

## **Chapter 10**

### **The Church Age and the Great Tribulation**

We are in the process of unfolding the timeline of the history of the world. We have found that this timeline is governed by God's salvation program for the world as it is revealed in God's Holy Book, the Bible. We have come to that period which we will call the "Church Age."

Actually, earlier in our study, when we looked at Pentecost as it occurred in A.D. 33, at which time the Holy Spirit was poured out, we were standing at the beginning of the Church Age. That day officially marked the beginning of the Church Age.

By the term "Church Age," we are speaking of the period in God's unfolding history of the world when He utilized a divine institution consisting of local congregations or local churches to evangelize the world.

The official beginning of the Church Age coincided with the end of the long period of time during which the nation of Israel was officially the external representative of the kingdom of God on this earth. The nation of Israel with its headquarters in Jerusalem had become so wicked that even though the Messiah Himself (the Lord Jesus) was physically present in their midst, they refused to recognize Him as their Savior. Fact is, they hated Him so intensely that they finally killed Him (Acts 2:36; 3:13-15).

Jesus said of the Jews in John 8:44, **"Ye are of your father the devil."** Jesus ministered for many months in cities such as Chorazin and Capernaum, which were located by the Sea of Galilee, and yet, Jesus observed in Luke 10:13-15:

**Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.**

*. . . during Jesus' ministry, very, very few became saved.*

Thus, during Jesus' ministry, very, very few became saved.

However, it was God's plan that this was the time that God would shift from using the nation of Israel as God's special people to the utilization of local congregations as the external representative of the kingdom of God (Acts 2:36-47; Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:1-10; Hebrews 12:18-24).

Thus, seven weeks after the resurrection of Jesus, God began the Church Age. Remember, we earlier learned that on the Pentecost afternoon in A.D. 33, about 3,000 individuals were saved. For the next 1,955 years, the Church Age would continue. During the Church Age, the nature and structure of the local congregations were carefully designed by God. They were to have as church overseers (elders and deacons), men who met very stringent spiritual qualifications (I Timothy Chapter 3). The people who attended these churches were to be under the rule of these elders. Thus, they were to have membership in these congregations (I Corinthians Chapter 5; I Peter 5:1-5).

The task of each congregation was to assist in the sending forth of the Gospel into the world. As they carried out this task, they started additional churches wherever a few people became believers. These mission churches in turn would send out missionaries to establish additional churches (Acts 13:1-3; 15:40-41; 16:4-5; II Corinthians 10:12-16). Thus, by the end of the Church Age, local congregations are to be found all over the world. Those who believed they had become saved became members of one of these local congregations.

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For the greatest part of the Church Age, the printing press did not exist. It was invented about 500 years ago, but the Church Age continued for more than 1,900 years. Thus, for about 1,400 years of the Church Age, all copies of the Bible were handwritten. Therefore, they were quite rare, and most people were illiterate. God, however, designed the local churches as a divine institution that could effectively teach the Gospel in spite of these obvious shortcomings. God established the local churches in such a way that the church members could be taught the Scriptures by pastors and elders who had access to a handwritten copy of the Bible and who were able to read it (Ephesians 4:11-12; II Thessalonians 2:15).

Even after the invention of the printing press, during most of the remaining years of the Church Age, a copy of the Bible was not readily available to many people of the world, and many people still lived with the problem of illiteracy.

### **New Testament Ceremonial Laws**

To assist with the understanding of the Gospel message, God also gave the local churches two ceremonial laws. The observance of these ceremonial laws did not initiate salvation or in any way guarantee salvation. They were given to assist individuals in understanding the nature of salvation. There was no spiritual power in the observance of these ceremonial laws.

The first ceremonial law was the act of water baptism. The purpose of water baptism was to show that even as water washes away the physical dirt on us, so the Gospel, which is the spiritual water, is required to wash our sins away (I Peter 3:20-21).

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that of the communion service.*

The second ceremonial law that was given was that of the communion service. The bread and the wine which were eaten in this ceremony were foods that contributed to our physical life. Thus, they were symbols that reminded us that we receive spiritual strength and life from the fact that Christ gave His life, that is, His body was broken and His blood was shed (He gave His life), that we might have life (I Corinthians 11:26).

The Lord's Supper, as the communion service was frequently called, also was pointing to the completion of the salvation of all genuine believers when spiritually, they will be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb who, of course, is Jesus (Revelation 19:7-9). The Bible teaches us that spiritually, the true believers are the bride of Christ. These ceremonial acts were to be carried out under the supervision of the church overseers (Acts 16:4; Ephesians 4:11-12).

The underlying spiritual power of the Church Age was the fact that God Himself was present whenever two or three or more people were gathered together in Christ's name (Matthew 18:20). God was present as the Holy Spirit not only in the lives of the true believers but also to apply the preached Word of God to the lives of those whom God planned to save. Therefore, even though the preaching was often very faulty, God still saved people as long as those that He

planned to save were hearing verses from the Bible. The principle taught in Romans 10:17, **“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,”** continually was a fundamental principle that God utilized to cause the local churches to grow.

This was in sharp contrast to the spiritual conditions that prevailed at the time the nation of Israel was coming to its end as the external representation of the kingdom of God. At that time, Jesus preached perfect sermons, but virtually no one was saved. This was the situation because at that time, God the Holy Spirit hardly ever applied the perfectly preached Word of God to any hearer’s life so that they might become saved. Moreover, during the Church Age, Satan, the great enemy of Christ, was restricted by God from interfering with God’s desire to save those that He wished to save as they heard the Word of God (Matthew 12:25-29; Luke 10:17-24; Revelation 20:1-3).

### **Satan Impacts the Local Congregations**

Satan, however, as the enemy of Christ, was still able to seriously affect the local congregations throughout the time of the Church Age (I Timothy 5:15; I Peter 5:8-9). He did so by bringing into the congregations individuals who were convinced they were saved but in fact were not saved. Because they were convinced they were saved, they tried very hard to live the way a truly saved person should live. Therefore, they were virtually indistinguishable from the true believers within the congregation. Because no church overseers could know with certainty the true spiritual condition of any individual, they could easily give membership to those who outwardly appeared to be saved but actually were not saved. These spurious believers were still under the authority of Satan (Matthew 13:24-30, 37-42; II Peter 2:1-2; Jude 4).

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Very frequently, these unsaved individuals were pastors, elders, or deacons who had the spiritual oversight of the congregations. Thus, even though Christ was officially the King of the New Testament churches, in effect, Satan to a high degree ruled in those churches. This is spoken of in II Corinthians 11:14-15:

**And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.**

This is also the teaching of Matthew 13:24-25:

**Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.**

The tares or weeds represent those who appear to be true believers but in actuality are under the authority of Satan. (For a more complete discussion of this subject, the reader is invited to obtain, free of charge, the book *Wheat and Tares* from Family Radio.)

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The result of this condition of local churches being filled with unsaved people who thought they were true believers created spiritual havoc in the churches. Many local churches and denominations became so corrupted that the true Gospel became completely obliterated, and they became altogether another gospel, a false gospel. The Bible alone and in its entirety no longer was the divine authority that structured and determined the character of the gospel they were preaching. The authority for their gospel was the Bible plus church tradition or that which they heard through dreams or visions or tongues. Even though they spoke of Christ as their Savior, Satan had become their ruler, completely. This could be seen especially in those churches that began to believe that God is still bringing divine revelation to men and women by means of tongues or dreams or visions or angel visitations. Thus, entire denominations came into existence which were altogether ruled over by Satan even though the rulers of these churches were convinced that they were serving Christ.

In God's plan for the unfolding of the timeline of history, God was fully aware of this terrible falling away from truth. Almost 2,000 years ago, God wrote

in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 about seven churches that were among the first churches of the Church Age. As He wrote about these churches, God was actually writing to all of the churches that would come into existence throughout the Church Age.

God indicated that even at that very early time in church history, already Satan was active in the churches (Revelation 2:9, 13, 24; 3:9). Already one of the churches, the church at Sardis, was effectively a dead church, even though it still had a few members who were true believers (Revelation 3:1-4). Fact is, a few hundred years later, all seven of these churches had ceased to exist.

This has been the experience of local congregations throughout the Church Age. However, in spite of the spiritual weaknesses of these churches, God still used them to accomplish His purposes to bring the Gospel message to the world.

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God's plan of salvation.*

In spite of the weaknesses and failures of mankind, God could override this and still accomplish His purpose of saving each and every individual He had planned to save. Fact is, nothing was happening outside of God's control. Nothing man or Satan could do could frustrate God's plan of salvation.

Finally, however, the time came when God was finished with the utilization of the institution of local churches to accomplish His plan of salvation. At least three things had developed.

First of all, the churches were increasingly departing from truth. Gospels that focused on miracles, visions, voices, and tongues were proliferating. The Bible itself became increasingly less authoritative in the churches. For example, the marriage institution was destroyed as churches began to sanction divorce in opposition to the Biblical law that there is not to be divorce for any reason. Or, for example, churches increasingly taught that one can initiate one's own salvation by doing certain things, such as "accepting Christ" as Savior or becoming baptized in water.

Secondly, the population of the world was exploding so that at this time in history, every hour the world population is about 8,300 individuals greater than the hour before. Thus, today, the world population is substantially greater than six billion people.

Thirdly, there was an enormous explosion in scientific knowledge. For almost 13,000 years, the fastest means of travel was a running horse. The fields were plowed by horses or oxen. There was no electricity, no understanding of atoms or neutrons or protons. No understanding of DNA. This was not because men of the past were less intelligent or less desirous to learn about these things. It was the simple fact that in the unfolding of God's timeline of history, it was not the time for this knowledge to be given to mankind.

However, beginning about 400 years ago, and particularly during the last 200 years, there has been an explosion of knowledge. The time has come when God is allowing mankind to increasingly understand the intricate nature and awesome complexity of God's creation. This awareness should cause mankind to realize that only God could create such a complex and beautiful world. Instead, because of the total perverseness of their hearts, mankind believes that *they* are in charge of this universe, and that they, in turn, are increasingly in control of their own destiny. Even the local churches, under pressure to reconcile the Bible with prevailing scientific theories and procedures, began to accept and approve un-Biblical doctrines such as theistic evolution and birth control.

This same wicked mind of man also becomes the engine that drives the desire to learn more and more about all of these things. Man's attempts to make large sums of money and to satisfy the lusts of the flesh take advantage of these secrets of God's creation. Man proceeds to use and abuse them in what he believes are practical applications.

Significantly, this explosion of scientific knowledge, which has resulted in shrinking the world so that there is virtually instant communication with many, many people in the world, coincides perfectly with the unfolding of God's salvation plan. Just as pornographic material and secular knowledge can now blanket the world, so too, the same means can be used to blanket the world with the Gospel.

Moreover, even as secular knowledge becomes more accurate and available to the world, so too, we are at a time in the unfolding of God's salvation plan when there can be a much more accurate presentation of Gospel details.

For example, the whole world can be told that the Bible teaches that God alone, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, has done all of the work required to save those whom He sovereignly plans to save.

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Indeed, it becomes quite obvious that God delayed the explosion of secular knowledge for this time when the spiritual knowledge of the Bible is to blanket the world. While secular man seeks to satisfy his own lusts for money and for satisfaction of the lusts of the flesh, the spiritual man, the true believer in Christ, commandeers this exploding scientific knowledge, putting it to work to blanket the world with the true Gospel.

All of the above factors set the stage for the tremendous drama that is presently taking place as Christ is making the final preparations for His return.

When we go back to the Jubilee Year of 7 B.C., we witness that God's tremendous plan to publish the good news of salvation to the whole world became a reality. In that Jubilee Year of 7 B.C., it was first a band of shepherds who **"made known abroad"** (Luke 2:17) the wonderful news given to them by the angelic host. Luke 2:10-11 records:

**And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.**

The proclamation of this wonderful news of spiritual liberty was further declared to the world as Jesus was announced as the **"lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29). That is, through Jesus, anyone who truly became saved would, with absolute certainty, have the penalty for his sins paid. He would be liberated from bondage to sin and to Satan. He was spiritually liberated so that he would be free to serve Christ as his Savior and King forever.

This announcement was made in A.D. 29. It was the first day of the seventh month. Remember, it was at the Feast of the Seventh Month New Moon that there was to be a remembrance of the Jubilee. Thus, effectively, the Jubilee Year, that began with the birth of Jesus in 7 B.C., was now in full motion because Christ, who is the very essence of the Jubilee, had now been announced to the world.

Jesus had come to free people from bondage to sin. Jesus Himself expressed this in Luke 4:18-19:

**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are**

**bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.**

The term “**acceptable year**” is synonymous with the term “Jubilee Year” because both terms identify with the concept of preaching or publishing deliverance to the captives. The captives include each and every human being who is not saved. To be without salvation is to be still in bondage to sin and to Satan. This is spoken of in connection with the Jubilee Year in Leviticus 25:10:

**And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.**

This publishing or preaching of the message of deliverance of people from their sins became officially recognized on Pentecost in A.D. 33.

Later in our study, we will discover that the Jubilee Year of the preaching of the Gospel would continue for 1,955 years, until A.D. 1988. In that year, the “**acceptable year,**” the Jubilee Year, came to an end. In that year, the Church Age came to an end. How do we know that A.D.1988 was the year that ended the Church Age and how does the Bible speak of that awful time of the end of the Church Age? \* These are questions we will address as we continue this study.

## **The Great Tribulation**

We are continuing with our task of unfolding the timeline of history, fully recognizing that it is securely tied to God’s wonderful salvation plan.

We are learning that for 1,955 years, the focus of God’s salvation plan was the Church Age. The local churches were the divine institution God had established to be the means by which the whole world was to become acquainted with the Bible. Thus, those who had been chosen by God to become saved might come under the hearing of the Word of God. But, that wonderful Church Age was to come to an end.

The following is a brief summary of some of the Biblical references to this terrible end of the Church Age, which coincides with the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

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\* For a more complete discussion of the end of the Church Age, the reader is invited to obtain, free of charge from Family Radio, a copy of the books *The End of the Church Age and After* and *Wheat and Tares*.

1. Revelation Chapter 7, the Great Tribulation cannot begin until the complete fullness (144,000) of all those who are to be saved during the Church Age has been accomplished. (Remember, the number 144,000 is not to be understood literally but symbolically, being the product of  $12 \times 12 \times 1,000$ . See Chapter 8 of this book for more on the numbers of the Bible.)
2. I Peter 4:17, Christ will come to judge the house of God (the local churches).
3. Matthew 24:21, there will be great tribulation such as the world has never known.
4. Revelation 20:1-4, Satan will be loosed so that he can be used by God as a judgment in the local churches.
5. Revelation 9:1-5, Christ as a star looses Satan.
6. Revelation 13:1-7, the beast (Satan) comes out of the sea to make war with the saints and overcome them.
7. Revelation 13:11, the beast (Satan) come out of the earth appearing as a lamb but speaking like a dragon.
8. Revelation 13:1 and 17:12, Satan rules throughout the Great Tribulation time as a beast with crowns on its ten horns.
9. Revelation 9:15, the four angels are loosed to slay the third part (those unbelievers who externally represent the kingdom of God) of men.
10. Revelation 8:1, the Great Tribulation begins with a symbolic half hour during which Heaven is silent (nobody in the whole world will become saved).
11. II Thessalonians 2:3-4, the man of sin (Satan) takes his seat (becomes the sole ruler) in the temple (the local congregations).
12. Revelation 11:7, the two witnesses (the true believers) are killed (driven out of the local congregations).

13. Revelation 11:2, the holy city (the true believers in the local congregations) are trodden underfoot.
14. II Thessalonians 2:7, He (that is, the Holy Spirit) who restrains is taken out of the midst of each and every local congregation.

These are a sampling of the teachings found throughout the Bible that instruct us concerning the reality and character of the Great Tribulation we are presently experiencing. And, as we have seen previously, now again, the focus of God's fearful judgment upon the whole world begins with His judgment upon the religious. When the Great Tribulation begins, God's judgment is falling upon the local churches and congregations. Those who remain in the local churches and congregations, seeking refuge in them rather than in Christ, are in rebellion against God and will appear at the Final Judgment Throne of God. These unsaved are judged out of those things written in God's record books, they are found guilty, and they are assigned to eternal punishment (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:31-33, 41-46a; Revelation 20:11-15). God's mercy is to be found only upon the truly saved. As eternity begins, only the true believers, in whom God has worked His salvation, are secure and are given their entrance into Heaven (Matthew 25:31-40, 46b). (To study more about what the Bible says will happen as eternity begins, see Chapter 12 of this book.)

The Bible greatly assures us that just before the end of time there will be this period of Great Tribulation. The fact that this dreadful time comes just before the end of the world is clearly stated in Matthew 24, verse 29:

**Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.**

As we continue this study, we will learn how the Bible speaks of the end of the Church Age. We will also learn from the Bible when the Church Age, in all likelihood, came to an end. Furthermore, we will learn what follows the end of the Church Age.

### **Silence In Heaven**

In Revelation 8:1, God gives us a very unusual and ominous prophecy. There we read:

**And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.**

To understand this verse, a couple of Biblical teachings should be kept in mind. Mankind can preach sermons as perfectly as possible; however, these messages will not benefit the hearers unless God applies the message to those whom God wishes to bless by that message (Matthew 13:14-17; John 16:13-15; 17:14, 17-19; II Timothy 4:2-4). If Heaven is silent, it implies that there is no action coming from God to bless that message. Thus, however faithful to the Bible that message may be, it is not being used of God as a means through which God saves any of the hearers.

Secondly, we read in Luke 15:7:

**I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.**

Luke 15:10 adds:

**Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.**

*If Heaven is silent, we can surely understand that this joyful activity identified with the moment of salvation of any individual is not going on in Heaven.*

If Heaven is silent, we can surely understand that this joyful activity identified with the moment of salvation of any individual is not going on in Heaven. Indeed, the most terrible situation existed in the world during the about a half hour of silence. During this half hour, which we will learn is the first part of the Great Tribulation, no one anywhere in the world could become saved. Later in our study, we will indicate when this dreadful half hour occurred. Indeed, all the evidence of the Bible indicates that we have already gone through this awful time.

There will be many who will claim they became saved during the time of those years. Many will testify that during those years their church witnessed the salvation of a great many people.

We must remember, however, that no one can see the hearts of men. The churches of our day are filled with men and women who are altogether convinced that they are saved. But by their disobedience to the command of God to come out of their local congregation, because God's judgment has come upon it, they are showing that they may not be true believers. We must listen to the Bible and not trust at all in what we think. Therefore, during this half hour of silence, we can know that those who were convinced they were saved in that time could not have become saved.

