

OUR GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM

The Blessed Hope

Our Gathering Together Unto Him

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Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better

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Preface

If you love the Lord Jesus Christ and his blessed book, "Old Faithful" – the King James Bible, you can identify with the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:23:

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.

This book began in 1973 when I was a second year student at a small Bible institute in Florida. Temporarily out of work, I would spend the first part of the day in search of employment. The latter part of the day was given to classroom studies and a personal study of the book of Daniel; specifically chapter 9.

What follows is the result of that continuing study 23 years later. It is my earnest and hopefully humble desire to add something of benefit to the study of the most remarkable book in all history, the Authorized King James Bible.

Heartfelt appreciation is herein given to the man who had a major part in shaping my understanding of God and his word. My dad, Samuel Wilson Rowley, through his deep love of the Saviour, and his consistent study of the word, piqued my interest in it at a young age.

Dad is presently enjoying the glories of heaven. I will someday join him in a glad reunion. It is with deep joy that I dedicate this book to dad, who taught me to love the word of God.

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The Blessed Hope – Our Gathering Together Unto Him

The coming of Christ for His Church is a subject close to the heart of God's people. Notwithstanding, the Church has been derelict in its charge to discover the details of that remarkable event. Lightly regarded by today's world-oriented saints, the admonition "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,*" is still in the Scripture. Regarding the Rapture, we are admonished to be:

Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Titus 2:13

You can stand out in the summer sun and stare into the eastern sky until you go blind attempting to obey this Scripture. Plainly that is not the intent of the Holy Ghost. It is to the Book we must go!

When you search for something important and it remains elusive, you normally intensify the effort. Not so with this subject! Ask the average saint that professes belief in the premillennial, pre-tribulation Rapture to give a blow by blow description of the event. You will get a scenario similar to this:

There will be a trumpet and a shout. The archangel will speak, and the dead in Christ shall rise and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Then those who are alive and remain will be caught up with them to heaven. It is somewhat a mystery how much time we spend in the "air" as this all takes place in the "twinkling of an eye"!

On earth cars, moments before navigated by Christians, are suddenly driver-less causing bedlam on the highways. Airplanes, suddenly without pilots, plummet out of the skies. Bumper stickers warn unwary travelers they are risking their lives riding in this auto. At any moment the driver will simply disappear!

Charles Taylor lays it out for us:

The translation of the Church will be worldwide, for there are true believers in Jesus Christ in every country on earth, and they all shall be taken

So far so good . . .! But then:

Every country will find itself in turmoil. Each government will have to act as quickly as possible to prevent a wild tide of anarchy and terrorism. Strong measures will be put into effect. The freeways, subways, airports, and streets will be in shambles as many engineers, pilots, bus-drivers, and a multitude of private car owners shall suddenly be caught up out of this world. It will be many days before they can unscramble the mangled cars, trains, and fallen aircraft. Communications will be greatly disrupted. Many key persons shall disappear and much of the lines of communications which are still above ground will be broken by crashes of cars and aircraft. Distraught and searching multitudes will jam and overload the communication lines and systems that do remain. Chaos will be on every hand¹

¹ Paul Lee Tan , *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations* (Rockville, Maryland: Assurance Publishers, 1979), pp. 1113-1114

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Scripture for this scenario? None. The above is mistakenly based on one Scripture:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52

The phrase "in a moment" has been interpreted to mean that the actual catching up of the Church occurs in a "twinkling of an eye". In reality, only states the fact that the *change* takes place instantaneously. The thing occurring "*in the twinkling of an eye*" is our change.

Where does scripture talk about that *change*?

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Romans 8:22 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Romans 8:23

The dead in Christ are raised out of their graves, and *our bodies* are instantly changed. It's called "*The redemption of our body*".

Reading the following scripture carelessly cross referenced to First Corinthians 15: 51,2 has given rise to the "instant rapture" teaching. In reality, there is simply no scripture that says we are "caught up" instantly. *We are caught up together* with the resurrected saints, *who rise out of their graves "first"*, into the atmosphere, and from there to heaven itself!

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1Thessalonians 4:15, 16

If you are saved and love Jesus Christ, you want him to come again. If you are honest, you will admit the scene envisioned above is not too far from what you had been taught or constructed in your own mind. Who the archangel is, what he has to say, who shouts, and the number of "trumps" (a last trump requires more than one), what the twinkling of an eye is all about, and the actual catching up, are all details still a bit foggy or of little concern. After all, who cares about all that so long as we get off the planet! Nevertheless, one who loves the Lord cannot be content to remain ignorant of those things God appraised worth writing about.

This book will challenge some things you always believed about the Rapture. Take a look, and then follow the instruction of the Apostle Paul:

**Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."
1 Thess. 5:20, 21**

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Some Preliminary Definitions and considerations.

It will be helpful at the start to define some terms.

Rapture: The coming of Christ in the air for His Church.

Great Tribulation: Three and one-half years of horror for Israel and the inhabitants of the earth. Follows the Rapture.

Advent: The coming of Christ to the earth. There are two Advents. In the first, He came as redeemer. In the second He comes to establish Himself as king over the earth. This *is not* the rapture in which he comes to the clouds and catches away his bride. Making these two events the same brings confusion and error.

Millennium: A period of one thousand years in which Jesus Christ will reign on earth, beginning roughly around the year two thousand after the battle of Armageddon.

Pre-millennial: Before the one thousand year reign. Refers to Christ coming personally to establish His kingdom.

Post-millennial: "After the one thousand year reign." Refers to the false theory taught by some that Christ's return takes place after the "millennium". Their "millennium" is not the 1000 year time period taught by the scriptures, but rather an indefinite period of time in which the church, which in their view has replaced Israel, brings in the Kingdom of God.

Armageddon: The defeat of Christ's enemies just prior to the millennium in a monumental victory at Meggido.

Imminent: To occur at any moment, impending, at hand.

CHAPTER 1

NO MAN CAN KNOW

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Matthew 24:36

Without fail, "no one can know" will find its way into any discussion about the Rapture of the Church. There is an unholy spirit abroad that resents anyone discussing the Rapture in a context that tries to discover anything connected with its timing. One of the great tenets of the faith is that *no one could know the day or the hour of the Rapture*. The idea is ingrained so deeply, its discussion is considered pointless. The verse above, speaking of the Second Advent, used to promote the "no one can know" doctrine, speaks in the present tense. It does not say "no man can know". Knoweth is old English Present tense. This will be discussed at length in this book.

The "no one can know" doctrine has spawned some strange and sometimes discouraging ideas. Among them, Christ will not return until the last soul has been saved.² As there are now multitudes that know not Christ, prospects for the Rapture grow dimmer each day.

One as well-known and loved as Clarence Larkin laments:

It is the firm conviction of the writer that there has been unnecessary delay in the Return of the Lord, caused by the failure of the Church to obey the "Divine Commission" to evangelize the world, and it is past time when He should have returned³

Then there is the "dynamic tension" theory. God isn't telling in order to keep us all on our spiritual toes. Grant Jeffrey informs us:

The New Testament tells us in many places to be watchful for the coming of the Son of Man. The net result of these passages is that Christians have been forced to live in a spiritually dynamic tension of not knowing just when the Lord will come to resurrect us. If Christ had clearly stated that His return would not be for more than nineteen hundred years, the Church might have lost its sense of urgency and mission. There might have been fewer missionaries who felt compelled to "go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. . ."⁴

Mr. Jeffrey not only misses the earthly Jewish designation of the Lord as the "Son of Man", he gives a very poor excuse for the Holy Ghost's apparent silence on this issue. The Laodicean Church has, for the most part,⁵ lost its missionary zeal and is clearly closer in time to the Rapture. It is

² This is a truism, but is Christ waiting for that "last soul", or is it that when he comes, the door of opportunity is closed? The Latter is the view of this author. The former also fails to take into consideration that a great multitude are saved during the Great Tribulation

³ Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational truth*, Forty first printing, (Rev. Clarence Larkin Est. 2802 N. Park Ave. Philadelphia) 1920 p. 15

⁴ Grant R. Jeffrey, *Heaven The Last Frontier*, New York: Bantam Books, 1990, pp. 39, 40

⁵ The author recognizes that there are many zealous missionaries today. It is a comparative statement. It also accounts for the fact that many of today's "missionaries" are spreading a false gospel.

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doubtful an absence of knowledge about the timing of the Rapture has had any effect at all on missionary activity. It is the love of Christ that constrains soul-winners to abandon homeland and culture for the hardship and discouragement of the mission field.

Jeffrey continues:

The Holy Spirit has, in a sense, kept us on our toes spiritually for two thousand years by refraining from telling us exactly when Christ would return. Obviously, God did not want us to know the exact hour when Jesus would return. Jesus said we would not know.⁶

The Holy Ghost has done nothing of the kind. He simply said that those whom Christ was speaking to did not know. He did not say no one could ever know. Whether someone ever *does* know on some future day is not addressed in Matthew 24:36

David A. Lewis, Assembly of God pastor, reinforces the idea:

Jesus simply forbade us to attempt figuring it out. "The timing of the Rapture of the Church . . . is deliberately hidden and forbidden. To pry into this matter is open rebellion against God. It is defiant disobedience."⁷

Proof text?

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. Mark 13:33

The verse applies directly to the tribulation and certainly does not say they cannot know the time, but only that they don't and should keep watching. It certainly does not forbid anything. Quite the contrary, it encourages "looking"! The strange mental quirk occurs again when the writer mistakes a statement in the present tense for a command to abandon watching!

Lewis finishes up by calling for an

"...all out boycott against date setting!"⁸

There is no basis for that boycott in Mark 13:33. I'll be the first to admit that I don't know the day and hour of the Rapture, and that it may not be known until we are very close to the event itself. However, the hysteria against those who search the Scriptures diligently in obedience to the command of the apostle to be *looking* for that Blessed Hope is unwarranted and unscriptural. Has it not occurred to someone out there that Christ's use of the phrase "that day and hour" not only discloses *there already was a day and hour* for the Second Advent (see definitions at the beginning of this study) on God's calendar, but that there is a warrant in the statement to cause us to search for it? Why did Christ bother to coin the phrase unless to arouse holy curiosity about it on the part of His saints? He could simply have said, "That is not for you to know at this time." His choice of words has caused that phrase to be among the most memorized in all of the Scriptures. Let's

⁶ Ibid. p. 40

⁷ David Allen Lewis, *The Triumphant Return of Christ* Green Forest, Arkansas: New Leaf Press, 1993, p. 333

⁸ Ibid. p. 351

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blame Christ himself for all this day and hour "Second Coming paranoia"! Paul could not have issued a clearer statement concerning the coming of Christ than he did in 2 Thessalonians 2:2,3. We will examine that announcement later in detail in this study.

Will We Know?

The Bible clearly teaches some will know both the day and the hour of the Second Advent, and it will be as natural as breathing to know both! It also makes clear Christ's bride will know ahead of time the hour He returns to take her out of this world.

This book will not attempt to set another date for the Rapture.

It is written with the conviction that the Bible-believer will know the day and the hour of the Rapture before it takes place. It is not written to predict a date. It is rather designed to help the believer understand what will take place in the days immediately prior to the Rapture. These events will be recognized by Bible-believers as initiating a countdown culminating in our being caught up together with Christ. The "catching up" of the church *will not be a surprise*.

The tense of Matthew 24:36 indicates only that when Jesus Christ spoke these words, no one knew the timing of the Second Advent, Himself included. That no one could ever know that day or hour *cannot* be proven from this text. As for the Rapture itself, we will know at least one trump ahead, more than likely six trumps ahead, as our change occurs at the last trump; more on that later.

The Lord told us that the ministry of the Holy Spirit (to come after his ascension) would include showing us things to come! John 16:13 informs us:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

It is one of the Spirit's particular functions to shew us prophetic truth - things to come. The catching up of Christ's bride certainly qualifies! Let's begin by establishing that Matthew 24:36 states its premise in the present tense and has nothing to do with the Rapture. The passage deals with the Second Advent. By confusing its context with the Rapture, some "would be" prophets are bold to teach the Church's voyage through the Tribulation - in spite of the clear instruction given in 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

So why does our discussion even include this verse?

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- Because it is the verse most often misquoted and taken out of context when a discussion of the Rapture is in progress.
- Because the passage taken as a whole and compared with parallel passages demonstrates some will know both the day and the hour of the Advent.
- Because some benefit can be gained from its study since, as we will show, there is a time correlation between the Advent and the Rapture.
- Because at the time spoken, Christ himself did not know the day or the hour of the Advent. However, He certainly knows both now!

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CHAPTER 2

CLEARING THE CONSTRUCTION SITE

Anywhere some structure stands, it is necessary to dismantle the present edifice before new construction can begin. This is true in understanding as well. We will never understand this subject properly until the theological skyscraper known as the "imminent return of Christ" is cleared out of the way.

Remember our definitions. Imminent: to occur at any moment; impending; at hand. Those who believe in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ believe He could have come at any time in the past since His ascension, or He could come at any time in the future. They believe the actual time of the rapture is concealed and is therefore "at hand".

John Walvoord, in his book, *The Return of the Lord* says:

Thousands of Bible-believing Christians believe that the coming of the Lord for His Church is imminent; that is, it could happen any day, any moment.⁹

To be fair, there are some scriptures that seem to teach this. This work will not ignore them, but will deal with them in a later chapter.

There are some insurmountable difficulties for the imminent Rapture advocates.

