “Come out of her, My people.” (Revelation 18:4). These announcements, uniting with the third angel’s message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don’t see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel

excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ from Scripture that the mother organization of Babylon—spiritual confusion, is the papacy. The organization which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman Empire which receives her power from Satan the dragon.

I _____ about the connection in Daniel 7:25 where it says, “he shall speak great words against the most high” and “think to change times and laws” and the arrogant, pompous, and blasphemous claims made by the Pope and papal organization that he is God and has the authority to change God’s laws.

I _____ that the whole issue of the great controversy has always been, and will end, over allegiance demonstrated by worship. This issue will soon come to the forefront and apostate religious powers will cross the line and become an “image of the beast” by pressuring civil enforcement of a counterfeit day of worship.

I _____ for God's Holy Spirit to fill and guide me. My prayer is that, by His grace, I will stand for the right despite persecution and keep His commandments and avoid the mark of the beast.

[illegible]



13 - The Seal of God

COMPILER'S NOTE: Just before the door of probation closes these truths of the three angels messages of Revelation 14 will go to the entire planet and all will make a decision of their allegiance in worship to God or the Beast and tradition of man. At that time the faithful who are seeking Him will receive the "Seal of God" and those who rebel against God's commandments will receive the mark of the beast. There is no middle ground, all will be in one camp or the other.

It is important to for all to understand when the mark of the beast is received. No one has or will received the mark

until the image of the beast passes a civil law mandating worship on a day other than the specific day that God has specified in the fourth commandment—the seventh day which is the Sabbath of the Lord our God (Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 2:28). Those who, when the light is given them, are lovingly obedient to His commandments now, these will be among those who can stand the test when the law is passed.

This lesson will lead to a better understanding of what exactly the seal of God is, and how we can obtain it and avoid the mark of the beast.

(1) WHAT WILL FREE US FROM THE DECEPTIONS OF THE BEAST AND HER IMAGE, AND SHOW US HOW TO AVOID THE DESTRUCTION THAT RESULTS FROM RECEIVING THEIR MARK?

John 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

1Timothy 2:3, 4 ...God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

RELATED TEXTS: Hosea 4:6; Psalm 119:151, 152; 117:2; 91:4; John 17:17

Let none think, because they cannot explain the meaning of every symbol in the Revelation, that it is useless for them

to search this book in an effort to know the meaning of the truth it contains. The One who revealed these mysteries to John will give to the diligent searcher for truth a foretaste of heavenly things. Those whose hearts are open to the reception of truth will be enabled to understand its teachings, and will be granted the blessing promised to those who “hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.” (Revelation 1:3).

The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism [Deut 18:10-12; Isa 8:19], the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power—all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven.

(2) FOR WHAT REASONS IS GOD, AND ONLY GOD, WORTHY TO RECEIVE OUR WORSHIP?

Revelation 4:11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power;

For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Chronicles 16:25-34; Psalm 96:1-10; Job 9:4-10

The Creator of the universe is the true and only object of worship. No man, no angel, is worthy of worship. This is the prerogative of God only. Creatorship is one of the distinguishing features of the true God in contrast with false deities (Jer. 10:11, 12).

In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator; and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God. One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. The fourth precept declares: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: ... for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:10, 11.

"The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God"—because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures.

“The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten.” [J. N. Andrews, History of the Sabbath, chapter 27]. It was to keep this truth ever before the minds of men that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial.

Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man’s thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, “Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment

in the manner He specifically commanded.

**(3) THE SEAL OF EVERY RULER
CONTAINS THEIR NAME, THEIR TITLE,
AND THEIR DOMAIN, HOW IS GOD'S
SEAL DESCRIBED IN THE 4TH
COMMANDMENT, AND AGAIN IN THE
LAST DAY MESSAGE OF WARNING TO
THE WORLD?**

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Revelation 14:7 ...and worship Him [God] who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 115:15; 146:5, 6;
Acts 4:24

The Sabbath is the memorial or SIGN of God's royal majesty and power in CREATING the heavens and the earth. A king's seal is the memorial or SIGN of his royal majesty and power, and right of authority and dominion. In the same sense is the Sabbath the SIGN or SEAL of the King Eternal, the mark of Jehovah's royal majesty and power, and extent of dominion. The fourth commandment, therefore, contains the full and perfect signature and seal of the Majesty of Heaven. It contains the signature and

seal of the Divine law. The constitution of God's moral government and religious system receives its ratification and royal sanction through the fourth precept, which alone points out himself and contains his name, title of royal majesty, and the SIGN or seal of the same.

The Sabbath is not introduced as a new institution but as having been founded at creation. Pointing to God as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, it distinguishes the true God from false gods. Thus the Sabbath is the sign of man's allegiance to God. The fourth commandment is the only one of the ten in which are found both the name and the title of the Lawgiver, the only one that shows by whose authority the law is given. Thus it contains the seal of God.

(4) WHAT SPECIFIC DAY DID GOD CREATE AS HIS SABBATH, INSTRUCTED US TO REST UPON, PLACED HIS SEAL OF HIS AUTHORITY UPON, AND ASKS EVERY CREATED BEING TO HONOR EACH WEEK AS A MEMORIAL TO HIM AS THEIR CREATOR?

Exodus 20:10, 11 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the

LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

RELATED TEXTS: Exodus 31:17; Ezekiel 20:20; Mark 2:28

What is sin?--"the transgression of the law" [1 John 3:4]. God denounces Babylon, "because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" [Revelation 14:8]. This means that she has disregarded the only commandment that points out the true God, and has torn down the Sabbath, God's memorial of creation.

God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh, sanctifying this day, and setting it apart from all others as holy to Himself [vs 11 last part], to be observed by His people throughout their generations. But the man of sin, exalting himself above God, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself to be God, thought to change times and laws. This power, thinking to prove that it was not only equal to God, but above God, changed the rest day, placing the first day of the week where the seventh should be. And the Protestant world has taken this child of the papacy to be regarded as sacred. This is called in the Word of God her "fornication." Rev 14:8.

(5) AT THE END OF CREATION WEEK, WHAT THREE THINGS DID GOD DO TO CLEARLY SET APART THE SEVENTH DAY FROM THE OTHER SIX, AND GAVE NO EVIDENT OF CHANGE FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION?

Genesis 2:2, 3 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

RELATED TEXTS: Exodus 20:11; 16:26; Deuteronomy 5:14

Hallowed by the Creator's rest and blessing, the Sabbath was kept by Adam in his innocence in holy Eden; by Adam, fallen yet repentant, when he was driven from his happy estate. It was kept by all the patriarchs, from Abel to righteous Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob. When the chosen people were in bondage in Egypt, many, in the midst of prevailing idolatry, lost their knowledge of God's law; but when the Lord delivered Israel, He proclaimed His law in awful grandeur to the assembled multitude, that they might know His will and fear and obey Him forever.

From that day to the present the knowledge of God's law has been preserved in the earth, and the Sabbath of the fourth commandment has been kept. Though the “man of sin” succeeded in trampling underfoot God's holy day, yet even in the dark ages, this period of his supremacy there were, hidden in secret places, faithful souls who paid it honor. Since the Reformation, there have been some in every generation to maintain its observance. Though often in the midst of reproach and persecution, a constant testimony has been borne to the perpetuity of the law of God and the sacred obligation of the creation Sabbath.

(6) AFTER CHRIST’S CRUCIFIXION, WHAT DID HIS FOLLOWERS DO ON THE SABBATH ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT?

Luke 23:53-56 Then he took it [Jesus' body] down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb ... That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near ... And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment ... on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they ... came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 27:62; 28:1; Mark 15:42; 16:2

At last Jesus was at rest. The long day of shame and torture was ended. As the last rays of the setting sun ushered in the Sabbath, the Son of God lay in quietude in Joseph's tomb. His work completed, His hands folded in peace, He rested through the sacred hours of the Sabbath day.

Luke specifically mentions Friday, the "preparation" day (v. 54), the Sabbath day (vs. 54, 56), and the "first day of the week" (ch. 24:1). There can be no question as to the sequence of these days or their identity. Christ was crucified on Friday, rested in the tomb over the Sabbath [Saturday], having completed the work of redemption, and rose the following day, the first day of the week [Sunday].

"Indeed, they, Christ's followers, rested the Sabbath according to the commandment, but on the first day of the week ..." This translation makes quite evident the sacredness these early Christian believers attached to the seventh-day Sabbath. Their last act on Friday was to prepare "spices and ointments" (ch. 23:56). Then they laid everything aside "according to the commandment," and did not resume their labor of love until early Sunday morning. The strong contrast between the sacredness of the Sabbath and the

secular character of Sunday here embedded in the gospel narrative speaks eloquently to Christians today.

(7) WHAT DAY OF THE WEEK WILL “ALL FLESH COME TO WORSHIP” GOD IN THE EARTH MADE NEW, THUS SHOWING THERE WAS NO CHANGE AUTHORIZED BY HIM?

Isaiah 66:22, 23 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 40:8; 55:11; Matthew 24:35

The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden [two thousand years before the Jews existed], and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law.” Matthew 5:18. So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator’s

power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. "From one Sabbath to another" the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up "to worship before Me, saith the Lord." Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 66:23.

(8) WHAT DOES GOD CALL US TO DO AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT, WHICH MOST OF THE WORLD HAS FORGOTTEN, IGNORED, OR OF WHICH THEY ARE SIMPLY NOT AWARE?

Exodus 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

RELATED TEXTS: Deuteronomy 5:12-14; Hebrews 4:1-11

The pope has attempted to change the day of rest from the seventh to the first day. He has thought to change the very commandment that was given to cause man to remember his Creator. He has thought to change the greatest commandment in the Decalogue and thus make himself equal with God, or even exalt himself above God. The Lord is unchangeable, therefore His law is immutable; but the pope has exalted himself above God, in seeking to change His immutable precepts of holiness, justice, and goodness. He has trampled underfoot God's sanctified day, and, on

his own authority, put in its place one of the six laboring days. The whole nation has followed after the beast, and every week they rob God of His holy time. The pope has made a breach in the holy law of God.

Religious powers, allied to heaven by profession, and claiming to have the characteristics of a lamb, will show by their acts that they have the heart of the dragon, and that they are instigated and controlled by Satan. The time is coming when God's people will feel the hand of persecution because they keep holy the seventh day. Satan has caused the attempted change of the Sabbath in the hope of carrying out his purpose for the defeat of God's plans. He seeks to make the commands of God of less force in the world than human laws. The man of sin, who thought to change times and laws, and who has always oppressed the people of God, will cause laws to be made enforcing the observance of the first day of the week. But God's people are to stand firm for Him, and the Lord will work in their behalf, showing plainly that He is the God of gods.

(9) BY WHAT FOUR WORLDLY PRACTICES DO MANY CHRISTIANS LEADERS, EITHER KNOWINGLY OR IGNORANTLY, MISLEAD THEIR FOLLOWERS TO BREAK THE TRUE

SABBATH OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT?

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

RELATED TEXTS: Mark 7:7-9, 13;
Matthew 15:3

As the people go to their former teachers with the eager inquiry, “are these things so?”, the ministers present fables, prophesy smooth things, to soothe their fears and quiet the awakened conscience. But since many refuse to be satisfied with the mere authority of men and demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord,” the popular ministry, like the Pharisees of old, filled with anger as their authority is questioned, will denounce the message as of Satan and stir up the sin-loving multitudes to revile and persecute those who proclaim it.

The special point controverted will be the fourth of the Ten Commandments. There is general agreement among Christians that the other nine are of universal obligation, but early in the Christian Era men began to set aside the seventh-day Sabbath and to substitute the observance of the first day of the

week as the day of worship (see Dan. 7:25). Sunday-observing Christians today set forth various reasons as to why they observe the first day of the week instead of the seventh, and as to why they feel free to ignore the original Sabbath.

Some say that the Decalogue was abolished along with all Old Testament laws; others that the time element in the fourth commandment is ceremonial but the observance of one day every seven is a moral obligation.

In the Roman Church the claim was long made that the church had, by its divine authority, transferred the sacredness of the day. However, in recent decades attempts have been made to invoke the authority of Christ and the apostles.

Since all those views are unsupported by Scripture, they are unacceptable to all for whom the Bible and the Bible only is the rule of faith.

(10) HOW DOES THE LORD DESCRIBE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORSHIP FROM THOSE WHO ARE TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN?

Mark 7:7 AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 4:19; 1 Samuel 15:24

As the tree of knowledge was placed in the midst of the Garden of Eden, so the Sabbath command is placed in the midst of the Decalogue. In regard to the fruit of the tree of knowledge, the restriction was made, "Ye shall not eat of it, ... lest ye die." Genesis 3:3. Of the Sabbath God said, Ye shall not defile it, but keep it holy. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." Exodus 20:8. As the tree of knowledge was the test of Adam's obedience, so the fourth command is the test that God has given to prove the loyalty of all His people.

The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not.

While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other

choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.

(11) OF WHAT IS THE SABBATH A SIGN?

Ezekiel 20:12 Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.

RELATED TEXTS: Ezekiel 20:20; Mark 2:27, 28

From the pillar of cloud Christ declared concerning the Sabbath: “Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.” Exodus 31:13. The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience.

Men have sought out many inventions. They have taken a common day, upon which God has placed no sanctity, and have clothed it with sacred prerogatives. They have declared it to be a holy day, but this does not give it a vestige of sanctity. They dishonor God by accepting human institutions and presenting to the world as the Christian Sabbath a day which has no “Thus saith the Lord” for its authority.

To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ’s creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.

(12) WHAT DISTINGUISHING MARK OF PROTECTION WILL THOSE WHO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO GOD BEAR “ON THEIR FOREHEAD”?

Revelation 9:4 They [angels Revelation 7:1-3] were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men

who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 7:2, 3; 9:4; 14:1; 22:4; Ezekiel 9:4; Hebrews 10:16

The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character. As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ. It is obedience to the principles of the commandments of God that molds the character after the divine similitude.

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, ... that we may know what is coming.

(13) HOW CAN THE SEAL OF GOD BE OBTAINED AND THE MARK OF THE BEAST AVOIDED?

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:5; 12:17; 22:14; 3:10, 11

After the warning against the worship of the beast and his image the prophecy declares: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Since those who keep God's commandments are thus placed in contrast with those that worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, it follows that the keeping of God's law, on the one hand, and its violation, on the other, will make the distinction between the worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast.

The sign or seal of God is his Sabbath, and the seal or mark of the beast is in direct opposition to it; it is a counterfeit Sabbath on the "day of the sun."

According to Revelation 14:9-12, they who do not receive the mark of the beast keep the commandments of God; and the Sabbath is in the fourth precept; they keep the Sabbath of the Lord; they have his sign or seal. The importance of this sign is shown in this, that the fourth commandment is the only one in the law which distinguishes the Creator from false gods.

The crisis will come when symbolic Babylon prevails upon the state to enforce Sunday observance by civil law and seeks to punish all dissenters. This is

the issue described in Rev. 13:12–17. In this dark hour those who cling to the Bible will refuse to give up the observance of the true Sabbath.

