

Job

The Coming Earthquake in Palestine

Radio Sermons



by

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The Coming Earthquake in Palestine

(Scenes of Christ's Return)

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Introduction

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Pet. 3:9, 10).

The Bible foretells the future. Throughout the pages of both the Old and New Testaments, literally hundreds of passages are devoted to the prediction of events to be fulfilled in the future, at the time of the writing. Many of these events have occurred in past history, but many more are to be fulfilled in coming times.

The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is an absolute certainty! This future event is far more certain than death and taxes—it is more certain than the rising of the sun tomorrow morning! The Apostle Peter, in his great "Panorama of the Ages" of II Peter 3:8, 9, tells us, *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* Peter assures his readers that God does not reckon the passage of time as man does—that is, what seems to be a very long time to man is just a short time to God. The Lord has not forgotten His promise to come again to establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth. This literal promise is to be kept.

However, there is a reason for the long delay. That reason is God's great love for the people of this world for whom "he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Second Coming brings with it a judgment on the earth-dwellers who, in spite of God's provision of a Saviour, remain in their sins. The Lord hesitates in His coming, because He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But, the Lord's delay does not mean that His coming is in any way less certain. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness . . . the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."

Peter assures us that the Lord is not just procrastinating when He delays His return. A period of almost two thousand years has passed since Christ ascended back to Heaven, when the two angels that stood by the disciples there on the Mount of Olives said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (see Acts 1:11). The long period of time does not mean that the promise has been forgotten. "The Lord is *not* slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." The fact of the Lord's return is as sure as it was the day that the promise was made!

The Lord delays His coming because He desires that all men repent and turn to Him for the free gift of salvation. He is "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The Lord is reluctant to bring this age to an end, because so doing will result in the eternal separation from God of multitudes of those for whom He died on the Cross at Calvary.

The Lord desires to provide every possible opportunity for those living in these last days of this Age of Grace. He wants to save lost men and women, and stands ready to do so for all who "come to repentance." "Repentance" just means "a change of mind," or "a change of attitude." Men and women must realize that by natural estate, they are lost sinners. They must realize that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and that all are included when God says, "There is none righteous, no, not one." They must understand the truth of the statement written by the Apostle Paul in Romans 5:12:

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Another great truth must also be brought home to lost men and women: "For the wages of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The remedy is so simple that most people of the world will not believe it: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

The Lord delays His coming because He "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." If an unsaved man, woman, teenager, or youngster hear or read these words, let me point out that *you* are one of the reasons for the Lord's delay. But the delay *will not* last forever! "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (see II Corinthians 6:2).

In Verse 10, the Apostle Peter tells his readers, "But the day of the Lord (which is to mark the end of this age) will come as a thief in the night." The Apostle knew that the subject of "the day of the Lord" had been treated in considerable detail by the Old Testament prophets, and by the Apostle Paul in I Thessalonians 4:13—5:11. It is not his purpose, therefore, to redefine this coming time period, but rather to place it in its correct relationship to this age, and to the eternal age of God that is to follow "the day of the Lord."

"The day of the Lord" begins with a time of great spiritual darkness and great tribulation on the earth. There is a seven-year period in which the fully-developed political and religious system of Satan will hold sway over the earth. It is the "seventieth week of Daniel," the "time of Jacob's trouble," the "tribulation period." But at the end of the seven-year period,

the Lord himself will descend bodily from Heaven with an army of both angelic beings and the resurrected saved ones from the Age of Grace. And He will bring an end to Satan's world system. The millennial day will dawn with this coming of the "Sun of Righteousness"; and for one thousand years, the Lord Jesus Christ will rule as King and High Priest over the earth.

It is when the Lord's feet touch the Mount of Olives at His Second Coming that the earth will experience "The Coming Earthquake in Palestine." The Holy Scriptures tell us not only of the events that precede this violent shaking of the earth, but also of the judgment and blessings to *follow*. The purpose of this study is to review certain of the more prominent passages relating to these events, and to reconsider God's own picture of those "Scenes of Christ's Return."

1.

The Battles of the Willful King

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done . . . And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Dan. 11:36, 40-45).

Shortly after the Lord appears in the air (to catch His Church out of the earth to take His Bride home to His Father's house), the identity of the long-predicted satanic world ruler will be revealed to the unsaved people of this world who have been left behind. This man will take his place at the head of the ten-nation coalition that represents the revived Roman Empire. He

will come under the guise of a man of peace and pretend to hold the solution to all the problems of the world. But he will soon make the world a great battlefield.

The record of this man's rise is given by the Apostle Paul in II Thessalonians 2:3, 4. He writes, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come," except there come *the departure* (of the Church from the earth; the *Rapture* of the Church mentioned in Verse 1) first, "and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple (Holy of Holies) of God, shewing himself that he is God." Here, Paul refers to this man as "the man of *sin (lawlessness)*." This is but one of his many titles. In Daniel 11:36, he is designated "the willful king."

It is this "man of sin," this "willful king," this "antichrist," who will sign the "covenant of hell" with the political head of God's chosen nation Israel, and thus initiate the "seventieth week of Daniel"—the seven-year "tribulation" period. Speaking of this man, the revealing angel tells Daniel, "And he shall confirm the covenant with the many for *one week (one seven-year period)*: and in the midst of the week (after three and one-half years) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (see Daniel 9:27). This man is Satan's representative in the earth, and for seven years he will rule over the earth.

God's Word has a great deal to say concerning this individual who is to appear in the end time as the head of the Gentile powers in their ten-kingdom federation. His person and work are detailed in such passages as Ezekiel 28:1-10; Daniel 7:7, 8, 20-26; 8:23-25; 9:26, 27; 11:36-45; II Thessalonians 2:3-10; Revelation 13:1-10; and 17:8-14. If one were to summarize the truths revealed in these passages, he would discover a number of facts concerning this person and his activities.

It is revealed that he will appear on the scene in the "latter times" of Israel's history (see Daniel 8:23). However, he will not make his identity known until after the Church has been caught up from the earth at the time of the Rapture (see II

Thessalonians 2:1-4). His manifestation will be hindered by the Restrainer (the Holy Spirit), according to II Thessalonians 2:6, 7.

Again, this man's manifestation will be preceded by "the departure" (see II Thessalonians 2:3), which is the departure of the Church-Age saints to be with the Lord. We can know that this man is a Gentile, because Revelation 13:1 says that he "arises from the sea." The "sea" represents the Gentile nations (see Revelation 17:15); and if he arises from the sea then he must be of Gentile origin.

The "willful king" will rise from the Roman Empire, since he is prophesied to be a ruler (a "prince") of the people who destroyed Jerusalem in Daniel 9:26. This man will be the head of the last form of Gentile world dominion, for he is like a leopard, a bear, and a lion according to Revelation 13:1. As such, he will be a political leader. The seven heads and ten horns (see Revelation 13:1; 17:12) will be federated under his authority.

His influence will be worldwide, for he will rule over all nations (see Revelation 13:8). This influence will come initially through the alliance which he will make with other nations (see Daniel 8:24; Revelation 17:12) and later through acts of war (see Daniel 11:40, 41; Revelation 6:3, 4). He will have eliminated three rulers in his rise to power (see Daniel 7:8, 24). One of the kingdoms over which he will have authority has been revived, for one of the heads—representing a kingdom or king (see Revelation 17:10)—will have been healed (see Revelation 13:3).

The "man of sin's" rise to power will come through his peace program (see Daniel 8:25). He personally will be marked by his intelligence and persuasiveness (see Daniel 7:8, 20; 8:23) and also by his subtlety and craft (see Ezekiel 28:6), so that his first position over the nations will come by their own consent (see Revelation 17:13). He will rule over the nations in his federation with absolute authority, where he will be depicted as doing his own will (see Daniel 11:36). This authority will be manifested through the change in laws and customs (see Daniel 7:25).

The chief interest of this "beast out of the sea" will be might and power (see Daniel 11:38). As the head of the federated empire, he will make a seven-year covenant with Israel, which will be broken after three and one-half years (according to Daniel 9:27). After breaking the covenant, he will introduce an idolatrous worship (see Daniel 9:27), in which he will set himself up as the supreme god (see Daniel 11:36, 37; II Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:5). He, therefore, will bear the characterization of a blasphemer, because of his assumption of deity (see Ezekiel 28:2; Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:1, 5, 6). Energized by Satan (see Ezekiel 28:9-12; Revelation 13:4), this man will receive his authority from the evil one, and will be controlled by the pride of the devil (see Ezekiel 28:2; Daniel 8:25). This "antichrist" will be the head of Satan's lawless system (according to II Thessalonians 2:3), and his claim to power and deity will be supported by miraculous signs wrought through satanic power (see II Thessalonians 2:9, 10).

Therefore, this man will be received as God and ruler because of the blindness of the people (see II Thessalonians 2:11). He will become the great adversary of Israel (see Daniel 7:21, 25; 8:24; Revelation 13:7). But there will come an alliance against him which will contest his authority (see Ezekiel 28:7; Daniel 11:40, 42).

The "man of sin" will break his covenant with Israel. This will occur after the defeat of the northern coalition of Russia and her allies, when they make their abortive attempt to invade the land of God's chosen people. The details of this invasion, and the results of it, are given by the Prophet Ezekiel in Chapters 38 and 39 of his prophecy.

At the beginning of the tribulation period, Russia and her allies represent what appears to be the only major military power obstructing the "willful king's" exercise of total dominion over the earth. When this power has been destroyed, he will declare his authority over all the nations. Israel is no exception. He will break his seven-year covenant with that nation and declare himself to be the supreme deity who in times past

was worshipped by that nation. He will take possession of the Holy of Holies of the rebuilt "tribulational" temple. This marks the beginning of "the time of the end."

"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships." The "beast's" declaration of himself as supreme ruler, and supreme god, will prompt another organized rebellion against him. "The king of the south" will push at him. This is a reference to a coalition of African nations, probably under the leadership of Egypt. These nations will launch a military maneuver against the major European territories which form the stronghold of his dominion. Shortly afterwards, another force under the leadership of one Daniel calls "the king of the north" will also launch a military offensive against his armies. The coalition headed by "the king of the north" will be well-equipped with military armored vehicles, with a cavalry, and with a great navy.

Since Russia will have already been destroyed in the conflict of Ezekiel 38 and 39, "the king of the north" could not be a reference to the political head of this nation. Probably, this leader will be the ruler of the nation of Syria. There are many scriptural references in which the king of Syria is called "the king of the north." ("Gog" of the land of Magog spoken of in Ezekiel's prophecy is called the king of the "uttermost parts of the north.") It is likely that Syria will gather allies from some of the Middle Eastern nations, and launch the military offensive that comes against the "willful king" from the North.

"And *he* (the willful king) shall enter into the countries and shall overflow and pass over." The "man of sin" will defeat the two-headed offensive against him, and launch a counter invasion of his own. His armies will overrun all those nations responsible for the rebellion. With complete victory, he will be able to trample down all rebellious nations, and establish his absolute control over them. He will expect no further problems from that quarter. His authority will now be unquestioned.

"He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." As a result of his counter offensive, the "man of sin" and his armies will enter and overrun the land of Israel (the "glorious land"). This will give him first-hand acquaintance with the riches and beauty and religious customs of that nation, which will lead to the setting up of "the abomination that maketh desolate." He will enter many other nations, apparently some of which were not a part of the two rebel coalitions, and overthrow them all.

However, there will be one territory in the Middle East that will not be conquered by this "willful king." This territory is designated as "Edom and Moab," and the one who rules over it is designated as "the Chief of the children of Ammon." The territory in view is that land to the east and south of the Dead Sea. It is the land that was the ancient possession of Esau and his descendants. This land contains the rock city of Petra, and it is apparently to this unconquered land that the remnant of Israel will flee during the persecutions of the Great Tribulation (the last three and one-half years of Daniel's "seventieth week").