Day Of

A plain statement by the word of God should be conclusive. The Rapture (the day of Christ) does not occur until the revealing of the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition. In spite of the fact that every fundamental Baptist teaches the passage otherwise, 2 Thessalonians tells a different story.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 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. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

Paul beseeches us by the hope of the Rapture, our gathering together unto him. He confronted and countered the teaching that the "day of Christ" was at hand, or imminent. He made it clear that day would not come until certain conditions are met; a falling away, or apostasy, and *the revealing of the Man of Sin*. He strongly cautions against being deceived in this matter!

All fundamentalists teach the "day of Christ" in the passage should be "day of the Lord". This effort to obscure the truth can be illustrated by the introductory note to 2 Thessalonians in the Scofield Reference Bible:

⁹ John F. Walvoord Th. D. *The Return of The Lord* (Findlay, Ohio: Durham Publishing Company, 1955) p. 80

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The theme of Second Thessalonians is, unfortunately, obscured by a mistranslation in the A.V. of 2:2, where "day of Christ is at hand" should be "day of the Lord is present". The Thessalonian converts were "shaken in mind" and "troubled," supposing, perhaps on the authority of a forged letter as from Paul, that the persecutions they were suffering were those of the "great and terrible day of the Lord," from which they had been taught to expect deliverance at the "day of Christ and our gathering together unto him."¹⁰ (Underline mine)

If one wanted to promote the heresy of the imminent return, it would be essential to hide the truth of this passage of scripture. The note is a conjecture. The underlined words "supposing" and "Perhaps" are the same kind of deceptive language evolutionists use when attempting to brainwash young people into believing their blatant foolishness. The "forged letter" is another fairy tale. There is no record of it in or outside scripture. We may well reply: "The truth of the Rapture is, unfortunately, obscured by the intentional falsehood in the Scofield note."

There was no mistranslation. The King James reading, derived from the Received Text reads "κριστου", Christ not "κυριου", Lord. To call the verse a mistranslation is an serious fabrication. The reference is to the Rapture, not the Second Advent. That the Thessalonians were not distressed, thinking they had missed the Rapture and the persecutions they were suffering were those of the Great Tribulation, becomes evident when we read 1Thessalonians 3:3,4 with 1Thessalonians 5:9

That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. 1Thessalonians 3:3,4

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Thessalonians 5:9

First and Second Thessalonians were both written in 54 AD. The passages quoted above should be enough to demonstrate that it was not the day of the Lord they were in, but the trouble and tribulation that saints of all times have been subject to:

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.¹¹ Acts 14:22

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Romans 8:35

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Romans 12:12

¹⁰ C.I Scofield, The Old Scofield Reference Bible

¹¹ This verse is not well understood by American believers who live in unparalleled comfort. However, those that stood boldly and gave their lives for God's truth understood, as do those who live now in Moslem dominated countries.

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For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were We were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. 2 Corinthians 7:5

It is certain the Thessalonians understood these things. There were doubtless those in the Church at Thessalonica who were alive when Christ walked the earth. If a young man was twenty years old when Christ began His public ministry and offered the kingdom to Israel, he would have been in his middle forties when 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written. That man would certainly have been instructed concerning the day of the Lord. He knew the kingdom was postponed, and had been taught of Paul concerning these things:

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 2 Thessalonians 2:5

However, if that were not enough, chapters four and five make clear the difference between the Rapture and the Advent.

In chapter four:

The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore *comfort one another with these words.* (Italics mine) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

These are words of comfort, not fear! How different from chapter five which deals not with the Rapture, but with the "day of the Lord".

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 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. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 (Italics mine)

Compare the above with:

But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Matthew 24:43

That's not the Rapture! It is the day of the Lord that comes as a thief, not the catching up of the Church!

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No one familiar with the Old Testament could have any doubts about the day of the Lord. It brings trouble:

For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: Isaiah 2:12 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Isaiah 13

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. Isaiah 13:9

For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates. Jeremiah 46:10

Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD. Ezekiel 13:5

For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen. Ezekiel 30:3

Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Joel 1:15

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; Joel 2:1

And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? Joel 2:11

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. Joel 2:31

There is a lot to be learned about the day of the Lord from the above scriptures. One characteristic of that day found in all the verses is *trouble!*

That day, **not the Rapture**, comes as a thief in the night. It brings with it sudden destruction - they shall not escape! The Thessalonians, as we have seen, were taught well. They unquestionably did not think they had missed the Rapture and were in the Great Tribulation.

If there is one verse on the Rapture the saints are familiar with, it is 1 Corinthians 15:52. It tells the saints they will be given a new body at the last trump! While many have given little thought to the

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implications of this verse, it is clear that there will be more than one "trump". That day shall not overtake the saints as a thief! When the first trump occurs, the saints who love his appearing will understand immediately. How many "trumps" there are is uncertain at this time; we will suggest seven, and give reason for the suggestion in a later chapter.

The day of Christ, which begins with the Rapture and includes the Judgment Seat of Christ, takes place nearly concurrent with the beginning of the day of the Lord, the Tribulation. The scene is biblical and has furnished the plot for a million stories. The bad guy (the devil) thinks he has the girl (the Church) but at the last moment the hero (the Lord Jesus Christ!) shows up and takes her away to live "happily ever after." (And in this case, it's true!!)

That *that* day will overtake the world as a thief is clear. That day will not overtake the saints as a thief! Why? Because they know the Lord is about to deliver them at the last trump! Even those who have been led astray with new perversions of the Bible still have intact a "last trumpet" warning in their perversions.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:2, we are dealing with the day of Christ, not the day of the Lord. Paul beseeches us by:

- 1) The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2) Our gathering together unto him. The verse is plainly Pauline and intended for the Church. Even Scofield recognized day of Christ as the Rapture. (See page 5)

Can that day - the day of Christ - come without the conditions of the text being fulfilled? Was it at hand? I trow not! I know "day of the Lord" accommodates "imminent" eschatology. I recognize Christ is the Lord and the text could be *forced* to mean day of the Lord. However, the verse reads "Christ" and the context is clear. *You should wonder why the new Bibles, all children of the Alexandrian text, change Christ to Lord.* The answer is transparent. One word in the text turns the understanding in an entirely different direction. Unwilling to believe the passage, Christians continue to remain willingly ignorant of the truth. Will you *corrupt the word of God* because you want the Rapture to be imminent? The truth is, the Rapture is linked closely in time with the start of the Great Tribulation. That day, our gathering together unto him, will not come except there come (1) a falling away first, *and* (2) that man of sin be revealed. Ironically, a striking feature of the falling away is a willingness to alter the Word of God, something everyone feels free to do with this scripture. Such an attitude can only be classified as "heady" and "high-minded". 2 Timothy 3:4

The Voice of the Archangel

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. Daniel 12:1

Daniel gives us another hint as to the timing of the Rapture of the Church. The verse above informs us that a major event in heaven for the beginning of the tribulation is when Michael stands up. We also know from Thessalonians that one of the three signal events accompanying

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the Rapture is the voice of the archangel:

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 1 Thessalonians 4:16

That Michael has some connection with the bodies of sleeping saints is clear:

Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. Jude 1:9

Michael stands up and speaks, signaling the rising of the dead in Christ and the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

There are some other problems with imminency.

Peter had to go home first

It is apparent that, at the earliest, Jesus could not have returned before the death of Peter.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. John 21:18,19

Jesus Christ revealed to Peter details of his own death. (*when thou shalt be old.*) The "old" part of that personal prophesy is part of the reason Peter slept soundly after the martyrdom of James (Acts 12:6). He knew it wasn't his "time to go". It is obvious the Rapture could not have taken place during Peter's lifetime. *That effectively cancels imminency.* History finds Peter crucified upside down by order of Nero, AD 69. 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, in which we find the words: "So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:" was written in 59 AD - *ten full years before the doctrine of imminency would even be valid if it were true!* Second Thessalonians 3:5 which contributes: And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ, was written in 54 AD - *a full fifteen years before Peter's demise.* If the Rapture was going to be imminent for the Thessalonians, the admonition for patience was well given. There would be no Rapture for at least fifteen years.

Peace and Safety

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. 1 Thessalonians 5:3

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Shallow American Christianity, fed spiritually on TV (Christian or otherwise there is little difference between the two as far as spiritual content is concerned), and perverted "Bibles" (all "bibles" other than the KJV), will attempt to discredit the significance of the above by suggesting that they have lived in peace and safety for years. The passage clearly speaks of the prospect of world peace. The unsaved thinker (who has rejected Jesus Christ out of hand) envisions little else. Bumper stickers shout, "Visualize World Peace". The mongrel news media keeps us informed in Orwellian detail of the continual and ridiculous efforts of world leaders to end (but instead commence) conflicts around the globe. A network of organizations¹² not excluding the Catholic Church, are working feverishly to bring about a New Age, and a New World Order. Their hope is a one world, integrated, conflict-less happy planet with a "chicken" (shades of Hoover) in every pot *without the help of God or Jesus Christ!* The hope can be summed up in the words of our text: Peace and safety! They will succeed! Evolution will, in the near future, produce its "highest form of life", his majesty the Anti-Christ. That he is now alive and well on planet earth is a virtual certainty. He will convince the world that peace is imminent (at last!) and God will bring sudden destruction upon them. That there has never been any real peace and safety on this earth except for short intervals (and even when there was "peace" there was never any real safety!) is evident to anyone willing to think. The Man of Sin will bring in "world peace" - temporarily.

Much has been written by those in the Body of Christ keeping us up to speed on the portentous events taking place in our government and around the world. It would be beyond the range of this book to reduplicate that information. This nation, along with the rest of the world, has turned its collective back on the God of heaven. His warnings have been clear. His judgment will include the events spoken of in the Book of Revelation. His vehicle will be a revived Roman empire (New World Order) under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church, and the United Nations. As this book is being written, the former Premier of the former Soviet Union is ensconced in a private office in southern California as head of the Mikhail Gorbachev Foundation and is traveling the world pushing the New World Order (one-world federal government under Anti-Christ) and calling for a world tax to be levied to finance the whole shebang!

Note: [December 2012 he is still at it: **The Gorbachev Foundation** (Russian: Горбачёв-Фонд) is a non-profit organization headquartered in San Francisco, California, founded by the former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in December 1991 and began its work since January 1992.] link: <http://www.gorby.ru/en/>

Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. Daniel 11:20

Daniel 11:20, when viewed in the light of these events sends a thrill of joy through the soul of those of us longing for His coming as we watch prophesy penned long ago coming to fulfillment in our own lifetimes.

Mr. Gorbachev is certainly not the "tax man", but his actions, unreported in the popular media, only point to the fact that these events are coming soon upon us.

¹² The Council on Foreign Relations, The United Nations, The Trilateral commission, The International Monetary Fund, the Fabian Society, The World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), The World Health Organization, the World Trade Organization, the Club of Rome, the World Council of Churches, The Illuminati, The Bilderburgers, and others,.

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When Jesus was born, the angels said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." World peace was then imminent and possible. Only when the one who is an imitation - Anti-Christ - shows up will there be another prospect of world peace, (false peace) and as we have seen, we don't get out until he shows up.

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? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Matthew 24:3-8

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of a period of time called the "beginning of sorrows." It is characterized by false Christs, wars and rumors of wars, uprisings, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. A good deal of time could be wasted by including extensive documentation of all the above. That false Christs are abundant is overwhelmingly evident to anyone doing even a cursory study of today's false cults and "messiahs". A simple library download yielded thirty pages listing approximately 475 news articles on major earthquakes occurring worldwide from 1990 - 1994. (you should go online and check the statistics **now!**) Papers such as: *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, *Christianity Today*, *Los Angeles Magazine*, *Outdoor Life*, *Science*, *Fortune*, *PC Week*, *Popular Science*, *The New Republic*, *The Lancet*, *Washington Monthly*, *TV Guide*, *National Catholic Reporter*, and others, reported on major earthquakes in Southern California, Mexico, Pakistan, Bolivia, Colombia, Idaho, Indonesia, Russia, Japan, Kentucky, Western Colorado, Algeria, India, Sumatra, Santa Monica, Yellowstone Park, Pennsylvania, Wyoming, New Guinea, the Aleutians, the Grand Canyon, Lima, Cairo, North Europe, Turkey, the Philippines, Iran, and Australia¹³

This only scratches the surface. In some of the above mentioned countries, Japan for instance, there have been literally hundreds of earthquakes in recent history.

World War II was touted to be the war that would end all wars. The United Nations was supposed to be the new Saviour of the world and bring in peace. They are failing - miserably. If your mercenary skills are waning, take heart! As of late, there are still plenty of wars going on at various locations around the globe. In all of this, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ to the hypocrites still ring fresh in the memory:

And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? Matthew 16:3

¹³ Computer download from the Bismarck Veterans Memorial Library, Bismarck, ND 1997.

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The Fig Tree

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Matthew 24:32, 33

This fig tree is rooted and growing. It is putting forth leaves and preparing to bear fruit. The parable plainly pictures the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948. She has roots and leaves. She is in the land (roots) but still in unbelief and self righteousness (fig leaves - don't forget Adam and Eve). We are told that we now can begin to look for summer. It is nigh. Summer, according to verse 33 is when "it" is "at the doors". "It" is the Second Advent. Since, as we shall see, the Rapture doesn't occur until the revealing of the man of sin, *there could have been no Rapture of the Church until Israel was again a sovereign nation.*

For those who believe that history is "His" story, the history of the 20th Century is an open book. It has been said before that World War I was to get the land ready for the Jew. The Balfour Declaration giving Great Britain the mandate over Palestine was an incredible twist in history expected by no one. Just as curiously, World War II was the hand of God getting the Jew ready to go back to the land. They were too settled in. It is the truth that after the war, against all odds, the Jews began migrating back to their ancestral homeland by the thousands.