What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world, are receiving the worldly mold, and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth,—these are receiving the heavenly mold, and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that the Lord God loves me and has provided this knowledge of His

will and the truth about His day in His unchanging Word.

I _____ that the Lord is my Creator and as the only true God is worthy to receive my worship and I _____ that the Lord put His seal in the center of His commandments as a weekly reminder of Him as our Creator, Re-creator, and the One who sanctifies me.

I _____ that Satan would attack this commandment which is a memorial to the Lord and a sign of true worship of the Lord and a sign of our connection to Him.

I _____ that since God gave the seventh day Sabbath at creation, because it was observed by His patriarchs, kept by Jesus, kept by His disciples before and after His death, we are told to “Remember” it in His eternal unchanging law, and that we will keep it in the new earth, then I _____ to keep it now.

I _____ that the Papacy has attempted to change God’s holy day and that, according to Revelation 12:17 in earth’s final moments the day of worship will become a distinguishing factor between true and false worship.

I _____ that, by God’s grace, both now and when the testing time comes, I will show my love for Him in the way He

has asked in obedience to all His commandments.

It is my _____ to bring glory to my Creator by receiving His seal in my forehead and avoid the mark of the beast. I _____ that I have the privilege to be among God's last day to bear His seal and be a messenger to share this truth with others.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS

[illegible]



14 - The Great Time of Trouble and the Plagues Begin

COMPILER'S NOTE: In progression though these lessons, it is important to realize that some of these events occur separately, simultaneously, and some partially overlap. When the time of trouble begins the Latter rain will have already fallen and the loud cry of the three angels will have been proclaimed by God's faithful for the last time. The wounds of the Beast will have fully healed by the reunited forces of church and state. This will be demonstrated by legislation of a forced day of worship which conflicts with the law of God. The pressure to observe Sunday--the

counterfeit Sabbath, will have escalated until mandated by civil law. The Bible explains in Revelation 13:17 that the first level of legislation, the abomination of God's law, will decree the use of economic sanctions. Some will give in to this pressure but this will not be successful in convincing God's faithful followers to change their allegiance from God to the dictates of man.

Up to this point, the birth pangs of the earth, by way of natural disasters and the wickedness of man, will have escalated to an unprecedented level. The apostate religious majority will blame the cause of these judgments on the nonconformance of a small fundamentalist group to the observance of Sunday.

Christ will leave the sanctuary marking the end of judgment and the close of probation. The eternal destiny of every human, at this point, will have been determined. God will withdraw His protection from those who reject it and will let loose the “winds” of strife. God's righteous judgments, by way of 7 last plagues as described in Revelation, will begin.

In a previous stage there was the initial passing of the Sunday law. This "abomination" will be an attempt by the man of sin to replace the Holy law of

God with his the traditions and dictates. Because God's faithful refuse to bow to the dictates of the Beast and her Image, the civil law enforcing economic sanctions will escalate to punishment by fines and imprisonment on those who refuse to cooperate. As their suffering increases from the plagues that rage around them, the religious majority—the Image of the Beast, will pressure the political leaders to impose the greatest scare tactic—a death penalty to all who will not conform. The law at that time is set in place, but to be enforced at a future time. Many who at one time were faithful will turn from their allegiance to God. Without an abiding connection with Christ, they will bow in homage to the dictates of the Beast for the sake of self-preservation.

(1) WHAT WILL SIGNAL THE CLOSING OF THE JUDGMENT AND MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE “GREAT TIME OF TROUBLE”?

Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people...

RELATED TEXTS: Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:12-14

Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, “It is done;” and

all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11.

Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The number of His subjects is made up; "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," is about to be given to the heirs of salvation, and Jesus is to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14).

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then

plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble.

(2) UNTIL THIS TIME, WHAT IS GOD HAVING HIS ANGELS TO HOLD BACK UNTIL THE SERVANTS OF GOD ARE FULLY SEALED IN THEIR FOREHEADS?

Revelation 7:1 After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 7:3

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecies are fulfilling. Strange and eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven—events which it was declared should shortly precede the great day of God. Everything in the world is in an unsettled state. The nations are angry, and great preparations for war are being made. Nation is plotting against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. The great day of God is hasting greatly. But although the nations are mustering their forces for war and bloodshed, the command to the angels is still in force, that they hold the four winds until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.

When the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human

passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.

A single angel destroyed all the firstborn of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere.

(3) WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT WHEN MICHAEL STANDS UP AND THE "FOUR WINDS" ARE RELEASED?

Daniel 12:1 ...And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time.

Revelation 9:4-6 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death

and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 7:3; 9:14, 15

The time of trouble such as never was, is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess, and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal.

(4) IN WHAT SEVEN JUDGMENTS WILL THE HARM FROM THE UNLEASHING OF THE "FOUR WINDS" BE MANIFESTED?

Revelation 15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 17:1; 19:2; 16:19; 21:9

The world is soon to be left by the angel of mercy and the seven last plagues are to be poured out....The storm is gathering. The bolts of God's wrath are soon to fall, and, when He shall begin to punish the transgressors, there will be no period of respite until the end. He shall come forth to punish the

inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, and "the earth...shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isaiah 26:21). Only those stand who are sanctified through the truth in the love of God. They will be hid with Christ in God until the desolation shall be over past.

These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy.

(5) WHAT IS ANOTHER WAY THE BIBLE DESCRIBES THESE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS OF GOD THAT WILL BE POURED OUT IN THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES?

Revelation 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 15:7; 16:2

God's goodness and long forbearance, His patience and mercy exercised to His

subjects will not hinder Him from punishing the sinner who refuses to be obedient to His requirements. It is not for man--a criminal against God's holy law, pardoned only through the great sacrifice He made in giving His Son to die for the guilty because His law was changeless to dictate to God. After all this effort on the part of God to preserve the sacred and exalted character of His law, if men, through the sophistry of the devil, turn the mercy and condescension of God into a curse, they must suffer the penalty.

Because Christ died, they consider they have liberty to transgress God's holy law, which condemns the transgressor, and would complain of its strictness and its penalty as severe and unlike God. They are uttering words Satan utters to millions, to quiet their conscience in rebellion against God.

(6) WHAT WILL BE THE FIRST PLAGUE THAT FALLS ON THOSE WHO HAVE CHOSEN THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

Revelation 16:2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath

threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people. Says the revelator, in describing those terrific scourges: "There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." (Revelation 16:1).

These whom God has warned and reproved and given great light, but they would not correct their ways and follow light, He would remove from them that heavenly protection that had preserved them from Satan's cruel power. The Lord would surely leave them to themselves to follow the judgment and counsels of their own wisdom. They would simply be left to themselves and the protection of God would be withdrawn from them, and they would not be shielded from the workings of Satan.

(7) BECAUSE GOD'S FAITHFUL WILL NOT BOW TO SATAN AND THE COMMANDMENTS OF MAN, HOW WILL HE REACT AND WHAT WILL BE HIS ACTION TOWARDS THEM?

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon [Satan] was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 12:12; 1 Peter 5:8

As Satan influenced Esau to march against Jacob, so he will stir up the wicked to destroy God's people in the time of trouble. And as he accused Jacob, he will urge his accusations against the people of God. He numbers the world as his subjects; but the little company who keep the commandments of God are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete.

The lamb-like power unites with the dragon in making war upon those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. And Satan unites with Protestants and Papists, acting in consort with them as the God of this world, dictating to men as if they were the subjects of his kingdom, to be handled and governed and controlled as he pleases.

If men will not agree to trample underfoot the commandments of God, the spirit of the dragon is revealed. They

are imprisoned, brought before councils, and fined. “He causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.” ...

(8) WHAT WILL BE THE SECOND AND THIRD "BOWL OF WRATH" POURED OUT ON THE WICKED?

Revelation 16:3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. ***Revelation 16:4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.***

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 8:8; 11:6; Exodus 7:19-21

The sea is useful primarily as a highway for international commerce and travel. It has been suggested that, by the obstruction of international travel and trade (see Revelation 13:13–17; 16:13, 14; 17:3, 12), this plague is designed to demonstrate in a signal way God’s displeasure with respect to Satan’s plan to bind the nations of earth together under his control.

In Bible times “rivers and fountains of waters” were primarily useful for such everyday requirements as drinking, bathing, and irrigation. Whereas the

second plague would doubtless result in great inconvenience and perhaps interruption of travel, the effects of the third would be immediate and serious.

(9) FOR WHAT TWO REASONS THESE PLAGUES OF BLOOD ARE DELIVERED TO THE BEAST AND THOSE WHO CARRY HER MARK?

Revelation 16:6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 6:10; 17:6; 19:2; 13:10

The sea “became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.” And “the rivers and fountains of waters ... became blood.” Terrible as these inflictions are, God's justice stands fully vindicated. The angel of God declares: “Thou art righteous, O Lord, ... because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.” Revelation 16:2-6. By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands. In like manner Christ declared the Jews of His time guilty of all the blood of holy men which had been shed since the days of

Abel; for they possessed the same spirit and were seeking to do the same work with these murderers of the prophets.

The plague is stated to be a direct act on the part of God. They are worthy. The punishment is precisely appropriate to the crime. The wicked deserve the punishment now meted out to them; it is in no sense an arbitrary act on the part of God.

In visiting these terrible judgments upon those who have rejected divine mercy. God is true in the sense that He is true to His word—He is carrying out what He had promised to do (Revelation 14:9–11). He is righteous, or just, in the sense that justice demands the meting out of punishment to those who have defied Heaven.

(10) AS THE WICKED SUFFER FROM THE FIRST COUPLE PLAGUES, AND SATANIC INFLUENCES CONVINCE THEM IT IS THE FAULT OF THE NONCONFORMISTS, WHAT LEGISLATION WILL BE DECLARED AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE?

Revelation 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:9; 10:21, 22; John 16:2

These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble.

God's people are not to fear. Satan cannot go beyond his limit. The Lord will be the defense of His people. He regards the injury done to His servants for the truth's sake as done to Himself. When the last decision has been made, when all have taken sides, either for Christ and the commandments, or for the great apostate, God will arise in His power, and the mouths of those who have blasphemed against Him will be forever stopped. Every opposing power will receive its punishment. (Jeremiah 25:30-33).

(11) WITH A DEATH DECREE IN PLACE, WHAT COUNSEL GIVEN BY JESUS TO THE CHRISTIANS IN JUDEA WILL ALSO BECOME APPLICABLE TO US?

Matthew 24:16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:17-20;
Luke 21:20-22; Jeremiah 6:1

As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains. Like the Christians of the Piedmont valleys, they will make the high places of the earth their sanctuaries and will thank God for “the munitions of rocks.” (Isa 33:16).

(12) WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE WICKED WHEN THE ANGEL POURS OUT THE FOURTH "BOWL" THAT UNLEASHES THE POWER OF DESTRUCTION FROM THE SUN?

Revelation 16:8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 8:12, 13;
Luke 21:25

Normally, the sun warms and cheers men, and controls plant growth, climate, and many other natural processes necessary to the maintenance of life

upon the earth. Now, it sends forth an excess of warmth and energy that tends to torment men and to destroy life. Though men doubtless suffer directly from this intense heat, its worst results are doubtless the most severe drought and famine the world has ever known.

(13) WHAT WILL THE FIFTH PLAGUE BRING UPON BABYLON AS A SYMBOL OF HER SPIRITUAL CONDITION?

Revelation 16:10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 8:22; Exodus 10:21-23

The seat of the beast is apparently his headquarters. The beast here represents primarily the papacy in its revived state, not so much in its religious aspect as in its assumed role of a world power dominant over other world powers.

Except for the small remnant that still resists his supremacy Satan numbers the world as his subjects, and it is through the revived papacy in particular that he seeks to secure undisputed control over the entire human race. It would therefore appear that for the duration of this plague the entire world is enveloped in a pall of darkness. Thus, while men

grope unrepentantly for light in a spiritually dark world (ch. 16:8, 9) God sends upon them literal darkness, symbolic of the deeper spiritual night that is yet to enshroud the earth.

(14) WHAT WILL THE WICKED WHO ARE BLASHEMING GOD BECAUSE OF THE PLAGUES NOT DO?

Revelation 16:9, 11 And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. ...They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 1:4, 5; Jeremiah 5:3, 4

Throughout the land there is a feverish but vain quest for a means of alleviating the suffering and want occasioned by the first four plagues and of averting further calamities. It is not motivated by godly sorrow, but by sorrow of the world. The objective is to escape the misery occasioned by the plagues, not to enter into a genuine state of reconciliation with God. Accordingly, Satan convinces the inhabitants of the earth, not that they are sinners, but that they have erred in tolerating God's chosen people.

Instead of acknowledging their guilt they proceed to lay the blame for their miserable plight upon those who have remained true and loyal to God. In utter perversity they refuse to yield to His will, and demonstrate themselves to be what they really are—devoted servants to Satan. The refusal to repent proves them to be altogether and unalterably opposed to God.

Those suffering from the plagues refuse to admit themselves in the wrong and God in the right, even in the face of severe judgments that would lead honest contrite men to amend their ways (Isa. 26:9, 10. Their hearts prove to be utterly hardened and unsusceptible to either divine mercy or severity.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ the signs happening in the world are escalating and we are standing on the threshold of these

great and solemn events. It is evident that the day of Christ's coming is drawing near.

I _____ that the day will soon come when Christ will stand up in the sanctuary in heaven and announce that judgement has ended, probation has closed, and the great time of trouble will begin. I _____ that my heart will be free from rebellion and I will be among those who are pronounced "righteous still".

I _____ that the when the winds of strife are released Satan will inspire his earthly agents to seek out and destroy the faithful who they are convinced are the cause of the judgements from which they are suffering. And I _____ that I don't have to fear, God will give me protection from the hand of the wicked.

I _____ that God has revealed the details of earth's final moments that I may escape the great deceptions of Satan, the Beast, and her Image. I _____ that I will be filled daily with His Spirit and spiritually prepared to remain faithful through these great and solemn events that are soon to transpire.

I _____ for the day of His coming and to be in paradise never suffering the effects of sin again!



15 - The Sixth Plague and Satan's Crowning Deception

COMPILER'S NOTE: At this point in time, Michael has stood up and proclaimed the finished judgment in the sanctuary. Probation has closed, and all mankind have received the "Mark of the Beast" or the "Seal of God". God has withdrawn His protection on the unrighteous, His holy angels have released the "Four Winds" of strife. Satan and His evil angels have taken advantage of the opportunity to wreak havoc on the earth and these judgments in the form of the first five plagues have taken place.

The righteous have been protected but those who have made no claim of Christianity, and those who have claimed Christianity, but have denied the power thereof, have been subject to these plagues. They realize they are on the wrong side because they are suffering from these judgments, so they begin to withdraw their allegiance to the Beast and her Image.

In a last desperate attempt to regain support for his failing agenda, Satan mobilizes his forces of darkness to the highest level possible with an onslaught of spiritualistic deceptions. Satan himself implements the greatest deception by appearing and claiming to be Christ. Because of his majestic appearance, charisma, and his supernatural signs and miracles he deceives the masses.