"He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." These verses tell us that the world dictator *will* put down, and dominate, the African nations who formed the southern coalition against him. He will conquer those nations, and he will confiscate their wealth. He will leave the remnant of the population in extreme poverty. It appears that his conquests will have been secured, and the entire world placed at his feet. No man or nation can question his right to rule.

However, things will only appear thus; for there will exist another bloc of nations—a great military power—far to the east of the scene of that most recent conflict. This power will be the "sleeping giant" of the Far East. China and the Oriental nations surrounding her will become restless under the rule of

the "beast." The "giant" will begin to stir; that stirring will be felt all the way to the "beast's" headquarters.

"But tidings (news stories) out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him." The "news" will be that another rebellion is stirring, and that another military offensive is about to be launched. We are told that the news that troubles the satanic dictator will come from "out of the east and out of the north." The emphasis will rest upon the east, indicating that the major source of the new offensive is to come from the extreme eastern section of the Asian continent. However, the north will also be designated, suggesting that the peoples of the eastern part of Russia (mostly Oriental peoples) will join China and her allies in this act of rebellion against the antichrist.

The "news" that will trouble this great dictator is the news of the formation and mobilization of the great two-hundred-million-man army from the Far East. This army is mentioned in Revelation 9:13-16 as a part of the sixth trumpet judgment. "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were *two hundred thousand thousand*: and I heard the number of them."

The army moving will be from a territory to the east of the great river Euphrates. It will be the army of the "kings of the east" that is mentioned in Revelation 16:12. "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." This will be the greatest army ever mobilized by mankind, and the dried-up riverbed of the Euphrates will serve as a highway for much of their journey from the Far East.

The movement of this army will represent a significant threat to the man who will have proclaimed himself world

ruler. It will pose the greatest threat yet to his security. His reaction will be to gather his own army from the western nations and move eastward to quell the advancing Oriental hordes. "Therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many."

His intent will be to destroy that eastern army at all cost. In so doing, without a qualm of conscience, he would destroy that entire swath of earth over which this army would march. He will move eastward with his army, and find himself planted for the last great battle in the land of Palestine—at the site of the city of Jerusalem!

"And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain." The "willful king" will erect a temporary palace for himself on the crest of Mount Zion. This palace shall be made up of an accumulation of tents, designed to meet the needs of a temporary world capital. The great army of the East will close in on this headquarters site. The antichrist's army of the West will advance from that direction to meet at that final battleground. Speaking of God's control of these two armies, John tells us (in Revelation 16:16), "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

It is here at Armageddon (the Valley of Megiddo) that the final battle will rage. The bloodiest battle of all history is to be fought in the countryside surrounding the city of Jerusalem. A poetic description of this battle is found in the words that the Apostle John has written in Revelation 14:20. "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

Daniel tells us the result of this great offensive launched by the "man of sin." "Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." The antichrist will *lose*, but the armies of the kings of the east will not *win*! Both great armies are to lose! The **greatest** event in all human history is about to take place!

Daniel tells us that the "willful king" will "come to his end." He does not say that this satanically-indwelt man will die physically. That is not the destiny of the "beast out of the sea." He will never die a physical death! Yet, he will "come to his end, and none shall help him." His "end" is a unique transfer from earth to Gehenna!

2.

The Climax of Armageddon

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zech. 14:1-3).

The post-exilic prophet, Zechariah, writing about 518 B.C., was permitted to see the earthly view of the climax of the final battle between the armies of the "man of sin" and those of the Eastern kings. He very dramatically records this earth-shaking event in the opening verses of the last chapter of his prophecy.

Recall that Daniel predicted that this willful king would take the city of Jerusalem and establish his headquarters there for the final battle against the advancing Eastern hordes in these words: "And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him" (see Daniel 11:45). The Western world ruler will establish himself for his last military stand on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, the very same geographical site that he had used three and one-half years previously to "oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God,

showing himself to be God" (see II Thessalonians 2:4). We remember that Daniel also predicts the outcome of "anti-christ's" last campaign: "Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

Notice, Daniel says, "He shall come to his end." He does not say, "He shall die." His earthly reign will be ended, and his earthly sojourn will be ended, but he will not die! It remains for the Apostle John to expand on Daniel's prophecy before we can know what Daniel meant by saying, "He shall come to his end."

In Revelation 19:20, we read these words, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. *These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*" Neither the "willful king" nor his "false prophet" are to undergo physical death! Rather, they will be transformed into immortal bodies and, in those bodies, will be cast alive into Gehenna!

Zechariah gives us further insight into the turmoil that this "man of sin" will bring upon the city of Jerusalem prior to, and during, the last battle of the campaign of Armageddon. There will remain still a sizable population of the remnant of the chosen nation living in Jerusalem in spite of the Lord's admonition to "flee into the mountains." They will remain even when they "shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place" (see Matthew 24:15, 16). Although many of the saved Jewish people will have obeyed that instruction given three and one-half years earlier, apparently many more will not have. It may be that these who will remain for Armageddon had been saved *after* the initial flight from Jerusalem had taken place. This would account for their not having joined their brethren in the earlier flight to the country of Edom (and the rock city of Petra). Those who remain behind are the ones who will endure this great suffering spoken of by Zechariah.

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh.” Zechariah opens this prophecy by announcing that the “day of the LORD” has come upon the earth prior to the events that he is about to describe. He is not saying that the “day of the LORD” will *commence* with the event of Armageddon, but rather that the “day of the LORD” is *already underway* (and far spent) at this time. We have here confirmation that the “day of the LORD” will begin with the signing of the seven-year covenant between Israel and the “man of sin” referred to in Daniel 9:27. (The “day of the LORD” will begin with the opening of the Great Tribulation and will extend through Christ’s millennial reign.)

In effect, Zechariah is telling the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem, “Behold, the day of the LORD *will* come upon you, and at sometime after the beginning of this ‘day,’ thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.” Those who continue to dwell in the city after the “abomination of desolation” can expect to see their city trodden down and their earthly goods taken from them during the continuing reign of the “antichrist.” As a part of the “day of the LORD” there will come a time that the Western army will confiscate all the valuables of Jerusalem’s population.

Great turmoil and great testing will come upon Jerusalem’s population just prior to, and during, the last battle of Armageddon. Upon the “willful king’s” arrival he will confiscate the property (the “spoil”) of the city. But with the arrival of the Eastern armies for the final battle, things will grow even worse.

Zechariah records the LORD’s words in Verse 2: “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.” From the earthly viewpoint, it would be the political situation that gathered the armies of all nations (both West and East) together for this last great conflict. It appears only coincidence that the meeting place of the armies was to be at Jerusalem and the Valley of Megiddo. But from the heavenly point of view, the world political situation (and chance) will have had nothing to do with the gathering of the armies and the choice of this battleground. It would be the LORD that brought the armies together at this chosen spot as He used the earthly

situation to bring about that which He had foreordained before the foundation of the world. The LORD is in control of all human history!

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.” All nations of the earth will be represented in one of the two opposing armies. In that day, there will be no such thing as a “neutral nation.” The Western nations will support the armies of the “beast.” The Eastern and Northern nations (who have joined together in rebellion against the “beast’s” world rule) will support the army advancing from the Orient. Therefore, “all nations” of the Gentiles (Israel will have no part in the preliminary battle, but will be trodden down by both sides) will be represented on one of the two opposing sides. Armageddon is to be truly a “world war.” It is most appropriate to designate this campaign as “World War IV”!

“The city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” This is what will happen at the arrival of the Eastern armies. “The city shall be taken.” This could only refer to the capture of the city by the Eastern general. The “willful king” will have been in control of the city prior to the beginning of the battle. The city of Jerusalem will be wrested from “antichrist’s” hands, and he will move into the Valley of Megiddo. It is the Eastern invaders who will be responsible for the final indignities that will be heaped upon Jerusalem’s inhabitants.

The marauding soldiers of the army of the kings of the East will go from door to door, methodically destroying all that they cannot carry away. They will take possession of everything. “The houses” shall be “rifled.”

The soldiers will also have their way with the Jewish women of Israel’s capital city. “The women” shall be “raped.” (This is what happens to the helpless population of a city taken by a godless and undisciplined satanically-controlled pagan army.) Everything that the city’s inhabitants had will be taken from them: their property, their self-respect, their virtue, and in many cases, their lives!

For one half of those who are left alive, there will be further indignity. "And half of the city (that is, half of the remaining city's population) shall go forth into captivity, and the residue (the other half) of the people shall not be cut off from the city." The half of Jerusalem's remaining population that is taken captive out of the city will probably represent the most able-bodied and the strongest individuals of the remnant. They are to be taken to serve as slaves to their masters, and perhaps even to fight in the Eastern army. The half that will remain in the city will probably be the old, the infirm, and the sick. There will be no respect of family group relationships or any other humanitarian guidelines in the division. All will be done for the convenience of the conquering horde.

The situation described by Zechariah is one that is totally devoid of human hope. The final population of Jerusalem (which typifies the final population of the nation Israel) will be completely helpless. (There could be no hope in the human heart, other than hope in the LORD.) The situation for Israel will be exactly the same as that described by the Lord in Matthew 24:22: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." As far as human power is concerned, all will be hopeless.

It is then that help does come from the only possible source. "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." In the hour of most terrible trial, when the enemy will be brutally triumphant and the remnant of God's ancient covenant people in danger of total extinction, and the covenants and promises made to the fathers in peril of being unfulfilled forever, *then the LORD shall go forth and fight against His and His people's foes.* In the hour of the apparent triumph of anti-God and anti-Christ forces bent on ousting the name of God and His Christ from the earth and destroying the Jewish remnant, in whom God's purposes for the earth in the coming age are centered, *the LORD will go forth and fight . . . as when He fought in the day of battle.* The LORD holds the solution to this unsolvable earthly problem!

The Hebrew word translated "go forth" is very appropriately applied to this One who appears once again in behalf of His people as "a Man of war." (In Exodus 15:3, we are told, "The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.") This word is employed of a king going out to war at the head of his troops. It is the word used in I Samuel 8:20 where we read, "That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and *go out before* us, and fight our battles." It is used also of the LORD going before His people to battle for them (Judges 4:14: "Is not the LORD *gone out before* thee?"). Here this word refers to the LORD in human form, to Messiah, as He personally comes forth from Heaven to fight for His sorely oppressed people on earth.

The LORD will fight for His people "*as in the day of battle.*" This expression pictures a warlike, or hostile, approach. That is, the LORD will come forth from Heaven prepared for battle—prepared to make war against the enemies of His people. The battle that they, humanly speaking, are in no position to fight will now be fought—and won—for them!

Zechariah presents the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory (with the armies of Heaven with Him) as he pens these words of Verse 3: "*Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*" Jesus of Nazareth, now in glorified form and prepared for battle is returning to the earth *on which* He died, and *for which* He died. His purpose is to destroy those armies of the nations of the world who have gathered themselves together in the land of His people.

This is the climax of all human history. It is that time prophesied in all of Scripture, and towards which all prophecy is focused. This is the time of Messiah's return, when He will "proclaim the day of vengeance of our God" as He comes "to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they (Israel) might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD that he might be glorified" (see Isaiah 61:2b, 3).

Zechariah makes no attempt to describe the details of the beautiful but awesome scene of Christ's reentry into the earthly sphere. He simply states the fact of His return, and then goes on to tell of His arrival upon the surface of the earth. It remains for other Scripture to describe the awesome opening of the heavens so that this reentry into the earthly sphere can take place.

3.

The Opening of Heaven

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:11-16).

The Prophet Zechariah recorded the earthly view of Messiah's Second Coming with the words, "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." However, it remained for the Apostle John, writing the closing book of the New Testament canon, to describe for us the heavenly view of the dramatic event of the opening of Heaven as the LORD does "go forth."