The Church Age, that is, the time when the local churches were bringing the Gospel to the world, is typified by two witnesses. God says in Revelation 11:3-6:

**And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.**

The time these two witnesses are to preach is 1,260 days. This equals forty-two months of thirty days which equals three and a half years. These three and a half years can be shown to be the last half of the seven years spoken of in Daniel 9:27, where we read:

**And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.**

The three and a half years or 1,260 days is the period from the middle of the seventieth seven, "**the midst of the week,**" when sacrifice and offering was to cease, until the consummation, which comes at the end of the world. This 1,260 days is the same period spoken of in Revelation 12:6 which identifies with the body of believers throughout the New Testament era. The fire that proceeds out of the mouths of these two witnesses (Revelation 11:5) refers to the Word of God which they publish. That Word is the fragrance of life unto life and death unto death (II

Corinthians 2:14-16). That is, the Word of God brings eternal life to those who become saved, but it also will condemn the unsaved to Hell forever. The language that speaks of these two witnesses having the power to shut up Heaven, to turn waters into blood, and smite the earth with all plagues (Revelation 11:6), are a reminder of two Old Testament men. The prophet Elijah prayed and the rain stopped for three and a half years (James 5:17). Moses was used of God to turn the waters of Egypt into blood (Exodus 7:20) and to bring ten terrible plagues upon Egypt (Exodus Chapters 7-12).

Moses represents the Law and Elijah the prophets. The Bible is called Moses and the prophets (Luke 16:29) and the Law and the prophets (Luke 16:16). Therefore, whenever these two witnesses are prophesying, it is the Bible that is the power and authority of their witnessing.

But the time would come when these two witnesses would become silenced because they are killed. This must coincide with the approximate half hour when Heaven is silent. Revelation 11:7-8 explains this:

**And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.**

The two witnesses are killed, that is, the Gospel has been silenced. It does not mean that they are physically dead. In John 16:2, God explains that being killed is equivalent to being put out of the synagogue (also translated “assembly”). There we read:

**They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.**

*When individuals are driven from the assembly, spiritually they have been killed because their voice can no longer be heard in the assembly.*

When individuals are driven from the assembly, spiritually they have been killed because their voice can no longer be heard in the assembly. They are killed in the sense that they have been driven out by the congregation itself.

Please note the language God uses in Revelation 11:8. There God indicates their dead bodies lie in the streets of the great city called Sodom and Egypt where also our Lord was crucified. Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. Jerusalem in Jesus' day was the external representation of the kingdom of God. During the Church Age, the local congregations became the external representation of the kingdom of God, so they are the Jerusalem that is in view in this verse.

But now Jerusalem — the local churches — have become Sodom and Egypt. That is, they, like ancient Sodom which was destroyed because of its extreme wickedness, are under the judgment of God (Jude 3-4, 7). They have become like ancient Egypt of Moses' day which God used to typify being in bondage to sin and being under the rule of Satan (typified by Pharaoh) (Exodus 13:14-15; II Peter 2:18-19).

That is why Revelation 11:7 speaks of the beast that comes from the bottomless pit making war against the true believers who are the two witnesses. The beast represents Satan. As Revelation 9:1-2 discloses, it is Christ Himself who has loosed Satan from the bottomless pit. The bottomless pit typifies Hell. Satan was loosed from the bottomless pit in the sense that he would be allowed to rule in all of the local churches, throughout the world, as the man of sin (Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10). Therefore, Satan (the beast) is now ruling in the local congregations and is able to drive out the true believers (the two witnesses). He is ruling in the local congregations because God Himself has abandoned all the local churches (II Thessalonians 2:3-7).

Now God has shifted the responsibility of evangelizing the world away from the institution of the local churches and to individuals. You will remember that for the first approximately 9,000 years of history, God had used individuals like Enoch and Noah to represent the kingdom of God to the world. Then beginning with Abraham, God raised up the nation of Israel to be the external representation of the kingdom of God. Then after Jesus was crucified, as God continued to unfold His salvation plan to the world, God shifted to the utilization of local churches to provide an external representation of the kingdom of God to the world.

God's utilization of the local churches ended when the half an hour of silence from Heaven commenced. Temporarily, God the Holy Spirit was not saving anyone anywhere in the world. True, preachers continue to preach and individuals continue to witness. However, remember we learned that two very important things are required before God can save His elect. (The elect are those who were chosen by God to become saved.) First of all, they must read or hear the Word of God which is the Bible. Secondly, God Himself must apply that Word to the hearts of those whom He plans to save.

These principles were in evidence in a striking way when Jesus preached. He was the Perfect Preacher since He was God Himself. Yet, do you remember that even though He diligently preached for three and a half years, only a few people became saved (Mark 2: 1-12; 5:1-20; Luke 23:39-43; John 8:3-11)? But later, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost, about 3,000 became saved (Acts 2:1, 41).

Thus, when Revelation 8:1 reports that Heaven was silent for about half an hour, it means that for this symbolic period of time, no one was being saved throughout the whole world. It was at this time that the churches lost their commission to represent the Gospel to the world.

In the Bible, this dreadful situation is called the Great Tribulation. This is referred to in Matthew 24:21-22:

**For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.**

In several verses, the entire period of the Great Tribulation is referred to as a period of one hour (Revelation 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19). Revelation 17:12 is especially significant:

**And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.**

We, therefore, conclude that the ten horns represent the rule of Satan within the local churches throughout the entire time of the Great Tribulation.

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no hope for the world.*

Matthew 24:21 effectively speaks of this time of Great Tribulation as a trauma, a catastrophe, by using the language “**tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world.**” Nowhere in the Bible do we read of another time when there was silence in Heaven for a period of time. If no one could become saved, it means there was no hope for the world. Therefore, it appeared

that each and every human being who had not become saved before the Great Tribulation began was guaranteed to end up in Hell.

No situation can be imagined that is more terrible, more awful, more traumatic than this. During this half hour of silence in Heaven, which identified with the first part of the Great Tribulation, even though many true believers, who are eternally secure as saved people, brought the Gospel outside of the local congregations, no one was becoming saved. Indeed, during the half hour of silence, which was the first part of the Great Tribulation, the whole world was in the most awful predicament, the greatest spiritual trouble it had ever seen.

During the entire period of Great Tribulation, Satan had been given full rule in each and every local congregation throughout the world. We read in II Thessalonians 2:3-4:

**Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.**

The man of sin spoken of in this verse can be shown to be Satan. He is called the man of sin because he is typified by the king of Babylon whom God used to represent Satan (Isaiah Chapter 14). While Satan is a spirit being and not a human being, he is called a man in Isaiah 14:16 because he is typified by the king of Babylon.

The phrase he “**sitteth in the temple**” means he rules in the temple. The temple signifies the local congregations. In the Old Testament, the physical temple was the external representation of the kingdom of God. In the Church Age, the local churches were the external representation of the kingdom of God. Thus, the phrase “**he . . . sitteth in the temple**” refers to Satan ruling in the local congregations throughout the world.

*This terrible condition in the local congregations will continue throughout the entire Great Tribulation period, that is, to the last day of this world's existence.*

This terrible condition in the local congregations will continue throughout the entire Great Tribulation period, that is, to the last day of this world's existence (II Thessalonians 2:6-9). That is why God commands in Matthew 24:15-16:

**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:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.**

The “**holy place**” in this verse refers to the local congregations which throughout the Church Age were the caretakers of the Bible. They had been mandated by God to send the Gospel into all the world. But during the Great Tribulation, the abomination of desolation is in all of the local congregations. The abomination of desolation is Satan who now rules in the churches. The word “Judaea,” like the word “temple” in II Thessalonians 2:4, was used in the Old Testament as a representation of the external kingdom of God. In the Church Age, it therefore refers to the local churches. The “mountains” refer to Christ Himself. We read in Psalm 121:1:

**I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills [or mountains], from whence cometh my help.**

Thus, in Matthew 24:15, God is teaching that the true believers, if they have not already been driven out, are commanded to flee from the local congregations.

### **Outside of the Churches, There Is an End to the Silence**

However, wonderfully, throughout the world outside of the local congregations, this terrible situation ends at the conclusion of the first part (the time of the half hour of silence) of the Great Tribulation. The silence in Heaven gives place to a great Gospel salvation program during the second part of the Great Tribulation that will continue to the end of time. Now, the “latter rain” is falling; the Jubilee is again being sounded. All around the world, there is a great multitude being saved outside of the local congregations. We will examine this wonderful news later in our study.

The logical questions that follow are: The Great Tribulation lasted one hour; how long is that? How long is the period that is spoken of as “about half an hour?” When did the Great Tribulation begin? We will examine these questions as we continue our study.

We do know that the period called the Great Tribulation is an event that closes with the return of Jesus Christ at the very end of the world. We read in Matthew 24:29-30:

**Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

Therefore, as we begin to understand the length of time of that dreadful period, we will also be given some understanding of the timing of the end of the world. But first, we must search the Bible to determine when that period began. We can use the past tense “began” because we can know that we are already living in that period of time. The beginning of the Great Tribulation identifies with a great many Biblical expressions spread throughout the Bible.

### **“My People” Are Under God’s Judgment**

God indicated why the local churches are experiencing judgment in our day by verses such as those quoted below. Please note the references in these verses to phrases like **“my people,” “the house of Judah,”** and **“the house of God.”** The entire nation of Israel was called **“my people”** by God. Likewise, all those who became members of local churches throughout the New Testament era were known to God as **“his people,” “the house of God,”** and **“the temple of God,”** that is, as God’s very own people.

*Unless someone has become truly saved, he is still headed for Hell, even though he may appear to be a fine church member.*

In both instances, they were God’s people in the sense that they were an external representation of the kingdom of God. However, the fact that these verses, which we will cite below, show that God’s wrath is on **“my people”** indicates that blood descent from Abraham (national Israel) or church membership does not in any way guarantee salvation. Unless someone has become truly saved, he is still headed for Hell, even though he may appear to be a fine church member (Matthew 7:21-23; Romans 2:28-29; II Corinthians 13:5-6; Hebrews 6:4-6; II Peter 2:20-22).

As indicated above, these verses are representative of a great many verses sprinkled throughout the Bible that bring these solemn and awful warnings.

Jeremiah 2:12-13:

**Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.**

Jeremiah 4:22:

**For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.**

Jeremiah 5:30-31:

**A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?**

Jeremiah 6:13-15:

**For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.**

Jeremiah 7:23-24:

**But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.**

Isaiah 1:21:

**How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.**

Isaiah 3:12:

**As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.**

Lamentations 1:8:

**Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sighth, and turneth backward.**

Ezekiel 9:9-10:

**Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not. And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.**

Ezekiel 34:2-5:

**Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.**

Jeremiah 1:16:

**And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.**

Jeremiah 6:19:

**Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.**

Jeremiah 2:8:

**The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.**

Jeremiah 9:11:

**And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.**

Jeremiah 23:1-2:

**Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.**

Lamentations 2:5:

**The Lord was as an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed his strong holds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation.**

Isaiah 5:5-7:

**And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.**

Isaiah 5:13:

**Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.**

Ezekiel 8:17-18:

**Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.**

II Thessalonians 2:3-4:

**Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.**

Hebrews 10:30:

**For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.**

I Peter 4:17:

**For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?**

As God wrote the Bible using the nations of Israel and Judah as illustrations of the local churches of our day, at times He included verses that distinctly show that His focus was not on these nations but upon the local congregations of our day, which in I Peter 4:17 are called the **“house of God.”** For example, as we have already noted, the Book of Jeremiah was written about God’s wrath on Judah at the time they were to be destroyed by Babylon. But God has included verses to clearly show that the prophecies of impending destruction are ultimately focused on God’s judgment on the churches of the New Testament Church Age. For example, in Jeremiah 10:20-21, we read:

**My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains. For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.**

The tabernacle mentioned in these verses was the tabernacle that was constructed about 800 years earlier when Israel was at Mount Sinai. Remember, it was taken to Shiloh where it remained for over 300 years. But the tabernacle at Shiloh ceased to exist about the year 1067 B.C. It was replaced by the temple, the foundation of which was laid in the year 967 B.C. This citation of Jeremiah 10:20 was written after 609 B.C. How then can it be speaking of the tabernacle being destroyed at this time, over 450 years later, when God is writing the Book of Jeremiah?

The answer is that God used the tabernacle at Shiloh as a picture or representation of the Church Age. We know this to be true because in Isaiah 54:2-3, God wrote through Isaiah (in about 700 B.C.):

**Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.**

This citation is speaking of God's tent (the Hebrew word for tent is also translated tabernacle) being enlarged. That is, not only has it not been destroyed, but it is being enlarged and strengthened. How can that be? It had ceased to exist hundreds of years before Isaiah Chapter 54 was written.

The answer is that the language of these verses is pointing to another tabernacle that was typified by the tabernacle that had been located in Shiloh. It is a tabernacle that is made up of the nations (Gentiles) that will come to salvation. This was to occur throughout the Church Age as the Gospel was sent into all the world.

This is the tabernacle that God is speaking of in Jeremiah 10:20-21. God is telling us that that tabernacle has been destroyed because the pastors are at fault. Through verses of this nature that are sprinkled throughout the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, etc., we are assured by God that we are to learn, by carefully studying these Old Testament books as well as the New Testament, all the reasons why the Church Age finally did come to an end.

*Good works are those actions and beliefs which are obedient to all of the commands of the Bible.*

Unfortunately, individuals in local congregations are convinced they are saved because they believe that Jesus is their Savior. But they do not realize that **“faith without works is dead”** (James 2:26). To have true faith or true belief in Christ as Savior will result in good works. Good works are those actions and beliefs which are obedient to all of the commands of the Bible. Thus, to hold a false teaching such as a false hermeneutic, which un-Biblically interprets the Bible using rules devised by men, will not square with truly believing in Jesus. Ignoring the plain rules set forth in the Bible itself for discovering spiritual truth produces the kind of false teaching that has brought the wrath of God upon the local churches.

The method that God is using to bring His divine wrath upon the churches is two-pronged. On the one hand, at the start of this period of Great Tribulation, God Himself left the local churches, and secondly, God has permitted Satan as

the enemy of the Gospel to occupy the churches. The Bible speaks in several ways of God having left the local congregations. The following are representative verses that speak to this. Jeremiah 5:1:

**Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.**

Christ, as the Son of God as well as the Son of man, is the only Man who can bring about pardon or forgiveness for those in the congregations, but now He is absent. Jeremiah 8:19:

**Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?**

God here poses a rhetorical question that shows that Christ is absent. Ezekiel 22:30-31:

**And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.**

Only Christ is the Man (the Son of God, the Son of man) who can keep God from destroying the land. He does so by taking upon Himself the sins of those who had been under the wrath of God. But now, He is gone from the churches.

### **Each and Every Local Church Is Under God's Wrath**

We have learned that it is God's plan that He would entirely reject the local congregations. The Bible teaches us that there is not a single congregation that is not under God's righteous judgment. We learn this from language such as that given in Mark 13:1-4:

**And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto**

**him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?**

This same incident is reported in Matthew 24:1-3:

**And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 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?**

These citations are clearly teaching that at the end of the world, the temple buildings will be thrown down so that not one stone will be left upon another. The words “temple” and “building” are used by God in I Corinthians 3:9 to describe the body of believers that would develop during the Church Age. We read there:

**For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.**

I Corinthians 3:16 adds:

**Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?**

Two kinds of building blocks are built into this building or temple. We read in I Corinthians 3:12:

**Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.**

The phrase “gold, silver, precious stones” refers to those who are

true believers like the wheat in the parable of the wheat and tares (Matthew 13: 24-30, 37-42). Wood, hay, and stubble would be like the tares. Throughout the Church Age, every true believer is a living stone in the temple of God which was externally represented by the local congregations (Ephesians 2:19-22; I Peter 2:5). However, in the opening verses of Matthew Chapter 24 and Mark Chapter 13, God is indicating that as a sign that Christ is coming, not one stone will be left upon another. That is, there will not be one local congregation that still has living stones (true believers) within it. From other Biblical citations, we know that they will have been driven out or they will have obeyed the command to come out.

The end of the Church Age, which coincides with the beginning of the Great Tribulation, which immediately precedes the end of the world, is awful, traumatic, disastrous, to the divine institution of the local congregations. Furthermore, it is worldwide in its scope.

### **In Which Century Will The Great Tribulation Begin?**

The big question that should be asked is: In which century will that be? One of the first Bible clues that help us know the approximate timing of the Great Tribulation which comes just before the end of the world is recorded in Matthew 24:32:

**Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.**

In this verse, God is speaking of a fig tree coming into leaf. Shortly before this prophetic statement was made, we read that Jesus came to a fig tree seeking fruit, but there was nothing but leaves. Jesus then cursed the fig tree and declared that it was never to bear fruit (Mark 11:12-14).

*God's curse came upon Israel so that they  
were rejected by God.*

From the context, we must realize that Jesus was looking at that fig tree as a portrait or representation of national Israel. They, like the fig tree with its leaves, appeared to be a spiritually healthy nation. They had the temple, they kept the spiritual feast days, etc. But when Christ looked for spiritual fruit, there was none. Fact is, they wanted to kill the Source of all spiritual fruit, the Lord Jesus. Therefore, God's curse came upon Israel so that they were rejected by God.

They no longer could be the external representation of the kingdom of God (Numbers 24:24; Amos 8:14; Romans 11:7, 25). More than that, in A.D. 70, they were utterly destroyed by the Roman armies, so that for almost 2,000 years, they were a scattered people without a land they could call their own.

However, in the parable of Matthew 24:32, Jesus speaks of a time when the fig tree would bear leaves. This appearance of life and vitality would be an indicator that summer was close at hand. This also would be an indicator that all the things spoken of in the context of this verse were in the process of being fulfilled. Matthew Chapter 24, the entire chapter, is speaking of the Great Tribulation that immediately precedes the end of the world. Thus, when this sign of the fig tree in leaf can be seen, we will know that we are very near the end of the world.

But what about the phrase that says when the fig tree is in leaf, summer is nigh?

In the Bible, harvest time is associated with summer. This is readily understood because winter is never the time of harvest. Therefore, we must understand that this verse is prophesying that there will be a time of spiritual harvest during this time of Great Tribulation. How can that be? Matthew Chapter 24 is speaking about Great Tribulation when Satan is ruling in the local congregations. It is a time of spiritual winter. So, how can we understand this prophecy of Matthew 24:32 which ties all of these things to summer, that is, to a time of harvest?

The solution can be known if we realize that outside of the local congregations, during the last part of the Great Tribulation, there will be a great harvest of believers, even as we read in Revelation 7:9-14. There God says that a great multitude of true believers will come out of Great Tribulation. This great multitude of genuinely-saved individuals, true children of God, will be harvested from nations all over the world. Indeed, it will be a summertime of spiritual harvest.

This is the meaning of Matthew 24:22 in which God indicates that for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. We will learn that during the second part of the Great Tribulation, outside of the local churches, there will be a great harvest of souls. In other words, the Great Tribulation is the time when God no longer uses any local churches anywhere in the world to evangelize the world. Instead, in the second part of the Great Tribulation, He will save a great multitude by the use of true believers who are under no church authority and who bring the true Gospel to the world.