He announces that he and His “father” have changed the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment to the first day of the week. He proclaims that the plagues are judgments of God on the world because a small rebellious group will not comply with the altered commandment. He claims that, if this group were destroyed, God would withdraw the plagues. Now the infuriated apostate religious majority pressures their civil authorities to enforce the death decree on the

insubordinate sect of God's faithful followers to stop the chaos and suffering. The "battle of the great day of God" is about to take place.

(1) IN THE SIXTH PLAGUE, WHAT HAPPENS TO THE WATER (REVELATION 17:15) "EUPHRATES," SYMBOLIC OF WITHDRAWAL BY THE PEOPLE OF THEIR SUPPORT OF BABYLON?

Revelation 16:12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 17:1; Psalm 65:7

(2) WHO ARE THE THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS THAT WILL BE SPEAKING THE DECEPTIONS IN THIS FINAL SHOW DOWN BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL?

Revelation 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 20:10; 19:20

Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die." "In the day ye eat

thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3:4, 5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. Says the prophet: “I saw three unclean spirits like frogs; ... they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:13, 14. Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.

Three unclean spirits. Proponents of both views agree on identifying the “dragon,” “beast,” and false prophet as modern spiritism, or paganism, the papacy, and apostate Protestantism. The three unclean spirits apparently either symbolize or represent this evil trio of religious powers, which together constitute latter-day “great Babylon”

(3) WHAT WILL THESE EVIL AGENTS OF DARKNESS PERFORM TO DECEIVE THE

"KINGS" AND THE "WHOLE WORLD" IN ATTEMPT TO REGAIN THEIR EARTHLY SUPPORT?

Revelation 16:14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Thessalonians 2:9;
Matthew 24:24

Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.

Those who look for miracles as a sign of divine guidance are in grave danger of deception. It is stated in the Word that

the enemy will work through his agents who have departed from the faith, and they will seemingly work miracles, even to the bringing down of fire out of heaven in the sight of men. By means of “lying wonders” Satan would deceive, if possible, the very elect.

(4) INTO WHAT IMAGE WILL SATAN TRANSFORM HIMSELF IN HIS FINAL AND GREATEST DECEPTION?

2Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

RELATED TEXTS: Galatians 1:8;
Revelation 12:9

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: “Christ has come! Christ has come!”

The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying: This is “the great power of God.” Acts 8:10.

(5) IN THESE FINAL MOMENTS OF EARTH’S HISTORY, ALONG WITH THE MASSES, WHO ELSE WILL SATAN ATTEMPT TO DECEIVE?

Matthew 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:5; 24:11; Jeremiah 14:14

The time is at hand when Satan will work miracles to confirm minds in the belief that he is God. All the people of God are now to stand on the platform of truth as it has been given in the third angel's message. All the pleasant pictures, all the miracles wrought, will be presented in order that, if possible, the very elect shall be deceived. The only hope for anyone is to hold fast the evidences that have confirmed the truth in righteousness. Let these be proclaimed over and over again, until the close of this earth's history.

(6) WHAT IS THE NAME GIVEN BY SCRIPTURE FOR THE FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL; AND BY WHAT HEBREW NAME IS THE EVENT OFTEN REFERRED TO BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION?

Revelation 16:14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Revelation 16:16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 19:19

The battle of Armageddon will be fought. And that day must find none of us sleeping. Wide awake we must be, as wise virgins having oil in our vessels with our lamps. The power of the Holy Ghost must be upon us and the Captain of the Lord's host will stand at the head of the angels of heaven to direct the battle. Solemn events before us are yet to transpire. Trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded; vial after vial poured out one after another upon the inhabitants of the earth.

Scenes of stupendous interest are right upon us and these things will be sure indications of the presence of Him who has directed in every aggressive movement, who has accompanied the march of his cause through all the ages, and who has graciously pledged Himself to be with his people in all their conflicts to the end of the world. He will vindicate his truth. He will cause it to triumph. He is ready to supply his faithful ones with motives and power of purpose, inspiring them with hope and courage and valor in increased activity as the time is at hand.

(7) WHEN SATAN UNITES THE "KINGS OF THE EARTH AND THE WHOLE WORLD" FOR THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON WITH INTENT TO DESTROY THE "CHOSEN AND

FAITHFUL," WHO ARE THEY ULTIMATELY MAKING WAR AGAINST?

Revelation 17:14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 25:40

The battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought. He on whose vesture is written the name, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, leads forth the armies of heaven on white horses, clothed in fine linen, clean and white. John writes: "I saw heaven open, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on

His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:11-14).

(8) WHAT TWO CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S FAITHFUL PREVENT THEM FROM RECEIVING THE MARK AND THE PLAGUES; AND IS THE REASON SATAN AND HIS FOLLOWERS BECOME FURIOUS AND PLAN THEIR DESTRUCTION?

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 12:17; 22:14; 1 John 2:3-5; 1 John 5:3

The heavenly sentinels, faithful to their trust, continue their watch. Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul. Some are assailed in their flight from the cities and villages; but the swords raised against them break and fall powerless as a straw. Others are defended by angels in the form of men of war.

(9) WHAT DID CHRIST SAY THAT WOULD RESULT IF THE FINAL DAYS WERE NOT SHORTENED?

Matthew 24:22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

RELATED TEXTS: Mark 13:20; Revelation 2:10

The very delay, so painful to them, is the best answer to their petitions. As they endeavor to wait trustingly for the Lord to work they are led to exercise faith, hope, and patience, which have been too little exercised during their religious experience. Yet for the elect's sake the time of trouble will be shortened. "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him? ... I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." Luke 18:7, 8. The end will come more quickly than men expect. The wheat will be gathered and bound in sheaves for the garner of God; the tares will be bound as *sticks* for the fires of destruction.

(10) WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE CALL THE EXPERIENCE OF JACOB, AND WILL BE THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE, AS THEY ARE HUNTED LIKE ANIMALS BY SATANIC DRIVEN FORCES AND AGENTS?

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is

the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

RELATED TEXTS: Jeremiah 30:10; Psalm 34:19; Romans 11:26

The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. "Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. . . . All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jacob's night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Gen_32:24-30), represents the experience of God's people in the time of trouble. (Jer. 30:5-7).

Though God's people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth's sake; they fear that every sin has not been repented of, and that through some fault in themselves they will fail to realize the fulfillment of the Saviour's promise: I "will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world." (Revelation 3:10). If they could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death; but should they prove

unworthy, and lose their lives because of their own defects of character, then God's holy name would be reproached.

(11) IN THIS FINAL GREAT BATTLE CALLED ARMAGEDDON, WHAT PROMISE CAN THOSE WHO TRULY KNOW AND HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL TO GOD CLAIM?

Psalm 91:14, 15 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him."

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 91:1-13;
Zechariah 2:8; Psalm 18:1-15

Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul. Some are assailed in their flight from the cities and villages; but the swords raised against them break and fall powerless as a straw. Others are defended by angels in the form of men of war.

(12) BY WHAT TWO MEANS WILL GOD'S FAITHFUL OVERCOME THE WRATH-FILLED ATTACKS OF SATAN?

Revelation 12:11, 12 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

RELATED TEXTS: John 16:33; Revelation 3:21

The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Malachi 3:17.

If the blood of Christ's faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed

sown to yield a harvest for God. *Since probation is then closed*, their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness. Says the psalmist: "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me." Psalm 27:5. Christ has spoken: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." Isaiah 26:20, 21. Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life.

(13) WHAT WILL BE THE FATE OF THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE MARK OF THE BEAST BY CHOICE OF DISOBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDMENT (IN THE FOREHEAD); OR ACCEPT THE MARK BY THEIR ACTIONS (IN THE HAND) TO AVOID THE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AND THE DEATH PENALTY?

Revelation 14:9, 10 ...Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 19:20; 16:19; Psalm 11:6; Matthew 13:41, 42

The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel's message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them.

Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the

prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.

But not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy. The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently.

(14) WHAT PROMISES CAN GOD'S FAITHFUL CLAIM IF THEY TRUST HIM THROUGH THE TIME OF TROUBLE?

Psalm 37:39, 40 But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, Because they trust in Him.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 27:5; 46:1-2; Isaiah 33:2, 16

Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience. With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril. But they must wait yet a little longer. The people of God must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism.

...Those only who have partaken of the sufferings of the Son of God, and have come up through great tribulation, have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, can enjoy the indescribable glory and unsurpassed beauty of heaven."

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that soon these catastrophic event called the time of Jacob's trouble

marked by the closing of the door of probation will occur.

I _____ that Christ is my Advocate and _____ that I will, by His grace, be counted among His faithful on that solemn day.

I _____ that Satan will be furious with those who do keep God's commandments, have the testimonies of Jesus, and do not bow to him. I _____ that, as a result, he will send and onslaught of Satanic delusions in his last great attempt to deceive the world and win the battle.

I _____ that Satan himself will come claiming to be Christ. His great deceptions will come by means of wonders, and miracles and I _____ that if I do not stay in God's Word and become grounded in truth I, along with the masses, will be deceived.

I _____ that there will be a "battle of that great day of God" called Armageddon that the reality is not even comprehensible.

I _____ that God's faithful will be hunted like animals. I _____ that I may have to experience these incredible events, but I _____ that God's promises are true and He will be faithful to deliver me from the hands of

***the evil one and deliver me safely into
His kingdom.***

In the meantime, I _____ that if I am called upon to be persecuted or even give my life to His cause, God will give me the strength and peace to endure whatever the situation and I _____ that He will be with me through it.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS

[illegible]



16 - The Seventh Plague

and the battle of Armageddon

COMPILER'S NOTE: At this point in time, the first six plagues have occurred causing tribulation in climatic proportions upon the wicked. After the first several plagues the anger of Satan and the wicked who are suffering from the plagues, have prompted the civil authorities to enforce the death decree upon the nonconformists. God's faithful have either fled to the hills, or been taken captive into prison cells. The day designated to enforce the death decree has come, and the manhunt for God's faithful servants begins.

God's tolerance has reached the limit and the power of His voice echoes through the heavens and earth as He proclaims "It is done!". Nature convulses at His words, the powers of heaven are shaken, and the earth is moved into upheaval. The "battle of that great day of God Almighty", which marks the final moments of history, is about to take place. God's steps in to fully intervene for His people and Christ is about to make His glorious appearing in the heavens.

(1) BECAUSE GOD'S FAITHFUL WILL NOT BOW, WHAT PREVIOUSLY LEGISLATED DECREE WILL THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST AND HER UNITED GLOBAL ALLIES ATTEMPT TO ENFORCE?

Revelation 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 17:6; Mark 13:12; John 16:2

When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws

near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof.

The decree will go forth that they must disregard the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and honor the first day, or lose their lives; but they will not yield, and trample under their feet the Sabbath of the Lord, and honor an institution of papacy. Satan's host and wicked men will surround them, and exult over them, because there will seem to be no way of escape.

(2) HOW WILL GOD INTERVENE AS HE SEES HIS FAITHFUL SAINTS HUNTED LIKE THE MOST HORRENDOUS OF CRIMINALS FOR THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO HIM?

Isaiah 30:30 The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard, And show the descent of His arm, With the indignation of His anger And the flame of a devouring fire, With scattering, tempest, and hailstones.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 2:5; 46:6; Job 37:5

The people of God--some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains--still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by

hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death. It is now, in the hour of utmost extremity, that the God of Israel will interpose for the deliverance of His chosen.

(3) WHEN GOD'S "GLORIOUS VOICE" IS HEARD, WHAT WORDS WILL THUNDER FORTH FROM THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN AS THE SEVENTH PLAGUE BEGINS?

Revelation 16:17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

RELATED TEXTS: John 19:30; Revelation 21:6

It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance.

Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory.

God permits the forces of evil to advance to the point of apparent success in their sinister design to

eradicate the people of God. As the moment appointed in the death decree arrives and the wicked rush forward with shouts of triumph to annihilate the saints, the voice of God is heard declaring, "It is done." This declaration terminates the time of Jacob's trouble, delivers the saints, and ushers in the seventh plague.

In the context of Revelation 16:17 the dramatic announcement marks the moment when the revelation of the mystery of iniquity is complete, when the true character of the universal religio-political union of vs. 13, 14, 19, is unmasked.

(4) HOW DOES THE EARTH RESPOND TO THE CREATOR'S GREAT PROCLAMATION, AND WHAT HAPPENS TO THE WICKED CITIES OF THE NATIONS AS A RESULT?

Revelation 16:18, 19 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

RELATED TEXT: Revelation 6:12, 13;
Isaiah 13:13

That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, “such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.” Verses 17, 18. The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest.

As lightning from heaven unite with the fire in the earth, the mountains will burn like a furnace, and will pour forth terrific streams of lava, overwhelming gardens and fields, villages and cities. Seething molten masses thrown into the rivers will cause the waters to boil, sending forth massive rocks with indescribable violence and scattering their broken fragments upon the land. Rivers will be dried up. The earth will be convulsed; everywhere there will be dreadful earthquakes and eruptions.

(5) HOW DOES THIS VERSE DESCRIBE THE HAVOC WREAKED ON THE MOUNTAINS AND ISLANDS OF EARTH?

Revelation 16:20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 21:25; Revelation 6:14; 20:11; Jeremiah 4:24-29

The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, "to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." (Revelation 16:19).

(6) AS THE EARTH HEAVES AND VOLCANO-LIKE ERUPTIONS OCCUR, WHAT WILL THE FIRE DO TO THE ELEMENTS OF THE EARTH AND THE PRIDE FILLED WORKS OF MAN?

2Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Peter 3:11, 12; Joel 1:15; Psalm 46:6

The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed as a cottage.

The elements shall be in flames, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. ... The earth's crust will be rent by the outbursts of the elements concealed in the bowels of the earth. These elements, once broken loose, will sweep away the treasures of those who for years have been adding to their wealth by securing large possessions at starvation prices from those in their employ. ... The great general conflagration is but just ahead, when all this wasted labor of life will be swept away in a night and day.

(7) WHAT IS THE NEXT DEVASTATING PHASE OF THE SEVENTH PLAGUE THAT FALLS ON THE WICKED?

Revelation 16:21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. ...

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 18:13;
Revelation 8:7; 11:19

At His own will God summons the forces of nature to overthrow the might of His enemies—"fire, and hail; snow, and vapor; stormy wind fulfilling His word." Psalm 148:8. When the heathen Amorites had set themselves to resist His purposes, God interposed, casting down "great stones from heaven" (Joshua 10:11) upon the enemies of Israel.

We are told of a greater battle to take place in the closing scenes of earth's history, when "Jehovah hath opened His armory, and hath brought forth the weapons of His indignation." Jeremiah 50:25. "Hast thou," he inquires, "entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" Job 38:22, 23.

Great hailstones, everyone "about the weight of a talent," are doing their work of destruction. Verses 19, 21. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world's great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God's people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.

(8) WHAT IS THE UNREMEMORSEFUL REACTION OF THE WICKED TO THE "EXCEEDINGLY GREAT" PLAGUE OF HAIL?