"Mid-Week"

Some might now be asking themselves, "If the Rapture doesn't occur until the revealing of Anti-Christ, and he is not revealed until the middle of the seventieth week, then is this book teaching a mid-trib Rapture?" Good question! No, it teaches a "*mid-week*" Rapture. Specifically, the Bible teaches a seven year week, but only a three and one-half year Great Tribulation. *The terminology is important.*

And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. Daniel 12:7

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. Revelation 12:14

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. Revelation 11:2

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. Revelation 13:5

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Forty-two months equal three and one-half years!

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. Revelation 11:3

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. Revelation 12:6

One thousand two hundred sixty days is three and one-half years.

Each of these: 1260 days; 42 months; 3½ "times", all work out to a three and one-half year Great Tribulation.

It has been assumed while teaching a future seventieth week, that the whole week is future and is included in the tribulation; that the first three and one-half years is relatively peaceful and the last horrific. It is true that there is a time of peace preceding the "sudden destruction" that takes the world by surprise.

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. 1Thessalonians 5:3

It is also true that there is nothing in Scripture preventing that period of peace from occupying the beginning months of the tribulation itself or the end of the church age. Paul tells us that the days just prior to the coming of the Lord would be perilous ones. When a peacemaker shows up he will be welcomed with open arms. Honest students of prophesy can clearly see in current events the stage being set for the advent of Anti-Christ.

The Scripture teaches a three and one-half year Tribulation and a seven year week. The two are often confused when the subject is discussed. We will discuss this critical area in more detail in chapter four.

It is clear the coming of Christ for the Church does not occur until the revealing of the Man of Sin. That day, the day of Christ, is the Rapture and the Judgment Seat of Christ. Every place the phrase occurs, it is in reference to the Church. "Day of Christ" shows up only two other places in your Bible. There is one occurrence each of day of Jesus Christ, day of the Lord Jesus, and day of our Lord Jesus Christ. All are, every one, admonitions to Church Age saints.

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Philippians 2:16

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Paul is concerned that at the Rapture he will be able to rejoice at the presence of those he led to Christ.

That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Philippians 1:10

Again, Paul looks with confidence to the time we get home and see the finished end of what God is doing now.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Philippians 1:6

To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1 Corinthians 5:5

Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:8

Blameless? When? At the end of the Tribulation? Can't be! We are not appointed unto wrath. The day of our Lord Jesus Christ here speaks of the Judgment seat of Christ. It is a day of rejoicing for some believers and a day of fearful regret for others.

It is at the day of Christ that we are found either sincere and without offence, or our insincerity and hypocrisy go up in flames at the judgment seat of Christ.

As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. 2 Corinthians 1:14

There are, nonetheless, verses which seem to teach an imminent Rapture:

And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. 2 Thessalonians 3:5

So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 1 Corinthians 1:7

Someone questions, "The Corinthians were told to wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then His coming had to be imminent, right? Would the Holy Spirit instruct them to wait if it wasn't?" Look at your question. It is 1997 (2014 updated) as of this writing. Did the Holy Ghost know the time of the Second Advent when Paul wrote to the Corinthians? Did Christ know the time when Paul wrote the above words? Undoubtedly He did. There was a "day and hour" on God's calendar. 1 Thessalonians was written a few years ahead of 1 Corinthians. In 1 Thessalonians 5:1, Paul states that we "know perfectly the times and the seasons". That knowledge pertains to the day of the Lord, the Advent. Christ knew then when He would come and told them to wait patiently. That undeniably proves something, but categorically not that He could have come at any moment! *He didn't come, and He knew He wasn't coming as of the time you are reading this!* Paul, by the Holy Ghost, instructed them to wait because their waiting didn't cease when they left planet earth. The Corinthians are still waiting. Their bodies are still not redeemed.

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Now go back and read that last sentence again until you get it. My beloved dad is in heaven. His *body* lies in Willamette National Cemetery near Portland, Oregon. Is he waiting for the Rapture? *You bet your last pair of boots he is!*

So What in the World Are We Waiting For?

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. Romans 8:19

Do you have loved ones in heaven? Does not the promise of this Scripture apply to them too? *Their bodies are still in the ground.* They are waiting for the same event we are. Remember. the dead in Christ rise first! My dad, while already in heaven, is waiting patiently for the same event you and I wait for. It is more than just being caught up, it is being transformed into the very image of Christ. In Romans 8:19 we are waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. The saints in glory are created beings. They are part of the "whole creation". They too are waiting for the "redemption of their bodies"! While we long to see him, the object of our "earnest expectation" is the manifestation of the sons of God! *We and they both await our "body like unto His glorious body"!* At this point, neither we nor they enjoy fully the benefit of that promised event. We Bible-believers make the mistake of thinking that our beloved black Book only has application to saints on earth. Quite the contrary; it most certainly applies to those saints already in glory.

Notice Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:19:

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

What does that verse mean? Well, it certainly has application to us living saints, but it is clear that those in "that life" (heaven) have the same hope also! *Their hope is the redemption of their bodies!*

Not only do these obstacles stand against the idea of an imminent return, most of the verses used to prove the doctrine have their application to the Second Advent, not the Rapture of the bride!

These Verses Are Advent, Not Rapture

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Matthew 24:42-44

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matthew 24:27

I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Luke 17:35,36

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To make it even more interesting, it appears that the one taken never makes it to heaven. Dead bodies and eagles don't sound like heaven to me! --

And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together. Luke 17:37

It is probable the "one taken" is conscripted into the army of Anti-Christ, eventually becoming breakfast for eagles.

Now the above scriptures all have one thing in common. In any analysis of the Rapture they are removed from their context and used to establish the "imminent" return of Christ. All the above scriptures deal with the Second Advent. Israel is the nation in view, and Jews the people God is warning. *The Son of man* is Christ's designation of himself to Israel. (Go ahead and check it out. Paul never uses the term) There is no need for the Christian, as far as salvation is concerned, to be concerned about being ready or watching. Either you are saved and you have a reserve ticket for heaven when Jesus comes, or you are lost and no amount of watching will secure you a place in that great logistical transport of the saints to glory. We are to be looking *in the Scriptures* for that Blessed Hope for the simple reason that it is our Blessed Hope!

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:8

Salvation is not a reward for watching for His Coming. A crown of righteousness is given to those Church Age saints who love His appearing. They are looking for it because they love it. Their eyeballs scan the word of God as well as the daily paper (or website). In the passage in Matthew, the goodman had his house broken up for failing to watch. He was commanded to watch there because the Advent was in view, and Christ spoke the words to people for whom the Advent was imminent...at the time he was speaking! Listen carefully to the call to Israel for national repentance to be followed by the installation of Christ's earthly kingdom.

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 3:1.2

This scene is fabulous and tragic. The history of national Israel has been one of rejecting their God to serve Idols. There were times of repentance and the following joy, but they were not the norm. Here everything is ripe for all they have been longing for for centuries. John, a prophet of God, tells them their king is ready to give them deliverance and peace. The condition? Repentance. National repentance. Leaders and subjects. The message of John was to all. To Herod, the scribes and Pharisee's, the soldier and the peasant. The ministry of Christ gave them everything our government professes to want to do for us. Free food, free medical and righteousness. They went for the "freebies", but rejected the righteous son of God. The opportunity, tragically, passed and awaits fulfillment at the *second* advent. Then they will receive him!

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Now listen to the words of Jesus as *He* proclaims the Imminence of the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 4:17

It is clear there was a bona-fide offer of the Kingdom of Heaven as well as the kingdom of God to Israel. That kingdom has not yet materialized for several reasons. Let's investigate. The kingdom was imminent, but there was no repentance. Hence, the kingdom was postponed.

A Good Question

The disciples understood the kingdom. In the first chapter of Acts they asked:

Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? Acts 1:6

The disciples were looking for the kingdom; a real, literal, physical restoration of a Jewish king to the throne of David. After the resurrection the disciples wanted to know about the kingdom. Their question was an honest one and a good one. Would Jesus at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Would the yoke of bondage to Rome be broken and Israel once again live under a Jewish king? One part of his answer is critical to our understanding of the passage:

It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. vs. 7

The expression "the times and the seasons" occurs three times in your Bible:

First time:

Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: Daniel 2:19-21

Please observe:

1. God "changeth" the times and the seasons. Whatever the times and seasons refer to, the events were not fixed on God's calendar when these words were penned.

2. The times and the seasons have to do with, the removal and setting up of kings, and the impartation of wisdom and knowledge about the end times (The theme of the book of Daniel).

The phrase occurs the second time in Acts 1:7 (see above). Jesus Christ acknowledges that questions involving the times and the seasons cannot be answered. No one knows the answers except the Father, and He's not telling.

Look at the last occurrence:

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But of the times and the seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 1 Thessalonians 5:1,2

Notice carefully - It is the day of the Lord that comes as a thief - not the day of Christ! The rapture of the church is not a secret; on the contrary it is announced by shouting and trumpets! Paul declares it needless to teach them on this subject. The times and the seasons have to do with the day of the Lord. When Paul writes Thessalonians, the timing of that day is fixed. Granted, no one knows exactly when it is, but it "ain't changin'" any more. It has been postponed. Any other explanation makes the disciple's previous question ludicrous. Why would God postpone the arrival of His kingdom? The answer is simple. Israel rejected the King (free will!) and in so doing rejected His kingdom. Had Israel received Him at His first coming, the disciples' question of Acts 1:6 would have been answered to their liking. The kingdom was at hand, and would have been installed had Israel received her King. But they cried, "We have no king but Caesar." The kingdom was postponed until the end of the Church Age. You may have to think about that one, but clear thinking can produce no other consequence. If the offer of a kingdom was valid, and they had accepted Him, there is no question but that he would have set up His kingdom then.

If you flinch at the words "would have", notice another "would have" in the same vein.

Where Is The Real Elijah?

But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist. Matthew 17:12,13

Was John Elijah? Under certain conditions he would have been! You will find God has all the bases covered. John for the First Advent and Elijah for the Second! Confused? Stay with us until chapter four where we go into this in more detail.

What Do We Have So Far?

Jesus said that of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only, because the Father kept that knowledge from Him. While God in His foreknowledge knew the Jews would reject their King, there was a bona-fide offer of the kingdom to Israel. It was appropriate that that knowledge was kept from Christ until after His rejection. Had Christ known - at that time - that He would be rejected, then His offer of the kingdom was a hoax. He would have been dishonest and could not have fulfilled His role as Redeemer and Saviour. When He died for you and me, He cried out "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do". It is inconceivable that His prayer went unanswered. That is why Israel is given a second chance to receive the King in Acts chapter seven. The preaching of Stephen was an invitation by God to once again believe on Christ. There they violently rejected Him again, and in lieu of being able to re-crucify Him settled for stoning His servant Stephen.

When Paul writes 1Thessalonians, the King has been rejected and Paul's gospel has gone to the Gentiles. There is no more uncertainty about the time of the coming of the King or His kingdom,

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and no more reason to keep that knowledge secret! The date is fixed on Christ's calendar.

Will Anyone Know?

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Luke 12:35-40

That settles that! Or does it? Pay attention. Peter asks a question you should have asked. (Note: The answer to Peter's question provides an outstanding example of understanding how to "rightly divide" the word of truth") 2Tim. 2:15

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? vs. 41

Notice the Lord's ambiguous answer.

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. Luke 12:42-46

Christ's answer is revealing! Verses 42 - 44 apply if the Advent really is imminent, which it then was (Peter's "us"). Verses 45 and 46 apply to one who lives in that time when the hour of the Advent is fixed - "all". *It is only the wicked servant that misses the day and hour.* His statement is "My Lord delayeth His coming." The wicked servant could have been aware of the time, but lost that awareness because of an evil heart. He falls into the trap of 2 Peter 3:4:

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.

Again - It is only the wicked servant caught unaware of the day or the hour! The implication is

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overwhelming that to be aware of the time of the Advent for the blessed servant comes as natural as sleeping. The wicked servant misses that which otherwise would have been obvious to him, the day and the hour!

Consider Revelation 3:3:

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, (emphasis mine) I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Notice the conditional clause, watch. Conspicuously, the Tribulation saint who watches winds up knowing both the day and the hour of His Lord's coming!! The Church has been taught for years that the Lord comes for us as a thief. He will not, he comes for us with advance notice!

Comfort for The Church - You Will Not Be Overtaken As A Thief

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 1 Thessalonians 5:4

You will be in Glory for some time when the Second Advent occurs. The context of 1 Thessalonians 5 is not the Rapture, but the day of the Lord. It is the day of the Lord that cometh as a thief in the night, not the Rapture of the Church. In spite of the fact that everyone and his uncle teach a secret Rapture and use Second Advent passages to do it, The Day of the Lord and the Day of Christ are not the same! The Day of the Lord catches the wicked servant we read of in Luke 12 unawares. He is thinking "peace and safety"; he gets "sudden destruction." The Church is not caught unawares at the Rapture. She has heard several "trumps" to herald Her Redeemers coming!

The passage comforts the bride by reminding us:

God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 1 Thessalonians 5:9,10

The saints of God have gone through all sorts of torture and trouble. They have been imprisoned and burned at the stake. They served as human torches to light the parties of Nero. They have been subject to some of the most inhumane devices the evil heart of man can conceive, yet the Book says, "God hath not appointed us to wrath." It is certainly clear the "wrath" spoken of here is the Great Tribulation. If you are saved, you might want to bow your head and thank God for that promise!