Although Zechariah did not tell us that this "going forth" was from the third Heaven, that is the only location from

which King Messiah can come. He is there presently at the right hand of God the Father acting as our Advocate and High Priest during this interadvent age of God's grace. He has been there since that decision, announced prophetically in Hosea 5:15, and fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ visited His chosen nation in grace and was rejected by His own people. "I will go and return to *my place* (the third Heaven), till they (Israel) acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early."

In his vision on the Isle of Patmos, the Apostle John had previously seen a "door" opened in Heaven as he was caught up "in the spirit on the Lord's day" as he records in Revelation 4:1. "*After this* (after these things) I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be *hereafter* (after these things)."

The remainder of that which is recorded in the Book of Revelation is a description of things to come, both in Heaven and on earth, as God brings human history to its climax. John's viewing aspect for all events he was privileged to witness is that of a heavenly vantage point. John represents the Church of this age who will be caught up to Heaven prior to the historical events prophesied in Revelation, Chapters 4 through 20. The Apostle views the opening of Heaven and the Lord's Second Coming from the position that we, Christ's Bride and Christ's Body, will have of the LORD's "going forth to fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle."

Revelation 19:11-16 contains one of the most graphic pictures of the Second Coming of Christ to be found anywhere in Scripture. The things described in John's picture of the returning Christ are intended as symbolic; however, the picture is literal. Those who are privileged to view the Lord's descent from Heaven will see this picture reenacted in a most literal way.

One writer (Merrill C. Tenney) describes the revelation of Christ in His Second Coming as following the pattern of a

Roman triumphal procession. When a general returned from a successful campaign, he and his legions were granted the right to parade up the Via Sacra, the main street of Rome that led from the Forum to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. Mounted on a white horse, the general rode at the head of his troops, followed by the wagonloads of booty that he had taken from the conquered nation, and by the chained captives that were to be executed or sold in the slave markets of the city. The chief captives or rebels were remanded to the Mamertine Prison, where they were usually executed, while sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered in the temple.

As John observed this wonderful scene from Heaven, he writes, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he who sits upon it, called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war." That which shuts the third Heaven away from the earth was opened. That opening was such that the One who sat at the head of the heavenly armies might proceed through it with all the multitudes who followed Him.

The first thing that attracted John's attention was the steed of the Heavenly Rider. "Behold! A horse! A white one!" Could this be a literal view of things to come? Will Messiah actually be mounted upon a white horse as He begins His journey earthward? Yes, the scene is a literal description of that which is to take place. The glorified Lord *will* be mounted on a heavenly steed that has the appearance of a white horse!

After seeing Heaven opened, and describing the mount of the Kingly Rider, John then identifies that glorified Personage. The mounted One can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ! *He* is the one mounted at the head of the advancing army! The earth's true King is coming to her, riding on a white horse! In contrast to the false ruler of the world (the "willful king") described in Revelation 6:2, Christ is presented here as the True Ruler. The earnest plea once recorded by the Prophet Isaiah *is* now to be fulfilled: "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, As when the

melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!" (See Isaiah 64:1, 2.)

The rider on the horse in Revelation 6 is described as one who "went forth conquering, and to conquer." John's vision foresees the time when the true "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" is going to triumph over those who blasphemously assumed control over the world.

In Verse 11, the Apostle assigns two titles to Christ—both in keeping with the divine judgment which is to follow. He is declared to be called "*Faithful*" and "*True*," and to judge and make war in righteousness. In His Second Coming, He is to demonstrate the sovereignty and righteousness of God, just as in His first coming He demonstrated God's grace and truth. These titles, here given to the white horse Rider, were previously ascribed to Christ in Revelation 1:5 ("And from Jesus Christ, who is the *faithful* witness") and Revelation 3:7 ("These things saith he that is holy, he that is *true*"). That which is assigned to the glorified Lord here was anticipated in the prophecies of Isaiah 11:3, 4: "*And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of lips shall he slay the wicked.*"

John describes his view of the glorified Christ in Verses 12 and 13: "*His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns (diadems); and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.*"

We are told, "His eyes were as a flame of fire." This is a description of Christ given previously by John in Revelation 1:14, and by the Lord himself (of Himself) in Revelation 2:18.

Although this is a literal description of the appearance of His eyes, it also speaks of His righteous judgment upon sin, and His ability to see into the hearts of men. It is a symbol of His omniscience.

His head is crowned with many crowns (or diadems, the crowns of a ruler), the symbol of His sovereignty over all the nations. That which is actually worn here by the glorified Lord is most likely a many-tiered headdress, each tier of which resembles a separate diadem. This mighty Christ possesses a name which no man, to that time, knew; for it is yet unrevealed. That Name is shown written upon His vesture.

His vesture is declared to be "dipped in blood," symbolizing His own blood, once poured out from His mortal body at the time of His death on Calvary's Cross—at the time of His first advent. He once said to His people Israel, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (see Leviticus 17:11). It is this precious "blood of atonement" that lets Him say, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (see Isaiah 1:18). It is His own "blood of the covenant" in which His garments of righteousness have been dipped. This blood also anticipates the bloodshed to come as He destroys those opposing armies in the earth.

The name given to Christ in Verse 13 is "The Word of God." This name belonged to Him throughout all His "goings forth" in the earth. He is the living "Word of God." He was the "Word of the LORD" who "came unto Abram in a vision" in Genesis 15:1. He is the "Word of the LORD" who appeared to many of the prophets to declare things present and things to come. John had previously declared that this title belonged to Him in John 1:1-3, and there it is declared that He was the Creator of all things. Here it is declared that the "Word of God" is also the "Judge of man."

“And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” Accompanying the glorified Christ as He begins His journey from the opened heavens to the earth are those described as “the armies which were in heaven.” The word “armies” is plural, indicating more than one army is in view. There are several armies, each made up of a particular “kind” of heavenly being.

Certainly, one of these armies is the glorified and resurrected Church which was caught up to Heaven at least seven years prior to this time. The fact that the beings of the armies are “clothed in fine linen, white and clean” does indicate that at least one of the armies consists of those who were redeemed “to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”—that is, the Church. However, there are other armies made up of the angels of Heaven. We know from other Scripture that there are several classes of unfallen angels, and probably a mighty army of each class. There would be an army of Cherubim and an army of Seraphim. Armies that represent additional classes of angels could also be a part of this procession.

The personnel of all armies are mounted upon white horses. Just as in the case of the One at the head of this procession, John saw all of the militarized beings of the various armies mounted on heavenly steeds. God has created (or will create) a “kind” of heavenly horse that will serve as transportation for His creatures on their journey to the earth. All of the Lord’s armies are classified as cavalry!

The view of Christ on a white horse with a vesture dipped in blood accompanied by innumerable heavenly beings clothed in fine linen and also mounted on white horses is an almost indescribable view. In reality, it is a demonstration that now, at long last, the filthy, blasphemous situation in earth is going to be wiped clean with a divine judgment of tremendous character! “The day of vengeance of our God” prophesied by Isaiah so many years ago is now to be “proclaimed” by the same One who, at His first coming, proclaimed “the acceptable year of the LORD.” The time of judgment has come!

Verse 15 provides a further description of Christ, and this adds to the picture of divine judgment. Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, which, according to the text, will be used to smite the nations and bring them under His rule. The Greek word for "sword" describes a weapon that is unusually large and longer than most swords. Here, the word is used symbolically to represent a sharp instrument of war, one that will be used to put down all opposition to His absolute rule. In visualizing the literal picture that was viewed by John (and will be viewed by many in the future in actual fulfillment), it is difficult to understand why the long sword is described as going "out of his mouth." Probably, the blade was held in the teeth in what we would call "pirate fashion." The literal is presented for the benefit of the symbolic. The sword symbolizes the "breath of his mouth" (the "Word of His mouth") with which He "shall slay the wicked."

"He shall rule them with a rod of iron." This expression first appears in Psalm 2:9 where it speaks of the Father's eternal decree for His Son. From the beginning, it was His destiny to rule in the earth. This expression was also used by the Lord in His letter to the Thyatiran Church in Revelation 2:27. There, He is speaking to the "overcomers" in His name (the saved of the Church of this age) who will share the millennial reign with Him. "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." The similar expression, "the rod of His mouth," is used in Isaiah 11:4. "Ruling them with a rod of iron" represents unyielding, absolute government under which men are required to conform to the righteous standards of God.

The Lord's divine act of judgment is also described in the latter part of Verse 15 in the words, "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." This is another view of the divine judgment that John described in Revelation 14:19, 20. *"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."*

This judgment was anticipated in Isaiah 63:1-6: "*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? . . . Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment . . . And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.*"

All of these passages point to the sad conclusion that in that coming day of judgment it will be too late for men to expect God's mercy. Where grace has been spurned, nothing remains but inflexible divine judgment. The Bible predicts scenes of terrible judgment at the time of Christ's return. This is in flat contradiction to the modern idea that the God of creation is dominated entirely by His attribute of love.

Verse 16 contains John's concluding description of Christ: "*And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*" Here at last has come One who has a right to rule the entire earth! He is One whose power and majesty will demonstrate His authority as He brings to bear His sovereign judgment on a wicked world.

In this short passage, the Apostle John assigns three names to the returning Christ. Verse 12 mentions "*. . . a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.*" This speaks of His essential glory as the eternal Son, concerning which He declared that "no man knoweth the Son but the Father." The second name is used in Verse 13, and it is "*. . . The Word of God.*" He is the eternal spoken Word of the Father. The third title (in Verse 16) is "*. . . KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*" In these three names we have set forth, first, our Lord's dignity as the Eternal Son; second, His incarnation—the Word became flesh; and, last, His second advent to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

It is in anticipation of this ultimate triumph of His Son that God the Father holds the nations of the world in derision in their rebellion against the LORD's Anointed (Messiah, Christ) in Psalm 2:1-4. As long ago predicted, God is indeed about to break the nations with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces and give the uttermost part of the earth to His Son as His rightful possession.

In view of this soon-coming consummation, how pertinent is the invitation of Psalm 2:10-12: *"Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."*

John has given us the heavenly view of the beginning of our Lord's return journey from Heaven. It is a glorious troop that leaves the sanctuary of the third Heaven through the portal formed by "the opening of heaven." A descriptive view of the actual journey of this great company from Heaven to earth is given in the Lord's own words of Matthew 24:27-31: *"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. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*

However, for a description of the Lord's arrival on the earth's surface, we must return to the prophecy of Zechariah. He alone describes the exact point on the earth where Messiah's feet will touch as He ends this spectacular journey. Zechariah also

describes those events that are to take place *immediately after* the Lord from Heaven again stands upon the mountains of Israel.

4.

Return to 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. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light” (Zech. 14:4-7).

Zechariah 14:4 records the termination of that momentous journey of the glorified Christ and His heavenly armies from the opened Heaven to the earth. The very point on the surface of the earth where Messiah's feet will first touch is designated: “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east.” He will touch down at the apex of the Mount of Olives!

Can there be any mistake as to whose feet are to stand upon the Mount of Olives “in that day” as we read Zechariah's prophecy? No. The antecedent of the pronoun “his” is the subject of the preceding verse. “Then shall the LORD (JHWH, Jehovah) go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.” Jehovah's feet are those which are to stand upon the Mount of Olives.

How can the LORD's (Jehovah's) feet stand on the Mount of Olives when "God is spirit," and hath not a body of flesh and bones? It is because they are the feet of His resurrected, glorified humanity, which ascended to Heaven from the very same locality. The "LORD" spoken of here is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah and the Son of God! The point in time that marks the instant that His feet touch the top of the Mount of Olives is the long-prophesied "Second Coming" of the Lord Jesus Christ!