With this fact in mind, returning to the prophecy of Matthew 24:32, we see that God is indicating that when the nation of Israel again becomes a viable nation (a fig tree with leaves), it is a dynamic sign that all of the prophetic

statements of Matthew Chapter 24 are about to be fulfilled, including the wonderful news that there would still be a great harvest of people becoming saved!

This prophecy of Matthew 24:32 has truly been fulfilled. In A.D. 1948, the fig tree, Israel, almost miraculously again began to occupy the land of Israel as a sovereign nation amongst the nations of the world. The prophecy was fulfilled that declared that they were again to be in leaf. It did not predict that there would be any fruit. To be in leaf without fruit means there would be no spiritual fruit. That prophecy also has truly been fulfilled. Except for a tiny trickle of true believers, Israel, as a nation, continues to reject Christ as the Messiah. The prophecy of Matthew 24:32 was indeed fulfilled in A.D. 1948.

*Indeed, it will not be long before everything spoken  
of in Matthew Chapter 24 will have taken place.*

This prophecy of Matthew 24:32 declares that all of the events associated with the Great Tribulation and the return of Christ would take place shortly after Israel again became a nation. From our vantage point of living more than fifty years after A.D. 1948, we can see that all of these things spoken of in Matthew Chapter 24 are taking place. Indeed, it will not be long before everything spoken of in Matthew Chapter 24 will have taken place.

It is indeed curious that Israel, the fig tree that came into leaf, officially became an independent viable nation on May 16, A.D. 1948. This was almost precisely 40 years to the very day before the end of the Church Age.

As we continue our study, we will learn that the Church Age, in all likelihood, ended on May 21, A.D. 1988, the day before Pentecost of that year. 40 years is certainly a significant period of time given the fact that so many other periods of Gospel history identify with the number 40. (For example, Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years.)

Moreover, the period of time from A.D. 1948 to the Jubilee Year A.D. 1994 is 46 years, which breaks down into the significant numbers  $2 \times 23$ .

Furthermore, the period of time from A.D. 1948 to A.D. 2011, which we will learn is the likely year that ends the world, is 63 years. The number 63 is made up of the significant numbers  $3 \times 3 \times 7$ . Is all of this coincidental? Or, does it indicate that God has a carefully designed plan for the unfolding of history?

## **False Prophets Will Arise**

We are learning that the entirety of Matthew Chapter 24 is focused on the Great Tribulation, a real event which occurs just prior to the end of time. We have already briefly looked at verse 15 which warns that the abomination of desolation would be standing in the holy place. We have learned that this is speaking of Satan ruling within the local churches after Christ has abandoned these churches. Indeed, remember the true believers were commanded to flee from these churches.

Another striking characteristic of the Great Tribulation is described by the language of Matthew 24:24:

**For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.**

This verse is teaching that during the Great Tribulation, there would arise preachers of what seems like the Gospel. They are under Satan's power, and they would preach gospels so close to the true Gospel that even the elect would be deceived by them, if such a thing were possible. But it is not possible that the elect be deceived. The elect are those who are or do become true believers because they had been chosen by God to become saved and could never be lost (John 6:37, 39). Matthew 24:24 says that these false prophets, who bring counterfeit gospels, will be recognizable because they will come with signs and wonders. That is, they will come appearing to be able to do miracles and other supernatural acts.

Significantly, a gospel came into existence called the charismatic gospel. Sixty years ago, when it was still very small, it was not called the charismatic gospel, but as this gospel grew into a worldwide phenomenon, it generally became known as the charismatic gospel. This gospel is focused on the concept that a true believer, filled with the Holy Spirit, will receive evidence of this in his life in that he will speak in tongues. Charismatics believe that to speak in tongues is to speak words in a heavenly language that come from the Holy Spirit. This experience normally occurs during prayer, and the words that are spoken will be interpreted into a known language by a fellow believer who presumably has been given the gift of interpretation. Those who hold the charismatic gospel presume that accompanying the activity of speaking in tongues, there will be the possibility of receiving messages from God by means of visions, angel visitation, or hearing a voice. Also, they believe there may be the possibility of miraculous healing and the supernatural activity of people mysteriously falling backward when they are "slain in the Spirit."

All of the above is based on an altogether wrong understanding of a phenomenon that was of a short time duration in the church of Corinth. The Bible reports in I Corinthians Chapters 12 through 14 that receiving a verbalized or articulated message directly from God was possible before the Bible was completed. This phenomenon was experienced by a few people in the early church of Corinth.

*. . . once the Bible was completed, such an experience is impossible because the Bible indicates that the Bible alone and in its entirety gives us the Word of God.*

However, once the Bible was completed, such an experience is impossible because the Bible indicates that the Bible alone and in its entirety gives us the Word of God. We read in Revelation 22:18-19:

**For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

This book mentioned in these verses can be only the Bible. The reader of the Bible always knows for certain he is hearing words from the mouth of God because that is precisely what the Bible is. God, therefore, will not and cannot satisfy the desires of the charismatic gospel people to hear directly from God apart from the Bible.

But there is a spirit being who can satisfy their desires. He is Satan whom the Bible says transforms himself into an “angel of light.” God warns in II Corinthians 11:13-15:

**For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.**

Satan, counterfeiting Christ, is active in our day completely fulfilling the prophecy of Matthew 24:24 and II Corinthians 11:13-15. The charismatic gospel has spread like wildfire throughout the world. For example, one of the largest churches in the world has been associated with the charismatic movement in Korea. This false gospel is successfully active in virtually every city and village in the whole world. All the dear people who are snared by it are convinced they have the true Gospel, when in fact the gospel they are following is totally false. This false gospel is dramatic evidence that the prophecy of Matthew 24:24 has now been fulfilled. (See the pamphlet *Speaking in Tongues* available free of charge from Family Radio.)

### The Noachian Flood Offers a Clue

The Bible gives another clue that may help us understand more precisely the timing of the Great Tribulation and the end of the world. This clue is so important we are going to study it in great detail. Earlier in our study, we considered the Biblical information concerning the Flood of Noah's day. Remember, we looked carefully at the language of II Peter Chapter 3 in which God tied together the Flood of Noah's day and the destruction of the universe at the end of the world. We read in II Peter 3:3-8:

**Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**

The Final worldwide Judgment is typified by the first worldwide Judgment that the world experienced in Noah's day. These two Judgments have a number of things in common, some of which are as follows:

1. They both are a result of man's sin.

2. They both are totally worldwide in scope.
3. They both come when mankind in general does not expect that such a calamity could take place.
4. In both cases, there is a remnant of people who escape the dire and dreadful consequences of this terrible Judgment of God.

*. . . we can know, without question, that the first Judgment by water assures us that the Final Judgment by fire will take place.*

A most significant fact is that in these verses of II Peter Chapter 3, God links these two Judgments together. Thus, we can know, without question, that the first Judgment by water assures us that the Final Judgment by fire will take place.

God then inserts into this solemn declaration of a fiery end to this world's existence this very interesting and very significant verse that we should now carefully examine. II Peter 3:8 declares:

**But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**

What can this verse mean? To understand it, we should look very carefully at each word and phrase.

The first phrase we will carefully examine is **“beloved, be not ignorant.”**

### **Beloved, Be Not Ignorant**

The word **“beloved”** assures us that this verse is specifically addressed to the true believers. Only they are the beloved of God. Only they will take seriously and will have understanding of what follows in this verse. Even as verse 3 of II Peter Chapter 3 speaks of scoffers, we can expect the unsaved will ridicule and disbelieve what God discloses in this verse.

Secondly, the verse tells the beloved, **“be not ignorant.”** By this phrase, God is effectively telling the truly saved, “I am telling you something that should

not be hidden from you. It is my plan that what I tell you in this verse will be understood by you.” What can it be that God is insisting should not be hidden from the true believers? We shall see presently.

## One Thing

Thirdly, the verse uses the phrase “**one thing**” to indicate that there is something very important that should not be hidden from the true believers’ knowledge. The phrase “**one thing**” is fairly unusual, but when it is used in the Bible, it is speaking of something of very great significance and importance. There are at least four other passages in which the term “**one thing**” is used.

John Chapter 9 records the healing of a blind man. As the Jewish leaders ridiculed the one who was healed together with the One who healed him, the man with his new eyesight declared in John 9:25:

**. . . Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.**

Regardless of anything else, the fact could not be denied that a mighty miracle had been performed. A man hopelessly blind could now see: “**. . . one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.**”

In Luke 10:38-42, we read of Jesus in the home of Mary and Martha. Martha is beside herself trying to be the perfect hostess. Mary sat at Jesus’ feet drinking in the words of spiritual life. Finally, Martha could stand it no longer that her sister Mary was not assisting her with her hostess duties and voiced her complaint to Jesus. Jesus’ answer to her is given in Luke 10:41-42:

**. . . Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.**

Obviously, the phrase “**one thing**” in this answer is pointing to that which is supremely important as compared with all other things. Spiritual nourishment, which Mary was receiving, is far more important than the physical nourishment that Martha wished to provide.

In Luke 18:18-24, the Bible tells us of a ruler who asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. The context assures us that this man lived an exemplary godly life. But Jesus told him in verse 22:

**. . . Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distrib-**

**ute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.**

This verse also emphasizes that the term “**one thing**” is referring to something of enormous importance. In this case, it was to look only to Jesus for salvation and not to any of our good works.

In Philippians 3:13-14 we read:

**Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

In these verses, the phrase “**one thing**” again indicates that our trust cannot be in anything we have done. Forget all of that. The one thing that is supremely important is that we look only for the salvation which God has provided in Christ.

In each of these four citations, the term “**one thing**” is pointing to something of supreme importance. Therefore, when we read in II Peter 3:8 that true believers are not to have hid from them one thing, we wonder what thing it is that is so tremendously important.

### **One Day is as a Thousand Years**

The Bible then tells us what this all-important information is. We read in II Peter 3:8:

**. . . one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**

What is this language telling us?

To help us understand this, God placed a related statement in Psalm 90:3-7. There we read:

**Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and**

**withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.**

This language is quite parallel to that which we are reading in II Peter Chapter 3. For example, Psalm 90, verse 3 warns mankind of judgment as God declares, **“Thou turnest man to destruction.”** The Final Judgment is also emphasized in verse 4 by the phrase **“a watch in the night.”** In several citations, Christ speaks of His return during a watch in the night. For example, we read in Luke 12:38:

**And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.**

Verse 5 of Psalm 90 reminds us of the Flood of Noah’s day as God uses the language, **“thou carriest them away as with a flood.”** This is also emphasized by the language of verse 7, where we read:

**For we are consumed by thine anger.**

Each and every one of the above phrases given in Psalm 90 are concerned with Christ coming as the Judge of all of the earth. This is directly parallel to the verses we are presently examining which speak about the Judgment at the end of the world.

Verse 4 of Psalm 90 is likewise very parallel to II Peter 3:8 as it speaks of a thousand years. The term **“a thousand years”** in this verse offers a bit more information that is not found in II Peter 3:8. Psalm 90:4 states **“For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past.”** Literally, the phrase **“as yesterday when it is past”** is “a day of old when it is past.” Therefore, the phrase in Psalm 90:4 can be translated literally: “For a thousand years are but as a day of old when it is past.” Thus, God is assuring us that 1,000 years is as a day. However, it is not referring to a future 1,000 years. Instead, it is a past 1,000 years. Given these numerous parallels between the account of II Peter Chapter 3 and that of Psalm 90, we can be assured that the reference to a day being 1,000 years that is spoken of in II Peter 3:8 is a reference to a past period of time.

Furthermore, as we look again at the Flood of Noah’s day, in which God gave a definite time reference of seven days and then the Flood would begin (Genesis 7:4), we cannot help but wonder: Is God giving a time reference in II Peter 3:8? Are the seven days before the Flood to be looked upon as seven days before the end of the world? No, not seven literal days, but seven days each being 1,000 years in length. In both II Peter Chapter 3 and Psalm 90, God is speaking

about the destruction of the whole world by the Flood and also about the destruction of the whole universe by fire on the last day.

### We Know When the Flood Occurred

One fact is abundantly clear: if we did not know with any precision the year when the Noachian Flood occurred, then, even if II Peter 3:8 were pointing to the end of the world coming 7,000 years later, we would still be without any clear idea concerning the possible time of the end.

However, there are two very striking facts of which we should be aware. The first is that as we have just learned, whatever the meaning of the phrase **“one day is with the Lord as a thousand years,”** God is insisting that every true believer (beloved) is to understand that meaning because it is super, super important. I believe that those who hear or read this verse should be thoroughly impressed by the language, **“beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing.”**

*God has given knowledge of the very accurate Calendar of Time, which we have been scrutinizing, and which has been hidden in the pages of the Bible.*

The second fact is that at this time of history, when God is opening the true believers' eyes to a great many Biblical truths that heretofore were not known, God has given knowledge of the very accurate Calendar of Time, which we have been scrutinizing, and which has been hidden in the pages of the Bible. And included in that Calendar is the precise year when the Flood of Noah's day occurred.

The fact is, we know that the year was 4990 B.C. Seven thousand years after 4990 B.C. is A.D. 2011. Remember that when we compute the passage of time between an Old Testament event and a New Testament event, we must add the two calendar dates together and subtract 1. We subtract 1 because there is no year 0. Thus,  $4,990 + 2,011 = 7,001$ , and  $7,001 - 1 = 7,000$  years.

Is God disclosing to us that A.D. 2011, which is so close at hand, is the last year of this earth's existence? That is a conclusion each reader of the Bible must ponder and study.

Certainly, as each one of us considers this awesome possibility, a few thoughts should be kept in mind.

1. We learned that 120 years before God destroyed the whole world in Noah's day, God gave the preacher Noah the exact year when the Flood was to occur. Remember, God said in Genesis 6:3:

**... My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.**

We know that this 120 years is not a statement giving the normal life expectancy of humans because for thousands of years after the Flood, men lived much longer than 120 years. Therefore, this statement could relate only to the amount of time Noah had been given to construct the ark. Since Noah was a preacher (II Peter 2:5), as a faithful preacher, he would publish everything that God told him. That would have had to include the fact that at the end of these 120 years, a terrible earth-destroying Flood was coming.

2. Seven days before the Flood, God gave Noah the precise day of the Flood (Genesis 7:4).
3. Hebrews 13:8 declares: **“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day and for ever.”** We can know, by examining how God acted in the past, how He will act in the future. Since God gave Noah information concerning the timetable for God's destruction by the Flood, we can surely expect that likewise, today, He will give us similar information concerning His timetable for His end-of-the-world destruction.
4. Earlier in our study, we learned that frequently, God gave Pharaoh notice as to the precise day when a plague would fall upon Egypt (Exodus 8:9-14; 9:5-6; 9:18-25; 10:4, 13-15).
5. Also, earlier in our study, we learned that when God was ready to destroy the ancient city of Nineveh in Jonah's day, God gave Nineveh a precise time. In forty days, destruction would come (Jonah 3:4).

It is true that the Bible clearly teaches that no one is to know the day or the hour of Christ's return. Therefore, we should understand that quite literally. However, the Bible nowhere says we cannot know the century or the decade or the year of Christ's return.

Having said these things, this study is not attempting to make a declaration of the day and hour of the end of the world. It is a historical study of the timeline of history. But history is not finished until the end of the world. Therefore, as we continue this study, we will note those teachings that relate to the end of the world. Of course, these verses of II Peter Chapter 3 definitely focus our eyes on the end of the world as they speak of Christ's coming and the total destruction of the universe.

We briefly considered the possibility that the Flood occurred 7 days or 7,000 years before the end of the world. The number 7 is featured very prominently in the Bible as a number of completeness or perfection. For example, we find:

1. 7 days of creation (Genesis 1:1 - 2:3)
2. 7 years of plenty, 7 years of famine (Genesis Chapter 41)
3. 7 days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6)
4. Blood was sprinkled 7 times before the Lord (Leviticus 4:6, 17).
5. Miriam was given leprosy 7 days (Numbers Chapter 12).
6. 7 sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-16)
7. The Feast of Tabernacles lasted 7 days (Leviticus 23:34).
8. 7 days in a week (Genesis 1:1 - 2:3)
9. Final Great Tribulation typified by 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12)

These examples are among the many in which God uses the number 7 to illustrate completion or perfection. (See Chapter 8 of this volume for an in-depth study of God's use of numbers in the Bible.) We know that presently, we are in the time of Great Tribulation which immediately precedes the end of this world. And we wonder if God is telling us that 7,000 years is the period between the Flood and the end of the world.

Continuing to look closely at the words God speaks in II Peter 3:8 and in its companion verse, Psalm 90:4, we can list the important concepts that we must keep in mind:

1. Both of the verses indicate that a day is as 1,000 years.
2. Both have in view the Flood of Noah's Day and the wrath of God at the end of the world.
3. Psalm 90:4 emphasizes that it is an olden day that is past, that is, as 1,000 years.
4. II Peter 3:8 emphasizes that the message given in these verses is particularly for true believers.
5. II Peter 3:8 indicates the message given in these verses will be understood by the true people of God.
6. II Peter 3:8 indicates that the principle that one day is as 1,000 years is super important as God speaks of "**one thing.**" We understand this since God uses the expression "**one thing**" in a number of other Biblical passages to identify something of enormous importance.
7. II Peter 3:8 underscores and emphasizes the super importance of the truth that must not be hidden from the true believers by doubling the statement so that we read:

**. . . one day is . . . as a thousand years, and  
a thousand years as one day.**

8. Seven days before God closed the door of the ark on the day that the Flood waters began, Noah, who was a true believer, was told very precisely which day the Flood would begin.
9. Until our present generation, no believer had been given exact information as to when the Flood of Noah's day began.
10. Presently, we know that the Biblical Calendar teaches us that the Flood of Noah's day occurred in the year 4990 B.C.
11. The number 7 is repeatedly used in the Bible to signify completion or perfection.

12. If, by these verses which we are studying, God has in mind 7 days of the past, then it appears that the focus of these verses is 7,000 years after the long-past year of 4990 B.C.
13. Seven thousand years after 4990 B.C. is A.D. 2011. Is this the year of Christ's return to which God is calling the attention of every true believer?
14. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Is there any reason that God cannot or will not give to the true believers of our day the precise year of the end of the world even as He gave the precise year of the Flood to Noah? Is this the one thing God wants every true believer to know? Amos 3, verse 7, states:

**Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.**

15. In a number of situations recorded in the Bible, God uses one day for one year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). Curiously, we have begun the serious discussion of II Peter 3:8 in the marketplace of the world in A.D. 2004, just seven years before A.D. 2011. Are these last 7 years also related to the idea that 7 days before the Flood, Noah was given an exact timetable as to when the Flood would begin?
16. Completely apart from these verses, we know from a great amount of Biblical data, that we are presently very close to the end of the world.

### **Are We Now Near the End of Seven Days?**

Before we complete our study of II Peter Chapter 3 and Genesis Chapter 7, we should consider one other possibility.