Revelation 16:21 ...Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 16:9; 16:11; Isaiah 8:21

They Blasphemed God. For the third time those upon whom the plagues fall curse God, thus revealing their utter contempt for Him, even in the midst of His most grievous judgments.

(9) WHAT WILL BE THE REACTION IN THE HEARTS OF THE UNPREPARED, PERPLEXED, AND DISTRESSED MULTITUDE AS THE "POWERS OF HEAVEN" ARE SHAKEN?

Luke 21:25, 26 "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

RELATED TEXTS: Micah 7:4; Isaiah 22:5; 13:13, 14

Storms, earthquakes, whirlwinds, fire, and the sword will spread desolation everywhere, until men's hearts shall fail them for fear and for looking after those things which shall come upon the earth. You know not how small a space is between you and eternity. You know not how soon your probation may close.

The latter part of the verse gives as the climactic reason for men's hearts failing them for fear, the shaking of "the

powers of heaven.” The scene here depicted takes place under the seventh plague. Upon this scene “the wicked look with terror and amazement”.

(10) WHERE WILL THE WICKED SEEK REFUGE FROM THEIR IMPENDING DOOM, AND WHAT CRY WILL RING FORTH FROM THEIR LIPS?

Revelation 6:15-17 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

RELATED TEXTS: Jeremiah 8:3; Isaiah 2:10, 19; Hosea 10:8; Luke 23:30

The derisive jests have ceased. Lying lips are hushed into silence. The clash of arms, the tumult of battle, “with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood” (Isaiah 9:5), is stilled. Nought now is heard but the voice of prayer and the sound of weeping and lamentation. The cry bursts forth from lips so lately scoffing: “The great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” The wicked pray to be buried beneath

the rocks of the mountains rather than meet the face of Him whom they have despised and rejected.

Thick clouds still cover the sky; yet the sun now and then breaks through, appearing like the avenging eye of Jehovah. Fierce lightning leaps from the heavens, enveloping the earth in a sheet of flame. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked. The words spoken are not comprehended by all; but they are distinctly understood by the false teachers. Those who a little before were so reckless, so boastful and defiant, so exultant in their cruelty to God's commandment-keeping people, are now overwhelmed with consternation and shuddering in fear. Their wails are heard above the sound of the elements. Demons acknowledge the deity of Christ and tremble before His power, while men are supplicating for mercy and groveling in abject terror.

(11) THOUGH THE WORLD WILL CRUMBLE AROUND THEM AND THEY SEE THE TERROR OF THE WICKED, WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS NOT HAVE TO FEAR?

Psalm 9:9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 46:7; 62:7, 8;
Proverbs 18:10

Thus God will destroy the wicked from off the earth. But the righteous will be preserved in the midst of these commotions, as Noah was preserved in the ark. God will be their refuge, and under His wings shall they trust. Says the psalmist: "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee." Psalm 91:9, 10. "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me." Psalm 27:5. God's promise is, "Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known My name." Psalm 91:14.

The time of trouble such as never was, is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess, and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal.

And now, while the precious Saviour is making an atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. God's providence is the school in which we are

to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus. The Lord is ever setting before us, not the way we would choose, which is easier and pleasanter to us, but the true aims of life. None can neglect or defer this work but at the most fearful peril to their souls.

(12) WHO DOES THE BIBLE SAY WILL BE DELIVERED FROM THIS "TIME OF TROUBLE"?

Daniel 12:1 ... And at that time your people shall be delivered, Everyone who is found written in the book.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 17:14; 20:12, 15; 21:27

Will the Lord forget His people in this trying hour? Did He forget faithful Noah when judgments were visited upon the antediluvian world? Did He forget Lot when the fire came down from heaven to consume the cities of the plain? Did He forget Joseph surrounded by idolaters in Egypt? Did He forget Elijah when the oath of Jezebel threatened him with the fate of the prophets of Baal? Did He forget Jeremiah in the dark and dismal pit of his prison house? Did He forget the three worthies in the fiery furnace? or Daniel in the den of lions?

Though enemies may thrust them into prison, yet dungeon walls cannot cut off the communication between their souls

and Christ. One who sees their every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers; and angels will come to them in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from heaven. The prison will be as a palace; for the rich in faith dwell there, and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light as when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises at midnight in the Philippian dungeon.

(13) WHAT GREAT AND FINAL EVENT DOES THE CLOSING OF THE SEVENTH PLAGUE USHER IN?

Matthew 24:30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 1:7; Acts 1:11

It is called the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. His coming surpasses in glory all that the eye has ever seen. Far exceeding anything the imagination has conceived will be His personal revelation in the clouds of heaven. Then there will be a perfect contrast to the humility which attended His first advent. Then He came as the Son of the infinite God, but His glory was concealed by the garb of

humanity. Then He came without any worldly distinction of royalty, without any visible manifestation of glory; but at His second appearing He comes with His own glory and the glory of the Father and attended by the angelic host of heaven. In the place of that crown of thorns which marred His brow, He wears a crown within a crown. No longer is He clad with the garments of humility, with the old kingly robe placed upon Him by His mockers. No: He comes clad in a robe whiter than the whitest white. Upon His vesture and thigh a name is inscribed, "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that the day is coming when the plagues will be underway, the protection of human laws will be withdrawn, and I will face the ultimate test of my allegiance to God by true worship the way He has asked.

I _____ that the Bible is clear that the whole earth will convulse, mountains will crumble, and islands will vanish into the sea; but I _____ that my God is faithful and will deliver me from these calamities.

***At the most trying hour, I _____
that God will proclaim that my
tribulation is finished and will interpose
for my deliverance. I _____ that He
will deliver me from the hand of the
wicked as He delivered his faithful in
times of old.***

I _____ to remain faithful to God and His wishes so that I will be among those who look to the sky as they depart like a scroll and welcome His coming as “King of kings, and Lord of lords”.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS

[illegible]



17 - How, Where, and When Christ Will Return

COMPILER'S NOTE: At this point in time, the last plagues have been poured out, the earth has been devastated with unprecedented destruction, and all who dwell on it are in turmoil. The lost are terrified and their hearts are failing them from fear. The Beast, her Image, and her followers are seeking to destroy those who they believe are the cause of their suffering.

The righteous are fearful but not for the same reason. Though the world is crumbling around them, their greatest fear is that their heart may have

unrepented sin that would separate them from their Saviour. The coming of Christ is eminent and they are joyful, but they still question if they will be able to stand in His presence.

This lesson focuses on what the Bible teaches will be happening at the time Christ returns. What will those with the mark of the beast will be doing? What will those sealed by God being doing? In what manner will Christ return? The belief held by most of the Christian world is that Christ will return and take His people by way of a secret rapture. The Bible has not left us room to wonder, we will clearly see what it teaches.

(1) TO WHAT PHENOMENON OF NATURE DOES THIS VERSE COMPARE THE DAZZLING BRIGHTNESS OF THE GLORIOUS COMING OF CHRIST?

Matthew 24:27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 97:4; Zechariah 9:14; Job 37:3-5; Luke 17:24

Fierce lightning leaps from the heavens, enveloping the earth in a sheet of flame. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked. The words

spoken *by God* are not comprehended by all; but they are distinctly understood by the false teachers. Those who a little before were so reckless, so boastful and defiant, so exultant in their cruelty to God's commandment-keeping people, are now overwhelmed with consternation and shuddering in fear. Their wails are heard above the sound of the elements. Demons acknowledge the deity of Christ and tremble before His power, while men are supplicating for mercy and groveling in abject terror.

(2) WHEN CHRIST RETURNS, WHERE WILL HE APPEAR WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY?

Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds...

RELATED TEXTS: Acts 1:11; Revelation 14:14; Daniel 7:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:17

Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God will know this to be the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the

rainbow of the covenant. Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror.

And, furthermore, Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ's advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming.

(3) DISPELLING THE MYTH THAT CHRIST WILL RETURN IN SECRET, HOW MANY EYES WILL SEE HIM AND WHO WILL MOURN THEIR UNPREPAREDNESS?

Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 6:15-17;
Matthew 24:30

The personal, visible, bodily appearing of the Lord in great majesty is here clearly described. Christ does not send a deputy, nor does He come spiritually. He Himself comes in person. The same Jesus who ascended to heaven now descends from heaven. Just before He went to heaven He promised to return (John 14:3). The church was assured when He ascended in a cloud that "this same Jesus" would "come in like manner" (Acts 1:9–11). Paul reiterates these promises and records additional

details concerning the manner of their fulfillment.

There would be nothing secret or mysterious about the return of Jesus. No one would have to be told that He had come back to earth, for all would see Him (Rev. 1:7). Christ's words leave no room for a secret rapture, for a mystical coming, or for any of the other false theories contrived by pious but overzealous would-be "prophets." Men would "see" Jesus "coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 24:30; cf. chs. 16:27; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 14:62; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7). There would be no mistaking the event. When Jesus returns, all men will know of it without having to be told.

(4) AS YET ANOTHER EVIDENCE OF CHRIST'S APPEARANCE, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE ELEMENTS OF THE EARTH?

2Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

RELATED TEXTS: Psalm 50:3; 97:3-5; Joel 1:15

In the day of the Lord, just before the coming of Christ, God will send lightning from Heaven in His wrath, which will

unite with fire in the earth. The mountains will burn like a furnace, and will pour forth terrible streams of lava, destroying gardens and fields, villages and cities; and as they pour their melted ore, rocks and heated mud into the rivers, will cause them to boil like a pot, and send forth massive rocks and scatter their broken fragments upon the land with indescribable violence. Whole rivers will be dried up. The earth will be convulsed, and there will be dreadful eruptions and earthquakes everywhere. God will plague the wicked inhabitants of the earth until they are destroyed from off it. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed as a cottage. The elements shall be in flames, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll.

(5) HOW WILL THE SKY, MOUNTAINS, AND ISLANDS REACT TO THE RETURN OF CHRIST?

Revelation 6:14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 16:20; Isaiah 34:4; Jeremiah 51:25

When Christ shall come the earth will tremble before Him, and the heavens will be rolled together as a scroll, and

every mountain and every island will be moved out of its place. “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.

Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself” (Psalm 50:3–6). In view of the great day of God, we can see that our only safety will be found in departing from all sin and iniquity. Those who continue in sin will be found among the condemned and perishing.

(6) WHAT WILL BE THREE UNMISTAKABLE AUDIBLE INDICATIONS THAT CHRIST HAS RETURNED?

1Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

RELATED TEXTS: Zechariah 9:14; 1 Corinthians 15:52; Revelation 1:10

(7) WHAT PROPHECY, GIVEN BY CHRIST, WILL COME TRUE FOR THOSE WHO WERE INVOLVED IN HIS MOCK TRIAL AND MERCILESS CRUCIFIXION?

Matthew 26:64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

RELATED TEXTS: Mark 14:62; Revelation 1:7; Matthew 25:31

Those who derided His claim to be the Son of God are speechless now. There is the haughty Herod who jeered at His royal title and bade the mocking soldiers crown Him king. There are the very men who with impious hands placed upon His form the purple robe, upon His sacred brow the thorny crown, and in His unresisting hand the mimic scepter, and bowed before Him in blasphemous mockery. The men who smote and spit upon the Prince of Life now turn from His piercing gaze and seek to flee from the overpowering glory of His presence. Those who drove the nails through His hands and feet, the soldier who pierced His side, behold these marks with terror and remorse.

In the lives of all who reject truth there are moments when conscience awakens, when memory presents the torturing recollection of a life of hypocrisy and the soul is harassed with vain regrets. But what are these compared with the remorse of that day when "fear cometh as desolation," when "destruction

cometh as a whirlwind"! Proverbs 1:27. Those who would have destroyed Christ and His faithful people now witness the glory which rests upon them. In the midst of their terror they hear the voices of the saints in joyful strains exclaiming: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isaiah 25:9.

(8) THOUGH THE BIBLE HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE EVENT IS NOT SECRET, HOW WILL THE ARRIVAL OF THAT DAY SURPRISE THOSE WHO HAVE REJECTED CHRIST?

2Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:42, 43; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; Revelation 16:15

God's message for the inhabitants of earth today is, "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matthew 24:44. The conditions prevailing in society, and especially in the great cities of the nations, proclaim in thunder tones that the hour of God's judgment is come and that the end of all things earthly is at hand. We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another—fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed. We are not to be surprised at this time

by events both great and decisive; for the angel of mercy cannot remain much longer to shelter the impenitent. (303) He who wishes to be saved must be right with God before the day of the Lord arrives, for there will be no opportunity for repentance on that great day.

(9) THOUGH WE MAY SEE THE SIGNS TO KNOW CHRIST'S RETURN IS CLOSE, WHAT DOES NO ONE KNOW REGARDING THE TIME OF THE GREAT EVENT?

Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:42, 43; 25:13; Zechariah 14:7-9

The exact time of Christ's second coming is not revealed. Jesus said, No man knoweth the day nor the hour. But He also gave signs of His coming, and said, "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." He bade them, as the signs of His coming should appear, "Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." And in view of these things the apostle wrote: "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day." Since

we know not the hour of Christ's coming, we must live soberly and godly in this present world, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

With vigilant watching they combine earnest working. Because they know that the Lord is at the door, their zeal is quickened to co-operate with the divine intelligences in working for the salvation of souls. These are the faithful and wise servants who give to the Lord's household "their portion of meat in due season." Luke 12:42. They are declaring the truth that is now especially applicable. As Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses each declared the truth for his time, so will Christ's servants now give the special warning for their generation.

(10) WHAT WILL BE GIVEN BY CHRIST AT HIS RETURN TO EACH ACCORDING TO THE EVIDENCE OF THEIR LOVE TO HIM AND THEIR FELLOW MEN?

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 22:12; Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 25:31-46

The Saviour presents before us the scene of the last judgment when the

reward is given to those upon His right hand, and the sentence of condemnation to those upon His left hand. The righteous are represented as wondering what they have done for which they are to be so liberally rewarded. They had had the abiding presence of Christ in their hearts; they had been imbued with His Spirit, and without conscious effort on their part; they had been serving Christ in the person of His saints, and had thereby gained the sure reward. But they had not had in view the reward they were to receive, and the expectation of it had been no part of the motive that had actuated their service. What they did was done from love to Christ and to their fellow-men, and Christ identifies Himself with suffering humanity, and accounts that all deeds done in sympathy and compassion and love to men, are done to Him.

(11) WHAT ARE WE WARNED THAT WE MUST “BE”, THAT WE ARE NOT TAKEN BY SURPRISE AT CHRIST’S RETURN?

Matthew 24:44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 25:10; Luke 12:40; Revelation 19:7; 22:7

Suppose that today Christ should appear in the clouds of heaven, who ... would be ready to meet Him? Suppose we should be translated into the kingdom of heaven just as we are. Would we be prepared to unite with the saints of God, to live in harmony with the royal family, the children of the heavenly King? What preparation have you made for the judgment? Have you made your peace with God?... Are you seeking to help those around you, those in your home, those in your neighborhood, those with whom you come in contact that are not keeping the commandments of God?...