Christ's Return Is On Schedule

The Rapture is connected with the Second Advent and precedes it by a set amount of time. It is scripturally incorrect to assume that since we don't know the exact time, Christ might come at any time. His coming for the Church is dated. Even those that declare date setting as heresy will admit that imminency does not mean that Christ is really coming at some undetermined time. David

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Allen Lewis, who says that date setting is open rebellion against God, admits that the date of the Rapture is fixed on God's calendar. His logic at this point is good:

"God can set dates, for He is the planner and fulfiller of all future events. He knows everything about the future and when each event will take place. The date for the Rapture is fixed. It is marked on the divine calendar. If God...does not know the date, then we . . . may as well throw the Bible out the window."¹⁴

Lewis continues in the strongest terms:

"After repeating the idea stated in Matthew 24:36, Jesus expands the forbidden territory of date-setting the Rapture: "take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" Mark 13:33 Ye know not when the time is! And, friend, a day is time, a month is time, a week is time, a year is time, and, You know not when the time is. This one statement settles it once and for all."¹⁵

Here Lewis shows himself a shallow thinker. The only thing that can be taught with any certainty from the above verse is that the disciples did not *then* know the time of the Second Advent, and that they had better be watching for it with prayer! It "settles" nothing. Rather the verses *encourage* "Watching" The Rapture of the Body of Christ is not even the subject under discussion! Again, the using and confusing of passages dealing with the Advent are given to prove we should not be looking for the Rapture in any way that seeks to know the timing of His coming.

That the date of the Second Advent is fixed is clear. Those Tribulation saints who are watching *will be aware of the day and the hour of that coming.*

But what effect does that have on the date of the Rapture? Remember, the day of Christ awaits the revealing of the Man of Sin, and that revealing in the context of 2 Thessalonians 2 is connected with the beginning of the Great Tribulation. That fixes the date of the Rapture. Granted, we do not know either day as of this writing. However, Christ is not coming at some arbitrary date decided on in a committee meeting with the four and twenty elders. He has been preparing for it for quite some time. Will the bride know ahead of time when the groom is coming to get her? Will anyone know when to expect the sound of the trumpet or the voice of the archangel? We can begin to investigate that question by looking back at some who knew what to look for at His first coming.

¹⁴ Lewis, p. 333

¹⁵ Lewis, p. 334

CHAPTER 3

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Waiting and Looking

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Luke 2:25-30

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Luke 2:36-38

Near the time of Christ's first coming there were in Jerusalem a number of people looking for Him, among them Simeon and Anna. Characteristic of them both was a deep longing for the one who would come to redeem and deliver. For Simeon, a lifetime of patient waiting was rewarded when the special promise of the Holy Ghost to him found its place in time and Simeon laid eyes on the second person of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is telling that God made one man a promise of knowing the first advent of our Saviour would take place in his lifetime! Anna, who, had she married at nineteen would have been 110 years old, is so completely attuned to the Spirit of God that she is instantly aware of the presence of her Saviour, gives thanks, and begins speaking of Him to "all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." (Luke 2:38) It is evident there were some actually looking for Him. We will look at these two again.

The Wise Men And The Star

Not only in Jerusalem were there those who waited with yearning hearts. Wise men traveled from the East after seeing His star. They began to inquire earnestly:

Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. Matthew 2:2

To be labeled "wise" by the Holy Ghost is an honor to be coveted. Demonstrably, the wise men were men of the Scripture. Their study of the Book led them to stand in the presence of their creator as the young child lay sleeping in His mother's arms. These students of prophecy were, no doubt, ridiculed by those who considered their activities akin to date setting. But they were primed and ready for that star to appear, and were instantly aware of its significance. That there

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weren't thousands lined up to steal a glimpse of their redeemer speaks to the spiritual darkness of the age into which the Light of the World quietly slipped.

"Star" occurs only twice in the Old Testament. One is a reference to a heathen idol. (Amos 5:26) The other is found in the parable of Balaam the son of Beor. This parable bears investigation. The visions are all of Israel at the Advent and in the millennial reign of Christ.

The Parable Of The Perverse Prophet

And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his! Numbers 23:7-10

And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Numbers 23:18-23

And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee. Numbers 24:3-9

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And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. Numbers 24:14-17

The above visions of the perverse prophet are among the most fascinating in Scripture. Each is a detailed description of Israel in the millennial reign of Christ. The last one alone speaks of the King's coming.

Under no circumstances could the Holy Ghost say of Israel when Balaam prophesied "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Nor could it be said there was the "shout of a king among them". The picture of Israel as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters, as of June 2014, are yet an unfulfilled vision of Israel in the Millennial reign.

Keeping in mind the preaching of John, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand", and remembering the postponement of that kingdom because its King was rejected, "there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel", yields light *on the First and Second Advents* to those who will rightly divide the word of truth. II Timothy 2:15

The Star and Scepter, had the King been received at His first coming, would have found fulfillment at His birth and His legitimate assumption of the throne of David. As we understand the verse from hindsight, the Star and Scepter, *separated by a comma in the text*, are separated by over two thousand years! What an amazing book!

The wise men also looked for His appearing according to the information given in Daniel's prophesy, chapter 9. This key passage gives us an exact time line running from the time of Cyrus King of Persia to the coming of Christ right through to the Millennium! We will examine that important prophesy in chapter 4.

Anyone with access to the Scripture would be primed and ready for the appearing of the Bright and Morning star. The question is why there were not more wise men to welcome Christ at His first coming. The sad thing is there are not many more who are interested in His Second Coming. Where are the wise men of this hour that search the Scriptures in anticipation of His appearing? If Christ were to genuinely reveal the time, we would have painted ourselves into a corner with buckets of "no man can know" paint!

Not Everyone Happy With His Appearing

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ

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should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Matthew 2:3-6

Not only were there those whose hearts rejoiced with exceeding great joy, some were less than cheerful at the announcement. There was a conspicuous kinship already at work between Church and state when it came to the one born King of the Jews.

Herod had no trouble finding learned assistance from the chief priest and scribes. They were equally anxious to be rid of one who threatened the status-quo. Especially *their* status-quo; and they were not alone. The text indicates there were "wicked servants" aplenty at His first coming. It should be no surprise that even in a time of spiritual darkness, some were aware of the timing of Messiah's coming. Some were overjoyed, while others were only too aware of the trouble coming their way in the person of Jesus Christ. There is no reason to believe things should be any different when Jesus Christ comes again. After the "time out" (Church Age) the team will simply resume play where they left off! The New Age - New World Order crowd seems to be more aware of His coming than the saints are. They, with Satan in control, are steaming ahead with their plans to have a one world federated planet somewhere beyond the year 2014. As has been demonstrated, and will be further demonstrated, *there was a clear awareness of the time of His first coming which found him wrapped in swaddling clothes*. There is likewise, unmistakable evidence for the timing of the second.

Well-meaning Christians, misled by the imminent return theory, state, "We should not be looking for the Anti-Christ, but for the Lord Jesus Christ." The assertion is true. We are not commanded to look for the Anti-Christ; we are instructed to be looking for that Blessed Hope and glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. The delusion comes from failing to realize that Christ will not come until the revelation of the Man of Sin. To state we should not be aware of this truth is to shut out major portions of Scripture which deal with the subject. Christ entered this world in a time of Roman political and spiritual darkness. The Light of the World will show up the second time in a comparable era of Roman darkness. The wisest man to live outside of Jesus Christ himself stated:

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1:9.

The spiritual condition of Israel when Christ entered the world was one of darkness. When opening the Scripture at the gospels, one becomes aware that the nation of Israel had not heard from their God for 400 years. When John showed up, he spoke to a people living under the dominion of foreign governments since Babylon. During this period of time the sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees developed. It was during this time the body of teaching, denounced by Jesus as the traditions of the fathers, became entrenched in national life. When God said, "Let there be light..., darkness was upon the face of the deep." So it was when Christ, the Light of the World, appeared. Isaiah uttered the prophesy:

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The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Isaiah 9:2

That Scripture was partially fulfilled at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ at His First Advent.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. Matthew 4:14-16

John writes about Him:

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. John 1:4, 5

As spiritual darkness prevailed at His first coming, so it will be at the second. Isaiah, speaking of the Tribulation, prophesies:

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Isaiah 60:1-3

You're going to have a hard time squeezing this passage into a First Advent context. The events of Isaiah 60:1-3 simply haven't happened yet! To try and force the passage into the Church Age simply won't work. The kings of this earth are presently under the control of the god of this world. None have "come to the brightness of thy rising". The LORD arises in the millennial morning as the Sun of Righteousness. Malachi 4:2. The Lord Jesus Christ himself told His disciples the moral tone of the world at His Second Coming would be parallel to the days of Noah and Lot. Every imagination of the thoughts of man would be only evil continually. Sodomy would become a legitimate "lifestyle". The time of the Second Coming of Christ is characterized as a time of gross darkness, upon which the Sun-light of God arises. The time immediately before the Tribulation and the revealing of Anti-Christ is a time of darkness:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 2 Timothy 3:1-5

That spiritual darkness is currently predominant in the Body of Christ! Revelation 3 tells of the condition of the Church just before the Rapture:

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[T]hou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked: Revelation 3:17

New versions of the Bible, to which the Holy Ghost will not bear witness, are leading straight back to Rome. Ignorance of the Scriptures is the leading epidemic in this country. That ignorance is the ultimate cause of all our domestic and governmental ills. The saints have abandoned the Scriptures, and have taken up trying to make the world a better place to live in. Good causes such as abortion, family, and other related issues have caused conservative Christians to join hands with Rome in trying to "save the country" and have neglected the weightier matter of souls going to hell. Rather than seeking God and souls, they are busy saving the environment or some other social ill. Other so-called Christians hold hands with the world in promoting tolerance for every sort of evil. *It is a dark time.* The unprecedented darkness predominant in this Laodicean Church Age tells us we are indeed closing in on our Blessed Hope! Let's look at some of the less known signs of spiritual declension.

Marriage and Meat

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 1 Timothy 4:3

Among the less noticed signs of the apostasy spoken of by Paul are suggested by the above verse are fornication and vegetarianism. The command is to forbid marriage and abstain from meats. For years this passage was applied without reservation to Rome, and with good reason! Rome has still not lifted its ban on marriage among its priests, and has only within recent times permitted meat on Fridays. (Smile, this is where your restaurants got their fish on Friday "specials".) One can see another fulfillment of the prophesy in the New Age movement, and even within so called Bible-believing circles. Revelation 17 designates Rome as MYSTERY BABYLON, the mother of harlots. We should not be surprised to see others seduced into her service.

Marriage

Although the scripture predicts that marriage will continue until the return of Christ, the push for same sex marriage throws some additional light on that scripture. Events considered immoral and wicked just a few short years ago are now not only practiced freely and considered totally "moral", but are protected by law and encouraged! To be against sodomy now is to place oneself at odds not only with society, but with the so-called Christian community. Alternative lifestyles are simply the business of those who choose them. If you frown upon that idea, you are "homophobic" and need to be "educated". That kind of education found its way into the corporations of America, and is now manifesting itself in our schools, courts, and military. It is no longer considered necessary to be committed to one partner for life. "Living together" is now accepted in American society as a normal alternative to marriage. Sadly it is even considered so by many so-called Christians. American sinners want the pleasures of sin for a season. Abortion on demand allows for unlimited fornication and adultery. "Choice" now a days is simply a means of shaking the fist at God and braying like a jackass, "I don't like your standards, thank you, I'll just invent my own." The plan of

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the social engineers is to de-emphasize the traditional (read "Biblical") family in favor of whatever any sinner wants to do or be! No need to be simply a man or woman. Now one can also be Sodomite, Lesbian or transsexual. Let your little boys play with dolls and your girls with toy soldiers. Since the Biblical standard is marriage and a lifetime commitment to one partner, you can be assured that those who hate God (Psalm 68:1, 81:15, 139:21, Romans 1:30) will eventually make marriage, *as we know it*, illegal, or at best socially unacceptable. As we draw closer to the time when Jesus will remove us from this present evil world, we will see these things come to pass no matter what anyone thinks about them. Yea, "let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4).

Meat

George Malkmus, in his widely circulated book *Why Christians Get Sick*, tells us.

"ALL MEN, FROM ADAM TO NOAH, WERE VEGETARIANS OR FRUIT-ARIANS!"¹⁶ (Emphasis in the original).

You are to infer from this bold statement, which happens to be true, that we should all become vegetarians. Malkmus continues the inference.

It wasn't until after the flood, when all vegetation had been destroyed by water, that man began to eat meat! [A]fter man began eating meat, it took only a few generations for man's life span to drop from over 900 years to about 100¹⁷

(He fails to tell the reader that after the flood God told men to eat meat - Gen. 9:3).

In the June 1993 issue of his *Back to the Garden* newsletter he lists five foods causing all our physical problems. What are the five foods causing all our physical problems? I will deal only with the first and most hazardous. Malkmus writes :

" I will list them starting with the most dangerous substance we put into our body . . . MEAT"

While much could be said for Rev. Malkmus' ideas in regard to toxins in modern meat products and food in general and the prevalence of drugs in our society, his emphasis on a vegetarian diet flies hard in the face of Scripture. When Paul wrote about end-time seductive doctrines spawned by devils, he not only warned about the end-time emphasis on vegetarianism, but stated plainly that a minister was less than good if he did not instruct his people clearly on this subject:

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. 1 Timothy 4:6

In order to strengthen the heresy, the "new" bibles, including the highly deceptive New King

¹⁶ Rev. George Malkmus, *Why Christians Get Sick*, Tennessee: Hallelujah Acres Publishing, 1989, p. 107

¹⁷ Ibid.