Is it possible that the references to seven days in Genesis Chapter 7 have a double meaning? In the historical setting, they declare that Noah was told that in seven days all of mankind and the animals that were to escape the Flood were to enter the ark during this seven-day period. The ark was the place of safety. It was the only place in which the destruction of the Flood could be avoided. In Genesis 7:4 we read:

**For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.**

But the Bible teaches that a day is as a thousand years. Could the command to Noah to enter the ark during the time of the next seven days be a command that all who are to escape the Final Judgment of God are to enter into the safety of the Lord Jesus Christ during the next seven days, that is, the next 7,000 years? Jesus is surely typified by the ark. The seven days can surely be understood as 7,000 years. Only by entering the ark could the people of Noah's day escape the Judgment of the Flood. Only by becoming saved, by having entered into Christ, can lost sinners escape the Final Judgment of the last day.

Genesis 7:16 tells us that when all were in the ark, God shut the door. God is the only one who knows when the last of God's elect will have become saved. Only then will He shut the door so that the time of mercy is past. We must take note that it is God who shut the door of the ark, even as it is God who determines when the last of the elect have become saved. Luke 17:26 records:

**And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.**

In a real sense, are not the days of the Son of man the whole time from the time of the Flood all the way to the end of the world? Could this verse be understood to tie the seven days just before the Flood to the 7,000 years just before the end of the world? Genesis 7:1 declares:

**And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.**

Are not all true believers spiritually a part of the house of Noah who was a true believer? Certainly, every true believer is a direct descendant of Noah. Therefore, is this not the command that is obeyed by all who do become true believers? Is this not the activity that has been going on during the entire period of time following the Flood? Surely we can see this additional teaching which comes to us from the language of Genesis Chapter 7.

### **Judgment Day Has Already Begun**

Now that we have seen this focus on A.D. 2011, are we not in danger of violating Scriptures? Is the Bible not emphatic that no one can know the day

or hour of Christ's coming? We have already noted that we are not to look for a precise day or hour. We may be surprised, but in a real way, this truth that we cannot know the day or hour has already been realized. For some time, a great many true believers have known that the period of time called the Great Tribulation possibly began in A.D. 1988. We will develop this concept later in our study. What was not known until only very recently was the fact that the beginning of the Great Tribulation was the beginning of God's Final Judgment on the world.

During these past several years, the true believers have become increasingly aware of the fact that the world is now experiencing the Great Tribulation. They have also become increasingly aware that the beginning of the Great Tribulation is the beginning of Judgment Day (Daniel 12:9-10; I Thessalonians 5:4-5). Therefore, God's Final Judgment, that began with God's judgment on all the local congregations and transitions to the time when Christ appears in person, has already begun. Therefore, we now know that Judgment Day is not a single day of twenty-four hours. Instead, it is a period of time stretching from the beginning of the time of the Great Tribulation to the actual end of this world's existence.

A somewhat parallel situation is found in connection with Creation. Creation of the universe encompassed six days of twenty-four hours. However, in Genesis 2:4, God speaks of a day when everything was created, thus indicating that there are cases in which a day can be understood to be longer than twenty-four hours if the context allows it. However, insofar as we can tell, no one who was living at the time when the Great Tribulation began was aware that Judgment Day had begun in that year.

Judgment Day coincides with the coming of Christ as Judge. Therefore, since Judgment Day began at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, and since we will presently learn that the Great Tribulation in all probability began in A.D. 1988, Christ must have already come as the Judge, and no one knew the day or the hour when He did come. This confirms and agrees with the words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 24:36.

### **Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 Speak to All Local Churches throughout the Church Age**

Let us further develop this conclusion. In Revelation 2:5, God warned the church at Ephesus:

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

The candlestick signifies the light of the Gospel. A local church without a candlestick is a church that no longer is being used of God in such a way that people are becoming saved. It is a church without the light of the Gospel. Its purpose and work of bringing the Gospel to the world has been finished.

The significant fact that we must recognize is that while in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3, God is speaking of seven churches, including the church at Ephesus, that were in existence even before the Bible was completed, these seven churches represented all of the local churches throughout the Church Age. We can be assured of this as we note that after speaking of each one of these seven churches, the words were added: **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”** (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; Revelation 3:6, 13, 22). In other words, the commendations and the warnings given to any one of these seven churches apply to each and every local church that has come into existence throughout the Church Age.

This truth is further emphasized in the statement of Revelation 2:22 in which God warns the church of Thyatira that a false prophetess named Jezebel operating within that church would be cast, together with her followers, into Great Tribulation. We must remember the term “Great Tribulation” is the time when God’s judgment has come on the local congregations just before the end of the world. Therefore, as God is speaking to the church of Thyatira, He is using this church as a portrait of all the churches at the end of the Church Age.

This is further emphasized as God warns the church at Sardis, **“ . . . If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief . . . ”** (Revelation 3:3). He also warned the church at Thyatira to **“ . . . hold fast till I come ”** (Revelation 2:25). The local congregations of Sardis and Thyatira ceased to exist hundreds of years before the coming of Christ at the end of the world. However, we must remember that the warning to them, that they were to **“ . . . hold fast till I come, ”** etc., in actuality, was to all the churches throughout the world throughout time. We will discover that, indeed, today, He has already come as the Judge to each and every church.

*. . . we should also be aware that the nature of the Great Tribulation is the fact that it brought the local churches’ role in sending the Gospel to the world to an end.*

With this in mind, we should also be aware that the nature of the Great Tribulation is the fact that it brought the local churches’ role in sending the Gospel

to the world to an end. Remember, Matthew 24:21 describes a time when there would be Great Tribulation. There we read:

**For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.**

Earlier, in verses 15 and 16 of Matthew 24, God had instructed:

**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:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.**

During the Church Age, the only holy place was the place where the Bible should be found. This would have been the local congregations which had been mandated and assigned the task of sending the Gospel into all of the world. These local congregations are called Jerusalem or Judaea because they, in an external way, represent the kingdom of God. Prior to the Church Age, the nation of Israel with its capital in Jerusalem, which in turn was located in the land of Judaea, which in turn was located in the land of Canaan, was the external representation of the kingdom of God. Abraham and his seed had been given the land of Canaan as an eternal possession (Genesis 17:8).

God spoke of the land of Canaan as an eternal possession, not because the physical land was the kingdom of God, but because it was a representation of the eternal kingdom of God. Thus, throughout the Bible, words like Jerusalem, Zion, Judaea, and Israel, which identify with the land of Canaan or with the nation of Israel, are used to point to the eternal kingdom of God. Therefore, because the local congregations were the external representation of the kingdom of God during the Church Age, which began in A.D. 33, the Bible frequently speaks of the local churches, which are the focus of the Church Age, as Jerusalem, Zion, Israel, Judaea, the temple, etc. (Jeremiah 2:1-4; 8:19; 9:26; 25:18; 26:18; Luke 21:20-21; II Thessalonians 2:4).

*. . . when a person becomes saved, he has eternally entered  
the actual kingdom of God.*

Incidentally, we must remember in this connection that when a person becomes saved, he has eternally entered the actual kingdom of God. Therefore,

the true believers are also frequently called Jerusalem, Zion, Israel, the temple, etc. The reader of the Bible must look carefully at the context where these words are used to determine whether God is speaking of the external representation of the kingdom of God or of the true believers who are the only eternal citizens of the actual kingdom of God.

Returning to Matthew 24:15-16, we read the words “Judaea” and “holy place.” In this instance, the words “holy place” and “Judaea” are referring to the local congregations which throughout the Church Age externally represented the kingdom of God. Throughout the time of the Church Age, God the Holy Spirit was present in each and every local congregation that was reasonably true to the Word of God. The Holy Spirit was present in these congregations to apply the Gospel to the lives of those whom God wished to save. Christ was present within that congregation as King of the church.

Unfortunately, there were some individuals, and frequently very many individuals, who were preachers or elders or members of that local congregation who were not saved. In the parable of the wheat and tares recorded in Matthew Chapter 13, they are called the “tares” (or “weeds”). They are virtually indistinguishable from the true believers. But because they are not saved, they are still under the authority of Satan. Thus, throughout the Church Age, Satan, through these individuals, to some degree, ruled in the congregation, even though Christ was the King of that local congregation.\*

However, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, Christ and the Holy Spirit left the local churches, abandoning them completely to Satan. The true believers were driven out or were commanded by God to come out. Thus, the situation described in Matthew 24:15-16 took place. Satan, the abomination of desolation, now had become the only spiritual ruler in every local congregation throughout the world. That is why the true believers were commanded to flee from the local congregations (Judaea). Remember, in this context, Judaea is the local congregation which was an external representation of the kingdom of God during the Church Age. The local churches are now ruled by the man of sin (Satan) who had taken his seat (he became the ruler) in the temple (the local congregations which previously had been an external representation of the kingdom of God). In II Thessalonians 2:3-4, we can read about this:

**Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin**

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\* For a thorough examination of the parable of the wheat and the tares, ask for the booklet *Wheat and Tares*, available free of charge from Family Radio.

**be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.**

### **Who Is The Antichrist?**

II Thessalonians 2:3 teaches that the man of sin will be revealed. The man of sin is the antichrist who will be very prominent near the end of the world. Who is the antichrist?

Throughout the church era, theologians have believed that Satan would finally rule in the world by means of indwelling a very prominent political-religious man. It was thought that this man, because Satan indwells him, would have enormous evil power throughout the world. In the past, notorious rulers such as Kaiser Wilhelm II, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, or some supreme ruler of the Catholic church, have in their time of power been looked at as possible candidates for the antichrist. However, each of these individuals has died and the world has continued, thus indicating that the speculation concerning them was altogether incorrect.

However, in our day, we know for certain who this man of sin, this antichrist, is. The Bible verse that exposes him is I John 4:3:

**And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it [he] should come; and even now already is it [he] in the world.**

The fact that the antichrist was already in the world when God was writing this verse, about 2,000 years ago, and would also be in the world at the time of the closing events of the history of the world, proves that he cannot be a human being. Each and every human lives out his life and then dies, never to reappear until the end of time when the resurrection of all the dead will occur.

However, the description of the antichrist in this verse fits perfectly with Satan. He was in existence 2,000 years ago and is still very much in existence today. He is the pseudo-christ, the false christ, the antichrist, who heads up the kingdom of Satan, which includes all the unsaved throughout the world. He is a counterfeit christ, constantly endeavoring to destroy Christ. He is described together with those who blindly assist him in II Corinthians 11:13-15:

**For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan him-**

**self is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.**

Satan indeed fits all the Biblical statements that speak of “the man of sin” or the “antichrist.” He is called a man because he was typified by the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14:4-20. In verses 16 and 17 of Isaiah 14, God is speaking of Satan in this context by the language, “. . . **Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness . . .**”

*Satan indeed fits all the Biblical statements that speak of  
“the man of sin” or the “antichrist.”*

Indeed, the “**man of sin**” has been revealed. He is Satan who now rules in all of the local churches throughout the world. He was given this rulership over the churches because the Holy Spirit, who had previously always been present within these churches to apply the Words of the Bible to the hearts of those whom Christ intended to save, is no longer present in the congregations. God the Savior has abandoned the congregations and is no longer doing the work of saving within them. Instead, as we are presently learning, He is now judging the congregations to prepare those remaining within the congregations for their commitment to Hell.

Because Christ and the Holy Spirit have abandoned the local congregations, these churches no longer serve as the light of the world. Effectively, their candlestick has been removed.

This is the awful calamity about which God warned in Revelation 2:5. Remember, we read there that if this church did not repent, Christ would come quickly and remove their candlestick. Remember, we have learned that this warning to the church at Ephesus, a local church existing at the time the Book of Revelation was being written, in actuality, was addressed to every local congregation that would come into existence throughout time. The local church of Ephesus was an example God used to illustrate a principle that applies to each and every one of the churches of the world. We know that this is true as Jesus warned in Revelation 2:5: “. . . **I will come unto thee quickly . . .**” This most significant phrase can apply only to the time when Christ has come as Judge of all the earth. This phrase, therefore, greatly helps us to understand that the second coming of Christ as the Judge includes and extends over a period of time rather than being focused on a single day. Let us develop this truth.

## I Come Quickly

We should look more carefully at the Biblical language that speaks of Christ's second coming to make certain that we are correctly understanding that Christ, at this time in history, has already come as Judge of all the earth.

Over sixty times, the Bible makes reference to the coming of Christ as the time when He brings this world to its end. Several verses teach that when He comes, everyone will see Him (Matthew 16:28; 24:30; Revelation 1:7, etc.). Numerous verses teach that we will not know when He comes (Matthew 24:42; 25:13, etc.). In John 14:3, Jesus promises that He will receive the true believers when He comes. Several verses teach that the wrath of God is coming (Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6, etc.). The Bible speaks of the hour of judgment (Revelation 14:7) and the great day of His wrath (Revelation 6:17).

*. . . because of the great amount of evidence that the Church Age has ended and the candlesticks have been removed from the churches, Christ must have already come.*

Six times Christ declares: **“I will come unto thee quickly”** or **“I come quickly”** (Revelation 2:5, 16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20). These are the phrases that are most significant in helping us to understand that Christ has already come. First, we will learn that it is a phrase that definitely identifies with Christ's second coming to bring this world to its end. Then we will learn that because of the great amount of evidence that the Church Age has ended and the candlesticks have been removed from the churches, Christ must have already come.

In Revelation 2:16, God warns the church of Pergamos:

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

This verse may be understood when we read in Revelation Chapter 19 God's description of Christ coming to bring judgment upon the world. He is pictured as riding on a white horse and having a sword protruding from His mouth. We read in Revelation 19:15:

**And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

That sword can be only the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17) that will bring judgment upon the unsaved as they stand before the Judgment Throne of Christ (Revelation 20:11-12). Therefore, God is telling the churches, in Revelation 2:16, that Christ will come quickly at the time He comes as Judge of all the earth. Thus, the phrase, **“I will come unto thee quickly”** identifies with Christ coming as the Judge.

Likewise, we read in Revelation 22:12:

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

*The reward for the true believers will be the completion of their salvation as they are given their eternal resurrected bodies.*

It is at the end of time that Christ comes with rewards. The reward for the true believers will be the completion of their salvation as they are given their eternal resurrected bodies. The rewards for the unsaved will be that which they have earned, **“... the wages of sin is death”** (Romans 6:23). The wages will be the terrible fact that they are judged, found guilty, and sentenced to eternal damnation.

From the above, we can know that there is ample Biblical evidence that the phrase **“... I come quickly”** can identify only with Christ’s second coming as the Judge of all the earth.

The second principle we must keep in mind is that we are now in the time of Great Tribulation, a time in which God has abandoned the churches. They no longer have the light of the Gospel because God is no longer applying the Word of God that may be preached by them to the lives of the unsaved. Therefore, the candlestick has been removed from them.

Thus, if the candlestick has been removed from all of the churches, it means that, based on the truth we learned from our study of Revelation 2:5, we can be sure that Christ has already come quickly. He already has come as Judge of all the earth. This agrees with all of the other references such as I Peter 4:17 which teaches that judgment will begin with the house of God. Remember that in I Peter 4:17, the house of God is the external physical representation of the kingdom of God which is the local churches.

Therefore, to answer our original question, since Christ has already come quickly to remove the candlesticks from each and every local congregation, and, therefore, since Judgment Day is already in process, we need not worry that we might be guilty of violating the Scriptures that declare that no one can know the

day or the hour when we ask the question, “Could A.D. 2011 be the year of the actual end of the world?”.

### **No One Knows the Day or Hour of Christ’s Return**

We are learning that Jesus has already come to begin the judging process in the world. Judgment has begun in all of the local congregations throughout the world. No one knew the day or hour when He came.

*His coming in a visible way, so that everyone will see Him with their physical eyes, will not occur until the very end of the world, which the Bible speaks of as the last day.*

Remember, Christ has not come a second time in a visible form in which we can see Him with our physical eyes. He has come spiritually to begin the judgment process in the local churches. From everything we read in the Bible, His coming in a visible way, so that everyone will see Him with their physical eyes, will not occur until the very end of the world, which the Bible speaks of as the last day.

### **The Feast of Tabernacles**

We believe this last day must identify with the timing of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was to be observed by Old Testament Israel during the fifteenth to the twenty-second day of the Biblical seventh month. We believe this for a number of reasons.

It is the only Biblical feast day that has not yet had a literal fulfillment. Remember, the Passover focused on the crucifixion of Christ, and Christ, as the Passover Lamb, was actually crucified in A.D. 33 on the fourteenth day of the first month, which was stipulated to be the Passover day.

Remember also, the Feast of Weeks (also called Pentecost) was to be observed seven weeks after the first Sabbath after the Passover Feast. The Feast of Weeks focused on the firstfruits of the springtime harvest. It was literally fulfilled in A.D. 33 when the Holy Spirit was poured out and about 3,000 were saved (Acts Chapter 2).

The Feast of the Seventh Month New Moon, which was to be a reminder of the Jubilee, was literally fulfilled in A.D. 29 on the first day of the seventh month when Jesus was announced as the Lamb of God. Remember, at the same time,

a voice from Heaven announced, “. . . **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**” (Matthew 3:17).

*The Jubilee, in which liberty was to be proclaimed throughout the world, was literally fulfilled on two occasions.*

The Jubilee, in which liberty was to be proclaimed throughout the world, was literally fulfilled on two occasions. Remember, we learned there were to be two Jubilees. The first was the year 7 B.C., a Jubilee Year in which Jesus was born. At that time, the shepherds and the angelic host published to the world that Christ the Savior had come.

The second Jubilee was A.D. 1994 at which time the half hour of silence ended in Heaven, and once again the Gospel began to be published throughout the world so that “. . . **a great multitude, which no man could number . . .**” is being saved (Revelation 7:9).

The Day of Atonement was to be observed on the tenth day of the seventh month. It identified with the Jubilee as Israel afflicted themselves (fasted), and we learned that fasting identifies with sending the Gospel into the world (Isaiah 58:3-7). We learned that, in all likelihood, it was literally on the Day of Atonement in the Jubilee Year 7 B.C. that Jesus was born.

Thus, we have learned of the intimate relationship that exists between the Old Testament ceremonial feasts and the actual literal fulfillment of these feast days.

*. . . we must discuss the one additional very prominent feast that was called for by the Old Testament ceremonial laws.*

However, we must discuss the one additional very prominent feast that was called for by the Old Testament ceremonial laws. It was the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Ingathering (Leviticus 23:34-36, 39-43). It was to be observed during the seven-day period that began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and ended on the twenty-second day of the seventh month. It was a feast that pointed to the ingathering of the year's final harvest. It is linked to the end of the world because it identified with the sending of the Gospel into the world during the time of the latter rain, which comes just prior to the end of the world, which is also the time of the second Jubilee. It is during this time that we are presently living, and a great multitude is being saved (Revelation 7:9-14).