Remember that profession is worthless without a practice that enters into the daily life. God knows whether we are keeping His law in truth. He knows just what we are doing, just what we are thinking and saying. Are we getting ready to meet the King? When He comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, will you be able to say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us" (Isaiah 25:9)? To those who can say this Christ will say, "Come up higher. Upon this earth you have loved Me. You have loved to do My will. You can now enter the Holy City and receive the crown of everlasting life."

I entreat you, brethren and sisters, to labor earnestly to secure the crown of everlasting life. The reward will be worth

the conflict, worth the effort.... In the race in which we are running, everyone may receive the reward offered—a crown of everlasting life. *Are you ready to say, I want this crown; I mean by God's help to have it. I mean to hold fast to the truth, that I may see the King in His beauty.*

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that the Bible does not reveal the exact day or hour of Christ's return.

I _____ that the Lord has revealed signs that we can know when His coming is near and the exact manner which He will return that, if I seek to know, I will not be among the masses that will be deceived.

I _____ that it is evident from the Bible that nothing in heaven or on earth will be able to keep secret the glorious return of Christ and this amazing event will be witnessed by every eye.

I _____ that every creature on earth will experience the unprecedented earthquake that will convulse the powers of heaven of all of nature causing mountains and islands to be moved out of their place.

I _____ that the Bible also teaches that Christ's return will be an extremely audible event. The entire earth will ring with the voice of Christ and the trumpet of God which will wake the dead.

I _____ that the Bible reveals that the time of Christ's coming will arrive unexpectedly as a thief in the night to those who are unprepared, but the event itself obviously will not be secret.

I _____ that a secret rapture of the righteous is not taught in Scripture. I _____ that it is a dangerous belief because it gives false security to the unrepented sinner who may decide that this will be the time to change his ways. Since a secret rapture will not occur, and judgment will have been decided, their door to salvation will be closed.

I _____ that I don't have to fear the judgment or the coming of my Lord because He is not only the Judge who loves me, but He is also my Lawyer, my Sacrifice, and my Saviour. I am looking forward with great anticipation to that magnificently wonderful day!



18 - The Glorious Return of Christ and Our Deliverance

COMPILER'S NOTE: The time and event of great expectation has arrived for the true followers of Christ and for the entire on looking universe! At earth's midnight hour when God's people are being hunted as the vilest criminals by evil men. When there appears to be no hope of rescue, the time of deliverance will come. The unmistakable evidence of the return of the Son of God is seen in the sky.

The Lord returns, but not as a humble servant. Not one to be beaten and spat upon by cruel men. He comes with all

the angels in all His glory as the Lion of Juda, the King of kings and Lord of lords! Every eye beholds the glory and fulfilment of this long awaited promise. The righteous dead are resurrected to life, the living are translated to meet them and their Saviour in the sky. The wicked witness Christ's return with horror, and they plead for the mountains to fall on them to hide them from the face of the One whom they have rejected. The rewards are given, the righteous receive immortality, the wicked receive their wish and are destroyed by the brightness of Christ's glory. They will sleep the sleep of death awaiting the 2nd resurrection and final judgment (Revelation 20).

(1) AS THE FAITHFUL, WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION, WITNESS THE APPROACH OF THE ANGELIC CLOUD, WHAT WILL BE THEIR TRIUMPHANT PROCLAMATION?

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

RELATED TEXTS: Joel 2:32; Proverbs 14:26

Through a rift in the clouds there beams a star whose brilliancy is increased fourfold in contrast with the darkness. It speaks hope and joy to the faithful, but

severity and wrath to the transgressors of God's law. Those who have sacrificed all for Christ are now secure, hidden as in the secret of the Lord's pavilion. They have been tested, and before the world and the despisers of truth they have evinced their fidelity to Him who died for them.

A marvelous change has come over those who have held fast their integrity in the very face of death. They have been suddenly delivered from the dark and terrible tyranny of men transformed to demons. Their faces, so lately pale, anxious, and haggard, are now aglow with wonder, faith, and love. Their voices rise in triumphant song: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." Psalm 46:1–3.

(2) WHAT JOYOUS WORDS DO THE REDEEMED PROCLAIMED AS THEY BEHOLD THE FACE OF THEIR BLESSED SAVIOUR?

Isaiah 25:9 And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; We have waited for

Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 25:8; 30:18;
Revelation 19:6, 7

This is our God. This joyous shout of triumph comes from the lips of the scattered saints as Christ appears in the clouds of heaven. Their earnest cries for deliverance are now changed to anthems of praise.

The hidden ones have been scattered because of man's enmity against the law of Jehovah. They have been oppressed by all the powers of the earth. They have been scattered in the dens and caves of the earth through the violence of their adversaries, because they are true and obedient to Jehovah's laws. But deliverance comes to the people of God. To their enemies God will show Himself a God of just retribution. ... From the dens and the caves of the earth, that have been the secret hiding places of God's people, they are called forth as His witnesses, true and faithful.

**(3) WHOSE MAGNIFICENT VOICE
RESOUNDS THROUGH THE HEAVENS AS
HE DESCENDS TO DELIVER THE
FAITHFUL?**

Isaiah 30:30 The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard, And show the descent of His arm, With the indignation

of His anger And the flame of a devouring fire, With scattering, tempest, and hailstones.

RELATED TEXTS: Job 37:4, 5; Psalm 29:3-5; Revelation 1:15

By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, "Look up," and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne.

(4) WITH WHAT MAJESTIC TITLE WILL CHRIST RETURN IN ALL HIS GLORY TO SET UP HIS KINGDOM ON EARTH?

Revelation 19:16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 17:14; Proverbs 8:15, 16; Daniel 2:47

No human language can portray the scenes of the second coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. He is to come with His own glory, and with the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. He will come clad in the robe of light, which He has worn from the days of eternity.

As the living cloud comes still nearer, every eye beholds the Prince of life. No

crown of thorns now mars that sacred head; but a diadem of glory rests on His holy brow. His countenance outshines the dazzling brightness of the noonday sun. “And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” Revelation 19:16.

(5) WHO WILL ACCOMPANY CHRIST AS HE APPEARS IN THE HEAVENS AND SEATED ON HIS THRONE?

Matthew 25:31 *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 5:11; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26

Christ is soon to come the second time. Of this we should often talk. It should be the uppermost thought in our minds. He is coming, with power and great glory, and every eye shall see Him. All the holy angels will accompany Him.

Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and in the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful, triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. In the place of a crown of thorns, He will wear a crown of glory—a crown within a crown. In the place of that old purple

robe, He will be clothed in a garment of whitest white, “so as no fuller on earth can white” (Mark 9:3) it. And on His vesture and on His thigh a name will be written, “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” Revelation 19:16.

(6) WHEN THE CLOUD OF ANGELIC HOSTS ARRIVE, IN WHAT MAGNIFICENT MANNER WILL CHRIST--THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE, CALL FORTH THE SLEEPING RIGHTEOUS FROM THEIR DUSTY GRAVES?

1Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 24:30, 31; Isaiah 27:13; Zechariah 9:14; Jude 1:14

Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: “Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!” Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and

people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying: “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory.

(7) WHAT OTHER GROUP WILL ALSO BE CALLED FORTH FROM THE GRAVE TO WITNESS THE COMING OF THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS?

Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

RELATED TEXTS: Zechariah 12:10; John 19:37; Psalm 68:1

Graves are opened, and “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth . . . awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept His law.

Those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to

see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.

(8) WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RIGHTEOUS AT THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET?

1Corinthians 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Corinthians 15:42, 43; 1 John 3:2

The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name. By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead.

“The hour is coming,” Christ said, “in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.” That voice is to resound through all the habitations of the dead; and every saint who sleeps in Jesus will awake and leave his prison house. Then the virtue of character we have received from Christ’s

righteousness will ally us to true greatness of the highest order. The victory of the sleeping saints will be glorious on the morning of the resurrection. ... There stands the risen host. The last thought was of death and its pangs. The last thoughts they had were of the grave and the tomb, but now they proclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

(9) WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE EARTHLY BODIES AND MORTAL SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL AT THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET?

Philippians 3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

1Corinthians 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 26:19; John 5:28, 29

All come forth from their graves the same in stature as when they entered the tomb. Adam, who stands among the risen throng, is of lofty height and majestic form, in stature but little below the Son of God. He presents a marked contrast to the people of later generations; in this one respect is shown the great degeneracy of the race. But all

arise with the freshness and vigor of eternal youth. In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost. He will change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave. Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will “grow up” (Malachi 4:2) to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory. The last lingering traces of the curse of sin will be removed, and Christ’s faithful ones will appear in “the beauty of the Lord our God,” in mind and soul and body reflecting the perfect image of their Lord. Oh, wonderful redemption! Long talked of, long hoped for, contemplated with eager anticipation, but never fully understood.

(10) WHO WILL BE GATHER FROM ALL PARTS OF THE EARTH AND JOYOUSLY REUNITED FOR THE JOURNEY TO HEAVEN?

Matthew 24:31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect

*from the four winds, from one end of
heaven to the other.*

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 11:12; 43:6; 60:4

Our fondest hopes are often blighted here. Our loved ones are torn from us by death. We close their eyes and habit them for the tomb, and lay them away from our sight. But hope bears our spirits up. We are not parted forever, but shall meet the loved ones who sleep in Jesus. They shall come again from the land of the enemy. The Life-giver is coming. Myriads of holy angels escort Him on His way. He bursts the bands of death, breaks the fetters of the tomb, the precious captives come forth in health and immortal beauty.

As the little infants come forth immortal from their dusty beds, they immediately wing their way to their mothers' arms. They meet again nevermore to part. But many of the little ones have no mother there. We listen in vain for the rapturous song of triumph from the mother. The angels receive the motherless infants and conduct them to the tree of life.

May the mother yet seek all the truth, and lay up a treasure in heaven, that when the Life-giver shall come to bring the captives from the great prison house of death, father, mother, and children may meet, and the broken links of the

family chain be reunited, no more to be severed.

(11) WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE FAITHFUL WHO ARE STILL ALIVE AT CHRIST'S RETURN?

1Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Kings 2:11; Revelation 11:12; Psalm 49:15

The living righteous are changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels “gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

(12) WHO WILL EACH OF US HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO MEET ON THAT DAY AS THEY GATHER US TOGETHER TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR?

Matthew 24:31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 13:41; 25:31; Hebrews 1:14

Not until the providences of God are seen in the light of eternity shall we understand what we owe to the care and interposition of His angels. Celestial beings have taken an active part in the affairs of men. They have appeared in garments that shone as the lightning; they have come as men, in the garb of wayfarers. They have accepted the hospitalities of human homes; they acted as guides to benighted travelers. They have thwarted the spoiler's purpose and turned aside the stroke of the destroyer.

Though the rulers of this world know it not, yet often in their councils angels have been spokesmen. Human eyes have looked upon them. Human ears have listened to their appeals. In the council hall and the court of justice, heavenly messengers have pleaded the cause of the persecuted and oppressed. They have defeated purposes and arrested evils that would have brought wrong and suffering to God's children. To the students in the heavenly school, all this will be unfolded.

Every redeemed one will understand the ministry of angels in his own life. The angel who was his guardian from his earliest moment; the angel who watched his steps, and covered his head in the day of peril; the angel who was

with him in the valley of the shadow of death, who marked his resting place, who was the first to greet him in the resurrection morning—what will it be to hold converse with him, and to learn the history of divine interposition in the individual life, of heavenly co-operation in every work for humanity!

(13) WHEN CHRIST APPEARS IN THE SKY WITH ALL HIS ANGELS, HOW WILL THE SAVED AND LOST BECOME SEPARATED?

Matthew 24:40, 41 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

RELATED TEXTS: 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Luke 17:34-36; Matthew 13:27-30

The teaching known as the “secret rapture,” according to which the saints are to be secretly snatched away from this earth prior to the visible return of Christ, is wholly unscriptural. Its advocates appeal to the statements of Christ in vs. 39–41 as proof. But these verses teach no such thing. The “coming” of ch. 24 is always, without exception, the literal, visible appearance of Christ. At this coming “all the tribes of the earth ... see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven” (v. 30). Everything of the nature of a “secret”

coming Christ attributed to the false christs (vs. 24–26).

What Jesus meant by being “taken” and by being “left” is made clear by the context. Those who are left are the evil servants, who instead of continuing in their normal pursuits after a supposed secret rapture, are cut asunder and assigned their portion with the hypocrites (vs. 48–51).

(14) AT HIS RETURN, HOW WILL CHRIST HAVE DETERMINED WHO WILL BE TAKEN AND WHO WILL BE LEFT?

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

RELATED TEXTS: John 14:21-24; 15:10; Revelation 22:14

Not to keep the commandments of God is not to love Him. None will keep the law of God unless they love Him who is the only begotten of the Father. And nonetheless surely; if they love Him, they will express that love by obedience to Him. All who love Christ will be loved of the Father, and He will manifest Himself to them. In all their emergencies and perplexities they will have a helper in Jesus Christ.

The Lord is coming in power and great glory. It will then be His work to make a complete separation between the

righteous and the wicked. But the oil cannot then be transferred to the vessels of those who have it not. Then shall be fulfilled the words of Christ: "Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." The righteous and the wicked are to be associated together in the work of life. But the Lord reads the character; He discerns who are obedient children, who respect and love His commandments.

(15) WHAT WILL BE THE PRACTICAL EVIDENCE OF OUR LOVE, OBEDIENCE AND THE BASIS OF THE REWARD WE RECEIVE?

Matthew 25:40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

RELATED TEXTS: Matthew 25:34-46

At the day of judgment, those who have been faithful in their everyday life, who have been quick to see their work and do it, not thinking of praise or profit, will hear the words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Christ does not commend them for the eloquent orations they have

made, the intellectual power they have displayed, or the liberal donations they have given. It is for doing little things which are generally overlooked that they are rewarded. “I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat,” He says.

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me”.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that at the midnight hour when all seems hopeless I will be among those who are, with great anticipation, are looking for the break in the turbulent sky where the angelic cloud will appear and reveal the King of kings and my Lord of Lords!

I _____ to look into the face of Jesus and be among those who are proclaiming, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us!”

I _____ to hear His magnificent voice resound through the heavens as He descends to take me up into the clouds to be with Him for eternity.

I _____ that on that day the Lord will, with His melodious voice and sound of the trumpet, call forth the sleeping dead to life. I _____ to be reunited with my loved ones as we are gathered on the cloud with Christ.

I _____ that I will be able to meet my guardian angel that has seen me through my life journey. I am _____ to hear the true stories of how I have been blessed with protection through thousands of attempts by the devil to destroy me!

I _____ that I will demonstrate my love for God and my love for my fellow men with daily acts of kindness. I _____ to, by the power of the Holy Spirit, look for “the least of these” and treat them as I would treat Jesus.

I am looking forward to that day to receive the gift of a new body and immortality. I _____ that You come quickly Lord Jesus and deliver me from this world of evil.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS



19 - The Rewards of the Righteous

(1) WITH WHAT WORDS OF BLESSING WILL THE LORD WELCOME THE FAITHFUL WHO ARE FOUND VIGILANTLY WATCHING AND EARNESTLY WORKING IN PREPARATION FOR HIS RETURN?

Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

RELATED TEXTS: Luke 12:37; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8; Matthew 24:45-47

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with Him a hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads.” Revelation 14:1. In this world their minds were consecrated to God; they served Him with the intellect and with the heart; and now He can place His name “in their foreheads.” “And they shall reign for ever and ever.” Revelation 22:5. They do not go in and out as those who beg a place. They are of that number to whom Christ says, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” He welcomes them as His children, saying, “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Matthew 25:34, 21.

(2) WHAT UNDESERVED EARTHLY TREATMENT WILL BE FOREVER REMOVED FROM THE RIGHTEOUS?

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 61:7; 30:26; 60:15

The heirs of God have come from garrets, from hovels, from dungeons,

from scaffolds, from mountains, from deserts, from the caves of the earth, from the caverns of the sea. On earth they were “destitute, afflicted, tormented.” Millions went down to the grave loaded with infamy because they steadfastly refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals they were judged the vilest of criminals. But now “God is judge Himself.” Psalm 50:6. Now the decisions of earth are reversed. “The rebuke of His people shall He take away.” Isaiah 25:8. “They shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord.” He hath appointed “to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” Isaiah 62:12; 61:3. They are no longer feeble, afflicted, scattered, and oppressed. Henceforth they are to be ever with the Lord.

(3) HOW DOES THIS VERSE DESCRIBE THE INABILITY OF THE HUMAN MIND TO GRASP THE MAGNIFICENT THINGS THAT THE LORD HAS INSTORE FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM?

1Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written: "EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

RELATED TEXTS: Isaiah 64:4; Psalm 31:19; Matthew 25:34

A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home.

Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them in the Father's house. Those who accept the teachings of God's word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1

Corinthians 2:9. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.

"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: ... Mine elect shall long enjoy the

work of their hands.” Isaiah 32:18; 60:18; 65:21, 22.

“And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.” Revelation 22:5. The light of the sun will be superseded by a radiance which is not painfully dazzling, yet which immeasurably surpasses the brightness of our noontide. The glory of God and the Lamb floods the Holy City with unfading light. The redeemed walk in the sunless glory of perpetual day.

(4) HOW MANY WILL OVERCOME BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND WHAT WILL THEY BE WEARING AS THEY STAND BEFORE HIS THRONE?

Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 7:10-13, 14: 5:9

“These are they which came out of great tribulation;” they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God’s judgments. But they

have been delivered, for they have “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” “In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault” before God.

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.” They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat, and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst. But “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Revelation 7:14-17.

(5) BEFORE ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, WHAT WILL HE PLACE UPON THE HEADS OF THOSE WHO LOVE HIM AND, BY HIS SPIRIT, HAVE OVERCOMER TEMPTATION?

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Timothy 4:7, 8;
Revelation 2:10; 1 Peter 5:4

Before entering the City of God, the Saviour bestows upon His followers the emblems of victory and invests them with the insignia of their royal state. The glittering ranks are drawn up in the form of a hollow square about their King, whose form rises in majesty high above saint and angel, whose countenance beams upon them full of benignant love. Throughout the unnumbered host of the redeemed every glance is fixed upon Him, every eye beholds His glory who's "visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Upon the heads of the overcomers, Jesus with His own right hand places the crown of glory. For each there is a crown, bearing his own "new name" (Revelation 2:17), and the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord."

(6) FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS, WHAT WILL THE REDEEMED DO WITH THEIR CROWNS?

Revelation 4:10, 11 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all

things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 4:4; 5:14; 1 Corinthians 9:25

Never can the cost of our redemption be realized until the redeemed shall stand with the Redeemer before the throne of God. Then as the glories of the eternal home burst upon our enraptured senses we shall remember that Jesus left all this for us, that He not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss. Then we shall cast our crowns at His feet, and raise the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Revelation 5:12.

(7) WHAT WILL GOD WIPE FROM OUR EYES, AND WHAT ARE FOUR RESULTS OF SIN THAT WE WILL NEVER EXPERIENCE AGAIN?

Revelation 21:4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 7:17; Isaiah 25:8

Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. In the home of the redeemed there will be no tears, no funeral trains, and no badges of mourning. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isaiah 33:24). One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on.

Every voice proclaims, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (Revelation 5:12). He sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. Do you think anyone there will take time to tell of his trials and terrible difficulties? "The former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17). "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 21:4).

(8) WHO ARE THE ONLY ONES PRIVILEGED TO SING THE SONG OF DELIVERANCE CALLED THE "SONG OF MOSES," AND WHY?

Revelation 14:3, 4 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men,

being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

RELATED TEXTS: Revelation 14:5; 12:11; 22:14

There is a day just about to burst upon us when God's mysteries will be seen, and all His ways vindicated; when justice, mercy, and love will be the attributes of His throne. When the earthly warfare is accomplished, and the saints are all gathered home, our first theme will be the song of Moses, the servant of God. The second theme will be the song of the Lamb, the song of grace and redemption. This song will be louder, loftier, and in sublimer strains, echoing and re-echoing through the heavenly courts. Thus the song of God's providence is sung, connecting the varying dispensations; for all is now seen without a veil between the legal, the prophetic, and the gospel. The church history upon the earth and the church redeemed in heaven all center around the cross of Calvary. This is the theme, this is the song,—Christ all and in all,—in anthems of praise resounding through heaven from thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand and an innumerable company of the redeemed host. All unite in this song of Moses and of the Lamb. It is a new song, for it was never before sung in heaven.

(9) AS CHILDREN OF THE KING, WHAT HAS HE PREPARED FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD AS OUR INHERITANCE?

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

RELATED TEXTS: Hebrews 11:10;
Revelation 21:2; Daniel 2:44

Before the ransomed throng is the Holy City. Jesus opens wide the pearly gates, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in. There they behold the Paradise of God, the home of Adam in his innocence. Then that voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, is heard, saying: "Your conflict is ended." "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

With unutterable love, Jesus welcomes His faithful ones to the joy of their Lord. The Saviour's joy is in seeing, in the kingdom of glory, the souls that have been saved by His agony and humiliation. And the redeemed will be sharers in His joy, as they behold, among the blessed, those who have been won to Christ through their prayers, their labors, and their loving sacrifice. As they

gather about the great white throne, gladness unspeakable will fill their hearts, when they behold those whom they have won for Christ, and see that one has gained others, and these still others, all brought into the haven of rest, there to lay their crowns at Jesus' feet and praise Him through the endless cycles of eternity.

(10) WHAT TYPE OF ABODE IS CHRIST PREPARING WITHIN GOD'S KINGDOM FOR EACH ONE OF THOSE WHO LOVE HIM?

Joh 14:2, 3 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

RELATED TEXTS: 2 Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 11:10, 16

As your senses delight in the attractive loveliness of the earth, think of the world that is to come, that shall never know the blight of sin and death; where the face of nature will no more wear the shadow of the curse. Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray. In the varied

gifts of God in nature we see but the faintest gleaming of His glory. It is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9.

Thank God! It is these mansions that we are looking to. It is not the earthly mansions here, for they are to be shaken down by the mighty earthquake ere long; but it is those heavenly mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for the faithful. We have no home here. We are only pilgrims and strangers here, passing to a better country. May God help us to win the boon of eternal life.

(11) WHERE HAS CHRIST, IN THE FORM OF CRUCIFIXION SCARS, ENGRAVED AN ETERNAL MEMORIAL OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR EACH OF US?

Isa 49:15, 16 "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.

RELATED TEXTS: John 20:25; 19:37

The apostle exalted Christ before his brethren as the One by whom God had created all things and by whom He had

wrought out their redemption. He declared that the hand that sustains the worlds in space, and holds in their orderly arrangements and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for them.

One reminder of sin alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought.

(12) WHAT WILL THE SAINTS STRIVE TO COMPREHEND THROUGHOUT THE ENDLESS AGES OF ETERNITY THAT THEY MAY BE FILLED WITH THE FULLNESS OF GOD?

Ephesians 3:18, 19 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

RELATED TEXTS: Ephesians 1:18-21; Romans 11:33; Isaiah 55:9

The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds

through the vast realms of space, the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore—humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father's face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart and crushed out His life on Calvary's cross. That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe.

The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, "Our Father."

The Offer

COMPILER'S NOTE: My friend, is there anything on this sin molested earth worth missing out on eternity with your beloved Creator and Redeemer. Now, by the power of His Spirit, He is making the

ultimate offer to you. There are a few basic steps to take to accept Him, or to make a recommitment to Him. These can simply be remembered by the "ABC's" of salvation.

The letter "A" stands for "ACCEPT". It is imperative that each one of us realize, accept, and confess the fact we are a sinner. The bible makes it clear that all have sinned and fallen short of His glory (Romans 3:23). The Bible also makes it clear that He offers forgiveness and salvation to ALL who will accept it (John 6:37; 2 Peter 3:9).

The letter "B" stands for "BELIEVE". We must believe Jesus is the Son of God, and that His blood has the power to cleanse us from ALL our sins. (Acts 16:31; John 3:16). And if your faith is weak, He will help you with that too. Like the father pleading for the healing of his child, you can pray, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

The letter "C" stands for "CONFESS" (1 John 1:9). We must confess our sins and ask God to give us a heartfelt sorrow and hatred for them, and the strength to change. A great example of true repentance is given by King David in Psalm 51. After confessing, whether we feel any change or not, we must choose to believe He has done what He promised.

The letter "D" stands for "DECIDE" (Revelation 3:20). Jesus is knocking on the door of our heart; we must decide to let Him in to become the abiding Lord of our life. By doing this, we become a child of God (John 1:12).

At the point of accepting Christ you are not claiming perfection or saying you have your life all together. It is just the opposite, it is saying, "Okay Lord, I realize I am not capable of living a holy life, please dwell within me and, by your strength, do this in me and through me." These simple steps mark the beginning of your walk with Jesus.

This process of being made holy into the likeness of Christ is called sanctification and is a lifelong process (Philippians 1:6). If we fall to temptation on this new journey, our Heavenly Father picks us up, cleans us up, and trains us that we may grow as Christians.

One of the greatest lies of the devil can be called the "clean yourself up first lie." He wants you to believe that you must remove all the addictions, pet sins, and sinful desires from your life before you can come to the Lord, but the truth is just the opposite. The Lord tells us in Matthew 11:28-30 to come and learn of Him, give him our "yoke" of burdens and take on His "yoke" and

we will find rest for our soul. Nowhere in these verses does it say we must clean ourselves up first.

As we spend time getting to know our Lord, Friend, and Redeemer, He will convict us of sin and work His power in our lives and change will occur. We will soon hate what we once loved and love that which we once hated. Our part is to seek Him (Deuteronomy 4:29) by spending time in His Word and in prayer then we will experience the promise that we will “find” Him.

It is important to realize that we all are born with a carnal nature. The natural inclinations of the heart are the opposed to spiritual things. At the onset of our journey, we may not find joy in God’s Word, our senses have been artificially stimulated by the media and things of this world. But if we keep seeking Him, our hearts will soon be exhilarated with joy as we begin to discover Him and the truths He longs to impart through His Word.

My friend, I invite you right now to ask Him to do this miracle within you. All it takes is saying a sincere prayer that includes the “ABC’s” outlined above. Pray this simple prayer in your heart. “Dear Father in heaven, I realize and accept the fact I am a sinner in need of a Saviour. I believe Jesus is the Son of God,

and that His shed blood has the power to forgive my sins. I confess my sins (be as specific as you can remember and He will also cover the rest) and I ask you to cleanse me from ALL unrighteousness. I realize that your way is better than mine; I open the door of my heart to you and I ask that you live within me. Please become the Lord of my life. I pray this in Jesus name and for His sake, Amen.”

Congratulations my friend! If you have, with a sincere heart, taken these simple steps you ARE a child of God.

Now your walk must be based on faith not on feelings or the things we see (2 Corinthians 5:7). These will change with circumstances, but His Word and promises will never change (Isaiah 40:8). Go forward believing He has done what He has promised, and He will lead and give you peace and victory in your life (Psalm 29:11). If along the journey you stumble and fall back into sin, you have an advocate with the Father. Come to Him again in sincerity and He will cleanse you again (1 John 1:9, 10; 2:1, 2).

Perhaps you have been a Christian for decades, or maybe you have not yet accepted the immeasurable gift that Jesus is freely offering you. My direct appeal is for you not to pass by this opportunity. The arms of the One who left the glory of heaven to save you are

outstretched still. He is knocking on the door of your heart? The day of salvation for you is today (2 Corinthians 6:2), will you accept His offer? As we have learned from this study, time is short and His coming is near. Don't let this glorious event take you by surprised and unprepared. There is no earthly treasure or treasured sin worth losing what Christ has paid such a high price to give you.

On that glorious and final day there will be only two groups, those who have demonstrated their love by full obedience to Him, and those who have been deceived or totally rejected Him. With which group will you stand?

If you are still wrestling with this life changing decision, I want to warn you of two dangerous traps in which the devil would love to catch you. The first is he would have you think "I am not good enough" or "I need to clean myself up first". The fact is you are not good enough and you cannot clean yourself up. It is because you are not, and can never be good enough on your own, that Christ died for you. This fact is your greatest plea for grace and the reason for asking.

No matter what you have done in your life, He offers you forgiveness and a fresh start. He wants you to come just as you are. Come with all your sins and

addictions and weakness, spend time and get to know Him. If you do this He will give you peace and, by His grace and Spirit, He will do the changing within you (Matthew 11:28-30). Your job is to submit to God, seek Him, and flee from the devil (James 4:7). This is done by avoiding temptation the best you can (Romans 13:14). Always remember this along your journey, your greatest struggle is not against temptation, it is to stay connected to God. Learn to abide moment by moment with Him and He will lead you and protect you on your journey to be at home with Him.

MY REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

(Use multiple responses if applicable)

A = believe and accept; B = feel confused; C = desire a better understanding; D = don't see the importance; E = feel overwhelmed; F = am grateful; G = feel inspired; H = am relieved; I = feel excited; J = am glad; K = feel upset; L = am surprised; M = feel at peace; N = am impressed; O = feel offended; P = am enlightened; Q = feel challenged; R = am shocked; S = feel appalled; T = agree; U = disagree; V = pray; W = desire application to my life; X = desire to share with others; Y = wish I never knew; Z = other

I _____ that, in love, the Lord has revealed these prophecies concerning earth's final moments from His Word.

Though the events that must transpire before His coming are solemn and fearful and cause me to _____, I _____

***that I don't have to fear and that I have
been warned that I may be prepared.***

I _____ that I have the privilege to be called His child and I _____ to have the honor to be among His messengers to share this end time message with others.

***I _____ to totally surrender my heart,
mind, and soul and all that I can become
to His love and service.***

I _____ that I remain faithful and always demonstrate my love for Him by honoring His commandments no matter the cost.

I _____ to have Him as Lord and leader of my life and desire to be among those who sing the Song of Moses one day in heaven.