It is interesting that Zechariah was chosen to prophesy the point of contact between the returning Christ and the earth. These words were written approximately 518 years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth—more than five centuries before the events recorded in the New Testament Gospels, and in the Book of Acts, took place. Zechariah had no way of knowing that the Mount of Olives would be the point of departure of Messiah when He ascended to Heaven after His work on the Cross (and after His resurrection). Almost six centuries were to go by before those events recorded in Acts 1:9-12: "And when he (the Lord Jesus Christ) had spoken these things, while they (the disciples) beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem *from the mount called Olivet*, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey."

Therefore, long before the ascension of Messiah had taken place, Zechariah's prophecy had predicted that the Mount of Olives was to be the site of His return to the earth. The fact that Christ's feet will again touch the very last spot where they stood at the time of His ascension at His first advent emphasizes that this interadvent age is a "great parenthesis" in God's program for the nation Israel. As His feet departed from the apex of the Mount of Olives, the opening parenthesis was

inserted. When His feet again touch that same point, the closing parenthesis will be inserted. God's program can then proceed as though those intervening years had never taken place. This blends Messiah's first and second comings together into one glorious expanse, just as this panorama was seen by many of the Old Testament prophets.

As John saw the glorified Christ leave the portals of the third Heaven, he saw Him mounted upon a white horse. It would seem that during His entire journey from Heaven to the earth, Christ would remain mounted upon this heavenly steed. Even though no mention of this horse is made by Zechariah, we can assume that the white horse touches the earth first. The Lord will then dismount, and His feet will touch those same impressions that they made at the time of His ascension some two millennia earlier. The heavenly horse will remain beside Him at this momentous event.

We are told that the LORD's "feet shall stand *in that day* on the Mount of Olives." What does Zechariah mean by this statement? He is speaking of the "day" that was mentioned in Zechariah 14:1: "Behold, *the day of the LORD* cometh." It is during the "*day of the LORD*" that this event will occur! This confirms that the time period that God designates as "the day of the LORD" begins with the signing of Israel's "covenant of hell" with the "antichrist" at the *beginning* of the tribulation. The "day of the LORD" includes the tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ, and the millennial reign of Messiah. His feet shall touch the Mount of Olives "in that day" (during "the day of the LORD").

So that there will be no mistaking the exact place designated, Zechariah specifies the location of the "Mount of Olives" which he has in view. It is the mount "which is before Jerusalem on the east." In Zechariah's day, that mountain was not so well-known (especially among Jewish people living in other parts of Palestine). It did become well-known to later generations. Zechariah precisely specifies the *exact* location of the mountain that is to play such an important part in Israel's history.

Zechariah 14:4 is the only place in the Old Testament where the "Mount of Olives" is mentioned by name, though the mountain is referred to as "the ascent of Olives" in II Samuel 15:30. However, the fact that he is using this name for the first time in Scripture can hardly account for Zechariah's describing its location. He not only wanted to make certain that there was no confusing the location of the mount of his prophecy, but he also wanted to call attention to some other Old Testament prophecies. Other of God's prophets had made it known that *from this mountain the glory of God departed from, and will return to, Jerusalem.*

"The glory of the God of Israel" left Jerusalem *by the east*, previous to the Babylonian captivity and the beginning of "the times of the Gentiles." Ezekiel 11:22, 23 tells us, "Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain *which is on the east side of the city.*"

This departure of "the glory of the LORD" is prophetic of the ascension of God's Son from the Mount of Olives after His rejection by the nation Israel. It was *from the east* that the same glorious symbol of the divine Presence was also prophesied to return. In Ezekiel 43:2 the same prophet wrote, "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel *came from the way of the east*: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory." This prophecy pictured the Second Coming of Christ, and it marked the termination of "the times of the Gentiles."

Throughout Old Testament times, the idea prevailed that it was from the east that salvation would arise. The idea was that salvation would come to Israel as the sun rising out of the east. The Prophet Malachi put this idea into words. He wrote (of the Second Coming of Messiah), "But unto you that fear my name shall the *Sun of righteousness arise* with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (see Malachi 4:2). So, "his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem *on the east.*"

The Mount of Olives as it stands today is the central rise of a mile-long line of limestone hills. It rises almost 200 feet above Mount Zion and almost 300 feet above Mount Moriah. Thus, it dominates the skyline on the east of Jerusalem, and it offers a suitable touchdown spot for the glorious One who will return to relieve that troubled city. This mountain, separated from the city by the narrow valley of the brook Kedron, once offered a serious obstacle to a rapid escape from Jerusalem. It was that which obstructed David's flight from Absalom, according to II Samuel 15:30. But, "in that day," Messiah's feet touching the mountain will transform the natural obstacle into a way of escape for the beleaguered remnant.

When the glorified Lord Jesus Christ dismounts from His white horse and stands upon the Mount of Olives, then will occur *"the coming earthquake in Palestine."* The result of Messiah's advent will be a gigantic earthquake that will affect great topographical changes! "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."

The prophesied earthquake will come suddenly. As the LORD's feet touch that crest, a great upheaval will occur. The mountain will be split by the force of this tectonic disturbance and will be divided by a great chasm, oriented east and west. The northern half of the mountain will move toward the north; the southern half will move toward the south, creating an open valley (the "valley of the mountains") running from the eastern wall of Jerusalem toward the eastern direction. This will make the highway of escape for that Jewish remnant which still remains within that city. The result of this catastrophic event will be beneficial to God's chosen people.

"And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal." The LORD has formed the escape route. Zechariah's prediction is, "Ye (the

Jewish people found in Jerusalem at the time of the LORD's arrival) shall flee *by way of the valley of the two newly-formed mountains.*"

We are told that "the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal." The word "Azal" is a proper noun, meaning to "be joined to," "be at the side of," or "be near." We have no record of a historic location known as Azal, but the meaning of this word suggests that it was a place in close proximity to one of Jerusalem's gates on the east. With the newly-formed valley extending to it, it would readily be a means of quick exit from the city for those fleeing from the enemy. The Prophet Micah mentions a place called "Beth-ezel" (see Micah 1:11), and this may be the same location as that alluded to by Zechariah. The word "Beth" (meaning "house of") was often omitted when one referred to place names.

"Yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah." It is in this clause that Zechariah first mentions an "earthquake." It is an earthquake that will split the Mount of Olives. This is not the only passage in prophecy which connects the "day of the LORD" and its accompanying divine wrath against sinners with violent earthquakes. The Prophet Micah speaks of the return of Messiah and the coming earthquake in Palestine in these words: "For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place" (see Micah 1:3, 4). Nahum 1:5 says, "*The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.*" Psalm 18:7 adds, "*Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wrath.*"

The seventh-bowl judgment described in Revelation 16:17-21 (which is coincident with the return of Jesus Christ) involves a worldwide earthquake "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

And the great city (Jerusalem) was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell." The coming earthquake in Palestine scheduled to split the Mount of Olives is but one part of this worldwide earthquake. Zechariah describes only the Palestinian quake, which is undoubtedly the most severe of all those worldwide shocks. The entire topography of the land of Palestine will be altered by the great quaking of that land.

Israelites still found in Jerusalem "shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah." The historic earthquake in view here is doubtless that referred to by Amos 1:1. The introduction to his prophecy contains these words: "The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake." The earthquake of Uzziah's day must have been of terrible severity to be so vividly referred to more than two centuries later. Josephus (the first century Jewish historian) relates that great catastrophe to Uzziah's attempt to offer incense in the temple against the protest of the priests. Evidently, the memory of this event was still vivid in Zechariah's day, which probably accounts for the reference to it in his prophecy.

"And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints (holy ones) with thee." The One whose feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives (see Verse 4) is here referred to by the title, "Jehovah my God." The One who is coming in the flesh to dismount upon the Mount of Olives is none other than the Creator of the universe and the covenant God of Israel! He "shall come" to the earth, and "all the saints" will be with Him! In Zechariah's prophecy, the Prophet changes to the second person pronoun at the end of Verse 5. However, there is no doubt that he was addressing the "LORD my God" who was mentioned earlier. The "holy ones" of the heavens will be a part of the army that accompanies the Lord Jesus Christ in His descent.

The army of "saints" mentioned can only refer to those who have previously been redeemed by His blood and resurrected and/or transformed to immortality by His power. This army is

made up of the resurrected Church—those who were caught up to Heaven to be with Jesus Christ at least seven years earlier! That army, of course, is also accompanied by other armies of the angels of Heaven. All of this great entourage will reach the earth's surface in the vicinity of the LORD's touchdown point.

The day of the LORD's return will be a strange one in the annals of earth's history. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." God will change the processes of nature for that day of the return of His Son. The "day" here refers to a cycle of the earth's rotation which shall be a part of that extended period of time known as "the day of the LORD." The great age-altering event of the Lord Jesus Christ's reentry into the earthly sphere is the climaxing event of that longer "day." The alterations to nature mentioned here by Zechariah are also described elsewhere in Scripture.

Isaiah prophesies of these "unnatural phenomena" in the following language: "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. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine" (see Isaiah 13:9, 10). Also, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (see Isaiah 24:23).

Joel, speaking of the same event, predicts, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (see Joel 3:14-16).

The Lord Jesus Christ himself said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (see Matthew 24:29, 30).

Zechariah saw the day of the LORD's return characterized by the absence of the normal light from the sun, which will be supernaturally darkened. However, it will not be complete darkness, but rather a twilight condition over the entire face of the earth. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark." The light will be dim, but it will be adequate to allow human eyes to see the great events taking place. Apparently, the sun will not be directly visible from any point on the earth's surface. Some kind of translucent covering will appear to envelope the earth, and it will diffuse light equally to all points of the globe. The people of the earth will experience a weird "haziness" as they observe the effects of God's "twilight zone."

The phenomena that cause these strange effects are known to God alone. It does no good for scientific minds to try to predict or understand what principles or processes that God will call into action. Zechariah says, "But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." The light will not be intense, but it cannot be described as a time of darkness. The strange light will continue throughout daylight hours, but it will not be taken away during those times when it normally should be night. This tells us that the light conditions will not change on various parts of the globe as the earth rotates on its axis. In effect, time will appear to stand still. All parts of planet earth will be aware that some great event is taking place as the LORD descends to the Mount of Olives and assigns His heavenly armies the task of destroying those opposing forces from the west and from the east that have met in battle at Armageddon. The worldwide earthquakes will be experienced by

all men, and they will know that the major shock—the coming earthquake in Palestine—has at last taken place!

Man has never gone through such a time in the past. No such “unnatural phenomena” will ever occur in the future. The “return to the Mount of Olives” will produce one-time-only effects in the earth. Human history has reached its climax!

5.

Destruction of the Armies

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh” (Rev. 19:17-21).

In order to follow the immediate actions of the returned Christ after His feet first touch the Mount of Olives, we must continue the heavenly view of these proceedings as given to us by the Apostle John. As he watches from his vantage point in the third Heaven, he is able to see the complete scope of everything that is involved in the climactic actions of the LORD who has “gone forth as in the day of battle.”

As John tells us in Revelation 19:17, immediately following Christ's return to earth, he saw an angel standing in the sun. This heavenly being, though probably not visible to the armies of the earth, was clearly discernable from John's position.

Some have taken this as a very unusual phenomenon and have had difficulty in understanding what the Apostle was trying to describe. The most natural interpretation of John's words is that he saw the angel descending from Heaven in the light of the sun, and he was probably directly between John's viewing point and the sun. In order for John to see the angel against the background of the sun, the angel himself must have been shining with even greater brilliance than our great "day star." The image conveyed is one of a heavenly messenger of brilliant light, and such light speaks of the glory of God, the angel's Creator and Lord.

The angel in the sun is crying some great announcement, with a loud voice. The shouted message (probably heard only by John, and by those earthly feathered creatures addressed) signifies that something of great importance is about to take place.