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James, all change the word meats to foods. The NASV sacks the verse with, "advocate abstaining from foods." The NIV gives us, "They ... order them to abstain from certain foods." The NKJV hums along with, "commanding to abstain from foods." One wonders what those mysterious foods might be? It couldn't be all foods. While the word meat is often synonymous with the word food in the Bible, the meaning in 1 Timothy is clear when one takes the time to search the Scriptures. When Noah and his family got off the ark, God said to them:

Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. Genesis 9:3

Two things should be patently obvious to anyone reading the above. God was now giving them something different for "meat", the word meat here is clearly in reference to food. Now they were to add to their diet every moving thing that liveth. To be sure someone down the road wouldn't think he was talking about plants blowing in the breeze, God then contrasted the "moving thing that liveth" with what they had been living on before the flood - the green herb. To eliminate all doubt, the Book speaks:

For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 1 Timothy 4:4

The joke on the new "versions" is that while they go to great lengths to avoid offending Rome, or the vegetarian movement in the passage, their seared consciences deceive them when they translate the next verse!

NIV: "For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected. . ."

NASV " For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected".

The NKJV gets caught with its spiritual pants down. They translate "foods" in verse 3, and "creature" in verse 4! "commanding to abstain from foods... (3) For every creature is good . . (4)

Someone has a problem ***pronouncing the word meat!!*** The only possible reason is that someone doesn't want to offend ROME!!

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly," only heightens the hypocrisy. The Holy Ghost told us to be on the lookout for seducing spirits teaching doctrines of devils! A cursory study of the Old Testament will find God telling the Israelites which animals are lawful to eat and which are not:

To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten. Leviticus 11:47

The book of Genesis finds Abraham (a type of the Father) feeding his guests beef, and Isaac (a type of the Son), eating venison!

And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. Genesis 18:8

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And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. Genesis 25:28

They have good taste!

Elijah is fed by God himself with flesh and bread:

And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. 1 Kings 17:6

When we get to the book of Acts, we find Peter given a clear command:

And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. Acts 10:13

It will certainly be objected that God was only using the "sheet episode" to persuade Peter to accept saved Gentiles into the fellowship of the saints - and there is no objection to that understanding of the passage. What is missed is simply that had not the disciples been used to consuming animal flesh for food; the object lesson would have been a failure. It is obvious Peter was not a vegetarian. It should be stated clearly that meat can be a problem as can anything when indulged in to excess. Malkmus' arguments and statistics are indeed seductive, and in all probability Americans overdo it when it comes to meat. However, when it comes to the Bible, statistics are to be relegated to second place. We also cannot safely ignore the statistics if we don't take the whole passage into consideration. The verse plainly states the overriding consideration is that the meat be sanctified, and received with thanksgiving.

For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 1 Timothy 4:5

According to the word of God, when any food, vegetable, or meat is received with a thankful heart, it is set apart - sanctified for the good of the body. Could it be that the so-called problem with meat is its normal manner of reception - without reference or thanks to God? It would certainly seem that God should judge a minister "good" on some other basis than warning his congregation about those who would forbid to marry and command to abstain from meat. The Roman Catholic religious system has forbidden marriage for its priests, and abstinence from meat for centuries. *It is clear that God is giving the true Church a warning against the seducing power of the Mother of Harlots described in Revelation 17.*

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The Voice.....

John the Baptist shows up at the First Advent to introduce the Messiah-king. It is important to notice that John was preaching a good while before Jesus begins his public ministry. We cannot state with finality how long before, but John turned 30 six months before Jesus did. It is probably that John's ministry of introducing the Saviour was a six month project culminating in his glorious proclamation "Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." It is clear that he prophesied long enough to gather disciples of his own (John 9:14) Jesus was 30 (Luke 3:23) when he faced forty days of temptation before beginning his own public ministry. Elijah the prophet prepares His way at the second. Both are beheaded by Rome! John at the First (Mark 6:25) and Elijah at the Second (Rev 11:6,7). Awareness of the relationship between John and Elijah gives us another clue guiding us to an understanding of the enemy.

We looked briefly at the affinity between Elijah and John. The importance of this enigma is emphasized by the fact that all four gospels include the cross reference to Isaiah 40:3.

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Matthew 3:3

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Mark 1:3

As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Luke 3:4

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. John 1:23

When one examines the content in Isaiah, it becomes apparent the prophesy concerns the Second Advent (Isa.40:5) and remains yet to be fulfilled in its entirety.

Was John really Elijah? No. His own testimony confirms this:

And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. John 1:21

That is the truth as far as John knows it. But is it the complete truth? Jesus says about John:

And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. Matthew 11:14

It gets even more interesting when the Lord states plainly that John is Elijah!

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of

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them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist. Matthew 17:10-13

That Elijah is in focus in Isaiah 40 is transparent. Malachi calibrates the picture even more clearly:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5,6

In Luke, Jesus speaks of John the Baptist:

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Luke 1:17

The prophet Malachi speaks of "my messenger". The description will fit either John or Elijah:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:1

Both Advents are in view, and are seen by Malachi as a seamless event. The Holy Spirit even points out the clothing worn by both men. (II Kings 1:8 Matthew 3:4) An unimportant detail? Not when you realize how few times the phenomenon occurs. God wanted you to notice it! Are they the same person? Yes and No. John is Elijah only if they are willing to receive "it". "It" is the kingdom. Since they did not, he remains John. Had they received it, the prophecies in question concerning Elijah would have had their fulfillment in John. John the Apostle later informs us:

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. John 1:11

Elijah will show up again to finish the fulfillment of the above Scripture. He will

(1) Restore all things, and:

(2) He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers. These two separate passages of scripture have not found their rest in fulfillment yet.

No Church Age to the Prophets

The whole consideration of John and Elijah emphasizes the fact there is a connection between the First and Second Advents that will yield us information about the second by studying the First. Clarence Larkin best illustrates this fact in his Mountain Peaks of Prophecy chart.¹⁸ The Church Age as we know it falls between the two Advents as a parenthesis unknown to the prophets who foretold of the coming of Messiah. On a time line, minus the Church Age, the Advents, now

¹⁸ Larkin, p. 5

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separated by nearly two thousand years, are seen as a singular event. Viewed in this light, many prophesy's about the coming of Christ find partial fulfillment at His First Advent, and complete fulfillment at His Second. Several more illustrations should cement the concept in the reader's mind.

Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Luke 1:31-33

Verse 31 First Advent, vs. 32 some of each, vs. 33 Second Advent and beyond:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; Luke 1:68-71

Verses 68-70 First Advent, vs. 71 Second Advent.

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 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, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. Luke 4:17-21

Compare with:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; Isaiah 61:1, 2

Notice, when the Lord quoted Isaiah 61 and proclaimed fulfillment of the prophesy, He stopped short of the last half of verse 2. It awaits fulfillment at the Second Advent. All the above prophesy's await complete fulfillment.

OUR GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM

Speaking Of The Devil!

We have discovered the relationship between the First and Second Advents. The timing of the Rapture is closely associated with the time of the Second Advent. As we study His first coming we establish a time frame in which to look for that Blessed Hope and glorious appearing. You might say it's a devil of a place to start, but Jesus himself said of Judas:

Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve. John 6:70, 71

Judas is not just an evil disciple; he is a devil and has his own place:

That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. Acts 1:25

Notice what Jesus calls him:

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12 (emphasis mine)

It is no small detail Christ reveals in this prayer. The man He previously labels a devil, who has his own place, has not only a name, but a title. He is the son of another devil named "perdition". This opens a Pandora's box of questions. Was he the son of Simon or the son of perdition? Moses, Daniel, and John combine heads to give us an answer. Our problem is to believe it.

That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. Genesis 6:2

There were some interesting results from those unions.

There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. Genesis 6:4

A careful reading of Hislop's *Two Babylons* will identify those giants as the gods and goddesses of Greek and Roman mythology.

Just a Myth?

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. Daniel 2:43

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME

There it is again; "they" mingle themselves with the seed of men! Now you must put your brain in gear. If "they" mingle themselves with the seed of men, who do you suppose "they" might be? "They" are certainly not men themselves. What are they?

Not as Cain, who was of that *wicked one*, (emphasis mine) and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 1 John 3:12

The above scriptures make it clear there can be an intermingling of seed between devils and men. Eve made a mistake about Cain when she said, "I have gotten a man from the LORD." (Genesis 4:1) *She got a man from the devil!*

You may draw your own conclusions about what may have happened in the garden besides eating forbidden fruit. Genesis 6 shows the legion of Satan following in their leader's footsteps, (Scofield notwithstanding) and Daniel informs us it will happen again in the tribulation. If this leaves you a little faint-hearted, remember that the one who redeemed you from your sins has a Father, who is not of this world. John 18:36

Judas (as was Cain) is the son of a devil and in the Tribulation will be manifest as the Devil himself! You should have no trouble with that. Satan is the closest thing to a perfect imitation of Jesus Christ there is. (2 Cor. 11:14) Your Saviour is both God and the Son of God. That Judas could be Satan and the son of Satan (perdition), poses no problem, but rather is to be expected. It is clear Cain was of "that wicked one". Ditto Judas. Paul further informs us on this subject:

[A]nd that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 2 Thessalonians 2:3

That man of sin is the son of perdition. They are one and the same. Judas is a devil, and as a man he is capable of hosting the devil in his body. (John 13:27). He is labeled the Son of perdition by Jesus Christ. His title reveals him to be Anti-Christ. In the Tribulation he assumes his identity as the Devil himself – manifest in the flesh! The mystery of iniquity will unveil itself as an antithesis of the mystery of Godliness.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. 1 Timothy 3:16

Satan is no longer simply "hosted" in the body of Judas, but is incarnated in him in imitation of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. As the mystery of Godliness is revealed in the incarnation, so the mystery of iniquity involves an incarnation.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. 2 Thessalonians 2:9

OUR GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM

The son of perdition is further described for us in 2 Thessalonians. He is "that man of sin". The temptation to notice additional parallels here is irresistible.

Anti -Christ

Called the Son of Perdition John 17:12
Is the Anti-Christ (Messiah) Luke 6:16 Chief character in the mystery of iniquity 2 Thess. 2:7
Dies by hanging on a tree - suicide Matthew 27:5
After death, went to his own place - the bottomless pit John 10:11
Rules the earth during the Great Tribulation
Is the idol shepherd Zech. 11:17
Is king over all the children of pride Job
Is the prince of the power of the air

Is revealed by his father (satan) 2Thess 2
Is a liar

Is a murderer from the beginning Jn 8:44
Hates the truth

Rules earth for 3.5 years

Jesus Christ

Called the Son of God
Is the Christ (Messiah) Matt. 16:16
Chief character in the mystery of Godliness 1 Timothy 3:16
Dies by hanging on a tree - freely Rev. 9:11, 11:7, 17:8
After resurrection, went to His own place - heaven. Luke 24:51
Rules the earth in the Millennium
Is the Good Shepherd
Is the King of Kings Rev. 19:16
Is the Prince of Kings: Rev. 1:5
Is the Prince of Peace: Isa. 9:6
Is the Prince of Life: Acts 3:15

Is revealed by His Father Matt 16:17
Speaks what He hears from His Father John 8:28

Is a life giver John 1:4 John 5:12
He is the truth John 14:6

Ministers to mankind for 3.5 years

This listing is by no means complete. Others, noticing the same phenomenon, have compiled similar lists.

During Jesus' ministry, Judas is a devil-man into whom the Devil enters to betray the Lord. At the beginning of the Tribulation it is Judas, the Son of perdition, as the Devil incarnate:

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. 2 Thessalonians 2:4

Thus, Satan finally gets what he has been after since Isaiah 14 where he intones:

[I] will be like the most High. Isaiah 14:14b

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME

WE HAVE NO KING BUT CAESAR

All roads lead to Rome

When Jesus Christ was born into the world, political and religious Rome was in power. The Roman Empire was formally established on January 16, 27 BC, under the adopted son of Julius Caesar, Caius Otavius, better known as Augustus. Political Rome fell in 476. While political Rome was declining, religious Rome was gaining vitality. The political-religious system known to history as the Holy Roman Empire spawned an era lasting until the Renaissance known as the Dark Ages. Not until recent history did the term "Middle Ages" supplant that appellation which more accurately portrays the epoch.

The Scriptures make it clear that religious and political Rome will be in power when Anti-Christ appears.

Octavian (Caesar) Augustus - 30 BC - 14 AD

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. Luke 2:1

The above scripture and its obvious connection with the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ should prompt the Bible believer to "take another look". Daniel tells us just prior to the appearance of Anti-Christ, a "tax-raiser" will appear. Then following the "tax man", the Anti-Christ arises. At first, he is not accepted, but through flattery, he obtains the kingdom.¹⁹

Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. Daniel 11:20,21

The verse is an enigma. The word "destroyed" implies violence, yet the Scripture deliberately cautions us that the destruction is not motivated by anger, nor is this warrior destroyed in battle. Augustus died of old age in 14 AD at the age of 76. There is nothing obvious about his death that could make him the "tax man" of Daniel. Another turn of events sees Judas Iscariot waiting in the wings to turn Jesus over to a Roman court of execution. *Knowing that God had given the Jews a bona-fide offer of the kingdom with the King present among them, makes one strongly suspect the Devil had his "tax man" and Anti-Christ ready in the event things had taken a different turn.*

The Roman Seducer Still At It

It is amusing to listen to post-millennial "scholars" discuss the book of Revelation. Here is Ian H. Murray attempting to do away with Revelation 20, which tells us of a literal one thousand year reign of Christ with His saints.

¹⁹ Although Israel is not now a "kingdom" . It will again become a kingdom again when the Anti-Christ shows up.