The Feast of Tabernacles is definitely linked to the end of the world by the phrase “**last day.**” Surprisingly, this phrase is found only once in the Old Testament and seven times in the New Testament. In the New Testament, four of the citations that speak of the “**last day**” are virtually identical and all are found in John Chapter 6. They are in verses 39, 40, 44, and 54. Each verse is speaking of true believers who will be resurrected on the “**last day.**” Verse 40 is typical, and we read there:

**And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.**

The Bible also speaks of the resurrection of the last day in John 11:24:

**Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.**

The sixth place the phrase “**last day**” is found is in John 12:48 where God speaks of the unbelievers being judged on the last day. We read there:

**He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**

*Significantly, the remaining two Biblical citations in which God includes the phrase “**last day**” are speaking of the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.*

Significantly, the remaining two Biblical citations in which God includes the phrase “**last day**” are speaking of the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. They are given in John 7:37 and in Nehemiah 8:18. We read in John 7:37:

**In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.**

And we read in Nehemiah 8:18:

**Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.**

These last two citations definitely link the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles to the return of Christ at the end of the world.

Given all of the foregoing information, we wonder, if all the Biblical evidence points to A.D. 2011 as the most likely year for the end of the world, then by determining the date of the twenty-second day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar in A.D. 2011, we would also know the likely day that ends the world.

However, it is very curious that in A.D. 2011, the twenty-second day of the seventh month could come in the month of September or it might come in October. This problem exists because the Jewish Biblical calendar is determined by the moon cycles, and those cycles do not neatly fit into the yearly cycle. Let me explain.

Each year consists of 365.2422 days. Each moon cycle (one new moon to the next new moon) averages 29.53059 days. The Biblical or Jewish calendar therefore consists of 29-day or 30-day months. Twelve months averaging 29½ days equals 354 days, but 354 days is about eleven days short of a year of 365 days. Therefore, every two or three years in the Jewish calendar, an extra month must be added so that, for example, the first month will always be as close as possible to the same location in the year.

*The vernal equinox is the day when, all over the world, the daytime hours are exactly equal to the nighttime hours.*

The Jewish calendar was instituted by God as reported in Exodus Chapter 12. From that calendar, we can calculate that the first Passover was on March 21, 1447 B.C. Significantly, March 20 or 21 is always the date of the vernal equinox. The vernal equinox is the day when, all over the world, the daytime hours are exactly equal to the nighttime hours. Therefore, it would appear that the extra month should be added whenever it was necessary in any year to keep the Passover as close as possible to March 20 or 21, the date of the vernal equinox.

The Bible, however, has given no rules concerning this. Therefore, in Jewish tradition, rules to govern the time when the extra month was to be inserted in the Jewish calendar are obviously man-made. Therefore, it is possible to argue

for the inclusion of the extra month in either of two years close to A.D. 2011 so that the twenty-second day of the seventh month comes either in September or October. The Jewish calendar according to its rules places the twenty-second day in October, 2011, but it is possible that it should be in September.

Additionally, the Bible speaks of the Feast of Tabernacles as having seven days. But it also associates the eighth day as a day of solemn assembly that is intimately identified with the Feast of Tabernacles. Was it the seventh day or the eighth day that was the great day, the last day, of the Feast of Tabernacles spoken of in John 7:37?

For all of these reasons, it does not appear that we can know with any certainty the calendar date that will be the last day of the history of the world. We probably are far wiser in simply indicating that it will, in all likelihood, occur in the fall of A.D. 2011.

*. . . it does not appear that we can know with any certainty  
the calendar date that will be the last day of  
the history of the world.*

### **The Unsaved Do Not Hear Because They Do Not Believe**

*Unsaved people can hear the truths of the Bible concerning  
the coming end of the world and Judgment Day, but  
spiritually, they remain in ignorance as if they never  
heard these truths even with their physical ears.*

One other fact must be kept in mind. Except for true believers who implicitly trust the Bible, no one truly believes what the Bible declares. Unsaved people can hear the truths of the Bible concerning the coming end of the world and Judgment Day, but spiritually, they remain in ignorance as if they never heard these truths even with their physical ears. That is why God says in Matthew 24:36-39:

**But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marry-**

**ing and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**

The people of the world in Noah's day heard him preach that at the end of 120 years, the Flood would come. They witnessed the gigantic construction project as Noah and his sons built the huge ark on dry ground. It was a tremendous testimony to the fact that Noah absolutely believed the truths that he was preaching, but none of these truths registered in the sinful minds of those outside of Noah's own family. The unbelievers of Noah's day continued to live as if they had never heard nor seen Noah. Then, right near the end, they heard the truth that in seven days the Flood would begin, but neither did these truths register with them. They continued to live as if they had never been told. The Flood came upon them as a thief in the night.

This matches the language we read in I Thessalonians 5:2-3:

**For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.**

We thus learn that the Biblical emphasis that indicates that no one can know the day nor the hour of Christ's return is literally true for the many reasons we have just related.

However, we must recognize that I Thessalonians 5:4-5 goes on to declare:

**But 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: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.**

*. . . it is the unsaved who are especially in view when God speaks of people not knowing the day or the hour*

The language of this verse surely tells us that in the lives of the true believers, the knowledge of the timing of Christ's return will be entirely different from that of the unsaved. The additional information of verse 3 particularly emphasizes that it is the unsaved who are especially in view when God speaks of people not knowing the day nor the hour.

The people living in Noah's day heard with their physical hearing the timing of the Flood. But they continued their earthly lifestyle of living in complete denial that destruction was imminent. They did not hear the warning with their spiritual ears. Therefore, for them, Christ came as a thief in the night. So too, it will be for most of the unsaved of the world of our day. Christ will come as a thief in the night.

### **True Believers Must Warn the World**

Let us now return to II Peter Chapter 3 and the one thing every true believer must know. **“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”** Again, the question hammers on the true believer. Is A.D. 2011, which we know is exactly 7,000 years after the beginning of the Flood of Noah's day, the final year of this world's existence?

True, the unbelievers will scoff. They have to ridicule. The last thing they want to think seriously about is that the end of the world is almost here. On the other hand, the true believers are faced with an enormous responsibility. Repeatedly, God warns them that they are watchmen who must sound the warning that the enemy is coming. The true believers have been commanded to declare the Gospel to the whole world. The Gospel begins with the warning of the fact that this world is heading for Judgment Day. It also includes the wonderful news that there is salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the reason God declares in Ezekiel 3:17-19:

**Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.**

*God gives the true believer no option. He must warn the world that Christ is coming as Judge of all the earth.*

God gives the true believer no option. He must warn the world that Christ is coming as Judge of all the earth. He must send forth the news that only in Christ the Savior is there any hope.

Is this perhaps the reason that God insists in II Peter 3:8 that He wants every true believer to know this super important fact that one day is as 1,000 years? For it is possible that this shows us that A.D. 2011 must be published to the world as the year of the end of the world. Every true believer must think carefully about these matters.

There still remains a question that must be answered. We learned that when Jesus comes again, every eye will see Him (Matthew 24:30). Did He not promise in Acts 1:11 that He would **“come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven”**? How then do we dare to keep saying that at this moment, He has already come? This is a fair question that we must honestly face.

### **Christ Has Already Come As The Judge**

When we search the Bible, we learn that Christ can come spiritually or He can come so that every person on earth can see Him with their physical eyes. First, let us hear God’s Word concerning Him coming as a Spirit. In John 14:23, Jesus declares:

**If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.**

This is a faithful promise. Those who have become saved are indwelt by Jesus and their Heavenly Father. That is, God has come to dwell within the life of the true believer.

I John 4:12-16 emphasizes:

**No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.**

This is why we read in Galatians 2:20:

**I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**

These citations assure us that Christ can come to us without our seeing Him with our physical eyes.

If Christ can come into our lives as the Savior without our seeing Him with physical eyes, then He certainly can come into this world as the Judge of all the world without anyone seeing Him with their physical eyes.

This is precisely the situation today. Christ as the Judge of all the earth has already come, even as He will come later so that every eye shall see Him.

Thus, Biblical passages such as Matthew 24:42-51 and Luke 12:35-46, which indicate that we cannot know the day nor the hour when He shall come, in all likelihood, have already been fulfilled. He has come to bring the local churches under His judgment even as prophesied in I Peter 4:17: “...**judgment must begin at the house of God . . .**”

This also means that a passage such as Revelation 2:5 “... **I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick . . .**” has already been fulfilled.

*That will be the awful moment when there is no more mercy,  
no more the possibility of salvation.*

On the other hand, the Bible speaks of His coming in a way that indicates that every person can see Him with their physical eyes. This will be fulfilled at the end of the “**last day.**” That will be the time when all the true believers will be raptured and all the unbelievers who had died will be resurrected to stand for judgment (John 5:28-29). That will be the awful moment when there is no more mercy, no more the possibility of salvation (John 12:48). That will be the “**last day**” spoken of in connection with the resurrection of the bodies of the genuine believers (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54).

The fact is, the Bible speaks in many ways about the second coming of Christ. For example, the Bible uses phrases such as “**that great and notable day**” (Acts 2:20), “**the great day of His wrath**” (Revelation 6:17), “**the hour of His judgment**” (Revelation 14:7), etc. All of these references are speaking of the time of the second coming of the Lord.

Because we are living at that time when the day of God's wrath is already taking place, we can now begin to have a better understanding of all of these phrases that identify with Judgment Day and the end of the world. We may conclude that the hour or day of judgment, the day of God's wrath, the fact of Christ's coming as the Judge, etc., are all speaking of the time in history that began with the beginning of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21) and ends with the entire universe being dissolved (II Peter 3:10).

### **What Is the Judging Process?**

However, now the question arises: If Christ has already come as the Judge, where is His Judgment Throne where He is busy judging?

To answer this question, we must understand what the Bible means when it speaks of Judgment. The word "judgment" or "judgments" is used very frequently in the Bible as a synonym for "law" or "precept" or "commandment." In Psalm 119, for example, God repeatedly uses the word "judgments" as a synonym for "laws." Thus, we know that the laws of God are the judgments of God. Thus, since sin is transgression of the Law of God (I John 3:4), it is, therefore, a transgression of the Judgment of God. We must, therefore, examine carefully the meaning of the word "judgment."

The Law or Judgment of God stipulates how mankind is to live. For example, the Bible declares: "**Thou shalt not commit adultery**" (Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-28). Thus, if an individual does commit adultery, he has broken the Law or Judgment of God. However, now that he has committed adultery and thus has broken the Judgment of God, that is not the end of the matter. The Law or Judgment of God also stipulates that "**the wages of sin is death**" (Romans 6:23). That is, the Law decrees that a penalty must be imposed upon the person who has broken the Judgment of God by committing adultery.

But this person who has committed adultery lives his whole life without consciously experiencing any penalty for his sin of adultery. Yet the Law or Judgment of God demands that the penalty must be paid. Therefore, the Law or Judgment of God stipulates that the hour will come when every person who has previously lived on the earth and subsequently died (remember, physical death is not payment for sin) will be resurrected and will stand before the Judgment Throne of God to answer for his sins. The resurrection of this person is decreed by the Law of God even as the appearance before the Judgment Throne of God and the subsequent sentencing and removal into eternal damnation are an integral part of the Law or Judgment of God.

Thus, we can know that when a person is brought to judgment it means that all of the laws that deal with the procedures that must be carried out in bringing that person to justice have been fully carried out.

We see this in our modern legal system. A person has committed murder. Therefore, he has broken the law. But then a whole series of procedures governed by the law must be carried out in order for judgment or justice to be done. This includes things such as allowing adequate representation by a defense attorney, pre-trial hearings, proper submission of evidence, proper courtroom procedures, etc. Sometimes the period of time required to properly bring judgment against an individual may consume months or years. Closure on the case will occur only when the suspect has been actually tried and either has been exonerated and set free, or has been found guilty and has been executed or has experienced whatever punishment the judge has decreed is a lawful penalty for his crime.

Returning to the Laws or Judgments of the Bible, we likewise discover that God had established many judgments or laws concerning the conduct of the local congregations. They were to follow strict rules in the appointment of elders and deacons (I Timothy Chapter 3). They were to be faithful representatives of the kingdom of God on this earth. They were faithfully to send the whole Gospel into the world. They were to be a divine institution wherein only God is worshiped. Any violation of the Biblical Laws or Judgments by these churches calls for certain Biblical legal action to be taken against them. This includes the fact that the time would come when the Holy Spirit would forsake these churches. It includes the fact that finally Satan as the man of sin would be allowed to rule in them. It includes the fact that the true believers would be driven out of them or would be commanded to come out of them. It includes the fact that God would send a strong delusion upon those who remain within those churches. It includes the fact that finally those who remain in these churches must individually appear before the Judgment Throne of God to answer for their individual sins.

All of the foregoing actions which are an integral part of the Law of God are an integral part of God's Judgment coming upon the local congregations. All of these actions are included in the warning of I Peter 4:17:

**For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?**

*We can know that Christ has already come as the Judge.*

Christ is the Judge of all the earth. Thus, many of the above actions are already taking place in the local congregations. We can know that Christ has

already come as the Judge. Fact is, we know, from the extensive Bible information that speaks to this subject, that the beginning of the Great Tribulation signaled the beginning of the Final Judgment. The hour of Judgment has begun.

Therefore, we need not be concerned with wondering about the day or hour when Christ will come as the Judge. He already has come as the Judge, and the various actions required for the final judging process to be carried out are now in full swing. Each day brings us closer to that aspect of the judging process when Christ will appear and each and every person will see Him with their physical eyes. It is then that each and every unsaved person will stand individually before the Judgment Throne of Christ to receive sentencing, and, from there, they will be removed into eternal Hell to pay for their sins. It is at that time, that time will be no more and the true believers will be evermore with Christ in the New Heavens and New Earth.

### **No One Can Become Saved in Any of the Local Churches**

We should now begin to analyze in more detail the Great Tribulation period that is spoken of as occurring immediately preceding the end of the world. Remember, Matthew 24:21 speaks of it. We read there:

**For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.**

Remember, too, we learned that the chief character of the Great Tribulation is the fact that it seemed no one could become saved anywhere in the world. Matthew 24:22 declares:

**And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.**

But we must recall that this verse also teaches that for the sake of the elect, the days of the Great Tribulation shall be shortened. This is in agreement with the teaching of Revelation Chapters 13 and 17 which speak of Satan ruling, under the figure of a beast with ten crowned horns, for a period of one hour. However, remember Revelation 8:1 speaks of about a half hour of silence. We are learning that the Great Tribulation, therefore, is the entire period when Satan is ruling so that no one is becoming saved in any local church. This is so because Christ has abandoned each and every local church to the rule of Satan. However, for the sake of the elect, while Satan's rule in the churches continues for the entire one hour (the entire Great Tribulation), *outside* of the churches, at the end of

about half an hour of silence, God again begins to save. This He does for the sake of the elect whom God had named to be saved and who had not yet become saved when the Great Tribulation began.

*Thus, the Great Tribulation is divided into two distinct parts.*

Thus, the Great Tribulation is divided into two distinct parts. During the first part, no one could become saved anywhere in the world. During the second part, no one can become saved in any of the local churches. But outside of the local churches, there is a great harvest of people becoming saved as the Gospel goes into all the world without the instrumentation of the local congregations.

We have learned that the end of time appears to focus on A.D. 2011. Thus, A.D. 2011 must, in all likelihood, be the year that coincides with the end of the Great Tribulation. We should now begin to learn what we can about the duration of the Great Tribulation and the length of each of the two parts of the Great Tribulation.

First, we should try to determine the precise length of time of the first part of the Great Tribulation. Remember, it identifies with the “about half an hour of silence” recorded in Revelation 8:1.

## **2,300 Days**

The Biblical statement most likely to give us the duration of the half hour of silence is found in Daniel Chapter 8. In that chapter, God describes the period of the Great Tribulation by the citation of Daniel 8:10-12:

**And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.**

The question was then asked in Daniel 8:13:

**. . . How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary**

**and the host to be trodden under foot?**

The answer was given in Daniel 8:14:

**. . . Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.**

The Hebrew words translated as “**days**” in this verse actually should be translated “evening mornings.” It is unique language that is very similar to that employed by God when He describes the six days of creation (Genesis Chapter 1). After each day’s creation activities, God declared, “**And the evening and the morning were the first day,**” etc. We can be certain that these days of creation, which were spoken of as evening and morning, were literal days of twenty-four hours. Therefore, we strongly suspect we are to understand the evening mornings of Daniel 8:14 to be literal twenty-four-hour days.

Secondly, at the end of 2,300 evening mornings, the sanctuary was cleansed (literally, made righteous). The only sanctuary or holy place that could have become righteous during the Great Tribulation period are the true believers who are sending the true Gospel into the world completely outside the local church. Remember, we learned that the entire one hour of the Great Tribulation, the rule of Satan, continues in the local churches until the end of the world. Therefore, only outside of the churches can righteousness be found.

Now let us examine how Daniel 8:13-14 ties to the language of Revelation 11:2, which speaks of forty-two months.

Daniel 8:13: . . . **How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?**

Revelation 11:2: . . . **and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.**

The sanctuary and the host of Daniel 8:13 are the kingdom of God which are the true believers, even as the holy city of Revelation 11:2 are the true believers who are the kingdom of God. Both citations therefore speak of the true believers being trodden underfoot.

This language in turn identifies with the true believers being killed. Revelation 11:7-9:

**And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against**

**them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.**

It identifies with Revelation 13:7:

**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.**

It identifies with Daniel 8:23-24:

**And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.**

It identifies with Revelation 8:1:

**And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.**

During this literal period of 2,300 days, which we are presently considering, no one anywhere in the world could become saved. It is the same period of time God speaks of as forty-two months in Revelation 11:2:

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

It is the same period of time that God speaks of as three and a half days in Revelation 11:8-9:

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

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

It is the same period of time God speaks of as “**time and times and the dividing of time**” in 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: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.**

The closest approximation to this terrible period of 2,300 days is the three and a half years during which Jesus preached. Jesus, the Perfect Preacher, preached for three and a half years. During this time, virtually no one was saved. When Jesus was preaching, Satan had not yet been bound. Thus, Satan was able to snatch away the perfect words of Jesus, even as Christ indicates in the parable of the sower in Luke 8:12:

**Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.**

Moreover, it was a time when the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out. Therefore, God at that time was rarely applying the perfect Words of God spoken by Jesus to the hearts of the hearers so that they might become saved.

But on Pentecost day in A.D. 33, a great number (about 3,000) did become saved. Satan had been bound in the sense that he could not snatch away the Word of God. The Holy Spirit was now applying the Word of God to the hearts of the elect so that they did become saved.

*. . . when the first part of the Great Tribulation began, all over the world, within the churches and outside of the churches, Satan had become loosed.*

Thus, when the first part of the Great Tribulation began, all over the world, within the churches and outside of the churches, Satan had become loosed so that he could again snatch away the Word from the hearers. During this same period of time, it was not God’s plan that the Holy Spirit would apply the Word

of God to the hearts of any who were chosen to salvation and who had not yet become saved. It was during this first part of the Great Tribulation that Satan took his seat, that is, he began to rule in all of the local congregations (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). Throughout the Church Age, which we are learning was in place from A.D. 33 to A.D. 1988, Satan had been planting within the local congregations tares or weeds. These tares were individuals who were not saved but who gave every outward appearance of having become saved. They were virtually indistinguishable from the true believers. They were individuals who believed they were faithful to all of the doctrines and practices of the church wherein they had become a member. They were altogether convinced that they were serving Christ as their Savior and King.