The message of the angel is addressed "to all the fowls that fly in the midst of (the) heaven." The expression, "the midst of the heaven," applies to the atmospheric heaven—the "first" heaven. It is the scavenger birds of the earth, the carrion-eaters, that are addressed by God's messenger. John (the human writer) was able to hear the angel's voice because he was among the heavenly observers.

The carrion-eating birds of the earth are invited to gather themselves to the supper of the great God. This is in contrast to the invitation given in Revelation 19:9 where the saints (saved ones) other than those of the Church are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The Greek word for "supper" used in both passages is the same, and it refers to the principal meal of the day. However, these two meals stand in sharp contrast. In Verse 18, the birds are invited to eat the flesh of those soon to be killed in battle. These dead will come both from the army of

the beast and the army of the "kings of the east." There are many classes of men present in both armies, and these are described in detail as kings, captains, and mighty men, including both free and bond, small and great. The horses of these men are also to be slain, and the birds are invited to eat of their carcasses. God, in His divine judgment upon those wicked armies, is no respecter of persons, or station in life. His judgment is the "great equalizer" of all!

Many have noted that there is a parallel between this passage and a prediction of the Prophet Ezekiel found in Chapter 39, Verses 17-20, of his prophecy. Although there are similarities, the passage in Ezekiel refers to the aftermath of an earlier battle. That battle is fought when the army of Gog (Russia and her allies) invade Israel just prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation (the last three and one-half years of the "seventieth week of Daniel"). In the battle of John's vision, God is contending with the armies of the entire world *after* the Lord's feet have touched the Mount of Olives at the time of His Second Coming. However, the resulting destruction of human flesh and the consumption of it by birds are similar.

The actual parallel to the scene presented by John in Revelation 19 is found in the Lord's "Olivet Discourse" recorded in Matthew 24. "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles (vultures) be gathered together" (see Matthew 24:28). The reference is to the carcasses of those who fall in battle and the gathering of carrion-eating birds to eat them. The reference in Matthew is to this "supper of the great God."

Ezekiel's invitation to "every feathered fowl" is to "gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you." The invitations are similar, but not the same. We must exercise care in interpreting passages so similar and remember that similarities do not necessarily prove identity. Carrion-eating birds are always drawn to places where there is death.

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." The battle that is about to

destroy the armies of the earth was not initiated by the returning King. Until He arrived in the earthly sphere, the armies of the East and West were battling one another. However, at His appearance with His armies of Heaven, the two wicked armies join forces to fight against their common foe. All the manpower of Satan's earth is unleashed against the "space invaders" from Heaven. They turn their weapons of destruction against Christ and His armies. Their weapons are ineffective against the "space invaders," but the "sword of the Lord's mouth" is quite effective against the earthly hordes. The carnage is great as the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" prepares the repast for "the supper of the great God."

The Lord Jesus Christ is still mounted upon His heavenly steed as He battles against His opponents. He, the great General mounted upon His battle horse, swings His sword of judgment with devastating effect. The armies of Heaven fight with Him. We are not told how much time is required for the annihilation of those great earthly armies, but the inference is that the judgment is completed in short order. All military personnel of both the armies of the West and of the East meet their doom. Their bodies lie dead upon the battlefield.

Their souls and spirits enter into Hades to await the final judgment of "the Great White Throne" that will occur approximately one thousand years later.

The destruction of the opposing armies is but the prelude to the destruction of the western leader and his associates. John describes not only the carnage, but tells us also that he saw the "beast" (a reference to the world ruler) and the kings of the earth associated with him gathered with the armies. This "beast" is to be identified with the one described in Revelation 13:1-10. The "kings of the earth" mentioned here are to be identified with the ten kings immediately associated with the beast, the "kings of the east," and others who participate in this final battle. They are all gathered there together, and all die in the battle, with the exception of the beast and his false prophet. God has another fate in store for these two notorious characters!

The consummation of the battle with victory for Christ and His armies of Heaven is described in Verse 20: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." The great world dictator of the West, the "beast" of Revelation 13:1-10, the "willful king," is taken captive and with him the false prophet, the second beast of Revelation 13:11-16. The false prophet mentioned here is definitely identified as the one who wrought miracles and deceived them that received the mark of the image (see Revelation 13:12-15). These two are not killed in the battle. Their doom is to be unique in the history of the earth.

The beast and his false prophet are "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." They do not undergo physical death, but are transported immediately into Gehenna, which is "the lake of fire burning with brimstone." These two most notorious characters in human history, Satan's counterfeits of Christ and the Holy Spirit, are scheduled to undergo a "negative rapture"!

We know that those Christians still living at the time of Christ's appearing in the air to catch away His Church at the end of this "acceptable year of the LORD" are to rise to meet Him without experiencing physical death. After this "meeting in the air," where they are joined by the resurrected saints of the Church Age, they will go with Christ to "His Father's house," which is the third Heaven (see I Thessalonians 4:13-18). But before those living saints rise to meet the Lord, their bodies will be transformed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" into immortal resurrection bodies never capable of dying in the future (see I Corinthians 15:50-54). The living Christians in the day of the Lord's appearing will undergo the "positive rapture," which consists, first of "transformation to immortality," and then *transportation* to the third Heaven, which is the place of their rightful abode.

The beast and the false prophet are to be transported without dying to Gehenna, the place of their rightful abode.

Gehenna is not a place of annihilation, but rather a place of eternal existence outside the presence of God. Gehenna is the real "hell," and the place is characterized by intense heat, but total darkness. It is a place of eternal torment.

The bodies of the beast and his false prophet are not consumed by the flames of "the lake of fire burning with brimstone." We are told in Revelation 20:10, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, *where the beast and the false prophet are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

The casting of the devil into Gehenna takes place 1,000 years after the beast and the false prophet have been transported there. Thus, the fire does not consume their bodies. We must assume that the beast and his false prophet will also be transformed into immortal, resurrection bodies before they are transported from earth to hell. Therefore, in every sense of the word, they are scheduled to undergo "negative rapture." They are the only two human beings in history who will ever undergo this experience!

The beast and the false prophet are the first to ever inhabit the lake of fire. They must wait 1,000 years before they are joined by Satan and the unrighteous dead of all ages. Satan (and probably all of his fallen angels) will join the beast and the false prophet after he leads the earthly rebellion at the end of the millennial reign. Soon after this, after the Great White Throne judgment, all the unrighteous dead of all ages will (in immortal, resurrection bodies) join the beast, the false prophet, the devil and all his angels in that place of terror. "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (see Revelation 20:13, 14).

"And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and

all the fowls were filled with their flesh." In bringing to a conclusion the battle between the earthly armies and the armies of Heaven, those not killed in the early stages of the conflict or in the capture of the beast and the false prophet are now put to death. The plain statement of Scripture is that the entire army of the wicked is killed. "The remnant," that is, the remainder, are slain by the sword of Christ. This sword is the same one mentioned as "proceeding out of his mouth" in Revelation 19:15. We are told that this act of judgment is exercised by the immediate power of Christ rather than by the armies which accompany Him. He is the righteous Judge who cometh "to judge and make war." Zechariah told us, "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle."

There is no scriptural evidence that the armies of earth prevail in any sense against the armies of Heaven. There is total defeat of man at the height of his satanic power when he is brought into conflict with the omnipotence of God. The powers of darkness are defeated; the powers of righteousness will then control the earth.

The last statement of Verse 21 assures us that the carrion-eating birds accepted the invitation that was extended to them by the "angel standing in the sun" to, "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God." The record says, "And all the fowls were filled with their (the armies of the West and of the East) flesh." Such is the abundance of the dead that the fowls are satiated as they consume the fruits of the battle.

All the military power of the earth is destroyed in this great battle of the ages. Only Christ and His armies of Heaven have further military strength. The "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" is now in total control of the earth. He must now perform those righteous judgments that will clear the earth of all satanic opposition to His establishing of the long-promised earthly Kingdom. Satan must be bound. The righteous dead of Old Testament times and of the tribulation period must be raised. The rebels of the chosen nations must

be culled out. And the unsaved Gentiles must also be purged from the earth. All of these actions of the Lord from Heaven are described in other portions of God's Holy Word.

6.

The Binding of Satan

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:1-3).

Satan and his hordes of demons will not be free to plague the earth during Christ's millennial reign. There is to be a period in this world's history when humanity will be free from satanic temptation. In order to bring about this situation, God himself must "bind" this most powerful of all the created angels.

The process of placing Satan in restraints is to be accomplished in the earth, but it is a process that is invisible to the mortal inhabitants of the earth in the days of Christ's return. That which takes place can only be viewed from John's heavenly vantage point. Therefore, the only description of Satan's binding found in Scripture is in Revelation 20.

John's description of these momentous proceedings is both literal and graphic. Speaking in the first person, John says, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven." Just as he saw the angel standing in the sun giving out an invitation to the fowls of the earth in Revelation 19:17, now he sees another angel descending from Heaven empowered by God to accomplish a mission for God. This angel is not Christ, who is

already present in the earth in His immortal flesh. It is another great angel, operating at the command of, and in the authority of, God.

As John witnesses this scene, he observes the angel coming down from Heaven possessing what he calls "the key of the bottomless pit" (that is, "the key to the pit of the abyss"). The word "abyss" is translated "the deep" in Luke 8:31 and Romans 10:7, and doubtlessly refers to the same place. This is the home of demons and unclean spirits.

The angel is also observed to have a great chain in his hands. In Verse 2, the angel is seen laying hold of Satan and binding him. It is further observed that the binding will not be removed until 1,000 years have gone by. In Verse 3, Satan is cast into the abyss, and the door to this place is shut. A seal is placed upon Satan himself making it impossible for him to deceive the "nations" (the "people of the earth") until the 1,000 years have elapsed. The angel then declares that after the 1,000 years have expired, Satan must be loosed for a short period of time.


Many students of Scripture have had trouble with this passage. John seems to be describing a literal scene that was presented to him from his heavenly vantage point. The question raised is, "How can an angel who is an immaterial being lay hold on Satan who is also an immaterial being?"

This question comes from unbelief. When speaking of spiritual things, Scripture frequently attributes the qualities belonging to a physical body to both angels and Satan. God, the Creator of angels, can also deal with these beings in a physical way. Only unbelief can harbor a doubt even about the idea of binding Satan with a "chain." The argument that an immaterial being such as Satan cannot be bound with a physical chain should not foster doubt as to the literalness of John's description.

We must keep in mind that John is using the language of appearance to describe action in the spiritual domain. The chain is a spiritual binding for a spiritual being, and it is applied by

another spiritual being. However, its effects are just as literal as the effects of a physical chain used to constrain a physical being. We cannot know if the chain has any physical characteristics, but the obvious teaching of the passage is that the action of the heavenly angel is designed so as to render Satan inactive. The intention of the description is not to represent Satan as merely restricted, but as rendered completely inactive.

In confirmation of the completely inactive state of this "prince of demons," Verse 3 states that he was cast into the abyss, which also is by its character a place of confinement. The angel uses the key to shut the devil up in the abyss. It is obvious that God intends the reader to understand that Satan is to be rendered totally inactive and out of touch with the world. The fact that Satan is totally separated from this world (his former domain) for the thousand-year period of the reign of Christ is confirmed by the multitude of passages dealing with that Kingdom in which Satan is never found working in the world.



God enabled John visually to see the angel bind Satan and cast him into the pit. However, John could not see visually how long Satan was to be in the pit, nor could he see the purpose. Nevertheless, he does tell us that the devil should deceive the nations no more, and that he should be loosed again after one thousand years. This additional information (beyond what he had observed in the vision) had to be given to John by divine revelation. In some way, God also provided to the Apostle an interpretation of the vision. John intends to convey to his reader not only what he saw, but also what was revealed to him as the meaning of what he had seen. We are not free to inject our own ideas, but rather must accept the plain statements and interpretations of the passage as given.