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As the Westminster Confession says, 'All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all'. Therefore, in view of the total absence of supporting evidence from the New Testament, it is exceedingly hazardous to claim that a thousand years intervene between Christ's coming and the end of the world on the grounds that Revelation 20 teaches a millennium. The truth is that Revelation 20 contains what has been called the 'darkest passage in all the Bible'; widely differing meanings have been given to it by those who share a common faith in the inerrancy of Scripture, and it is better to admit that our view of that difficult chapter is uncertain rather than to commit ourselves to an interpretation which can only be harmonized with the remainder of Scripture by introducing confusion into the meaning of many passages otherwise clear.²⁰

Revelation 20 just happens to be one of the easiest chapters in the Bible to understand. For those who refuse to rightly divide the word of Truth, it is also the most difficult to believe. What has this passage to do with the end time supremacy of Rome? Let's continue for a moment to discover other caches of unbelief, especially in this easy to understand - hard to believe book in the word of God. You will see the connection shortly.

Revelation 19:1 finds us listening to a great voice of much people in heaven, saying,

Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.

What is the occasion?

For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. Revelation 19:2, 3

They are rejoicing over the judgment and destruction of the great whore. Just who is this great whore? The "hard to understand" book of Revelation makes it clear.

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS

²⁰ Ian H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope*, The Banner of Truth Trust P. O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 17013 1971 p. xvii xviii

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AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Revelation 17:1-5

This is the whore. If you wish a fuller description, take time to read the entire chapter. Verse 9 will further nail the lid on the coffin:

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. Revelation 17:9

Murray gives us:

"The reformers of Luther's day were divided on the interpretation of prophesy, but uniting them was one theme, "the unanimous belief that the Papal system is both the 'man of sin' and the Babylonian whore of which scripture forewarns us. (2 Thessalonians 2; Rev. 19). In the conviction of sixteenth-century Protestants, Rome was the great Anti-Christ. . . ."21

They were hot on the trail however; it is the city itself that is identified with the great whore of Revelation 17:

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. Revelation 17:18

There should be no problem identifying the city. Only people with a religious bias would have a problem with it. Anti-Christ's connection with the whore is clear from verse 8:

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. Revelation 17:8

The beast is none other than our old nemesis Judas Iscariot! He was, is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit. Here lies our "mystery of iniquity"! Notice the parallel to Christ himself.

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Revelation 1:18

The old reformers were close, but it is not the whore who is identified with the Anti-Christ; it is the beast. While the world is seduced by the religious Roman whore, the Beast does his dirty work. It is clear that when Anti-Christ shows up, Rome will play a major role, both politically and religiously. Such was the climate when Christ showed up the first time. It will be so again. The present day has accurately been called the "counter reformation". This wicked generation fails to understand an early America where Catholics had to have their own state; Mary-land. It wasn't until John F. Kennedy that a Roman Catholic was considered eligible for the highest office of our land, and the issue was *hotly debated in the press*. Now it is considered insensitive and unfeeling to point out the truth, religiously or politically, about the Roman whore in our midst.

²¹ Ibid. p 41

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Babies, Mother Teresa, and the Pope

The right to life anti-abortion movement has further strengthened the march back to Rome. In finding worthy causes, Rome has succeed in diverting so-called Protestant Christianity away from soul-winning and building up the saints in the word of God to other goals. The protesters have given up the protest and in doing so have lost their reason to exist. Campaigning for the lives of the unborn is a good cause, but it is not the focus of the gospel. A cursory study of the New Testament will find the apostles sold out to one cause, and one cause only -- preaching Christ crucified, buried, risen, and coming again. Paul not only does not get involved, but preaches submission to heathen authorities! The post-millennial - reconstructionist crowd, along with the charismatics, so concerned about bringing in the kingdom, will be forced to join with Rome to bring about their desired end. Their goals are, for all practical purposes, one and the same.

CHAPTER 4

SEVEN OR THREE AND ONE HALF?

I began studying the prophecy of Daniel and the seventy weeks of chapter 9 in 1973. I compiled what I thought was some interesting information, but it was rejected as too unorthodox. Not willing to chance spreading false doctrine, I put the study aside. I am only too aware that the mind, once it becomes convinced it has uncovered a new "truth", will tend to insert its own bias into whatever other evidence it uncovers. That's how most cults become established. So, in order to avoid that potential pitfall, I try, once an idea is fairly established, to tear it down with the arguments my friends have advanced, and then, if possible, discover other arguments against it. Then if I cannot prove it against those arguments, I let it sit until such time as God gives more light or interest. In my study from the Authorized Version, I concluded that the teaching about Anti-Christ making a covenant with Israel could not be supported. At least not in Daniel 9:27. In that passage, a covenant is *confirmed*, not created:

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. Daniel 9:27

I came to believe that the "he" in the first part of verse 27 refers to Christ himself; not the Anti-Christ - that Christ was the "covenant confirmer" It is fascinating how a doctrine becomes entrenched into the collective thinking of a group of people. The conventional teaching on Daniel's seventieth week was ingrained into the minds of this generation of prophecy students by a man named Sir Robert Anderson. Anderson was a saved man who loved the Lord. His book, *The Coming Prince*, is a classic. It laid the groundwork for this generations understanding of the subject going into seventeen editions by nineteen sixty nine. Anderson was a saved man, but fell into the error of correcting the word of God with the "original manuscripts". He reserved the right to choose which reading backed up his theology. We would suspect him of being a paid up member of the Alexandrian cult.²² On page 6 in his "preface to the tenth addition" he disparages the use of the "oldest MSS". I quote:

The R.V. reading of Acts xiii. 20 seems to dispose of my solution of the perplexing problem of the 480 years of I Kings vi. I. But here, in accord with their usual practice, and in neglect of the principles by which experts are guided in dealing with conflicting evidence, the Revisers slavishly followed certain of the oldest MSS.²³

Now listen as he hypocritically chooses to side with the oldest MSS against the KJV. To bolster his own view, on page 51 in the note he says:

²² See any issue of the *Bible Believers Bulletin*, Bible Believers Press, Box 7135, Pensacola, Florida 32534

²³ Sir Robert Anderson *The Coming Prince*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, seventeenth edition. p. ix

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Not the covenant as in A.V..²⁴

Much can be learned from Anderson's book, but to follow him in his interpretation of verses 26 and 27 in chapter 9 is a serious mistake. Just as changing the day of Christ in 2 Thessalonians 2 to the day of the Lord, completely reverses the meaning of that passage, so, changing "shall confirm" to "And he will make a firm covenant" (NASV) or "confirm a covenant" (NIV) destroys the teaching of this passage. The word of God states that "he", whoever he is, **confirms the covenant**. We believe the "he" refers back to "Messiah the prince" rather than to the "Prince that shall come", the Anti-Christ. Let's look at the passage.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. Dan 9:25

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 26

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. (emphasis mine) 27

In verse 26 there is a colon following "but not for himself". Then there is a prophetic statement that is history for us. Titus sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD; history; then a semicolon jumps the reader to the end of the tribulation. As in other places in scripture, the semicolon separates the former clause from the latter by two thousand years plus! Verse 27 begins with "And he shall confirm the covenant..." the antecedent of "he" going back to Messiah the Prince in verse 25. *How do I know that?* The word "**And**" following "**week**", "**cease**" and "**that**" show the action of the entire verse to be the same person. Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh. He confirms the covenant for the first three and one half years of the week, by signs, miracles of healing, feeding the thousands and raising the dead. He then causes the sacrifice and oblation to cease by offering himself as the one final sacrifice for all; then he (the same person) overspreads the abominations that make desolate, and finishes with a flood. The same person accomplishes all these things. As we will to show later, he will continue the confirmation of the covenant during the last three and one half years. Later, I discovered that others had arrived at conclusions similar to mine. John Walvoord, in his book, *The Return of the Lord*, states:

One other view, however, claims our serious attention. It is advanced by a number of able expositors and claims to be a literal interpretation. In brief, the view accepts a system of chronology which allows for the termination of the sixty-nine weeks of the prophecy at the baptism of Christ. The first half of the seventieth week is, in their judgment, fulfilled by the

²⁴ Ibid p. 51

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events of the public ministry of Christ. In the middle of the week Christ is crucified, the sacrifice and oblation cease.²⁵

Christ himself caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease, "in the midst of the week" (27) by offering himself as the final, once for all, sacrifice for all mankind. It has been argued that the sacrifices actually continued until 70 AD when Titus sacked Jerusalem. In light of Calvary, those sacrifices went unnoticed by a holy God whose beloved son finished all redemptive sacrifice, "once for all".

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb. 10:10

In opposition to this view, the standard interpretation is advanced that there is an *indefinite period of time between the close of the sixty-ninth week and the beginning of the seventieth week*. At some future date the seventieth week will begin. Its events will come to pass literally and will follow the order of events given in the standard interpretation of the Book of Revelation. It is this view that most fundamentalists hold to. *There is no scripture anywhere suggesting "an indefinite period of time" separating the 7th week from the 69th*. In reality the beginning of the seventieth week and the start of Christ confirming the covenant occur with the beginning of His public ministry and last until the crucifixion.

The "other view" Walvoord refers to is that of Philip Mauro. Mauro correctly observes the fact that there is no reason to suppose a break in time between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth; however, his post-millennial viewpoint blinds him to the truth he was seeking to expound. He places the entire seventieth week in the past distorting the truth which is crucial to understanding the *confirmation of the covenant*. Where does the Bible say that at the end of the sixty-ninth week there would be an indefinite time break? It simply states there would be a break in the **midst** of the seventieth week. The break in time is clearly declared in numerous Scriptures to be in the middle of the seventieth week. Jesus himself gave us that clear teaching. In Mark 1:14,15

(Mark 1:14) Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

(Mark 1:15) And saying, *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.* (Italics mine)

After his temptation, he preaches his first "message". What was it? The time is fulfilled. What time? The only time prophesied that is anywhere within "range" is Daniels prophesy of the seventy weeks. He states clearly that the 489 years (69 Bible "weeks") is fulfilled. Now He announces the beginning of the seventieth. *There is no mention of any "intermission"*. We Baptists often talk about being silent where scripture is silent. Where is there *one verse* that suggests a break between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth? We'll talk more on this later.

We have seen before that the Great Tribulation lasts three and one-half years.

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

²⁵ John F. Walvord Th.d, *The Return of The Lord* (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1955) P 80

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foot forty and two months. Revelation 11:2

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. Revelation 13:5

**And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth
Revelation 11:3**

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. Revelation 12:6

All work out to a 3½ year Great Tribulation, 1260 days - 42 months - 3½ "times".

It has been assumed the whole week is future and runs concurrent with the Tribulation; the first 3½ years will be relatively peaceful and the last horrific. It is true, the early months of the great tribulation or the ending months of the church age, hold significant promise of peace: False peace.

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. 1Thessalonians 5:3

Students of prophesy can clearly see in current events the stage being set for the Advent of the false peace maker, his majesty the Anti-Christ.

Note the following carefully! The kingdom, as we have seen, was postponed because of Israel's rejection of their Saviour-Messiah. When Christ began His public ministry, there is no reason to believe there was any break in the time sequence of Daniels prophesies. *Israel had not yet rejected their Messiah, and there was no reason to suspend the sequence of events.* The prophesy was postponed because:

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. John 1:11

Their official rejection of the King *occurred at Calvary, Certainly not at the beginning of His ministry.*

Chronological Error

While studying the chronology in Daniel 9, several things stood out that I believe have been taught in error. Satan uses good men to generate error. Fallacy is furnished credibility via the reputation of its teacher. Examples of this are found in the Scofield Reference Bible. First is the note in Genesis 6 on the sons of God.²⁶ Another is the note in 2 Thessalonians on the day of Christ, which we dealt with in a previous chapter.

²⁶ Scofield has the sons of Seth as the "sons of God". Job 38:4-7 clearly shows them to be angels.

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What Covenant ?

If chapter nine is read as a whole, it is easy to see that Daniel was concerned about a *specific covenant*. Daniel prayed daily for God to remember His covenant and bring Israel out of heathen captivity. It should be remembered that Daniel was willing to face death at the mouth of lions rather than to cease praying for Jerusalem. He was the right man for God to reveal the future to. Daniel's prayer chronicles his confession of personal and national sins. He petitions this covenant-keeping God to turn away His anger (vs.16) and cause "Thy face to shine" (Second Advent). It is while he is praying that Gabriel shows up and informs Daniel that **the covenant will be confirmed**. To correctly interpret the prophesy in chapter 9, it is crucial to take *the entire chapter into account*. In the beginning of the chapter, Daniel writes about the end of the seventy years desolation of Israel spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet. He refers to God as one who "keeps covenant":

And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant (emphasis mine) and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; Daniel 9:4

It is inconceivable that in answer to Daniel's prayer Gabriel would speak of some other covenant than the one Daniel spoke of in the beginning of his prayer. When the angel says "and he shall confirm the covenant . . ." the most logical interpretation would be that Gabriel was referring to the same covenant Daniel had in mind when he prayed! Since the land had been desolate for seventy years, it makes perfect sense that Daniel was referring to the covenant that God made with Abraham in the book of Genesis. It had to do with land. It was the "Abrahamic" covenant. There are several scriptures that corroborate this view:

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; Deuteronomy 7:9

Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; 1 Chronicles 16:15

He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, (my emphasis) the lot of your inheritance: When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. Psalms 105:8-12

Standard teaching has Anti-Christ making a covenant with Israel to last seven years, which he will break in the middle of that seven year period. How that can be ascertained from Daniel 9:27 as it stands in the AV is a mystery. The covenant is obviously the one Daniel mentions in verse four. *No one is making a covenant with any one. Someone (Jesus Christ) is confirming one already in existence. **Israel will not need to covenant with Anti-Christ; they will receive Anti-Christ as their Messiah! They will receive him gladly! They will receive him with joy.*** They will certainly

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not make a covenant with him *nationally*, but will make one "religiously" in the same sense that Israel made covenant with God on several occasions. For instance the covenant with God made during the reign of Josiah.