THOUGHTS - COMMENTS – PRAYERS

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Appendices

(A) OBEDIENCE, THE TRUE TEST OF LOYALTY

God, in His great wisdom, has set up fundamental laws based on mercy, truth, and justice [Ps.97:2] and a revelation of His pure character [Ex.34:4]. His love-based laws are not restrictive, but rather are a source of security and happiness to those who wisely abide [Ps.119:1]. By definition, sin is separation from God [Isa.59:1-2] and caused by transgression of His love-based laws [1 Jn.3:4]. God could foresee that, if left unchecked, sin would spread throughout the universe with the effect of a malignant cancer. To prevent this He declared the penalty of death for violation of the law [Rom.6:23]. God demonstrated to the universe His perfect balance of justice and mercy [Ps.89:14] by providing a way of salvation for the truly repentant transgressor [1 Pet.1:20].

The great controversy continues within us and it is all about loved-based obedient and allegiance of the heart. Satan's strategy is to convince us that the law—the very tool that makes us aware of our sins and calls us to repentance and obedience, is of none effect. He knows that without the law in place, our course

towards sin and the separation it brings is inevitable [Prov. 5:22]. Cleverly, Satan has brought about the infiltration of this false doctrine and the cry resounding from the masses is, “God’s laws are void!” Colossians 2:14 is quoted that states that the ordinances against us were “*nailed to the cross.*” To read but three verses further [Col.2:17] makes the issue perfectly clear—“*these are a shadow of things to come*” [Eph.2:15]. The ten commandment law and the ceremonial laws are distinctly separate. The ceremonial laws were to be kept beside the ark [Deut.31:26] the ten commandment law was put inside of the ark [Ex.40:20].

At the moment of Christ’s death an unseen hand tore the temple veil from top to bottom to mark the end of these ceremonial ordinances that dictated the sacrificial practices [Matt.27:51] . These were, at His death fulfilled by Christ the Lamb of God dying for the sins of the world. The laws that ceased were the ceremonial laws and practices of the sacrificial system that pointed forward to great sacrifice of Christ [Lev.23:37, 38; 2 Chron.8:13]. The current validity of the Ten Commandments is confirmed in the final chapters of Revelation where we are told that God’s people, who

ultimately enter heaven will reflect their love and allegiance for God by being commandment keepers [Rev.14:12; Rev.22:14 KJV].

The law is simply a mirror to reflect the condition of our heart [Ez.11:19, 20]. To do away with the law is to take away the knowledge of sin [Rom.5:13]. God is love [1 Jn.4:8] and the ten commandment law is simply a written explanation of how to demonstrate love. The first four commandments show our love and respect for God and the last six demonstrate our love for our fellow man [Mk.12:29-31].

God has specifically said, *“If you love me, keep my commandments”* [Jn.14:15, 21, 23, 24; 1 Jn.5:2, 3]. Keeping His commandments out of love makes Him our Lord because we are servants to whom we obey [Rom.6:16]. It is a blessing to obey [Deut.11:27, 28]. To show respect to God by obedience to His commandments is the whole duty of man [Ecc.12:13]. He is the Author of Salvation to those who obey [Acts 5:32; Heb.5:9], and He promises to send the Spirit of Truth to those who obey [Jn.14:15-17]. At the judgement many will say, “Lord, Lord... but then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work practice

lawlessness.” [Mat. 7:22, 23]. The highest form of worship is to love Him enough to obey [2 Jn.1:6] and to claim to worship and then intentionally not obey is contradictory— seeking a form of Godliness but denying the authority and power thereof [2 Tim.3:1-5].

We are now in a dilemma. Like Paul, we see the significance of obedience of the law and that we should obey, but we are weak and give in to the flesh [Rom.7:19]. Our natures are evil [Ecc.9:3], we are all sinners [Rom.3:23], our righteousness is as filthy rags [Isa.64:6]. In our heart we have the conviction to obey but, with pure motives, in ourselves we do not possess the ability [Jer.13:23].

The good news is that we can come to Christ just as we are —wretched and miserably lost in sin—and claim the blood that was shed at the cross. By the blood of Jesus we are forgiven of our sins and freed from the *condemnation and penalty* of the law [Gal.3:13; Rom.5:8-11]. Then, after full surrender, He will replace our sin-hardened hearts with hearts of love [Ezek.11:19]. We find peace and contentment [Matt.11:28-30; Jn.14:27] as He writes the commandments of love in our hearts [Heb.10:16]. As we spend time with Him

he demonstrates His character in us by giving us the ability to keep His commandments [Ez.11:20]. By faith [Gal.3:6] we are privileged to become partakers in His divine nature and escape the corruption and lust of this world [2 Pet.1:4]. We are given the power to obey by His Spirit [Acts 5:32]. The curse of condemnation is gone and the blessing of the law remains as a light unto our path [Psa.119:105; 37:31; Jam.1:23-25]. It is then that we are ready to face the challenges of earth's final moments without fear.

(B) THE HISTORY OF THE SABBATH

At the end of creation week God set aside a day and “rested” from all His work [Gen.2:2]. God did not “rest” due to physical exhaustion. He rested, blessed, and made holy the Sabbath so that by His command and example we would be blessed with this weekly memorial of Him as our Lord and Creator [Gen.2:1-3]. He stamped His seal of authority on this specific time each week and asked us to set aside our secular activities and spend this time with Him. But Satan's aim is to keep us so preoccupied with the issues of life that we fail to know or experience the true blessing that observing the fourth commandment brings [Isa.56:2; 58:13,

14; Deut.5:29; Heb.4:4-9; Lev.26:2-4; Rev. 22:14].

The Bible clearly outlines the institution of the Sabbath from creation to its observance in the earth made new. The Sabbath was a gift to all mankind at creation 2,000 years before Abraham, the first Jew, existed. At the end of creation week God rested from His creative work and instituted the Sabbath for man [Gen.2:3; Mk.2:27]. Sabbath worship was carried on by the Patriarchs until, due to their cruel treatment during the period of slavery in Egypt, they ceased to observe it. After leaving Egypt they were reminded of its importance by God's provision of a double portion of manna on Friday so they could honor His Sabbath [Ex.16:4, 5]. This occurred before the law was given at Mount Sinai confirming it existed prior to Sinai. Then, at Sinai, God reinforced the existence, sacredness, and importance of the 4th commandment by saying "Remember" [Ex.20:8].

The practice of Sabbath observance was continued on by those entering the land of Canaan and was proclaimed by the Prophets and kept by God's faithful [Neh.13:15]. Years later Christ came as our example [1 Pet.2:21] and faithfully kept the Sabbath [Luk.4:16; Mk.1:21;

6:2]. Even in His crucifixion and death He observed the Sabbath by resting in the tomb until the first day of the week [Matt.27:57 – Matt.28:6]. In His life, ministry, death, and resurrection, there is no record of Him asking for the day to be changed. He specifically said He came to fulfill the law [Matt.5:17, 18] not abolish it. He made a statement that indicates the Sabbath would still be considered holy, years after His death when Jerusalem would be destroyed [Mat.24:20]. It is also evident that no directions were given by Christ for the observance of Sunday because some of his closest followers prepared his body for burial and then observed the Sabbath “according to the commandment” [Luk.23:56 KJV; Mk.16:1] and continued to observe the Sabbath from that point forward [Act.18:4; 13:14, 27, 42; 15:21; 17:2].

In the New Testament book of Hebrews, written following Christ’s death and resurrection, Sabbath observance was reiterated [Heb.4:8-11]. We are told that the Sabbath is a perpetual covenant [Ex.31:16]– a sign of sanctification in our lives from God [Ez.20:12; Ex.31:13]. We are also told that following the close of this world’s history when we enter the new earth we will be observing the seventh day Sabbath [Isa.66:22, 23].

With no directions given for a change prior to Christ's death, a change from Sabbath to Sunday worship was not a part of the New Covenant. For something to be part of someone's last will and testament it has to be stated before death [Heb.9:16-18; Gal.3:15]. The Scriptures may be searched from cover to cover and not one text will be found that has authorized the change of seventh day Sabbath worship to Sunday.

(C) THE HISTORY OF SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

Historical records verify that church leaders and civil governments instituted the tradition that Sunday worship be observed in honor of Christ's resurrection. Instead Scripture has ordained baptism and communion [Rom.6:4; 1 Pet.3:21; Col. 2:12] for this purpose [Luk.22:19, 20].

The word "Sunday" does not occur in the King James Version of Scripture and the phrase "the first day of the week" is mentioned eight times, each without any command for a change [Matt.28:1; Mk.16:2; 16:9; Luk.24:1; Jn.20:1; 20:19; Act.20:7; 1 Cor.16:2]. Traditions, especially if they involve worshipping the Lord, can be good as long as they do

not interfere with our observance of the law of God, but if there is a conflict we are called to obey God [Matt.15:3, 9; Col.2:8; Acts 5:28. 29].

Study of historical sources reveals the transition from Saturday to Sunday observance and also the organization that claims responsibility for the attempted change. The transition from Saturday to Sunday worship was not immediately implemented following Christ's death but was a slow process that occurred over hundreds of years.

“Sunday, the first day of the week. Its English name and its German name (Sonntag) are derived from the Latin dies solis, “sun’s day,” the name of a pagan Roman holiday . . . In the early days of Christianity, Sunday began to replace the Sabbath and to be observed to honor the resurrection of Christ. Sunday was instituted as a day of rest, consecrated especially to the service of God, by the Roman emperor Constantine the Great. Since the 4th century, ecclesiastical and civil legislation has frequently regulated work on Sunday and service attendance. In the United States, laws limiting business activity and amusements on Sunday have become known as blue laws.” [Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia].

*“The institution of the Papal Church of Rome proudly claims authority above God in this attempted change of the Lord’s holy day. The following are some published statements from the Catholic Church proudly claiming full responsibility: **Question** - Have you any other way of proving that the church (Roman Catholic) has power to institute festivals of precept? **Answer** - “Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her—she could not have substituted the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.” **A Doctrinal Catechism, by S. Keenan, P.174, 354.***

*“The observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the Catholic Church.” **Plain Talk About Protestantism, by Father Segur, P.213.***

*“The Catholic church by virtue of her divine mission changed the day from Saturday to Sunday.” **The Convert’s Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, P.50, 3rd edition.***

“Reason and common sense demand the acceptance of one or the other

alternatives; either Protestantism and keeping Saturday, or Catholicity and keeping of Sunday. Compromise is impossible.” **American Catholic Quarterly Review, Jan.1883.**

“If you look to the Bible as an authority for the observance of the day (Sunday), you will not find it. It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and all other Christians outside the pale of the Mother Church, that the Bible does not support them anywhere in the observance of Sunday.” **Clifton Tracts, Vol.4, P.15.**

This attempted change was predicted in the book of Daniel, “... *he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws...*” [Dan.7:25]. The only law involving time is the 4th Commandment [Ex.20:3-17].

(D) DOES THE DAY OBSERVING THE 4TH COMMANDMENT MATTER?

Does it matter the specific day we “Remember” or how we observe it? The 4th Commandment is located in the heart of God’s law. It is the one Commandment that on a specific day, and in a specific way, serves as a perpetual memorial and honor to God as

our Creator and Lord. Is full obedience important? Does it matter? When you tell your toddler to do something, do you expect the child to fully understand and agree before obeying? No, you expect obedience out of love, respect, and trust. You expect obedience based on the knowledge of your love and the fact you asked it to be done. God, our heavenly Father, who is much wiser than us asks and deserves this same love and trust-based obedience.

It is on this issue of faith all mankind is tested. It was on this very issue that Adam and Eve fell. They were given specific instructions not to eat the fruit of a specific tree [Gen.2:16, 17]! It didn't make sense to them or to really matter but it did! The significance was that they failed to give love-based trust and obedience to God's commands *even though they didn't fully understand*. A similar test of faith was given to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and praise God he passed! It didn't make sense but in faith he obeyed. It is the same principle with Sabbath observance of the fourth Commandment. The fundamental issue is to whom will we give our love-based obedience, worship, and allegiance? It is a test of faith. And we are told in Revelation it will be an issue at the end of time [Rev.12:17; 14:7; 22:14].

For six thousand years the basis of the great controversy has been about allegiance and it is no surprise that it will be *the issue* at the closing of the conflict. Satan's goal was, and still is, to deface God's laws that instruct in allegiance and worship to God and to receive the worship only God deserves. WE studied in this lesson series that Revelation tells us that in earth's closing moments three important messages of warning will be proclaimed to the world and all three involve the issue of worship [Rev.14:6-9].

When in the final days of earth's history you are being called to "*Fear God and give glory to him...*" How will you choose to show your allegiance? Will you follow His specific instructions to "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy..." [Ex.20:8-11]. Will you claim the special blessing He offers: "*If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.*" [Isa.58:13, 14].

Giving worship to our Creator any day or time is a blessing; but, a richer and fuller spiritual blessing results from full obedience and submission to God's commands just as He has asked [Rev.22:14; Jn.15:10, 11].

(E) THE BEAST OF REVELATION

(11 Characteristics)

In the last days we are warned, *“If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God...”* Rev.14:9, 10. Because it is God's desire for every person to be saved [2 Pet.3:9] He has given us eleven identifying characteristics of the “beast” in His Word to prevent being deceived.

As we learned in the lessons, before we reveal to others who the “Beast” is it is important to preface this information by saying that there are many God-loving, heaven-bound Christian friends affiliated with this religious institution who do not realize the they have been taught false doctrine. This is why, in mercy and love, God makes the plea “come out of her my people” [Rev.17:2-4].

According to Scripture a “beast” is a king or kingdom or ruler with great

political power [Dan.7:17, 23; 8:21]. Even today animals are symbols of nations—the United States being an eagle. The political power that has been clearly identified by Bible scholars from protestant denominations as the “beast” [Revelation 13:1; 14:9, 10] is the Papacy or Roman Catholic Church. History reveals that this “diverse” ecclesiastical power controlled kingdoms and dominated the religious world for many centuries. Daniel described it as the “Little Horn” [Dan.7:8; 20-25; 8:9-12] and Paul referred to it as the “man of sin” [2 Thes.2:2-4]. There is clearly no other power on earth that so precisely fits the following eleven Bible criteria. [Rev.13:1-10; 15-18].

(1) THE BEAST RISES OUT OF THE SEA (Rev.13:1) = In Scripture water such as “sea” represents a multitude of people, nations, and tongues [Rev.17:15]. So these beasts arose from an area of the densely populated civilized world. This describes perfectly the densely populated area of Rome in Western Europe where the Papal power arose and has its seat of power.

(2) THE BEAST HAS SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS (Rev.13:1) = To positively identify the papacy as the

seven headed and ten horned beast we can reference other Scriptures concerning the same subject matter. The beast described in Revelation 13 is actually an amalgamation of the four beasts described in Daniel's vision [Dan.7:15-20] and is also related to the toes of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream [Dan.2:31-35]. Examination of historical sources reveal that, though not all historians agree on the specific dates, the majority agree on the successive kingdoms who comprise the seven heads and ten horns on the beast who we seek to identify. Let us take a few moments to identify the world powers involved so we can identify the Beast and the meaning of the seven heads and ten horns.