John observes the angel descending from Heaven in possession of both the key to the pit of the abyss and a great chain. The angel literally takes hold of the spiritual being who is called here by all four of the designations that are common throughout Scripture. This one who "was a murderer from the

beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him . . . for he is a liar, and the father of it" is designated as "the *dragon*, that old *serpent*, which is the *Devil*, and *Satan*." The angel, acting in the power of God, is able to use the chain to bind this great evil one.

When the wicked spiritual being is thoroughly bound, the angel then casts him into the pit of the abyss, closes up the portal to this place (which was opened at the time of the fifth trumpet judgment according to Revelation 9:1), and sets a seal upon his person. From the scriptural descriptions of this place, we must assume that the "pit of the abyss" is in the internal parts of this earth. This is where the bound and sealed Satan is to spend the next thousand years.


John then gives interpretive information to his reader. The devil is to remain chained and sealed (with the seal of God, showing that only God has the power to release him) until one thousand years have gone by. Then John tells us that after the thousand years are completed, it is necessary in God's purpose to release him for "a little season." Revelation 20:7 predicts this "little season" of freedom for Satan with the words, "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." We are then told, "And (he) shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth." That deception, and the rebellion that it engenders, will mark the end of the Millennial Kingdom and the destruction of this present earth.

The fact that Satan is bound (and therefore restricted from all activity in the earth) constitutes one of the major features of Christ's righteous rule upon the earth. This will make possible the peace and tranquillity and absence of spiritual warfare predicted for the Millennial Kingdom. The period before Satan is bound, that is, the tribulation, and the period at the close of the reign of Christ, when Satan is again loosed, stand in sharp contrast to the tranquillity of the thousand years in between. The only period in all human history in which Satan will not practice his work of deception will be the thousand years in which he is bound while Christ reigns upon the earth.

After the messenger of the Father has come down from Heaven and completed his work of binding the prince of demons, then Christ, the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" can proceed with His judgments upon the world's remaining humanity, and His purging of the earth. But first there must occur the next phase of the first resurrection. God's Word tells us of the restoring of immortal life to both the Old Testament saints, and to those saved ones who died as martyrs, during the seven years of the tribulation.

7.

Resurrection of Saints



"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).

"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. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:1, 2).

After the binding of Satan, the time has come for rejoining the souls and spirits of the righteous dead to immortal resurrection bodies, so that they may take their place in the Kingdom. That which is to take place is the *third phase* of the *first resurrection*. Christ's own resurrection was the *first phase* of the *first resurrection*. Of this event, Paul says, "But now is


Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (see I Corinthians 15:20). The *second phase* of the *first resurrection* is described (again by Paul) in I Thessalonians 4:16, 17. "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: 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." The second phase of the first resurrection is the resurrection and Rapture of the Church at the time of the Lord's appearing in the air.

The *third phase* of the *first resurrection* affects the "saved ones" (the "saints") who died as martyrs during the seven-year tribulation period, as well as the "saved ones" of Old Testament times (both Jews and Gentiles). Although the resurrection of tribulation saints and Old Testament saints are described in separate places in Scripture, the times of these resurrections in God's overall time schedule leads us to believe that they are the same event. The third phase of the first resurrection does not affect the "saved ones" of this present age, because they were resurrected and/or transformed at least seven years earlier before the beginning of Daniel's "seventieth week." These saints formed one of the "armies of heaven" that accompanied the Lord in His return to earth from the "Father's house" in the third Heaven.

The Apostle John describes that resurrection of the tribulation saints in the words that are found in Revelation 20:4. He was viewing these earthly proceedings from his heavenly vantage point. John prefixes his description of the actual resurrection by describing the preparations for the Lord's judgments that are soon to take place in the earthly scene. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them."

The Apostle viewed seats of judgment being set up in the earth. These "thrones" were occupied by created beings who were given authority to reign with Christ, and to represent Him

in His earthly judgments. Since Scripture tells us that the saints of this Church Age "shall reign on the earth" (see Revelation 5:10), and that we shall judge, not only "the twelve tribes of Israel," but "that the saints shall judge the world," and "that we shall judge angels," it can be assumed that these judgment "thrones" are occupied by resurrected "saved ones" from this present Church Age. The members of Christ's "Bride" are the occupants of these "thrones" that John saw set up.



The last part of the verse describes the resurrection of the tribulation martyrs. "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; *and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*" John first saw the "souls" (those non-material "parts" of those who had died, absent from material bodies) of the "beheaded" dead, just as he had seen these "souls" at an earlier point in this sequential "unveiling" (see Revelation 6:9). While John watched, these immaterial beings were rejoined to immortal physical bodies suitable for the earthly environment of the Millennial Kingdom. They, also, are to reign with Christ on this present earth: "*And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*"

There is no doubt that John was speaking of the tribulation saints as he narrates this scene. The description he provides could be applied only to those who died as martyrs during the reign of the "beast." He says that the souls he saw return to living bodies were "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and *which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.*" These who lived again were witnesses for Jesus Christ and for the truth of the Word of God during a time when all in the earth were required to worship the beast and his image and to receive his mark. It was a time when those who refused such worship and the necessary "mark" (so that they might show their loyalty to Christ and His Word) were immediately killed. Therefore, these

whom John saw *were* "saved ones" who had died at the hand of the world's "willful king."

There is a second group of the righteous dead who are to be resurrected at this exact same point in God's prophetic program. It was the Prophet Daniel who was chosen to speak of this great event. It is in the first and second verses of Chapter 12 of his prophecy that Daniel writes, ". . . and *at that time* thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life. . . ."

This is a description of the resurrection of Old Testament saints, particularly the saints of the nation Israel. Daniel tells us that the resurrection will take place "at that time." What time did he designate thus? The answer is found in those words which precede this statement in Daniel 12:1. "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." These words provide the time sequence of that which leads to the resurrection of the Old Testament saints.

The opening "at that time" in which Michael the archangel shall "stand up . . . for the children of thy people," designates the beginning of Daniel's "seventieth week," the seven-year tribulation period. Michael is designated as the "archangel" by Jude in Verse 9 of his short epistle. This great angel is the messenger of God specially assigned to watch over the affairs of Israel during those times when God is dealing specifically with that nation. He will "stand up" as Israel enters that final "week" designed of God "to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy (place)" (see Daniel 9:24).

Michael's "standing up" appears to take place at the same time that the Church is called out of this earth, since I Thessalonians 4:16 mentions "the voice of the archangel" as

one of the three sounds heard at the time of the Lord's appearing in the air at the time of the Rapture of the Church. At that time the archangel's voice will be heard (by the Church) as he announces the soon-coming of Israel's "time of trouble." He will "stand up" for the people of that chosen nation before the signing of that seven-year "covenant of hell" (see Daniel 9:27) with the "willful king."

Notice how Daniel outlines the time sequence. "And *at that time* (at the time of the Rapture of the Church just before the beginning of the tribulation period) shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people (the children of Israel): and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to the same time (this is a description of the entire tribulation period): and at that time thy people (Israel) shall be delivered (by the Lord's return to the Mount of Olives and His defeat of the warring armies of the world), every one that shall be found written in the book (those whose names are in the Book of Life, that is, the saved remnant still living at the end of the tribulation). And *many* (the saved ones of Israel's Old Testament times as well as the saved ones from the Gentile nations of that same historical period) of them that sleep in the dust of the earth (those bodies shall be brought back to immortal life as they are rejoined by the souls and spirits returned from the third Heaven), *some* (the saved remnant) to everlasting life."

Daniel tells us of the beginning of the tribulation, the coming of the "time of trouble," the deliverance of the people, and the resurrection of the Old Testament saints. The resurrected "saved ones" from all of Israel's past will return to earthly life to enjoy the blessings of the long-promised Kingdom of Messiah.

This resurrection also comes at the end of the tribulation, after the Lord's feet have touched the Mount of Olives, and after the living saints have been delivered. This is precisely the same time that the tribulation martyrs are to be resurrected. Therefore, these two resurrections *must* be one event! All the saints of the nation Israel will rise at the same time to enjoy the Kingdom that God has promised to them. What a glorious

future awaits those of God's chosen nation who, in past ages and in the future tribulation, patiently await Messiah's coming from Heaven!


The last part of Daniel 12:2 speaks of the second resurrection. This resurrection comes at least 1,000 years after the third phase of the first resurrection. "And some (shall awake) to shame and everlasting contempt." Here again in God's prophetic Word, we have a vast gap of time placed between two events that are mentioned in the same sentence. The prophets did not *predict* these time intervals, but by the wording used, they *suggested* their existence. Here the gap of time falls at the place where our English translation simply places a comma.

The closing phrase in Daniel 12:2 ("and some to shame and everlasting contempt") is the same resurrection that is designated by John in Revelation 20:12-14. From his heavenly vantage point, John describes the terrible scene of resurrection to the second death. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death (the grave, the dust of the earth) and *Hades* (the temporary prison of unsaved souls and spirits) delivered up the dead which were in them (bodies, souls and spirits were rejoined to resurrection life): and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and *Hades* (all the resurrected unsaved dead) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

All the righteous dead from all past ages are present on earth in immortal bodies as the Lord prepares to judge all those who survived the tribulation and who are still living in mortal flesh, in His purge of this planet. All of these innumerable beings are to have part in the judgments to follow. Those of the nation Israel are to be judged first. This is then to be followed by the judgment of living Gentiles.

8.

The Judgment of the Remnant



“As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD” (Ezek. 20:33-38).

In Daniel 12:11, 12 there is a precise time prophecy that has caused much pondering by students of the prophetic Word. Concerning the time of the Great Tribulation, Daniel has written, “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.”

In an earlier statement, Daniel indicates that the sacrifice is to be taken from Israel and the abomination of desolation set up in the tribulation temple in the middle of the “seventieth week.” Speaking of the “willful king,” the “antichrist,” Daniel had said, “And he shall confirm the covenant with (the) 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” (see Daniel 9:27). The

“seventieth week” consists of seven 360-day years. Therefore, that “week” contains 2,520 days. The “midst of the week” would come 1,260 days before the scheduled end of the tribulation.

The fact that the return of Christ is scheduled to occur 1,260 days after the setting up of the abomination of desolation is confirmed by Revelation 12:6. *“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.”* The “woman” represents the saved remnant of the nation Israel who is dwelling in Jerusalem at the time that the “abomination of desolation” is set up. The Lord himself gave instructions to these faithful Israelites in Matthew 24:15, 16. *“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.”*

John saw the “woman” flee into the wilderness, and he understood that she was to be nourished there for 1,260 days. The faithful remnant will not be free to leave their hiding place until the Lord’s feet touch the Mount of Olives at His return. Therefore, the time between the “midst of the week” and the arrival of Jesus Christ upon the earth’s surface is designated as 1,260 days.

However, Daniel’s time prophecy first mentions a period of 1,290 days. Thus, he adds thirty days to the time between the “midst of the week” and the day of the Lord’s arrival upon the Mount of Olives. Probably this thirty days is the time required for the Lord’s armies from Heaven to defeat the armies of the earth, to bind Satan, and to resurrect the righteous dead of both Old Testament times and the tribulation period. At the end of 1,290 days, those who are still living in the earth are to undergo judgment in the courts of the “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Daniel then adds another forty-five days to the period previously mentioned, and he pronounces a blessing on those

who are still present in the earth at the end of the additional forty-five days. "Blessed is he that waiteth (remains), and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

This last forty-five day period would seem to be the time occupied by earthly judgments on those still living in mortal flesh after the Lord has won His battle with the organized forces of wickedness and after He has resurrected the righteous dead of past ages. At the end of this forty-five days, those who have been pronounced righteous (because of their faith in Jesus Christ) shall be ushered into the Millennial Kingdom, still in mortal flesh, as the "seed population" for a continuing earthly life. Therefore, "Blessed is he that waiteth."