And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. (32) And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 2Chr 34:31

Anyone familiar with the passage in second Chronicles 34 knows the joy of Josiah's Passover. It would be understood that God's people there made covenant with their God. In the same way, Israel will "make covenant" with Anti-Christ after which he will sit down on the mercy seat in the temple and declare himself God! It is interesting to discover that God's judgment fell on Jerusalem after Josiah's revival and his death. There will be revival in Jerusalem and all Israel when their "Messiah" shows up after which God's judgment, sudden destruction, will fall once again on his people, and according to Jeremiah, on all the nations, *including the moral cesspool known as the USA.*

The "revival" in Israel under their "messiah" (Antichrist) will likely produce a "Passover", as Israel renews the Kingdom under the wrong "Christ". A believable scenario would be Israel with her new "king", (shades of Saul!) rejoicing in a false peace, during the early months of the great tribulation, celebrating Passover where their king shows his true colors and offers the abomination of desolation in the holy place, spoken of in by Daniel, bringing "sudden destruction upon them and the entire world; and as scripture so solemnly warns, *They shall not escape.*

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:) Matt 24:15

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Matt 24:16

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house :Matt 24:17

Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. Matt 24:18

And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! Matt 24:19

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: Matt 24:20

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. Matt 24:21

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It is also possible that the false peace leading up to the beginning of the last 3.5 years take place near the end of the church age.

Jeremiah caps it off.

And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against *all the nations*. Jer 25:13 (Italics mine)

This Anti-Christ/false Messiah will sit in the rebuilt temple on the mercy seat and proclaim himself God!

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. 2Thess 2:4

Sadly Israel will receive the one who comes in his own name.

I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. John 5:43

Scripture speaks of the league made with him in Daniel and Isaiah: As Satan can also "teach scripture" (2 Tim. 4:1) *he has subtly convinced the fundamental element of Christianity that he will confirm the covenant. It is something that he simply cannot do. It is beyond the range of his power. **It is not his covenant!*** He can only pretend to do so, and has falsely convinced everyone that he will!

How Anti-Christ deceives Israel

And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. Daniel 11:23

This verse speaks nothing about the covenant Christ confirms with Israel. It simply states the method Anti-Christ uses to convince Israel he is their King. We have his number in Second Samuel 15:7-12.

And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. 2 Sam 15:7

For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD. 2 Sam 15:8

And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron. 2Sam 15:9

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But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. 2 Sam 15:10

And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing. 11

And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom. 12

Absalom, one of the greatest types of the Anti-Christ in the Bible, deceived Israel and is *the complete picture* of how the Anti-Christ deceives Israel to become their "Messiah-King". If you are familiar with the rise of Absalom, you know he stood in the gate and promoted himself by complaining about his father, and telling what he would do if king. He almost succeeded! Anti-Christ will succeed, but only for three and one half years.

Then God tells Israel that their "covenant" with Anti-Christ will be disannulled. Tribulation!

And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. Isaiah 28:18

Israel's *spiritual* or "*religious*" covenant with Anti-Christ (their covenant with death, and agreement with hell) will be disannulled.

Prophecy students are simply mistaking that "spiritual" covenant Israel makes with their "God" (Anti-Christ) for a *supposed national covenant* Anti-Christ makes with the nation of Israel for seven years. Israel will covenant with Anti-Christ the same way the Jews made spiritual covenant with Jehovah in times of obedience. Prophecy students are expectantly watching the continuing saga being played out in Palestine. They will be disappointed. The "Israeli-Palestinian agreement" hammered out in Oslo, Norway, Camp David, or the Hamas offering of temporary recognition of Israel or any other "peace plan" dredged up by men ignorant of the scriptures *is not the precursor to Anti-Christ confirming anything.*

Who are the "many"?

Scripture declares that the covenant confirmer will confirm the covenant with "*many*".

**And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week . . .
Daniel 9:27**

Anytime a treaty or covenant is made between heads of state, that treaty or covenant is binding on *all* the citizens of the two respective countries. No one is exempted. The scripture says that he (whoever "he" is) confirms the covenant with **many!** *Many are not all and all is not many.* The covenant is not a national covenant which is binding on all citizens, but the Abrahamic covenant,

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which gives the Jews the land along with a KING. *To get the land, they must accept the king.* So, some will reject the king and his covenant and many will receive it. This takes place during the last three and one half years known as the great tribulation. Many will refuse the mark, and will refuse to worship the false Messiah. It is to those receptive Israelites that the covenant is confirmed. The teaching that anti-Christ confirms or makes a covenant with Israel that lasts seven years, (or seven minutes, for that matter) cannot be taught from this passage; *it is NOT his covenant.* If I contract with you for a certain service or agreement, that contract can only be abrogated by the clear consent of us both under law. No one else can confirm, nullify, add to or circumvent that contract. The same is true with the Abrahamic covenant to Israel. It is an unconditional agreement between God and his chosen people. Satan CANNOT confirm the covenant. *It is not his to confirm!*

The covenant is confirmed with **Many** for "one week". (seven years) "Many" cannot be taken to mean the entire nation. It is clearly someone confirming a covenant *already in existence* with a large group of people **within the nation**, in the tribulation the covenant will be confirmed through *superior* miracles pre-figured for us in the spectacle of Pharaoh's magicians serpents being eaten by Moses rod-turned-serpent. Those miracles will be connected with healing and feeding God's elect during the great tribulation, a time when food cannot be purchased without a mark or number.

The Chronology (standard teaching)

Standard teaching has the chronology beginning with the events given in Nehemiah 2. Artaxerxes *permits* Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem, survey the damage, and rebuild. It ends with the triumphal entry by Christ into Jerusalem just one week (seven days) before His crucifixion. Extensive detail is given in the book that produced this train of thought, *The Coming Prince*, by Sir Robert Anderson. Anderson's research, using astronomical data to back up his thesis, mathematically placed the 384 years where he taught it was; Nehemiah to triumphal Entry. It was so convincing that it set the stage for *all future teaching on the subject*. The only real problem with it is that it is dead wrong. The actual chronology begins with the decree of Cyrus found in Ezra 1: *It is always proper exegesis to take the plain statement of scripture over carefully constructed ideas that have to skirt the scripture to be acceptable.* The Scripture is plain!

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Ezra 1:2

The date of that decree is 536 BC; only two years after the prophesy given to Daniel. If you were Daniel, would you not have understood the decree of Cyrus to have initiated the time schedule referred to in the prophesy given to him? There have been objections that the decree of Cyrus refers only to the temple house. While that may be true from Cyrus' perspective, God has a broader view.

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Isaiah 44:28
(underline mine)

This was prophesied in 712 BC, 276 years before the decree itself!

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The chronology (Messiah the Prince) ends with Christ's baptism and beginning of His public ministry, not with His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Proof: In Mark 1, Jesus is baptized (verse 9) and tempted of the Devil. (verse 13) Christ's *first* words are "**The time is fulfilled.**" (verse 15)

Where the chronology ends is of the utmost importance. If it ends where Anderson contends it does, at the triumphal entry, then the seventieth week is all still future. If it ends with the beginning of His public ministry, *and Christ Himself said it did*, the ministry of Christ certainly meets the requirements of the text, "he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." His ministry covers the first half of the week, and the Great Tribulation covers the last. During His ministry He raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, healed the lepers, fed the multitudes, and rebuked the unrighteous.

Daniel testifies in his prayer that God is one who confirms His words unto His people. These scriptures will be applied:

**And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;
Daniel 9:4**

The curses given for not "keeping his commandments" are found in Deuteronomy 27 and 28. It is instructive that the Prophet Malachi tells of the ministry of Elijah in connection with the Second Advent. He shows up before the Lord Jesus Christ to:

**turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.
Malachi 4:6**

Luke tells us his purpose is to make a people prepared to receive their Lord. He shall:

**turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.
Luke 1:17**

When John, who may have been Elijah, shows up, his ministry must last long enough to fulfill Luke 1:17. If it was indeed six months it could certainly be suggestive of a six month period of time in the church age where the False Prophet prepares the way for Anti-Christ.

God wants a people prepared for confirmation of His promises of blessing found in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. That is exactly what takes place. Pity a people with religious leaders that reject truth. Although the common people received Him gladly, He was rejected by the "builders".

If it be objected that He will not be around for the last half of the week, *clear prophetic evidence of His presence among His faithful during that time was given by Christ Himself.*

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in

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the midst of them. Matthew 18:20

I realize the above verse is used to prove the spiritual presence of the Lord in a group of believers. However, that verse is certainly not necessary. If you are a New Testament, born again saint, Jesus Christ is in you! The presence of two or three is not a requirement. We have this treasure in earthen vessels now, no matter who we are or are not with! The verse is obviously aimed at the Tribulation Jew, and speaks of His literal physical presence among them, *sometimes without their knowledge!* Joseph was in the presence of his brethren without their knowing who he was. The same kind of promise is given again:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:20

This being "in the midst of them" was prefigured in the teaching session that took place on the Emmaus road. At that point, there were two walking together, discussing recent events. He appeared to them and taught them, without them knowing him. The same type meeting took place with several at the tomb and to the disciples after His resurrection. In the first half of the week, He appears openly in an open society. In the last He appears clandestinely in a closed society. *That is the reason for the warning given by Matthew:*

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. Matthew 24:26

He will come to them! **Literally!**

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A SCRIPTURAL CHRONOLOGY

I constructed a chronology (see appendix) which runs from the decree of Cyrus King of Persia until the beginning of the public ministry of Christ. That puts the end of the 483 years not at the death of Christ, but at the beginning of His public ministry, which lasts approximately 3½ years. *My chronology was not strictly necessary. It was only done to show that such a chronology is possible.* The axe is laid to the root of the tree in a verse that Anderson simply disregarded. Christ said the time was fulfilled when he began preaching. (Mark 1:14)

A problem has been imagined since there are about 565 years from the decree of Cyrus, and the announcement by the Lord that the time is fulfilled. The whole idea was abandoned for the simple reason that the extra time wouldn't fit, so the "Nehemiah to entry" explanation was adopted instead.

It is clear that the time began with the commandment of Cyrus. There was no *decree* given by Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, only *permission* to go back, survey the damage, and build.

It is also clear that the time ends with the beginning of the ministry of Christ. His personal announcement ending the 69 weeks of Daniel's prophesy eliminates all doubt as to their end. Immediately after the temptation by Satan, He states "the time is fulfilled"(Mark 1:15). Tiberius began reigning in 14 AD. Christ's announcement following His baptism occurs in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1,21,22) putting the ending of the 483 years at the year 29. It also fulfills the portion of Daniel's prophesy "unto Messiah the prince". It fulfills 7 + 62 weeks of years or 69 weeks, precisely 483 years. This is easily possible from the time of Cyrus based on God's clock. Both Larkin and Anderson use the passages in 1Kings 6:1 and Acts 13:18 to show that God does not count time for the Jew when he is out of favor. Take the time from Cyrus' decree (536 BC), deduct 15 years from the 2nd of Cyrus to the 2nd of Darius when the work ceased, and 483 for the 69 weeks. You end up in about 37-38 BC, the year Herod takes Jerusalem. Israel is under Roman rule until well after Christ's death. There is no real problem with a chronology that puts the ending of the 483 years right at the beginning of His public ministry. This, as previously noted, is in line with what Christ Himself said about it. Bible timing is a subject requiring in the Faith of Abraham and the Wisdom of Solomon. Israel was told by God himself that they would be "strangers in a land not theirs" *four hundred years.* (see appendix)

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; Gen 15:13

Now, how long do you think they were actually there? Says four hundred years, right? Not so fast...

Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. Exod 12:40

So, did God lie? Of course not. Were they there at least 400 years? Absolutely. The fact that God tacked on an extra thirty years may have *discouraged some faithful soul who thought he had the time of "God's deliverance" figured out.* God certainly had a good reason for the extra thirty years. "He doeth all things well", whether we understand or not.

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Let's peek in on some others who paid attention to God's "timing".

In Luke 2:25-38 there are two people looking (watching!) for His coming. Simeon was no doubt an old man who had been looking for the appearing of the Messiah according to Daniel's prophecy. He was promised by the Holy Ghost that he should "not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ". Anna also, a widow, who, had she married at 16 would be 107 years of age, was waiting. The Spirit led Simeon into the temple to hold his creator in his arms. It is apparent from their ages that they had expected the Advent of the Messiah many years earlier. Had they not figured the prophecy down to the year fifty-three; 536 minus 483? Did their faith fail? No. They waited and *the promised child showed up*. Their looking prefigures the Tribulation saint pictured for us in Hebrews 9:28.

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

The covenant confirmed

So, by whom was the covenant confirmed? Let's explore:

Galatians 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. 15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. 16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Notice the language. The Covenant was before the law, but was later confirmed in Christ. Would not it suggest that Christ is the "covenant confirmer"! Christ certainly did not confirm the covenant before he was born. Christ did confirm the covenant to Israel when He was with them on earth. His miracles were testimony to his Deity, and his message was the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom was imminent! The covenant was being confirmed. They were being offered an earthly kingdom, but they did not like the prospect of a righteous King. His miracles were for the precise purpose stated repeatedly in the Old Testament, "And they shall know that I am the LORD". The raising of Lazarus from the dead pictures the resurrection of the whole house of Israel!