But they had not become saved and, therefore, they were still under the authority of Satan. They frequently included the vast majority of people within the local congregations. Early evidence of such degradation of the churches is recorded in Revelation Chapter 3, verses 1-4 and 15-17. Today, the evidence is abundant as we witness how few people from the local congregations are obeying God's command to leave the local congregation, now that we are in this time of Great Tribulation. The fact is, those who are unsaved, that is, those who are under the authority of Satan, will not want to obey God's command to come out of the churches.

*When the Great Tribulation began, the impact of God's withdrawal from the local churches throughout the world was hardly noticed in these churches.*

When the Great Tribulation began, the impact of God's withdrawal from the local churches throughout the world was hardly noticed in these churches. In many instances, most of the genuine believers who had been members in these churches had already been driven out. Frequently, this was a result of the true believers' criticism of some of the doctrines or practices observed by their congregation that were not faithful to the Bible. Thus, when the Holy Spirit abandoned these churches, it made hardly a ripple. Only because of what we read in the Bible can the truth be revealed about what has been happening in the churches.

During this 2,300-day first part of the Great Tribulation, not only was Satan the prince of the secular world, but he also had become the ruler in all of the local congregations. Moreover, throughout the world, no one was being saved regardless of how they heard the Gospel. Indeed, the world had come into Great Tribulation. This is why the Bible declares in Revelation 13:7-8, concerning this

forty-two months (Revelation 13:5), that is, this first part of the Great Tribulation:

**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. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

### **The Holy Place is Made Righteous**

But after this 2,300 days, there is a change in the world. We read in Daniel 8:14:

**And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.**

Literally, this verse is teaching that after 2,300 days, the holy place will be made righteous. What can this mean?

The holy place is where the true believers are. Throughout the Church Age, the true believers had been found mainly in the local congregations. But now they have been driven out into the world. While these true believers continue to be in-filled by the Holy Spirit and continue to bring the Gospel throughout the world during the first part of the Great Tribulation, no one is becoming saved. Therefore, during these 2,300 days, the true believers, effectively, are no longer the holy place.

*The Holy Spirit is again saving people.  
Christ, the Jubilee, is again being proclaimed  
throughout the world.*

But at the end of 2,300 days, the holy place is cleansed. That is, the true believers, typified by the two witnesses of Revelation Chapter 11, are now standing on their feet with the Spirit of life from God having entered into them. They are bringing the true Gospel to the world. That is, Heaven is no longer silent. The about “**half an hour**” of silence has ended. The Holy Spirit is again saving people. Christ, the Jubilee, is again being proclaimed throughout the world. A great multitude which no man can number is becoming saved (Revelation 7:9-14).

This is the time of the latter rain. (See *The End of the Church Age and After*, available free of charge from Family Radio.) This is the time of the final summer of harvest. This is the time of the final ingathering. This is the time of the second Jubilee. Indeed, Christ has come again as the Savior. We will find that this time of the end of the first part of the Great Tribulation, the end of the 2,300 days, the beginning of the latter rain, the beginning of the final ingathering of the elect from all over the world, coincides with A.D. 1994. Remember, A.D. 1994 is a Jubilee Year. It, like the Jubilee Year of 7 B.C., coincides with the coming of Christ as Savior. And remember, Jubilee identifies with the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world.

True, during this last half of the Great Tribulation, Satan continues to rule in the local churches. Within the churches located all over the world, Christ continues to bring judgment as He prepares the members of these churches for their appearance before the Judgment Throne of God. He continues to send these people, who only corporately or externally had been His people, a strong delusion that they should believe a lie (II Thessalonians 2:11).

In the secular world outside of these churches, God is also preparing the unsaved who are not chosen for salvation for their appearance at the Judgment Throne of God. He has given them up unto uncleanness and vile affections (Romans 1:24, 26). He has given them over to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:28).

*The two witnesses again are standing on their feet,  
filled with the Spirit, declaring the Gospel  
throughout the world.*

Indeed, throughout the one hour, which is the entire time of the Great Tribulation, Satan is ruling both in the local churches and in the secular world as sin multiplies in the churches and throughout the world. But there is a major difference throughout the world during the second part of the Great Tribulation as compared with the first part of the Great Tribulation. During the second part, it is again the time of Jubilee. The two witnesses again are standing on their feet, filled with the Spirit, declaring the Gospel throughout the world. We read in Revelation 11:11:

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

The three and a half days correspond to the 2,300 days. It is called three and a half days because three and a half is one-half of 7. We have learned that the number 7 signifies perfect completeness.

The language in the above verse that says the Spirit entered the witnesses and they stood upon their feet means that they are again to bring the Gospel to the world. Similar language is used in Ezekiel 2:1-2, 4 to describe the declaration of the Gospel to the world. There we read:

**And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.**

**For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.**

This passage assures us that standing on one's feet and endowed with the Holy Spirit signifies the sending forth of the Gospel.

*It is a time when each saved person has placed his trust only in all that the Bible alone teaches.*

This is the time that a great multitude which no man can number is coming out of Great Tribulation into salvation. We read in Revelation 11:11 that when the two witnesses stood on their feet, “**great fear fell upon them which saw them.**” This is the fear of God that every true believer receives when he has become a true believer. This is the time in which those who do become saved are not certified by spiritual rulers who have been appointed to rule over a divine institution called the nation of Israel or the local New Testament church. It is a time when each saved person has placed his trust only in all that the Bible alone teaches. He knows that God will work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

### **The Gospel Goes Into All of the World**

We are now in the time of the latter rain, when the world, which has exploded to more than six billion people, is being blanketed with the true Gospel.

The true Gospel presentation attempts to be as faithful as possible to the Bible and entirely rejects any doctrine that suggests that man's work of being baptized in water, or accepting Christ, or believing in Christ, or anything else he does, has a part, together with the grace of God, in providing for salvation.

We must realize, of course, that false gospels, which teach many doctrines contrary to the Bible, will continue to bombard the world by such means as radio, television, and Internet. These, however, will not deter the spread of the true message of salvation to the world. The two witnesses who stand upon their feet include only those who faithfully bring the true Gospel.

By means of this faithful proclamation of the true Gospel, the language of II Chronicles 36:21, "**the land had enjoyed her sabbaths,**" will occur. Remember, the "land" in this context represents the actual kingdom of God which consists of all true believers. The sabbath is the seventh-day sabbath that points to the fact that we are not to trust in any work of any kind that we do as an assist in becoming saved. Thus, during this time of the second part of the Great Tribulation, the land (the kingdom of God, which consists of the true believers scattered throughout the world) is enjoying the sending forth of the true Gospel which insists that all of the work of saving is done by Christ.

It is the time that the "**holy place**" (Daniel 8:14) has been cleansed. Now, entirely apart from any local congregation, it is the Bible alone and in its entirety that is the ultimate and only spiritual authority that God is using in the world. This is so even though the local congregations and others with less than the true Gospel are still attempting to send a gospel into the world.

*We will learn that the duration of time encompassed by the entire Great Tribulation appears to be 23 years.*

### **The Great Tribulation: 23 Years**

We will learn that the duration of time encompassed by the entire Great Tribulation appears to be 23 years. The first part of that period is 2,300 days which is a few months longer than six years. Thus, the last part of the Great Tribulation appears to be  $23 - 6 = 17$  years.

In Chapter 8 of this study, we learned that the number 23 is intimately associated with judgment and the wrath of God. We also know that the number 17 is intimately associated with Heaven. Given this much information, we now can suggest a timeline for the Great Tribulation and the end of the world.

If we begin with the Jubilee Year of A.D. 1994 as the end of the “**silence in heaven about the space of half an hour**” (Revelation 8:1), then 2,300 days earlier would be sometime in A.D. 1988. Thus, A.D. 1988 would have been the year in which the Church Age came to an end and the Great Tribulation of Matthew 24:21 began. Then the period from A.D. 1994 to A.D. 2011, a period of 17 years, would be the second part of the Great Tribulation. Thus, the entire length of the Great Tribulation would be a total of 23 years.

Immediately, we can see that 23 years is quite in agreement with the manner in which God uses numbers. The number 23 consistently identifies with God’s judgment, which is the essential character of the Great Tribulation.

We have already seen the number 23 used in connection with the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14. Remember the example of I Corinthians 10:8. God is describing a plague that was recorded in Numbers 25:9. Actually, 24,000 were killed in the plague (Numbers 25:9), but I Corinthians 10:8 declares that 23,000 fell in one day. This obviously means that 1,000 must have fallen the second day to make a total of 24,000. But God is certainly identifying the number 23 with judgment.

*The 276 survivors represent the true believers who are driven out or commanded to come out of the churches, beginning with the time of the Great Tribulation.*

Earlier, we also saw the example in Acts 27:37. There we read that God made certain that when the ship on which Paul was a prisoner was destroyed, there were 276 individuals aboard that ship who were saved. Although we will not develop it in this study, it can be shown that the destroyed ship is typifying or representing the local churches that come under the wrath of God at the end of the Church Age. The 276 survivors represent the true believers who are driven out or commanded to come out of the churches, beginning with the time of the Great Tribulation.

Significantly, the number 276 can be broken down in several ways, as shown in the following:

$$12 \times 23 = 276$$

$$3 \times 4 \times 23 = 276$$

$$3 \times 2 \times 2 \times 23 = 276$$

12 signifies fullness.

3 signifies God's purpose.

4 signifies universality or the end.

2 signifies those who bring the Gospel.

23 signifies judgment.

Thus, the number 276 spiritually is teaching that the fullness (12) of all true believers will escape the judgment (23) of God. Or we could understand the number 276 to signify that it is God's purpose (3) that genuine believers all over the world at the end of the Church Age (4) will escape God's judgment (23). Or we could understand that the number 276 represents that it was God's purpose (3) that those who are to continue to bring the Gospel (2) would be rescued from the judgment of God (23) that destroyed the ship (the local churches).

We might note again another interesting and perhaps significant fact in connection with the number 23. The Flood of Noah's day occurred in the year 4990 B.C. Creation occurred in the year 11,013 B.C. Thus, there were exactly 6,000 plus 23 years from Creation to the Flood.

*A.D. 1988 coincides exactly with the 13,000<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
of the history of the world.*

The next great judgment that took place was the Judgment the Lord Jesus endured when He paid for the sins of all those included in God's salvation plan of electing love. That Judgment occurred in A.D. 33. It is very curious that the time from the Judgment in Noah's day, in 4990 B.C., to that experienced by Jesus, in A.D. 33, was precisely 5,000 plus 23 calendar or inclusive years. Likewise, A.D. 2011 is exactly 13,000 plus 23 years from Creation. Is all of this coincidental? Or does it show the majestic consistency of the unfolding of God's salvation plan? We might also note another interesting fact: A.D. 1988 coincides exactly with the 13,000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the history of the world. Is this a significant fact or is it merely a curiosity?

## The Church Age: Pentecostal Firstfruits

The Church Age, in the unfolding of God's salvation plan, was the harvest of the Pentecostal firstfruits. Remember that at the Feast of Weeks, which in the New Testament is called Pentecost, the firstfruits were brought in.

In this connection, we know that God officially began that harvest very literally on Pentecost day in A.D. 33. That day about 3,000 were saved (Acts 2:41). The occurrence of each following Pentecost day in a real sense signified the continuing of the harvest of the firstfruits (the salvation of additional people). Therefore, we can call those who became saved at any time during the Church Age, "Pentecostal firstfruits".

If the Church Age, the age of gathering in the firstfruits of the harvest, ended in A.D. 1988, we would suspect that it would have ended the day before the A.D. 1988 Pentecost day. We can calculate very accurately the date of the Pentecost of A.D. 33. It was May 21. We also know that in A.D. 1988, Pentecost occurred on May 22. This in itself is striking because the date of Pentecost is controlled by its relationship to the Passover day. And the Passover day is always the fourteenth day of a lunar month. Thus, the Passover, and likewise Pentecost, could be any one of about twenty-nine different calendar days. Yet, in God's Timeline of History, the day of Pentecost in A.D. 1988 came on a day so that the Church Age continued exactly 1,955 complete years ( $1,988 - 33 = 1,955$ ) to the very day. Its duration would have been May 21, A.D. 33, to May 21, A.D. 1988.

Moreover, it is indeed interesting that when we add 2,300 days, the duration of the first part of the Great Tribulation, to May 21, 1988, the end of the Church Age, we come to September 6, 1994. September 6 was a very special day in the year 1994. It was the first day of the seventh month. Remember we learned that this feast day identified with the Jubilee. Thus, we learn that the end of the "**silence in heaven about the space of half an hour**" (Revelation 8:1), which ended with the Jubilee again being sounded throughout the world, identifies perfectly with September 6, 1994. Both the day September 6 and A.D. 1994 are identified with the Jubilee.

*We thus learn that, in all likelihood, the Church Age encompassed exactly 1,955 full years to the very day.*

We thus learn that, in all likelihood, the Church Age encompassed exactly 1,955 full years to the very day. We also have learned that, in all likelihood, the end of the half hour of silence, the first part of the Great Tribulation, coincided

with the Jubilee day of September 6 in the Jubilee Year of A.D. 1994. We surely can see how carefully God, all the way to the end of time, has preplanned the unfolding of the Gospel Timeline of History.

### **A Brief Review**

Thus far, we have discovered considerable Biblical evidence that appears to give us a good understanding of the major events, and the timing of those events, that bring us to the very end of the world.

In summary, those events are as follows:

1. The Church Age, which began on the Day of Pentecost May 21, A.D. 33, probably continued for precisely 1,955 years until the day before Pentecost, May 21, in A.D. 1988.
2. This tremendous period, during which the Gospel reached into all the world and local congregations were established in virtually every city and village of the world, coincided with the first great Jubilee period. During this great period that in principle began with the birth of Christ in the Jubilee Year 7 B.C., the Gospel went forth as a two-edged sword. It was a sweet fragrance of Christ to those who became saved. But it was the stench of death to those who did not become saved (II Corinthians 2:15-16). As we learned, it was typified by the conquest of the land of Canaan that began in the year 1407 B.C. Individuals like Rahab the harlot (Joshua Chapters 2 and 6) or like the inhabitants of the city of Gibeon who wanted peace with Israel (Joshua Chapter 9) were spared. Inhabitants of other cities of the land of Canaan who resisted Israel were destroyed.

*This worldwide activity of the Church Age probably came to an abrupt end in A.D. 1988. In that year, the judgment preparations for the end of the world began.*

3. This worldwide activity of the Church Age probably came to an abrupt end in A.D. 1988. In that year, the judgment preparations for the end of the world began. It was in this year that the brief period of time the Bible calls the Great Tribulation began. We learned that it probably began in A.D. 1988 and will probably end

in A.D. 2011, which, according to our present understanding, will be the last year of this present world's existence.

4. The Great Tribulation began at the moment this first great Jubilee period came to an end probably on May 21, A.D. 1988, which was the day just before Pentecost in that year. As we learned from Revelation 8:1, for a brief period of time, Heaven became silent, so that for this period of time, no one in the whole world could become saved. Christ had come to bring judgment upon every local congregation in the entire world. On the one hand, God was finished using these churches as the external representation of the kingdom of God on this earth. All of those elect of God who were to become saved by God's utilization of the local congregations had become saved.

On the other hand, the local congregations were increasingly unfaithful in presenting to the world the teaching of the Bible. The doctrines of the church confessions and the man-made hermeneutic (the method of Bible interpretation) that were uniquely those of their denomination had become the ultimate authority rather than the Bible. Thus, the local churches had come under the wrath of God. Therefore, Christ had come in judgment, beginning in A.D. 1988, to prepare those churches for the great Judgment Throne when Christ will judge all of the unsaved of the world.

5. This awesome event, that appears to have occurred in A.D. 1988, marking the end of the time of the first Jubilee period and coinciding with the end of the Church Age, marked the beginning of what appears to be a time of great success for Satan. Throughout the Church Age, he had been unable to frustrate the purpose of the Gospel to save those whom God had elected to salvation. True, he had been able to seed, to plant, within the local churches, individuals who were not saved but who gave the appearance of having become saved. The Bible speaks of these individuals as tares or weeds. Thus, even though Christ was the King of the local churches, Satan as an angel of light had much authority in the local churches through his subjects (the tares), who the Bible says are **“transformed as the ministers of righteousness”** (II Corinthians 11:15).

However, at the end of the Church Age, as a first act of preparing the individuals who were members of the churches for judgment, Christ,

who had ruled as King in the local churches, abandoned them to the full control of Satan. The true believers within the churches were driven out or were commanded to come out. Those tares who remained within the local churches were blinded by God so that they were convinced that they were saved Christians and that their local congregation would remain faithful until the very end of the world.\*

*Christ, who had ruled as King in the local churches,  
abandoned them to the full control of Satan.*

6. At the same time that this terrible situation descended on all of the local congregations throughout the world, God also gave Satan unparalleled rule over the kingdoms of the world. God has taken His hand of restraint off the unsaved of the world who by nature are in complete rebellion against the Law of God but who, throughout the Church Age, had been restrained by God from unbridled wickedness. Therefore, especially beginning in A.D. 1988, which marked the end of the Church Age, God also has allowed sin to greatly increase throughout the world. Thus, we have entered a period marked by such things as enormous growth in sexual perversion and homosexuality.

*God has taken His hand of restraint off the unsaved of the world who by nature are in complete rebellion against the Law of God but who, throughout the Church Age, had been restrained by God from unbridled wickedness.*

7. This terrible period of Great Tribulation will probably continue for a period of twenty-three years, ending with the return of Christ at the end of time in A.D. 2011. We have learned that this twenty-

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\* Again, the reader is invited to obtain free of charge from Family Radio the books *The End of the Church Age and After* and *Wheat and Tares*.

three-year period appears to be divided into two parts. The first part was exactly 2,300 days in length and ended, in all likelihood, on September 6, A.D. 1994. The second part began on September 6, 1994, and continues for seventeen years to the autumn of A.D. 2011. During this first part of the 2,300 days, no one anywhere in the world could have become saved. There was no longer in existence a Jubilee. The local churches and the whole world were experiencing a tribulation of monumental consequence.