The judgment of the earth's mortal population will take place in two phases. The first of these concerns the chosen nation Israel. Those physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) are to appear before the King as a group separated from the other nations of the world. The indications are that their judgment will come first.

It was the Prophet Ezekiel who was chosen to record the prophecy of Messiah's judgment upon the remnant of Abraham's descendants. Ezekiel's brief prophecy is found in Chapter 20, Verses 33 through 38 of his book.

"As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you" (v. 33). Ezekiel is recording a direct quotation from the One he designates as the Lord GOD (Lord Jehovah). The Lord GOD takes a solemn oath that He will rule over the remnant of the nation that He selected by sovereign grace so many centuries earlier. The words, "As I live," are far more than just a declaration of His eternal existence. They refer to His living in a glorified human body. He speaks of His eternal life as the incarnate Messiah of Israel, the One who took on human flesh that He might die for that remnant over which He is to rule. He will dwell among His people as an immortal, glorified Man as He exercises His sovereign rule.


He will rule with "a powerful hand, and a stretched out arm." His authority and power will be absolute, and He will personally stifle all wrong doing. It is also "with fury poured out" that He will rule over that nation. "With fury poured out" means "after my fury has been poured out." The Lord God is saying that He will rule over the remnant *after* the fury of God has been poured out on the earth during the tribulation and the judgments that immediately follow. The righteous Kingdom will be established. Then, "will I rule over you."

The Lord GOD continues to speak: "*And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out*" (v. 34). It will be Messiah himself who will gather all of the living Israelites out from the countries in which they have been dispersed during this interadvent age. Other Scripture indicates that He will use, as intermediate agents, some of the angels of His heavenly armies to accomplish this colossal regathering. In Matthew 13:41, the Lord himself told us, "*The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.*" Also, He further stated (in Matthew 24:31), "*And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*" However, in spite of His using heavenly messengers as His helpers, He is the power behind the regathering. It is His "mighty hand" and "stretched out arm" (after God's fury has been poured out) that will bring all the nation of Israel together before Him.

"*And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face*" (v. 35). The place of the regathering will be the land that God promised to Abraham. Here the Lord GOD refers to that land as "the wilderness of the people." The word "wilderness," as used here, refers to an unspoiled and an unoccupied territory designated as a dwelling place for those found worthy to enter the earthly Kingdom of the righteous. It is at the capital point of this land, Mount **Moriah**, the building site of the Temple, that Messiah himself

in immortal flesh will sit as Judge before all of the regathered Israelites. "There will I plead (speak judgment) with you face to face." The glorious King of Israel will be the personal Judge of all His chosen people.

In His continuing words, the Lord GOD likens the coming judgment to His dealings with Israel's rebellious ancestors in the wilderness of the land of Egypt. "Like as I pleaded (spoke judgment) with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD" (see Verse 36). The reference is to the LORD's appearance before Moses on Mount Sinai at the time of the giving of the Law. There, the LORD "spoke judgment" face to face with the one who represented all of Israel at the time of the wilderness wandering. The judgment of the remnant will be conducted in a fashion similar to that historic encounter.



It is in Verse 37 that the Lord GOD speaks of the method of procedure that will be used in this judgment. "*And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.*" Just as a shepherd's staff is employed to count the sheep (see Jeremiah 33:13), so the Lord GOD will bring the entire flock under the rod, this time with the purpose of separating the godly from the wicked. The rod used is the "stave" of God's grace spoken of in Zechariah 11:7. Those who are judged worthy (those who are godly through their faith in Messiah, exercised before His return to the Mount of Olives) will be certified as firmly under the bond of the covenant.

The "covenant" in view here is the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they break, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (see Jeremiah

31:31-33). This is the covenant that was sealed by Messiah's shed blood on the Cross at Calvary.

The judgment of the living rebels is described in Verse 38. *"And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD."* The unsaved descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be made manifest as they pass under the LORD's rod of judgment. These are the ones who did not receive Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and acknowledge Him as Messiah of Israel during the days of the tribulation. They did not give heed to the preaching of the 144,000 during the days of Jacob's trouble. They went their own way, and received the "idol shepherd" when he "came in his own name." They received the beast's mark, and they worshipped his image. In so doing, the Lord GOD says, "They transgressed against me." They are found unworthy to enter the righteous Kingdom of Messiah.

These rebels will have been gathered out from the countries of the Gentiles, just as were their saved brethren. They were brought to the judgment scene, but they were found guilty of transgression against the God of Israel. Therefore, "they shall not enter into the land of Israel." They will not receive the promise of the land that was made to their forefathers. They are not worthy of the Kingdom. They will have no part in it.


Nothing is mentioned of the fate of these Israelites who were found "rebels" at King Messiah's judgment. However, the opening part of Verse 38 recorded the LORD's statement, "I will purge out from among *you* (the righteous Israelites) the rebels." This would seem to indicate that they meet a fate similar to that of the unrighteous Gentiles who are tried later at "the judgment of the sheep and the goats." As we shall see in the next chapter, these unsaved ones were told, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The rebels of Israel will also depart this earth into the place of everlasting fire.

Those who are gathered to that great judgment (both saved and unsaved) will at last know that Jesus Christ is the covenant God of Israel—Jehovah. Still speaking to the remnant of Israel the Lord GOD, the Messiah, says, “And ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

The first phase of the judgment of living human beings in the earth has now been completed. The second phase still remains. The glorified Christ must now judge the Gentiles who are still living in the earth. He proceeds to accomplish that task.

9.

Judgment of the Nations



“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. 25:31-34, 41, 46).

The judgment of living Gentiles in the earth at the time of Messiah’s Second Coming is described in the Lord’s own words as they are recorded by Matthew in the third section of what has become known as the “Olivet Discourse.” The judgment described is a judgment in the earth *after* the Lord’s feet touch the Mount of Olives, but *before* the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom. Because of the language used by the Lord in describing this judgment, it has become known as the judgment of

“the sheep and the goats.” It is *not* a general judgment (as some have assumed), but rather an earthly judgment of mortal men from the Gentile nations who have survived the holocaust of the tribulation period.

That this judgment comes subsequent to the judgment of living Jews (the judgment considered in the last chapter), appears obvious by the wording of the text itself. This confrontation with the “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” will take place during the extended forty-five days mentioned by Daniel in Chapter 12 and Verse 12 of his prophecy. This is probably the last major event of that forty-five day period.

Matthew 25:31 provides the unmistakable setting for the judgment about to be described. The events that follow are to take place “when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.” The Son of Man’s coming in His glory (with the armies of angels accompanying Him) can only refer to the return of Christ at the end of the tribulation when He comes to set up the earthly Kingdom. This expression could not refer to His appearing in the air to catch away the Church at the time of the Rapture. Neither can it refer to a time after the millennium has expired when God is to destroy this earth and create a new one. This judgment of “the sheep and the goats” is to take place after the Lord’s return from Heaven, which is described in Zechariah 14 and Revelation 19.

“Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” It is the earthly throne of David that is in view. The Lord Jesus Christ will take His rightful place as “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” over the earth. In immortal, resurrected, glorified flesh, He will sit upon the earthly throne of His glory set up on Mount Moriah in the Temple in Jerusalem. This “throne of his glory” is both a “kingly” throne and a throne of judgment. One of His first official acts from this throne is the judgment of the living Gentiles.

“And before him shall be gathered all nations.” The word translated “nations” is the Greek “ethne.” This word can be translated “Gentiles,” and it is translated such at many places

in the New Testament. The word "ethne" refers to people, not to political subdivisions. Here, it is people that are in view. "Before him shall be gathered all *Gentiles* (individuals from the Gentile nations)."

The Lord Jesus Christ had in view this gathering of mortal Gentiles for judgment when He delivered the parable of the dragnet in Matthew 13:47, 48. "*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.*" He made clear the meaning of His Words as He explained this parable in the continuing words of Verses 49 and 50. "So shall it be at the end of the *world* (age): the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

The angels of God are to be the active agents in the gathering of Gentiles together before the judgment throne. A further description of this gathering for judgment is given in Matthew 24:40, 41. "*Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*"

"*And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*" As all Gentiles are gathered before the "Judge of all the earth," the first action taken by the One upon the throne is a division of the individuals so gathered. This division is made prior to the presentation of any evidence, or the consultation of any record books. The division is between the saved and the lost, the righteous and the unrighteous, the "sheep" and the "goats." The Lord knows those who are His own, and He has no need of evidence or earthly records to accomplish such a division. There are only two classes of Gentiles standing in His presence, just as there are only two classes of peoples in the world today. These two classes are distinguished by the words of John 3:18: "He that believeth on him is not condemned

(judged): but he that believeth not is condemned (judged) already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." The judgment for the King's initial division had already been made at the time of the gathering.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The "sheep," the ones who were saved by exercising faith in Him before His return from Heaven, had been placed on the King's right hand. The King of all the earth addresses this group first. This judgment, for them, is a judgment of reward. The reward is presented without further delay. The "King" (notice that the Lord is here called the King—this is definite proof that this is an earthly—not a heavenly—judgment) invites His "sheep" to enter and take possession of the righteous Kingdom that has just been set up. He is already in the Kingdom, and He invites the "sheep" to join Him there. His invitation is, "Come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

This is the long-promised earthly Kingdom. It was prepared for those who are to inherit it even before God's initial act of creation. It was prepared "from the foundation of the world." The plans for this great Kingdom were in the mind of God from the very beginning, and He knew the names of all those who were to inherit it before the world was.

Those who are invited in are addressed as "ye blessed of my Father," men and women who were "blessed of the Father" because of their faith in the Son. They had believed God, and He had "imputed it unto them for righteousness." Because they were the "blessed of the Father," they were about to receive the reward promised to those who obey Him. "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The King did not need to offer an explanation for His action. However, for the benefit of those standing by, He did continue on to explain why the possession of the Kingdom had been offered. He tells these "blessed of my Father—For I was an

hungred, and ye gave me meat (food): I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

Some have been baffled by the King's words. They ask the question, "Does this mean that God had declared these 'sheep' righteous on the basis of their good works?" No, He had not declared them righteous on the basis of their works. He had declared them righteous on the basis of their faith in the shed blood of His Son. The *works* that the King mentions were the *outward evidence* of their faith! These works would not have been performed if these "sheep" had not been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit at some previous time. They performed good works because they *were* righteous by imputation, not in order to *become* righteous in their own power.

To understand this fully, we need to look at the King's continuing words. The "sheep" were also surprised at His previous words, because they did not recall ministering to Him. Their response is given in Verses 37 through 39. "*Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*"

The King's reply is most enlightening. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of *these my brethren*, ye have done it unto me." It is by these words that we first find out that a third group of humanity were present at that judgment scene. The King spoke of this third group as "these my brethren." The King was there in the flesh, and His brethren after the flesh are the saved remnant of the nation Israel. That third group was made up of saved Israelites!

We can deduce two things from this information. First, the **descendants of Israel** are not included among those who are in the process of being judged. Second, the judgment of the living

Jews and the purging out of the rebels described in Ezekiel 20:37, 38 had already taken place. The saved Jews, still living in mortal flesh, are to be observers of this judgment of Gentiles; but they themselves have already been judged.

So, it was their treatment of the Jews during the time of the tribulation that the King brings up as certain proof of the salvation of these "sheep." During the reign of the beast, the Jews will be the most hated people of all time. No one living in that day will raise a hand to protect or comfort the hated and persecuted Israelites *except they be saved by their own faith in Israel's Messiah!* Therefore, in the day of this judgment, good treatment of Jewish people during the tribulation will be an outstanding evidence of a work of grace performed in the individual heart!

We should recall that, although all salvation is by God's grace, all judgments are of works. For those who are saved by grace, their evil works have already undergone judgment upon the Cross at Calvary. When saved people stand before the appropriate judgment seat, only their good works are judged, and the result is always a reward. Such is the case here, and it will have been the case of the Church at the judgment seat of Christ (as is described in I Corinthians 3:11-15).