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. 11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: Ezekiel 37:10, 11a

If the covenant was to be confirmed, how would that confirmation be implemented? John says of the miraculous nature of Christ's ministry:

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And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name John 20:30, 31

And that is just how God said he would do it!

These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles. Deuteronomy 29:1-3

Did Jesus Christ qualify as the covenant "confirmer"? *Paul said he was.*

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. Romans 15:8

Was he not the one, chosen of the Father, to confirm God's promises to Israel? Who else could have fulfilled that sacred trust?

Stephen makes it clear that Jesus Christ came to Israel in Roman bondage in the same sense that Moses came to Israel in Egyptian bondage (Acts 7:20-37). They believed him only after the performance of signs and wonders. It was the miraculous nature of those signs that gave validity to Moses' claims. In the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ confirmed the promises of the fathers to Israel through miracles and signs. The Jew requires a sign, (1 Corinthians 11:22) so the Lord gave them signs. Jesus was that prophet "Like unto Moses"!

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; **Deuteronomy 18:15**

Still another chance

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. Luke 23:34

In Acts 3, Peter speaks again to a forgiven people and attempts to persuade the people of their relationship to a covenant-keeping God. In verses 23-25, he speaks of a "prophet like unto Moses" and the destruction of those that refuse to hear him. There is more in this passage than can be dealt with within the scope of this book, but note the people Peter speaks to:

Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Acts 3:25

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A covenant that is spoken of repeatedly in the Scripture in connection with the ministry of Christ should not be difficult to identify. Could it be any clearer?

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CAUGHT UP!

CHAPTER 5

CAUGHT UP!

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 1 Corinthians 15:51 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 1 Corinthians 15:52

Note, it is the BODY that is changed immediately, not the change of location.

Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Philipians 3:21

The change of location is not immediate as in the "twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52). *No human in the Bible ascended into heaven in the twinkling of an eye.*

Many Old Testament accounts that appear to have no obvious meaning of themselves, help us understand events scheduled for the "ends of the world". Of those end-time events, the coming of Christ for His Church is the first. There have been other "Raptures" in the past. Can we learn anything from them?

Most Raptures Seen by Others

Enoch

Enoch was 365 years old when he was translated (Gen. 5:19). Notice the Gentile calendar reckoning, a day for a year. *Christ will be on Gentile time and using a Gentile calendar when he comes for his church.* Enoch may or may not have been observed. He represents a Gentile under grace who is caught up.

Elijah

All the sons of the prophets knew there was an impending rapture in Elijah's life. They all knew ahead of time that Elijah was going "up".

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. 2 Kings 2:11, 12

Elisha saw him go up! Elijah is a type of the Tribulation saint taken up bodily at the end of the tribulation. It is possible that the multitude of folk saved out of the Great Tribulation will have seen the ascension of Church Age saints. Perhaps that miracle will encourage them to endure to the end. (Matthew 24)

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Noah

Noah goes up in type on the water of judgment. He came back down and inherited the earth -- a picture of the Jew that safely survives the Great Tribulation and inherits the earthly kingdom.

Firstfruits

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Matthew 27:52,53

Soul-winners should find great opportunity to gather Church Age gleanings from fields white unto harvest. If those saints weren't zapped immediately into heaven but were left on planet earth for a season, why would the harvest be any different? There isn't any Biblical evidence of them having been seen going up. They surely were taken to paradise when Christ led captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8).

The above scripture partially accounts for the firstfruits spoken of by Paul in I Corinthians 15:23:

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

The account in Matthew 27 shows us the sequence of events at the Rapture. There is no sudden catching up. *The change is the only thing that occurs in the twinkling of an eye.* We may be given the opportunity to go into the city and appear to "many", *as did those that came up at the resurrection of Christ.*

Moses and Elijah In The Tribulation

And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. Rev. 11:12

Paul Was Caught Up

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

Compared With His Revelation Of The Catching Up Of The Saints.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:17

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Notice - we meet the Lord in the air. What a meeting! We sing about it in church. "There is going to be a meeting in the air . . ." There is no twinkling of an eye Rapture to Glory. We meet in the air, earth's atmosphere, and then together, move on north toward home. For those who see an "instantaneous" Rapture - a move to heaven in the "twinkling of an eye", It will certainly be an abbreviated "meeting in the air"!

With the possible exception of Enoch, every person taken into Glory was seen going up by some other person. Elijah was seen by Elisha, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself had an audience watching as He ascended into Glory.

And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. Luke 24:51

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. Acts 1:9

How Many Trumps?

At least two - probably seven.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. I Corinthians 15:51, 52

Notice again it is only the change that takes place in the "twinkling of an eye. The dead are not caught up in the air ahead of the living saints, but simply raised out of their graves. Before the living saints are raptured, the dead rise (from the dead) first, to join them and we are "caught up together!"

If there is a "last trump", there must of necessity be a "previous" trump. We are certain that the post-tribbers are mistaken in assigning the last trumpet of Revelation to the Rapture. We simply will not be here. In addition, at the rapture we meet Him in the air, at the last trump of Revelation he comes to the earth, with his feet touching down at the mount of Olives.

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. Zech 14:4

There are at least two trumps at the catching up of the bride, however, there is a good indication that there will be seven "trumps" or trumpet soundings before your actual change. If there are, could there be one each day for seven days?

Jericho

So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted

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with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. Joshua 6:20

Biblical truth often has more than one way of unfolding itself.
Look at chapter 6 verse 5.

And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. Joshua 6:5

The verses are "coincidental"; that is, a passage having nothing obvious to do with the Rapture of the Church, contains material with a significant rate of coincidence. Bible-believers have witnessed this sort of thing too many times to ignore the passage. The verses speak prophetically when there is little in the context to prove prophetic content.

But can this scripture honestly be used in this fashion? Is this just an isolated passage that seems to have a coincidental relationship to the New Testament promise of the Rapture of the Church? If they are simply an account of the fall of Jericho, then they had best be left out of this study. To be honest, it became necessary to see if there were other examples of Old Testament happenings that had no extraordinary significance outside their own immediate context, yet by New Testament commentary, a secondary or deeper understanding could be attached.

Ensamples

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 1 Cor. 10 :11

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Romans 15:4

. . . It Will Happen Again!

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1:9

The word "ensamples" as used in 1 Corinthians 10:11, comes from the Greek "τυπος" (too-pos) our word "type" is derived from it.) A type or ensample differs from an example in the sense that an ensample is a picture of some object, such as a "en"sample of cloth which a woman might wish to buy, or a color "en"sample for choosing what color to paint your home, whereas an example is something to be followed, emulated, or used as a pattern. The words are similar, and in some cases interchangeable, but they are not the same, nor is one the obsolete cousin of the other. What we are looking for then, are Old Testament types of New Testament truths that could not be understood without the New Testament revelation of the type. Let's see what is available.

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And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Exodus 14:21,22

Compare with:

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 1 Corinthians 10:1,2

How would anyone know a baptism took place in Exodus? The words Baptist, baptize, or baptism occur nowhere in the Old Testament. Only with the help of the Epistle to the Corinthians do we learn of the baptizing of the Church in the wilderness.

After Two Days

Another example will become immediately clear to those who rightly divide the word and hold to a scriptural Pre-Millennial interpretation:

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Hosea 6:1,2

Since one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day, the use of "two days" and the "third day" in the above passage clearly points us to the millennial reign of Christ after a two thousand year Church Age. Another picture of the same sort, but somewhat more veiled, is found in the account of the good Samaritan.

And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Luke 10:35

Little is learned from the above until it is recalled that a pence, "penny" is a day's wage

And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. Matt 20:2

The good Samaritan pays for two days care with a promise to come again! PS - Stay with the KJV. The new perversions say "denarius" and lose the cross reference for you. (Yes, I know. God used "penny" so you could get the truth, AND understand the passage, but now you change it to better reflect the "original" Greek, lose the cross reference, and certainly "denarius" is clearly easier to understand than "penny"!)

OUR GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM

Solomon "Ascending Up" Into the House Of The Lord

And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. 1Kings 10:5

We would have to admit that His *ascent* (stairway NASV - it obliterated the cross reference) had to be "something else" for it to impress a queen to such a degree! Is not Solomon a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and His ascent into the presence of God after His resurrection?

Let's get back to Jericho. There is a shout and there are trumpets, seven trumpets. The language the Holy Spirit uses makes me want to shout! Note:

and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. Joshua 6:5

Even more intriguing is the numerical coincidence. Joshua is the sixth book of the Old Testament. The phrase above occurs immediately before the sixth verse putting it typically in context with Joshua 6, sixth book, chapter 6, verse 6, picturing a "Rapture" concurrent with the revealing of Anti-Christ, and matching 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. The exact coincidence occurs in Romans, the sixth book of the New Testament sixth chapter, fifth verse. Note the last word in the verse!

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: (emphasis mine) Romans 6:5.

Only the Holy Ghost could engineer such a book!!

What about the shout and the voice of the archangel? It appears that it is the Lord Himself that shouts, or perhaps.....the saints get their shout back and shout.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout

We shout for various reasons. In apostate America it is usually in anger, often in response to a winning team. Shouting is a bible subject and used to occur regularly in churches alive for the Lord, but has been replaced with clapping by Spirit quenching apostate folk who can get mega-excited at a ball game, but never at the preaching of the words of the living God!

Michael's role will have to do with the raising of the bodies of the saints. Of the few references to him in the Bible, one clearly has to do with this very thing.

Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. Jude 1:9

The remaining details are no doubt still to be discovered within the pages of the Holy Bible. I am aware this evidence will be discounted by some who have read this far as exegetical dreaming. I am also aware that one cannot teach doctrine with coincidences. But, one must admit that the

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Lord's method of conquering Jericho was a bit unusual. It is also to be noticed that the reference to the "last trump" in 1Corinthians 15 didn't leave much of a clue to the "previous trumps". If those things were for our ensamples, could it be that the strange account of Joshua conquering Jericho was done for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come?

And how About Noah.

1 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. 2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that [are] not clean by two, the male and his female. 3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. 4 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. 5 And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. Genesis 6:1-5

For seven days Noah and his family stayed in the ark before it began to rain. Someone says, "So what." Someone might be right, but then why did God tell us that, and wasn't it written for our admonition and edification?

Let's summarize. There is a trump. The saints hear it and become aware of its divine nature. There is one trump a day for seven days. At the last trump, you are changed. It may be that we are then caught up, or it may be that we are left here to "go into the city and appear unto many." It would certainly be a major evangelistic effort (to counter the phony charismatic "revival" supposedly taking place). It had a precedent in the resurrection of saints that came up after the resurrection of Christ. You can believe that there were some converts of those resurrected saints. It is quite possible that is what Paul was referring to when he talked about those who were "baptized for (on account of) the dead." Some were undoubtedly converted and baptized on the testimony of one who had been. If I hear a trump and there is no immediate rapture, I will certainly believe we are going up soon, and that our last opportunity for evangelism was at hand!

Bedlam

Does the Rapture of the Bride of Christ indeed bring hospitals to overload status as the cars of millions of Christians careen off the highway, suddenly without drivers? Do Christian airline pilots leave their passengers "in the lurch" by their "sudden" departure to points north? Most important of all these questions is: "Does the Word of God actually teach such a thing?" If it does, I would be the first to denounce all infidels of unbelief. We would and should simply leave those details to God. However, no such thing is taught in the Bible. There is a sudden change, *but the verse teaches no sudden departure*. Drivers will simply park their autos, and pilots will be too busy to fly again.

For the Old Testament Jew, salvation is viewed as part and parcel of the establishment of an earthly kingdom. No Israelite in Christ's day was interested in being born again, and we are not to be preoccupied with establishing the Kingdom of Heaven. (Unknown to the modern saint, the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God are not the same. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual

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kingdom that is "within you". The Kingdom of Heaven is Gods kingdom on this earth in the millennial reign of Christ.) In spite of the fact that the Lord attempted to show Nicodemus the need, the Jew did not yet understand that the kingdom had to be spiritual as well as physical. On the same wavelength, the modern day Post-Millennial, charismatic, tongue-speaking, sign-seeking, feeling-oriented kingdom builders haven't figured out that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. They continue to try and force physical blessings promised to Israel and the sign gifts given for the Jew who requires a sign, into the Church. We are not kingdom builders. We are ambassadors for Christ, beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God. We are commissioned to:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:19, 20

These simple truths are unknown to the modern saint raised on the leavened loaves of perverted Scripture, trying to force application of Second Advent scriptures on the Church. The result is a doctrinal nightmare, and a church that has lost its testimony to a world that's going to hell. Is the Lord Jesus coming again? Do you believe He is? If He is, are you ready for His coming? To be ready you must be saved. Jesus didn't simply suggest being born again, He said, "Ye must be born again." Will you, unsaved reader, bow your heart to God and receive the Lord Jesus Christ now? Will you repent of your wickedness and take for yourself the bleeding Lamb of God which "taketh away the sin of the world." Will you place your trust in his blood, shed for your and my sins? Will you? That is the question. It is not a matter of religion, it is a matter of your will! Will you or will you not receive Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. Will you believe that he died and rose again for you? FOR YOU!? He did, and if you, believing, ask him, he will forgive all and give you eternal life.

**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
John 3:16**

Are you saved? Do you believe He's coming? Have you been looking for Him to come? Will you stop fooling around trying to get your roots in down here, and begin to set your affection on things above? The truth is, He is coming and soon. We are looking for Him, and longing for Him. We like the way John closes the book:

Even So Come Lord Jesus