It is well established in secular history and accepted by the Christian world that the beasts and parts of the statue in these prophecies represent the major empires dominating the world [Dan.7:17, 23] from 600 years before Christ to the final climax of earth's history. [*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol.3, p.634].

The Lion [Dan.7:4] or The Head of Gold [Dan.2:32] = Babylon's rule from 605 - 538 B.C. and was like a lion with eagle wings. A lion and head of gold perfectly described the empire of Babylon because it was the greatest of all

kingdoms and the wings described the swiftness in which it conquered the civilized world.

The Bear [Dan.7:5] or The Breast and Arms of Silver [Dan.2:32] = Medo-Persia ruled from 538 - 331 B.C. The bear perfectly describes the cruel and rapacious characteristics of the Medes and Persians. The three ribs signify the three provinces of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt. The bear being inferior to the lion and silver inferior to gold, describes how Medio-Persia was inferior to Babylon in wealth and magnificence.

The Leopard [Dan.7:6] or the Belly and Thighs of brass [Dan.2:32] = Greece ruled from 331 - 168 B.C. The four wings represent the conquests of Greece under Alexander the Great that had no parallel in ancient times for rapidity in conquest of the then civilized world. The four heads represent the four generals to whom his kingdom was divided following his death.

The Dreadful and Terrible Beast [Dan.7:7] or The Great Legs of Iron [Dan.2:33] = Rome and the ten horns ruled from 168 B.C. - 476 A.D. At its inception the empire of Rome was unequaled in the dread and terror it inspired as it ground nations into the dust beneath its feet.

The seven heads and ten horns

[Rev.13:1] or the Ten Toes [Dan.2:33, 41, 42] = Rome split into ten kingdoms between 351 A.D. - 476 A.D. The feet that were “iron mixed with miry clay” have ten toes that represented these ten final divisions of the Roman empire.

These ten divisions, many of which exist today, were the Alamanni (Germans), Visigoths (Spanish), Franks (French), Suevi (Portugese), Burgundians (Swiss), Anglo-Saxons (English), Lombards (Italians) and the three who are now extinct the Ostrogoths, Vandals, and Heruli [Dan.7:24; 2:4].

God said they “shall not cleave one to another” [Dan.2:43] and history proves with the futile efforts of Charlemagne, Charles V, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, and Hitler that God’s Word is true and these nations will never be reunited.

Then “another shall arise after them” [Dan.7:24; 7:8] also called the “Little Horn” [Dan.7:8], and a “diverse” or “different” kingdom [Dan.7:24] =

While the first ten were political kingdoms this one was a diverse ecclesiastical power. This is the same power that rose up after the ten horns in Revelation 13:2. Out of the ruins of political Rome, arose the great Empire in the giant form of the Roman Church (A.

C. Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church* [1900], p. 150) Her emergence began in the year of 476 and she rose to full power by 538 A.D. History and the Bible prove beyond a doubt that the “Little Horn”— [the dreaded beast of Rev.13:1; Dan.7:8; 7:24; Rev.14:9] is the Papacy.

She plucked up three horns by the roots [Dan.7:8; 7:20]. Proving her power, the Pope of Rome destroyed the Ostrogoths, Vandals, and Heruli because they refused to become “Christian” thus leaving seven heads.

(3) SHE RECEIVES POWER, SEAT, AND AUTHORITY FROM THE DRAGON [Rev.13:2] = Satan is the “dragon” [Rev.20:2] giving the beast its power and political position. The “seat” of a kingdom is its capital. Herod, Rome’s ruler, was clearly controlled by Satanic influence as he sought the death of Christ [Rev.12:3-5, 9; 13:2; Matt.2:13]. It was this same pagan Rome, under the decree of Justinian, that fulfilled this prophecy by turning over her authority and capital city to the Papacy— “the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.”

(4) SEEKS WORSHIP AND IS GUILTY OF BLASPHEMY

[Rev.13:1, 4, 5, 6, 8; Dan.7:8, 20] = The Bible describes blasphemy as an attack on the name of God [Rev.13:6]. In other words to claim to be God and claim the rights that only He has [Jn.10:32, 33].

One specific privilege that only members of the Godhead can grant is forgiveness [Mk.2:9, 10]. Here is a direct quote from a Catholic catechism: “The Priest does really and truly forgive the sins in virtue of the power given to him by Christ.”

Joseph Deharbe, S.J., A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion (New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1924), p.279.

The Papal organization’s leader has also claimed power over the angels of God.

“Indeed, the excellence and power of the Roman pontiff is not only in the sphere of heavenly things, earthly things, and those of the lower regions, but even above the angels, than whom he himself is greater” **translated from Lucius Ferraris, Papa II, *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, p. 27**

(5) THE BEAST WAS “LIKE” A LEOPARD, WITH FEET OF A BEAR, AND THE MOUTH OF A LION (Rev.13:2) = The “Leopard” headed by Alexander the Great ordered his people to worship him as a god. The Papacy beast power of Revelation 13

ruled by the Pope took on the Greek culture of claiming worship as God.

The “bear” power, Medo-Persia, is still known today for its claims of infallibility. Once a law was made it could not be reversed [Dan.6:15]. The Pope “as the feet of a bear” claims this same infallibility.

The “Lion” empire Babylon, is still known today as a wonder of the world. Its prideful rulers blasphemously claim status and worship as God and so does the Pope—“his mouth as the mouth of a lion.”

(6) RULES FOR 42 PROPHETIC MONTHS [Rev.13:5; 11:2; Dan.7:25]

The Bible says that the beast was given power to reign for 42 months. In prophecy one day equals one year [Ezek.4:6; Numb.14:34]. A Jewish month contained 30 days so 30×42 days equals 1260 years [Rev.11:3; 12:6]. The Little Horn or Papal powers ruled from 538 A.D. to 1798 exactly 1,260 years. This era was termed “The Dark Ages” because the church forbade all but the church leaders to read the Scriptures.

(7) PERSECUTED THE SAINTS

[Rev.13:10; 17:6; Dan.7:25] = During the Papal rule those who did not submit

to her dogmatic apostate beliefs were considered enemies of the church. Pressured by her power, the civil authorities under the direction of the “Inquisitional Courts,” persecuted and killed Christians unwilling to recant their Bible-based beliefs. [*New Catholic Encyclopedia - Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967, vol.14, p. 208: Torture and the Church*].

(8) RECEIVES A DEADLY WOUND

[Rev.13:3] = The Papal power temporarily ended when Rome was forced to retreat from the Arian invaders and the French general Berthier arrested and exiled Pope Pius VI— who died in prison thus separating religious power from the civil authority. This deadly wound to her authority was delivered in 1798 right on the Biblical schedule.

(9) DEADLY WOUND HEALS AND “ALL THE WORLD WONDERED AFTER THE BEAST” [Rev.13:3]

= The Scriptures also predicted that the deadly wound would heal. Since 1798 the Papal leaders have continued to regain influence and power. The leaders of all the countries of the world consider it a privilege to give honor to the Pope. As he travels the globe, the Pope is often the focus of television and newspaper headlines, gaining prestige as the world “wonders” after him.

In 1978 the deadly wound was not the death of the Pope who was reigning at the time, the deadly wound was the church losing her civil power with the separation of the powers of church and state. The “healing” of the deadly wound is occurring as the majority of the protestant churches no longer protest the apostate beliefs and are joining hands with the papal mother church. Full healing will take place at the point that civil power joins her in the enforcement of Sunday worship.

(10) THE LEADER HAS THE NUMBER 666 [Rev.13:18] = The man representing the Papal power is the Pope. The title he claims is, “Vicar of the Son of God.” which is “Vicarious Filii Dei” in the official language of Latin. If you convert each letter of this title to Roman numerals—they total 666.

(11) WOULD ATTEMPT TO CHANGE “TIMES AND LAWS” [Dan.7:25] = The Beast power in its own publications blatantly claim authority over God to alter His laws. “The Pope has power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ.” *Decretal, de Tranlatic Episcop*

The Catholic church has attempted to change God’s ten commandments. The

second commandment which forbids bowing down to images is removed because they advocate worship to mother Mary and the saints. Then, to still have “ten” commandments they divide the tenth commandment as God wrote it into two parts.

There is clearly no person or organization other than the Papacy that fits all these eleven Bible-based criteria that God has provided in His Word to warn us without questions who the Beast power is to separate from her [Rev.18:4].

(F) THE “IMAGE” OF THE BEAST

The “Image” of the Beast must also be identified to avoid deception and destruction [Rev.14:9]. Just as God provided information on how to identify the Beast He has also provided five characteristics of its “Image” so we can be fully informed and avoid receiving the mark of the beast.

(1) CAME OUT OF THE EARTH
[Rev.13:11] = Bible prophecy uses “water” to describe a heavily populated area [Rev.17:15] so we may conclude that the “earth” is a sparsely populated area. The United States did not conquer by force as the four beasts of Daniel 2 and 7 and Revelation 13 and 14. The

United States rose to power in a sparsely populated land.

(2) WAS “COMING UP OUT OF THE EARTH” WHEN THE PAPACY RECEIVED ITS DEADLY WOUND

[Rev.13: 11] = We know from our study of the Beast that this deadly wound was delivered in 1798. On March 1, 1789 the Constitution of the United States went into effect. As predicted this newly emerging world power came into existence as the Papacy received her deadly wound.

(3) IT WAS “ANOTHER” BEAST COMING UP [Rev.13:11] = According to John it was “another beast” rising to power in the 18th century so it could not be any other preexisting power. This characteristic would rule out all the preexisting European countries as being the “Image of the Beast.”

(4) HAD “TWO HORNS AS A LAMB AND SPOKE AS A DRAGON”

[Rev.13:11] = It is a lamb-like power. In the Bible and especially in prophecy, a lamb symbolizes Jesus Christ. To describe this second power in Revelation 13 as having two horns like a lamb is to ascribe to it Christian qualities. The new power was to be a Christian power, a nation adhering to the principles of

Christianity as outlined in Scripture. The lamb also represents the gentleness offered in religious freedom to all. Then speaking as a “dragon” represents a later change in its original nature.

The United States Constitution, based on the philosophy of freedom of worship, perfectly fits the description of the Lamb. The term “lamb” also indicates youthfulness—the United States came into existence after all the previously discussed beasts. The “two horns” on the lamb represents the United States’ greatest claims of both civil and religious freedom. We can look around us and see these rapidly eroding away which is the focus of the next characteristic.

(5) EXERCISES ALL THE POWER OF THE FIRST BEAST BEFORE IT TO FORCE WORSHIP [Rev.13:12, 15, 17] = In opposition to the forced participation of the “mother church” apostate teachings, Martin Luther nailed the 95 thesis of doctrinal error to the church door in Whittenburg. This marked the beginning of the great religious Reformation. The pursuing of this religious freedom was the motivating factor for those coming on the May Flower to establish this nation.

One hundred years ago it was common to hear this same information identifying

the beast resounding from virtually all Protestant pulpits. This fact can be easily established by reading the sermons and historical notes about the founders of the different denominations. Now from the majority of them you don't hear this message. This is the wound of the Papacy continuing to heal. The message resounding from most protestant denominations today is to stop the protest and join hands with the "mother church". In this action they are effectively readopting the doctrine and beliefs of the "Beast" power.

The exponential rise in crime over the last few decades is obvious to all. In fulfillment of Paul's prediction in the last days we are witnessing, "...fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful" [Rom.1:29-31]. The silent religious majority is appalled and will soon rise up to do something about it. They are organizing political parties and voting in leaders to use the church-state union to attempt to force their religious beliefs and practices on others. They will "speak like a dragon" to change the very

foundation of religious freedoms that this great nation is based on—civil and religious freedom. All these efforts will be “to bring our nation back into God’s favor.”

In resemblance of the papal reign of terror in the dark ages, this power will use civil government to inflict economic sanctions and eventually the death penalty to those who refuse to participate in its religious dictates. This reuniting with the “mother church” in her apostate beliefs is what is referred to as the “Image of the beast” [Rev.13:15-17].

There is only one nation that exists on earth today that meets the first three of these five predictions that have come to pass and we are experiencing the escalation of characteristic four which will lead to number five. The obvious conclusion is that the United States is on track to become the “Image of the Beast.”

(G) God’s “Seal” and the “Mark” of the Beast

The great controversy that began in heaven and will end on this earth is over the issue of worship—the demonstration of submission and loyalty. The “mark” of the beast or the “seal” of God is the ultimate sign of who has our allegiance. Every

living person will receive the “mark” of the beast by joining Satan in rebellion to God’s law or receiving God’s “seal” by choosing to obey all His commandments.

We are told that the “mark” which indicates false worship, is located in the “forehead” or on the “hand” [Rev.14:9]. The “forehead” is the decision making portion of the brain and signifies what one truly believes with the mind. The hand signifies what we do by our actions and not necessarily what we believe [Eccl.9:10]. These are not visible marks [Heb.10:16] but rather choice and action. God’s sealed people “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” [Rev.14:12]. The individuals who have received God’s seal as commandment keepers will be protected through the seven plagues [Rev.9:4; 7:3]. Those who follow the apostate religious practices of the beast will, when enforced by civil authority, will receive its “mark” and suffer destruction [Rev.14:9-11].

You may ask, “Why is keeping God’s commandments and specifically the fourth such an important issue?” We were warned by the prophet Daniel, in his vision that the beast power, motivated by Satanic influence, would “Think to change times and laws” [Dan.7:25]. The

fourth commandment is the only one that involves time.

A “seal” contains three things: the ruler’s name, title, and the domain under command. An earthly example is the presidential seal which contains the ruler’s name, the title: “President” and the domain: “The United States of America.” Located in the heart of God’s law is the fourth commandment which contains every element of God’s seal, “...the LORD [His name] made [title of Creator] heaven and earth, the sea [His domain].” Satan has focused his attack on the fourth commandment which calls us to remember and worship God as our Creator by keeping His day holy [Ex.20:8-11; Mk.2:28]. Satan has cleverly, over time, managed to blind the majority of the Christian world to the blessing and importance of the Sabbath. Just as God used Sabbath observance as a test of loyalty for the Children of Israel in the desert [Ex.16:4-6] it will be a testing point of our allegiance in the last days.

You may ask, “When is the mark of the beast received?” The Bible predicts the lamb-like beast will be transformed into the image of the beast and speak as a dragon [Rev.13:11]. Because of influence from the Papacy [the beast], the image of the beast [the Protestant

denomination that reunites in the apostasy of false doctrine with the Papacy will speak as a dragon. This will be done by exerting pressure for all Christians to conform to the Beast's religious practices. The pressures will be manifested by religious legislation mandating the observance of Sunday worship. This will be done first by economic sanctions, physical force, and eventually by the threat of the death penalty [Rev.13:15, 17]. At that point every living person will have made the choice to accept God's "seal" by love-based full submission to Him and obedience to His commandments despite persecution [Rev.14:7-9; 12:17]; or to follow the Beast and receive her "mark" by observing her false doctrines [Rev.14:9].

The good news is that until forced false worship is enforced by civil law the mark of the beast will not be received by anyone. In mercy God is still calling His people out of the false doctrines of Babylon [Rev.18:1-4]. There will be no middle group, where will you stand my friend.