The unsaved are judged on the basis of their works also. We see that truth as we continue to read the description of the King's judgment of the "goats." Also, at the final Great White Throne Judgment of the wicked dead of all ages, we find they too are judged on the basis of their works. Revelation 20:13 tells us, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: *and they were judged every man according to their works.*"

After He had rewarded the "sheep" and had explained to them the reason for their reward, the King turned His attention to the second division of Gentile humanity—the "goats." "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil

and his angels." Again, no evidence was presented, and no records were opened. The Lord knew the hearts of these on His left hand, and He knew that they had not availed themselves of the grace of God while they had the opportunity. He commanded every individual of this group to depart from Him on a journey that would eventually lead to God's eternal prison—a place of eternal separation from God.

"Depart from me (depart from the presence of God), ye condemned ones. Begin your journey through the paths of everlasting fire, and eventually reach your eternal destination in Gehenna (the lake of fire), the place that was created to house the devil and all his demons." In order to depart by the path of everlasting fire, it was necessary for the souls and spirits of these "goats" to be separated from their mortal bodies. They were to undergo physical death. They could not continue to live in the righteous Kingdom. Their bodies were to return to the earth, but their souls and spirits were to go into Hades, the prison for departed spirits of the unsaved dead and the first "half-way house" on their journey through the paths of fire. The King's command, "Depart from me," was a terrifying condemnation to physical death, and to eternal destruction.

After pronouncing a sentence upon the "goats," the King spoke of the evil works that were a sure testimony to their unsaved state. "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat (food): I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." Their works during the reign of the beast were precisely the opposite of those of the "sheep." They did not risk their lives in order to relieve the suffering of the afflicted.

The "goats" demanded an explanation of the meaning of the King's charge. "Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?"

The King's answer also informed this group that His brethren, the Jews, represented Him during those terrible days

of the tribulation. "Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

This judgment scene closes with the final statement of Verse 46: "And these (the 'goats') shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous (the 'sheep') into life eternal." Both groups were ushered through portals that lead to eternity. The "goats" went into everlasting punishment. They died a physical death, their souls and spirits went into Hades (a place of fire—see Luke 16:24), and their bodies decayed in the earth. Their souls and spirits were to remain in Hades until the time of the second resurrection. From the judgment of the Great White Throne, they, as resurrected and immortal physical beings, were to be cast into the eternity of the lake of fire.

The "sheep" were ushered into the Millennial Kingdom to repopulate it, and to enjoy it. After they had lived out their lives in that Kingdom, they were to be transformed to immortality so that they might occupy the eternal Kingdom in the new earth. Their eternal destiny of bliss was also fixed, and they would never know what it was like to live outside the presence of the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The earthly judgments were now complete. The King could proceed to set up His earthly Kingdom in all its glory.

10.

The Glorious Kingdom

“And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited . . . And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles . . . In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD’S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 14:8-11, 16, 20, 21).

After the purging of the house of Israel, and after the judgment of living Gentiles, when all the unsaved “shall go away into everlasting punishment,” then all mortal humanity left in the earth will be “children of God.” All left alive will know the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. Satan is bound in the pit of the abyss, and he can no longer tempt the nations. The earth has been cleansed of all evil influence, other than that which still lies in the old fleshly nature of that mortal humanity found worthy to enter the Millennial Kingdom. The Lord Jesus

Christ, Israel's Messiah, can now firmly establish His earthly reign.


The Old Testament abounds with many descriptions of that coming glorious Kingdom. An exhaustive study of all the Scriptures that deal with this subject would fill a very large volume. In considering the Lord's Kingdom, we must limit ourselves to those highlights that Zechariah has recorded in the fourteenth chapter of his prophecy. This provides us with only a brief summary of some of the major features of the Kingdom, but even this summary should excite the imaginations of those who belong to the Lord, and who "love His coming."

The coming earthquake in Palestine will bring great changes to the topography of that land. These changes are for the benefit of Messiah's Kingdom. Zechariah 14:8 speaks of some of these topographical changes. *"And it shall be, in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be."*

Zechariah says that these changes will come about "in that day." This refers back to the "day" that was mentioned in Verse 1. That day is "the day of the Lord." As clearly foretold by a majority of the Old Testament prophets, "the day of the LORD" begins with the opening of the seven-year tribulation period, and extends until God destroys this present planet after the rebellion led by Satan at the end of the thousand-year reign. The earthquake occurs when the LORD's feet touch the Mount of Olives, and it changes the landscape of Palestine. These changes include the lifting up of the city of Jerusalem upon a high plateau which will be the highest elevation between the Mediterranean Sea on the west and the Dead Sea on the east.

A source of water in Jerusalem would be capable of feeding streams that flowed either to the west or to the east. Zechariah says that there will be such a source of water and from it *"living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea."* The Prophet is speaking of literal water, although these pure

waters do picture the spiritual cleansing that flows forth from the throne of Christ. The source of these waters is undoubtedly the fountain predicted in Joel 3:18: "... and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim." This literal fountain pictures the spiritual fountain mentioned by Zechariah in an earlier prophecy: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (see Zechariah 13:1).



The waters that originate in Jerusalem will flow in equal volume both westward and eastward. "Half of them" will flow "toward the former sea." The "former sea" (the "sea on the front") is the Dead Sea to the east. The other half of the waters will flow toward the "hinder sea" (the "sea to the back"); that is, the Mediterranean Sea to the west. The wonderful, mild climate that is to be characteristic of the whole earth during Messiah's reign will prevail in the land of Palestine. The "living waters" (flowing waters) from Jerusalem will continue their flow in both summer and in winter. There will be no drying or freezing of these waters at any time of the year. Seasonal changes will be very minor during the millennial day, and the entire year will be a "growing season." Concerning this year-round growing season of the glorious Kingdom, Amos says, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed" (see Amos 9:13).

These are the days of the reign of the covenant God of Israel. He will be present in immortal flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ. Zechariah tells us, "And the LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one."

Messiah's Kingship will extend beyond the boundaries of the Holy Land. He is to be absolute Ruler over all the earth. There will be only one great "I AM"—only one Jehovah. All demonic activity in the earth will cease with the binding of Satan. Therefore, there will be no false "gods" to usurp worship rightly belonging to Jehovah. There will be no other man in the earth

who sets himself up as a sovereign king. All will be unified under earth's only rightful and divine King. "And his name" shall be "one."

The topographical changes that are to characterize Jerusalem and the surrounding countryside are further described in Verse 12. Literally translated, Zechariah's words are, "All the land shall be transformed as the Arabah from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and she (Jerusalem) shall be elevated and shall be inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's vinepresses."

Zechariah has already given us the *cause* of this vast topographical change in which the city of Jerusalem is to be lifted up above the hills by which she has always been surrounded and overshadowed. That cause was the contact of Messiah's feet with earthly terrain and the mammoth earthquake that made the entire, formerly rugged, terrain from Geba to Rimmon "a very great valley." The purpose for this vast change in the geography of the central highland region of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah is to give Jerusalem, which will then be "the city of the great King" (see Psalm 48:2, 3) in the Kingdom Age, the prominent elevation it will warrant as the capital and chief city of the millennial earth. From this city, Messiah's dominion and rule will issue forth to the uttermost bounds of the globe.

The land is said to be "turned about as the Arabah" (that is the proper name translated "plain"). This expression means that the land is to be changed into a plain; that is, it will be smoothed out in a fashion similar to the Arabah.

The Arabah is the geographical name of the deep rift that extends from the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan Valley through the Dead Sea and on to the Gulf of Aqaba. This area is outstanding in that it is the deepest depression on the surface of the earth. At the Sea of Galilee it is 652 feet below sea level, at the Dead Sea almost 1,300 feet below, and only 300 feet above sea level at a point just west of Petra in Edom. There is also another

outstanding characteristic associated with this area. The terrain is of extremely level character. In Josephus' work, he twice speaks of this land as the "Great Plain." The Arabah is deep, and it is level. Zechariah tells us that other parts of Palestine will assume the characteristics of the Arabah.

The district specifically scheduled to undergo these great changes is precisely defined as extending "from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem." This includes the whole "hill country" of the ancient tribe of Judah and extends further to the border of Simeon on the south, and also incorporates most of the land belonging to the tribe of Benjamin on the north. The city of "Geba" was in Benjamin's territory, and was located about six miles northeast of Jerusalem. Rimmon was located about 33 miles southwest of Jerusalem at a point where the central highland ridge of Judah falls off to the lower-leveled country of the Negev. This was one of the cities reoccupied by the Jews on their return from exile according to Nehemiah 11:29. This was an inhabited site in Zechariah's day.

Again, the purpose of the leveling and the lowering of the entire hill country of Judah is that Jerusalem may enjoy an eminent position, unobstructed by higher hills about her, as has always been the case up to that future time. Zechariah says that Jerusalem "shall be lifted up (elevated)," and "inhabited in her place." The city is to be "dwelt in" in her place of exaltation. All of the ancient city is to have inhabitants. Zechariah emphasizes the extent of the rebuilding and rehabilitation of the Holy City by expressly giving certain boundary points. The lifted-up city will be occupied "from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's vineyards."

Zechariah further declares, "And men shall dwell in it (the city of Jerusalem), and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." The exalted city will be occupied by mortal men; both those who survived the tribulation and were found worthy of the Kingdom as a result of the Lord's judgments, and by their children. No more in the history of this present earth will Jerusalem be

destroyed. Even the rebellion at the end of the millennial reign will not result in Jerusalem's destruction. The millennial Jerusalem will only be destroyed when God disintegrates this present earth to make way for the new earth after all human life has been lifted up from this planet. "Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."

Jerusalem will be an active world capital. All of the millennial world's Gentile population (the "sheep" of the Lord's judgment with their offspring) will gather there annually to worship the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." In Verse 16, Zechariah writes, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

The "feast of tabernacles" will be restored as a major religious holiday during the millennial reign. This will be a time set aside for the earth's population to worship the One who is both King, and "Jehovah of hosts." Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, sitting on the world throne is "the LORD (Jehovah)" of the Old Testament. All the world will be in possession of that knowledge as Jesus Christ reigns over the earth.

Zechariah concludes his magnificent prophecy with further words of description. "In that day (in the millennial-reign portion of 'the day of the LORD') shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD: and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite (the merchantman) in the house of the LORD of hosts."

In the glorious Kingdom, holiness to the LORD shall extend to all, even to the animals of burden. All will be sanctified to Messiah's service. All the containers in the millennial Temple shall be cleansed and dedicated to the LORD's service, just as were the containers before the altar in days past.

Holiness and dedication to the LORD will go even beyond that. Every container in the city of Jerusalem and throughout the district of Judah shall be purified and set apart to the LORD's service. Sacrifices commemorating Messiah's work of the Cross will be offered in that millennial Temple. Those sacrifices in that day (just as the Lord's Supper in our day) will be a remembrance of that work accomplished on the hill of Calvary at Messiah's first advent. The carcasses of the sacrifices offered will be divided and returned to those who offered them. The parts of the animal sacrifices may be "seethed" (boiled) in the containers found throughout Jerusalem and Judah (because all are purified). The food cooked in them may be consumed by the participants.

In that day there will be no more "merchandizing" in the Temple of the LORD of hosts. Never again will Messiah be forced to say, "You have made my Father's house a den of thieves." All that takes place in that house will be on the highest spiritual plane. At last, righteousness will reign in the earth!

All this will follow that "coming earthquake in Palestine." The world today awaits the return of her rightful "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Everything good that is ever to happen to this planet depends upon His return. There will be no peace on earth until the Prince of Peace once again stands upon the Mount of Olives. We who are God's own should fervently pray (as our LORD once taught us to pray), "Thy Kingdom come!"

The End