*During this first part of the 2,300 days, no one anywhere in the world could have become saved.*

8. The true believers who live during this period do not lose their salvation. Most of them were not even aware that such a dreadful situation prevailed throughout the world. They may have been concerned about the doctrines and practices that were increasingly Biblically questionable. They may have wondered about the spectacular success of gospels such as the charismatic gospels that feature tongues and signs and wonders. But they had no knowledge that Jesus had come to begin the judgment process, beginning with the judgment on the house of God (the local churches) and transitioning to the return of Christ and the judgment at the end of the world. It is at the end of the world that the dreadful time will have come when each and every unsaved individual must personally stand before Christ as the Judge. They will be found guilty, and they will hear the awful truth that they have been sentenced to an eternity under God's eternal damnation.
9. This terrible first part of the Great Tribulation ended, in all likelihood, on September 6, A.D. 1994. We learned that September 6 was the first day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. A.D. 1994 was a Jubilee Year and September 6 of that year was the first day of the seventh month. It was a special ceremonial feast day identifying with the Jubilee Year. Thus, the end of this first part of the Great Tribulation coincided with the beginning of the second Jubilee period which would continue for seventeen years, ending in A.D. 2011.

*. . . salvation is again taking place all over the world.*

10. During the seventeen years of the second part of the Great Tribulation, the period of time in which we are now living, the spiritual conditions in the local churches will continue unchanged. Satan continues to rule as he ruled in the churches during the first part of the time of the Great Tribulation. But in the world outside of the local churches, a great change occurred. As we have previously noted, the Jubilee is again being sounded throughout the world. That is, salvation is again taking place all over the world. God is not utilizing the local churches as the means to send forth the Gospel. Instead, God is utilizing individuals, who have no relationship with local congregations, who faithfully continue to send forth the Gospel throughout the world. It is a time when a great multitude which no man can number is being saved.
  
11. During the second part of the Great Tribulation, Satan continues to rule as **“prince of this world”** (John 14:30; also see II Thessalonians 2:1-4; Revelation 20:7-9). Throughout the time of this last seventeen years, God continues to give people up to great wickedness. That is, all kinds of rebellion against God continue to get stronger. The Bible appears to have virtually no authority in the world. But for the sake of the elect, who are sprinkled throughout the huge population of the world, the Bible continues to be used of God as the means through which God is doing His work of saving people. Immediately following this twenty-three-year period of Great Tribulation will come the end of time and the end of the history of planet Earth.

Later in our study, we will indicate what we can know at this time concerning our understanding of eternity future. But before we examine some of the Biblical citations that speak of the end of time, when Christ appears so that every eye shall see Him, we should raise a very serious question.

### **Is There More Biblical Information?**

It is true that the Bible declares in Matthew 24:21 that there will be Great Tribulation such as this world has never known nor ever shall know. It is also true

that this Great Tribulation is immediately followed by the return of Christ and the end of the world. This is clearly indicated by the citation of Matthew 24:29:

**Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.**

*The Biblical rule is that we are to compare Scripture with Scripture until we obtain conclusions that are in harmony with any and every citation of the Bible that might relate to the conclusion that was obtained.*

However, in arriving at the details of this period of Great Tribulation, we have had to piece together bits of information from various parts of the Bible. True, because of the awesome nature of this Great Tribulation, the Bible presents extensive information about it. It is also true that this is the way all doctrines of the Bible are developed. The Biblical rule is that we are to compare Scripture with Scripture until we obtain conclusions that are in harmony with any and every citation of the Bible that might relate to the conclusion that was obtained.

Therefore, we must ask, given the enormous nature of the subject we are considering — the timing and details of the end of the world — is there anything more in the Bible that would further strengthen and corroborate our conclusions? And the answer is: Yes, indeed, there is still more that can be learned from the Bible that greatly strengthens our belief that we have properly understood the Biblical information concerning the timing of the end.

### **What We Know Thus Far**

1. The fig tree in leaf assures us that the end has to be after A.D. 1948.
2. The phrase “**summer is nigh**” (Matthew 24:32) emphasizes that shortly after A.D. 1948, there must be a harvest of souls.
3. A harvest of souls means there must a Jubilee.
4. A.D. 1994 is the next Jubilee Year after the year 1948 when Israel again became a nation.

5. If summer harvest begins in the Jubilee Year 1994, it means something must have ended the first Jubilee that identified with the Church Age.
6. We are very comfortable with two Jubilees because of what we learned when we studied the destruction of Jericho.
7. The ending of the first Jubilee coincided with the beginning of the Great Tribulation.
8. The Great Tribulation is spoken of as one hour in Revelation Chapters 17 and 18.
9. Revelation 8:1 speaks of a half hour of silence. This verse assures us that there will be an end to the first Jubilee.
10. Matthew 24:21 speaks of the beginning of the Great Tribulation.
11. But Matthew 24:22 implies there will be some kind of relenting or change before the full end of the Great Tribulation: “. . . **for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.**”
12. Matthew 24:22 identifies with Revelation 8:1 which indicates that the silence in Heaven is half an hour. That is, there is a great change somewhere in the midst of the Great Tribulation.
13. Since A.D. 1994 must be the beginning of the second Jubilee, it must coincide with the end of the half hour of silence and the beginning of the second period when, for the sake of the elect, the Gospel is again going forth.
14. The duration of the first part of the Great Tribulation appears to be best described by Daniel Chapter 8 where we read of a period of 2,300 days.
15. Since the Church Age identifies with Pentecost, at which time the firstfruits were brought in, we could expect the end of the Church Age to be the day before Pentecost in A.D. 1988. The day before Pentecost in 1988 was May 21. This date in A.D. 1988 is 2,300 days earlier than September 6, 1994.

16. This makes the Church Age equal to 1,955 years to the very day. 1,955 breaks down into the significant numbers  $5 \times 17 \times 23$ . (See Chapter 8 of this book.)
17. 2,300 days after the day before Pentecost in A.D.1988 comes to the first day of the seventh month in 1994 according to the Jewish calendar. In the Old Testament ceremonial law, this day was the feast day for remembering the Jubilee. According to our modern calendar, this date was September 6.
18. When we try to identify the end of the second part of the Great Tribulation, which coincides with the duration of the second Jubilee, we find that a time duration of seventeen years is most probable.
19. Seventeen years goes to A.D. 2011. Thus, the entire duration of the Great Tribulation would then be 23 years.
20. A time duration of 23 years for the entire Great Tribulation fits with the fact that these 23 years are a time of judgment on the local congregations.
21. 23 years fits with two prior 23-year periods that ended with judgment.  
 $11,013 - 4,990 = 6,000$  plus 23 years from Creation to the  
Noachian Flood Judgment  
 $4,990 + 33 = 5,000$  plus 23 years inclusive from the Noachian  
Flood Judgment to the Judgment on Christ  
 $11,013 + 2,011 - 1 = 13,000$  plus 23 years from Creation to the  
Judgment by Christ
22. A period of 17 years for the duration of the second part of the Great Tribulation, which is the period of the second Jubilee (also called the latter rain or final harvest), fits well with the final harvest of souls since the number 17 signifies Heaven.
23. The 17 years fits well with the 153 fish caught (see John 21:11). These fish represent all of those saved during the latter rain which we call the second Jubilee.  $153 = 3 \times 3 \times 17$ . (See Chapter 8 of the book.)

24. The 17 years in a veiled way identify with the 17 years that Jacob lived after he came under the care of Joseph in the year 1877 B.C.
25. The 17 years in a veiled way identifies with the 17 shekels Jeremiah paid for the deed to the land which was a proof that Israel would again return to the promised land.
26. A.D. 2011 fits perfectly with the statement of II Peter 3:8 which speaks of a day being as 1,000 years. Precisely 7,000 years after the Noachian Flood of 4990 B.C. is A.D. 2011.
27. The year 2011, which likely is the Final Judgment Day for the local church as well as for the whole world, is 1,978 years after A.D. 33, which breaks down into the significant numbers  $2 \times 23 \times 43$ . (See Chapter 8 of this book.)
28. The year 391 B.C. is the year when the Old Testament was finished, and  $2,011 + 391 - 1 = 2,401$ , or  $7 \times 7 \times 7 \times 7$ . In the perfectly complete end of time, Christ will finish speaking to this present world.
29. Egypt and Nineveh. God gave precise time information as to when His judgment would fall upon the Egyptians and the Ninevites.

Thus, we have learned that a great many facts harmonize with the conclusion that the Great Tribulation began in 1988 and ends at the end of the world in A.D. 2011. Further, that it was divided into two parts, the first part being 2,300 days and the second part being 17 years, also appears to harmonize with any and all Biblical data that relates to this subject.

But now, before we can feel secure with these conclusions, there is one more big test that can be applied to these conclusions. With that test, we discover much more strengthening and corroborating evidence that we have properly understood the Biblical information concerning the timing of the end.

## Chapter 11

### Patterns

God uses a very interesting device in conveying truth. That device is the giving of a pattern by which the object to be built or formed will be correctly finished. This is a method or procedure we can readily understand. For example, if an individual is going to make a garment that will fit properly, it is extremely helpful if a pattern can be obtained that will show how each piece of material from which the garment is made should be cut. This ensures that the garment will fit well and no material will be wasted.

Likewise, before the temple was built by Solomon, we read in I Chronicles 28:11-12:

**Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things.**

This same concept is conveyed in I Timothy 1:16:

**Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.**

In this citation, the life and conduct of the Apostle Paul is declared to be a pattern to follow for those who would live in a God-glorifying way.

Likewise, God gave Moses the pattern for the objects that were to be placed in the tabernacle. For example, we read in Numbers 8:4:

**And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.**

Significantly, this is the method God used when He gave much information concerning His Gospel plan. We read in Hebrews 8:3-6:

**For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.**

This citation is teaching us that the pattern that typified or showed God's Gospel program were the various laws that governed the activities of the priests as they performed their duties in the temple.

### **Biblical Patterns of the Great Tribulation**

In this study, as we have traveled down the highway of time, we have made many references to three dramatic events that appear to be related. They are as follows:

1. The experience of Jacob when he was commanded to leave the promised land of Canaan and go with his entire family to live in the heathen land of Egypt. The year was 1877 B.C.
2. The experience of the nation of Judah when the armies of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in the year 587 B.C.
3. The traumatic experience of true believers of our day as, in this time of Great Tribulation, they are commanded to leave their local churches.

It might be noted that superficially, there is no resemblance that can readily be seen between the great tribulation that Jacob experienced in 1877 B.C. and that which was experienced by the nation of Israel in 587 B.C. Furthermore, superficially, there does not appear to be any resemblance between either of these two tribulations and the Great Tribulation of our day.

*God has provided two distinct patterns that clearly sharpen the focus of events relating to the Great Tribulation of our day.*

However, God has provided two distinct patterns that clearly sharpen the focus of events relating to the Great Tribulation of our day. Remember, it is during the period of the Great Tribulation that the final activity is taking place as God is completing the unfolding of the Calendar of History.

When we discover the precise fit of these two patterns as they are compared with the details of the Great Tribulation that has come just prior to the end of the world, we will be greatly encouraged that we have properly understood the Biblical information concerning the end of the world.

*. . . as God gives understanding of the metaphors and parables of the Bible, the understanding of the teachings of the Bible is greatly increased.*

Only when we thoroughly understand that Christ spoke in parables so that we clearly see the spiritual meaning of these events, can we see the precise relationships that exist between them. This is an excellent illustration of the Lord's assertion in Mark 4:11-12 that He spoke in parables so that those who were not true believers would not understand. For the true believers, the fact is that as God gives understanding of the metaphors and parables of the Bible, the understanding of the teachings of the Bible is greatly increased.

Now, let us briefly outline the two great tribulation patterns recorded in the Bible.

Pattern 1. The first pattern is that of Jacob having to leave the promised land (Canaan) to go to Egypt to escape the grievous famine that was occurring (Genesis 43:1; 46:2-3). The total time duration was seven years. It was divided into two parts in that it was after the first two years of the famine that Jacob and his family left Canaan. The year he left Canaan was 1877 B.C.

Pattern 2. The second pattern is that of Judah during the seventy-year period from 609 B.C. to 539 B.C. It, too, was a time of great affliction that was divided into two parts. The first part ended when Jerusalem and the temple were completely destroyed by the armies of the Babylonians.

We will find that the tribulation experience of Jacob and also the tribulation experience of Judah are patterns that identify very closely with the conclusions to which we have already come in this study. Furthermore, because our conclusions concerning the present Great Tribulation fit these patterns so closely, we will be greatly encouraged that we are correctly understanding God's closing program for the churches and for the world which ends with Christ's return.

We will discover at least fourteen distinct parallels or similarities between the two patterns themselves as well as between them and the present Great Tribulation, which will end with Christ's return at the end of the world. To facilitate the setting forth of these parallels, we will use the word "JACOB" when speaking of the great tribulation Jacob experienced in 1877 B.C. We will use the word "JUDAH" when speaking of the terrible tribulation Judah experienced in 587 B.C. We will use the phrase "PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION" when speaking of the present time of Great Tribulation.

We must remember that the tribulations of "JACOB" and "JUDAH" are facts of history. They are the patterns that God has given us. The tribulation we call "PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION" is the Great Tribulation we are presently experiencing. We will find that it is precisely patterned after the "JACOB" and "JUDAH" tribulations.

### **Parallel Number 1: EACH TRIBULATION WAS A TIME OF GREAT TRIBULATION.**

**JACOB:** Acts 7:11 speaks of this time as a time of "great affliction." The Greek word which is translated "affliction" is the identical word translated as "tribulation" in Matthew 24:21. Therefore, God speaks of Jacob's experience as "great tribulation."

**JUDAH:** The Great Tribulation spoken of in Matthew 24:21 was typified by the destruction of Judah in 587 B.C. Therefore, it is very extensively written about in Old Testament books such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Zephaniah, etc. In each book, the destruction of Judah is used as an example of the end of the Church Age, at which time all the local churches throughout the world would come into judgment. In the Old Testament, God wrote in the Hebrew language rather than in the Greek (Greek is the language of the New Testament). Therefore, we do not find the exact words, "great tribulation." However, the idea of great tribulation is expressed in many ways in these books. For example, Lamentations 2:2-7 clearly describes the enormous tribulation the nation of Judah experienced at that time in history. We read in these verses:

The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought them down to the ground: he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof. He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about. He hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all that were pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire. The Lord was as an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed his strong holds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest. The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the LORD, as in the day of a solemn feast.

PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION: God declares in Matthew 24:21:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

**Parallel Number 2: THE PHYSICAL HOMELAND IN EACH PERIOD WAS AN EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

JACOB: The land of Canaan, which the family of Jacob had to leave, was an external representation of the kingdom of God. Abram, the grandfather of Jacob, had been told in Genesis 17:8:

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

JUDAH: The land of Judah, which all of Israel was commanded to leave,

was also an external representation of the kingdom of God. This was so because the land of Judah and Jerusalem was an integral part of the land of Canaan (Isaiah 5:13; Jeremiah 5:30-31; Lamentations 1:8).

**PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION:** The local churches physically in evidence throughout the world were a divine institution designed by God to be the place identified with true believers (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 7:17; Revelation 2:1-5). Thus, it too was an external representation of the kingdom of God. That is why God frequently speaks of them as Jerusalem, Judaea, Zion, the temple, etc. (See *The End of the Church Age and After*, pages 62-67).

**Parallel Number 3: THE PEOPLE OCCUPYING THAT HOMELAND WERE ALSO A REPRESENTATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

**JACOB:** The entire family of Jacob was also given the name Israel. Israel, which means Prince of God, is a name that is repeatedly used to signify the kingdom of God (Genesis 32:28; Isaiah 48:1-2).

**JUDAH:** All of the nation of Judah, which, after the year 709 B.C., included anyone who was a blood descendant of Abraham, was looked upon by God as the external representation of the kingdom of God (Psalms 74 and 137).

**PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION:** All the members of the local congregations, which are located throughout the world, are an external representation of the kingdom of God.

**Parallel Number 4: EACH HOMELAND HAS A LONG HISTORY OF OCCUPATION. THE NUMBERS OF YEARS HAVE WITHIN THEM NUMBERS SIGNIFYING JUDGMENT.**

**JACOB:** Abraham had come to the land of Canaan in the year 2092 B.C. Jacob and his family were commanded to leave Canaan and go to Egypt 215 years later, in the year 1877 B.C. The number 215 breaks down into 5 x 43.

5 signifies salvation or judgment

43 signifies salvation or judgment

**JUDAH:** Israel became a kingdom with Saul as their first king in the year

1047 B.C. The kingdom of Israel ended in the year 587 B.C. when it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon.  $1,047 - 587 = 460$  years. The number 460 breaks down into  $2 \times 10 \times 23$ .

2 signifies the caretakers of the Bible

10 signifies completeness

23 signifies judgment.

**PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION:** The Church Age began a few weeks after Jesus returned to Heaven in A.D. 33. Satan took his seat, that is, he began to rule in the churches most likely in A.D. 1988.

$1,988 - 33 = 1,955$  years. The number 1,955 breaks down into  $5 \times 17 \times 23$ .

5 signifies salvation or judgment

17 signifies heaven

23 signifies judgment.

### **Parallel Number 5: EACH TRIBULATION BEGAN WITH FAMINE.**

JACOB: Genesis 41:54-56 declares:

**And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.**

JUDAH: Jeremiah 21:6-7 declares:

**And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence. And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their**

**enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.**

Jeremiah 14:1-4 declares:

**The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth. Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up. And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, and found no water; they returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads. Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads.**

PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION: Amos 8:11 declares:

**Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.**

A famine of hearing the Word of God means that God is no longer giving people in the churches ears to hear; that is, they hear the Word of God with their physical ears, but that Word is not spiritually applied to their hearts because God the Holy Spirit has left the churches.

In Revelation 11:7-8, we read of the killing of the two witnesses (the true believers) by the local congregations. They are not physically killed but they are killed in the sense that their voice is no longer heard in the congregation. They have been driven out of the congregation. This sad fact is recorded in Jeremiah 14:16:

**And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.**

I will pour their wickedness upon them is not referring to the wickedness of those who were killed. It is the wickedness of the killers. This idea is further expressed in Psalm 79:1-3:

**O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them.**

Because God has left the local congregations and because the true witnesses have been driven out, God is no longer applying the Word of God that is preached in these congregations to the lives of those people in the congregations. Therefore, it is like there is no Word of God being preached. Thus, the churches are experiencing intense spiritual famine.

### **Parallel Number 6: GREAT TRIBULATION: A TWO-PART PROGRAM.**

**JACOB:** The seven years of famine that endured in the days of Joseph were divided into two significant parts. The first part was two years in length. During these two years, Jacob and his family remained in the land of Canaan even though there was great famine within the land of Canaan.

During the last five years of famine, Jacob and all of his family came into Egypt and remained there for the duration of the famine and even for a long time afterwards. Thus, the seven years was divided into a two-year part and a five-year part.

**JUDAH:** The great tribulation period that fell on Judah officially began in the year when the last God-fearing king who reigned over Judah was killed. That king was Josiah who was killed in battle in the year 609 B.C. This was the year that the seventy-year tribulation began for Judah. First they were subjugated to Egypt, and then they came under the authority of Babylon. In the year 587 B.C., Jerusalem and the nation of Judah were totally destroyed by the armies of Babylon. This was twenty-three years inclusive after King Josiah was killed in battle. During the remainder of the seventy years, Judah did not exist as a nation in the land of Canaan.

**PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION:** The Great Tribulation spoken of in Matthew 24:21 is also divided into two periods. Revelation 18:8 speaks of the Final Tribulation as “one day” and Revelation 18:10, 17, and 19 as “one hour.” Likewise, Revelation 17:12 speaks of this time as “one hour.” In Revelation 14:7, this time is spoken of as the hour of His (God’s) judgment.

The context in which the above one-day and one-hour citations are found show that these phrases refer to the entire Great Tribulation period.

However, in Revelation 8:1, we read:

**And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.**

We have shown that this half hour is the first part of the Great Tribulation period. This first period is followed by the remainder of the Great Tribulation period during which time, for the sake of the elect, that is, for the sake of those who had been elected by God to become saved and had not yet become saved, the Gospel continues to go into the world. However, it is a Gospel for which no local church, anywhere in the world, has any mandate or authority to bring it to the world. This latter period is spoken of in the Bible as the latter rain and as the time of the end of the year harvest (Matthew 13:39; James 5:7).

#### **Parallel Number 7: THE FIRST PART OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD FEATURES THE NUMBER 23.**

JACOB: As we have learned, the great tribulation of Jacob's day was divided into two parts. The first part was two years in length. Jacob and his family, which included all of Israel who lived in the land of Canaan at that time, left Canaan and came under the protection of Joseph during the remaining five years of famine. Genesis 45:6 declares:

**For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.**

A full two years equals 24 months. However, nowhere does the Bible say two full years in connection with the famine Jacob and the world were experiencing (compare Acts 7:23). Therefore, if 23 months had passed at which time Jacob came into Egypt, it would still be permissible language to state two years had passed.

There is precedence in the Bible to think of the number 24 as the number 23. In I Corinthians 10:8, we read:

**Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.**

This citation is speaking of a plague that came upon Israel just before they were to cross over the Jordan River into Canaan, the promised land. We read in Numbers 25:9:

**And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.**

This is truly a curious situation. Why does God give the number 24,000 in Numbers Chapter 25 and the number 23,000 in I Corinthians Chapter 10? We know there is no contradiction. The 23,000 is the number of those who were killed in one day. Thus, 1,000 of those who were killed in the plague were killed the day earlier or the day following the day when the 23,000 were killed.

But this is a significant reference because as we learned earlier, God speaks of the Great Tribulation as “one day” (Revelation 18:8). Thus, we see by the usage of the phrase “one day” that there exists an identification of the number 23 with the Great Tribulation. Therefore, since the two years of the famine are not specifically spoken of as two full years, and because they do identify with the great tribulation of Jacob’s day, could not the two years be looked upon as 23 months instead of 24 months, even as the plague featured in Numbers Chapter 25, in which 24,000 died, is identified with 23,000 in I Corinthians Chapter 10?

JUDAH: As we have learned, there was a distinct break in the seventy years of tribulation experienced by Judah. It was in the year 587 B.C. when Jerusalem was destroyed. This terrible tribulation began in the year 609 B.C. and continued to be experienced in the year 587 B.C. when Jerusalem was destroyed.

Therefore, 609 - 587 inclusive equals 23 years. The tribulation began in the year 609 B.C., and it was during the year 587 B.C. that Jerusalem was destroyed, indicating that both of these years can be included as the first part of this seventy-year tribulation period. We thus see that these 23 years inclusive identify with the probable 23 months of the tribulation experienced by Jacob.

PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION: In the Book of Daniel, God prophesies concerning the coming of the Great Tribulation at the end of the world. During that time, Satan will be the apparent winner in the local churches. Daniel 8:11-12 describes his actions:

**Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.**

A commentary on these verses is recorded in Daniel 8:23-24, where we read:

**And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.**

These statements were fulfilled when the present Great Tribulation began. In this connection, the question is raised in Daniel 8:13:

**Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?**

The question is, “How long will Satan be able to prevail so that Christ and the Gospel are vanquished?” Remember we read earlier in Revelation 8:1 that there was silence for about one half hour. That half hour, which was the first part of the Great Tribulation, identifies with these verses we are reading in Daniel Chapter 8.

In answer to the question of how long this situation would continue, the answer is given in Daniel 8:14:

**And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.**

The word “days” in this verse literally, in the original Hebrew, reads “evening mornings.” This is like the language of Genesis Chapter 1 where an evening morning was a day of twenty-four hours. Therefore, we would suspect that Daniel 8:14 is describing 2,300 twenty-four-hour days. At the end of these 2,300 days, the sanctuary (the holy place) would be cleansed (literally, “be made righteous”). This citation thus appears to be speaking either of the entire Great Tribulation period, or it can be speaking of the first part of the Great Tribulation period.

The key to this question must relate to the phrase “the holy place be made righteous.” Before the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the local churches were

the “holy place.” This is so because the Bible was present there, and these churches had been given the task of evangelizing the world. But then there was silence in Heaven for half an hour. Effectively, during this half-hour period, there was no salvation going on. However, immediately following this half hour of silence, came the latter rain. During the latter rain, the final harvest of true believers takes place, and the “holy” place shifts to the sending forth of the Gospel by individuals outside of the local congregations. Therefore, in that sense, the holy place has been cleansed or made righteous.

Thus, it would appear that the 2,300 days (evening mornings) of Daniel 8:14 is the literal duration of time of the first part of the Great Tribulation period. Thus, in the great tribulation of Jacob’s day, the first part of this period was in all likelihood to be considered as 23 months. Likewise, the first part of the seventy-year tribulation period that fell on Judah was 23 years, inclusively. And the first part of the Great Tribulation of our day, when Christ is judging the local congregations, is 2,300 literal days.

#### **Parallel Number 8: THE ENTIRE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD RELATES TO THE NUMBER 84.**

**JACOB:** The tribulation period experienced by Jacob encompassed seven years or 84 months.

**JUDAH:** The tribulation period experienced by Judah endured for seventy years, which is 840 months. Again the number 84 is in view.

**PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION:** Earlier in our study, we learned from II Peter 3:8 that a day is as 1,000 years in God’s sight and 1,000 years is as a day. We also learned that this statement was made in the context of reminding us of the Flood of Noah’s day and of the coming end of the world at which time the entire universe will be destroyed by fire. We learned that A.D. 2011 is precisely 7,000 years after the Noachian Flood. Therefore, there is a distinct possibility that A.D. 2011 could be the year when the world is brought to an end.

We have also learned that A.D. 1988 is the probable year when the Great Tribulation of our day began. The period from A.D. 1988 to A.D. 2011 spans 23 years, and given the fact that the number 23 is used in the Bible to signify judgment, we can see the likelihood that the entire period of the Great Tribulation could be 23 years. What is remarkable is the fact that each year has 365.2422 days within it. Thus, our calendar shows each year as 365 days with each fourth year as a leap year of 366 days. In a period of 23 years, there are five leap years. Thus, eighteen years of 365 days plus five years of 366 days equals a total of

exactly 8,400 days. Thus, we see that the number 84 is also prominently in evidence in the present Great Tribulation period just as it was in the tribulation periods experienced by Jacob and by Judah.

**Parallel Number 9: GOD TESTS THE BELIEVERS BY COMMANDING THEM TO LEAVE THEIR HOMELAND.**

JACOB: As we learned earlier, because of the famine in Canaan (the land that externally typified the kingdom of God), Jacob and his entire family were commanded to leave Canaan and go to Egypt. We read in Genesis 45:9-10:

**Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast.**

That this was God's plan for Jacob is emphasized by the language of Genesis 46:2-3:

**And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation.**

Therefore, we read in Genesis 46:5-7:

**And Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.**

This meant that God had abandoned the land of Canaan leaving it to be possessed only by unbelievers.

JUDAH: In similar manner, at the time great tribulation had come upon Judah and Jerusalem, God commanded in Jeremiah 21:8-10:

**And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey. For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.**

In similar fashion, God declared in Jeremiah 38:2-3:

**Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live. Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.**

This meant that God had abandoned Jerusalem and Judaea so that they would be possessed only by unbelievers.

PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION: As we learned earlier, the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew teaches very plainly about this time of Great Tribulation that has come just prior to the end of the world. In Matthew 24:15-16, God commands:

**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:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.**

The holy place and Judaea signify the local churches that are located all over the world. They are the holy place because throughout the Church Age, they had been entrusted with the Bible by which they had been commanded to send the Gospel into all of the world. But now Satan, as the man of sin, who in this verse is called the “**abomination of desolation**,” is ruling in all the local congregations, and the believers have been commanded to flee to the mountains. The mountains are a figure pointing to God Himself. We read in Psalm 121:1:

**I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.**

In this verse, the word “hills” can also be translated “mountains.” The local churches have become Babylon because Christ has abandoned them and given them to Satan, who is typified by the king of Babylon, to rule over. This is stated, for example, in II Thessalonians 2:3-4:

**Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.**

Satan is called a man because in Isaiah Chapter 14, he is typified by the man Nebuchadnezzar who was king over Babylon. To take one’s seat is a figure of speech that expresses rulership. Thus, God commands the believers, in Revelation 18:4:

**And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.**

Thus, we must understand that God has abandoned the local congregations, leaving them entirely to unbelievers.

**Parallel Number 10: TRUE BELIEVERS WHO OBEY THE COMMAND TO COME OUT ARE UNDER GOD’S PROTECTION.**

JACOB: Jacob and all of his family came to Egypt and settled in the land of Goshen. They were under the care and protection of Joseph who, as the ruler second only to Pharaoh, was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

JUDAH: Judah was told in Jeremiah 29:4-7:

**Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be**

**carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.**

PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION: Those who have been driven out of the local congregations, or in obedience to God's command have come out of the local congregations, continue under the protection of Christ who has promised the true believer: **"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"** (Hebrews 13:5b).

**Parallel Number 11: THE LAND OR LOCATION FROM WHICH THE TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE COME OUT WILL CONTINUE TO BE WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF TRUE BELIEVERS TO THE END OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION.**

JACOB: The Great Tribulation is identified with a seven-year famine. When Jacob and his family left Canaan to go into Egypt, the land of Canaan was left to those who follow Satan (unbelievers), and the famine continued until the end of the seven-year tribulation period (Genesis 45:4-13, 17-21; 46:1-27; Acts 7:11-15).

JUDAH: When Judah and Jerusalem entered into this seventy-year tribulation period, those who remained under the blessing of God lived in Babylon. For the entire time of this tribulation, after Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, the land of Israel remained as a hostage of Babylon, and Israel could not return. It was only at the end of this seventy-year period that Israel could return to Jerusalem.

PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION: This tribulation will continue until the end of the world when Christ appears as the Judge of all the earth. The local churches will be experiencing the action of God in preparing them for the last day. This action of God's wrath upon them will continue all the way to the end of the world. Those who remain in them will be sent a strong delusion (II Thessalonians 2:11). To use the language of the parable of the wheat and tares (Matthew 13:27-30), they are the tares that are bound in bundles to be burned.

**Parallel Number 12: EACH TRIBULATION PERIOD IDENTIFIES WITH THE NUMBER 43, MAKING THE NUMBER 43, IN THESE CASES, IDENTIFY WITH JUDGMENT.**

JACOB: The number 43 is prominent in two ways. First of all, it was after 215 years of occupancy in the land of Canaan that Jacob came into Egypt. The

number 215 is the product of  $5 \times 43$ . Secondly, in one sense, the great tribulation experienced by Jacob and his family continued for five years, until the end of the seven-year famine. However, it continued in another sense for 430 years because that was the period of time that Israel remained in Egypt as they grew into a nation.

**JUDAH:** In the year 1877 B.C., Jacob and his family left the promised land (Canaan) and came into Egypt. This year began the second part of their seven-year tribulation. Exactly 1,290 ( $3 \times 10 \times 43$ ) years later, in the year 587 B.C., Jerusalem was destroyed by the king of Babylon. This began the second part of the seventy-year tribulation endured by Judah. This 1,290-year period between the tribulation periods of Jacob and Judah was prophesied in Daniel 12:11:

**And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.**

This citation speaks of 1,290 days from the time that the daily sacrifice was taken away (which identifies with great tribulation) to the time the abomination that makes desolate is set up (which also identifies with great tribulation). The Bible allows us, as we learned earlier in this study, to understand that 1,290 days equals 1,290 years. The number 1,290 equals  $3 \times 10 \times 43$ . Thus, the time duration from the great tribulation of 1877 B.C. to that great tribulation of 587 B.C., which came 1,290 years later, equals 1,290 years, or  $3 \times 10 \times 43$  years.

**PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION:** The time duration between the beginning year of the second part of Jacob's tribulation (1877 B.C.), and what appears to be the beginning year of the second part of the present Great Tribulation (A.D. 1994), is exactly  $3 \times 3 \times 430$  years.  $1,877 + 1,994 - 1 = 3,870 = 3 \times 3 \times 430$ . Once again the number 43 identifies with tribulation.

**Parallel Number 13: THE TRUE BELIEVERS ARE TO BE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD WHEN THEY HAVE COME OUT OF THEIR HOMELAND AND LIVE IN THE WORLD.**

**JACOB:** The family of Jacob was shepherds. When they came into Egypt, they were to serve as shepherds to the Egyptians. We read in Genesis 46:34: **“every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.”** In Genesis 47:6, Pharaoh declared to Jacob:

**The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.**

Throughout the Bible, God uses the idea of shepherds to represent those who are to bring the Gospel. For example, Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and the true believers are His sheep (John 10:7-15).

JUDAH: In Jeremiah 29:4-7 we read:

**Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.**

PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION: The true believers live in the world but they are living here as representatives or ambassadors of the Gospel. They are the two witnesses of Revelation 11:11 who during the second part of the Great Tribulation stand on their feet and “. . . **the Spirit of life from God entered into them . . . and great fear fell upon them which saw them.**” The true believers have come out of the local churches, the external representation of the kingdom of God during the Church Age. And to “**seek the peace of the city**” is altogether identified with the true believers, outside of the local congregations, who bring the Gospel to the world with Christ as the Prince of Peace. The fear of God comes upon those whom the Holy Spirit is saving as they hear the true Gospel that is sent into all the world during the second part of the Great Tribulation.

**Parallel Number 14: THE DIVISION OF EACH TRIBULATION PERIOD INTO PARTS IS VERY SIMILAR.**

Please note the similarities as shown in the following chart.

<b>JACOB</b>	
First part was 2 years	Entire tribulation was 7 years
2 years equals <b>28.6%</b> of 7 years	
<b>JUDAH</b>	
First part was 22 years	Entire tribulation was 70 years
22 years equals <b>31.4%</b> of 70 years	
<b>PRESENT GREAT TRIBULATION</b>	
First part equals 2,300 days	Entire Great Tribulation appears to be 23 years, which equals 8,400 days
2,300 days equals <b>27.4%</b> of 8,400 days	

It is very significant that these three events, which superficially appear to be altogether unrelated, are so similar in their time relationships. We know that it is extremely unlikely that these similarities are merely coincidental. In each case, the period of time encompassed by the entire event is broken very decisively into two parts. In all three, the ratio of the first part of each event to the whole time of the event is nearly the same. This can only be true because all three events follow the same pattern.

We should be greatly impressed by these fourteen parallels that exist between the patterns themselves. We should be even more impressed by these fourteen parallels that exist between the two patterns on the one hand and the present Great Tribulation on the other. These many parallels can be true only if we have correctly understood God's Timetable for the final end of history that encompasses this present Great Tribulation period. We are given great assurance that our present understanding of the timetable of the unfolding of God's salvation plan during this present Great Tribulation is accurate. We must remember that all of this material is derived solely from the Bible. Because it is new to our ears does not in any way diminish its value and authority as truth.

Again it should be emphasized: We should be greatly impressed that God in His divine mercy has hidden within the Bible these two patterns of the Great Tribulation of our present time. Thus, we can receive great assurance that our understanding of the bits and pieces of information that were scattered throughout the Bible have been correctly assembled and understood.

## A Brief Summary

By means of the two Biblical patterns which we have just extensively examined, God has very carefully given us the design and character of the events that must take place just prior to the end of the world. These Biblical patterns that were set forth when the Patriarch Jacob and his family entered into Egypt in the year 1877 B.C., and when Jerusalem was devastated by the Babylonians in the year 587 B.C., in fourteen different ways demonstrate what we should expect regarding the closing events prior to the end of the world.

Significantly, now that we are more than halfway through the expected timetable of these closing events, we have seen that everything called for in the Bible, which relates to these closing events, appears to be right on schedule.

Moreover, we should recall that in II Peter Chapter 3, God spoke about the worldwide judgment of the Noachian Flood together with a clear statement of the coming Judgment at the end of the world when the whole universe will be consumed by fire. We have learned that, in that chapter of the Bible, God strongly appears to link the date of the Noachian Flood, 4990 B.C., to A.D. 2011, which comes precisely 7,000 years after the Noachian Flood, as the date for the Final Judgment.  $4,990 + 2,011 - 1 = 7,000$  years. (Remember, we must subtract one year when adding Old Testament years to New Testament years because there is no year zero.)

Furthermore, we have taken note of the fact that the last time God spoke to Old Testament prophets, giving them information that became an integral part of the Bible, was in the year 391 B.C. The last time God will speak in the New Testament era will be on the last day of this world's existence when He will come with the voice of Christ as the Chief Messenger (I Thessalonians 4:16). It appears that will happen in A.D. 2011. Surely it is not coincidental or accidental that  $391 + 2,011 - 1 = 2,401$  years, and that the number 2,401 is made up of the extremely significant numbers  $7 \times 7 \times 7 \times 7$ . As we noted in Chapter 8 of this book, the number 7 signifies complete perfection, and the number 4 (4 sevens) signifies universality or the extreme end. We do know that the end of the world will be the end of time when all of God's work in connection with the existence of this universe will have been perfectly completed.

Additionally, we have taken note that, in connection with the history of the world, there are three great judgments in view:

1. The Judgment on the world by means of the Noachian Flood.
2. The Judgment on Christ as He went to the cross to pay for the sins of each and every person who would become saved.

3. The Judgment at the end of the world when all of the unsaved are judged.

We also learned that the number 23 invariably signifies God's Judgment. Therefore, we must also be impressed that the following parallels exist between the timing of these three judgments.

1. 11,013 B.C. (Creation year) to 4990 B.C. (Noachian Flood Judgment year) = 6,000 + 23 years.
2. 4990 B.C. (Noachian Flood Judgment year) to A.D. 33 (year when Christ was judged) = 5,000 years inclusive + 23 years.
3. 11,013 B.C. (Creation year) to A.D. 2011 (possible Final Judgment year) = 13,000 + 23 years.

Indeed, we wonder how likely is it that all of the above is coincidental or accidental. Surely, we must take into very serious consideration the likelihood that A.D. 2011 may be the year that ends this world's existence. And we must act in light of the Bible's admonitions clearly stated in Hebrews 2:1-5:

**Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.**

Remember II Peter 3:11-12:

**Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?**

But now, we should briefly examine what the Bible teaches concerning that which takes place following the end of time.

