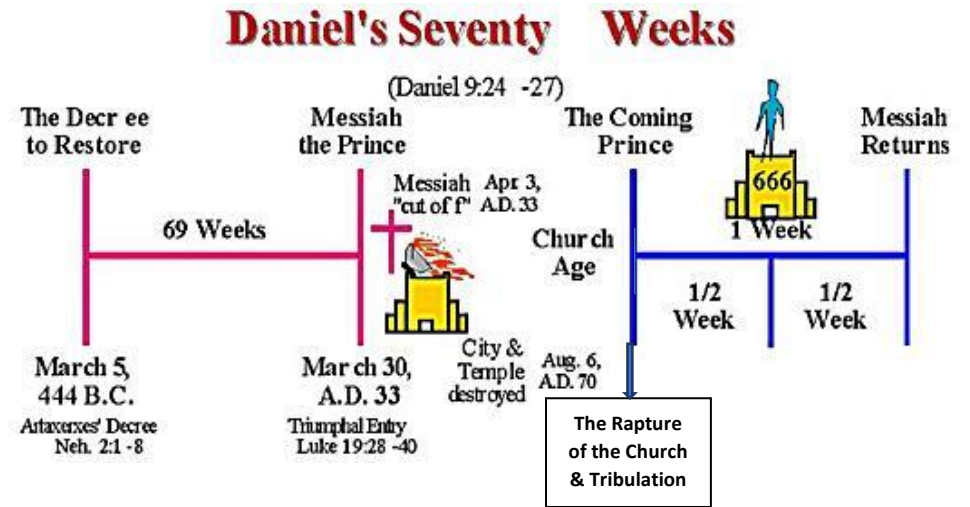


Handbook 3
Studies on
‘Things to Come’
The Prophetical Books of
Daniel
Revelation
Haggai, Malachi
For God has spoken
Studies by Albert Fairweather



“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen” Revelation 1:7



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- Book 1. The Shepherd's Handbook' and 'The Holy Spirit'**
A Guide for Elders, Bible Teachers & Students of God's Word
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God has spoken!

What a remarkable statement that the God of all creation has spoken to reveal Himself and His will for all peoples. His voice was heard in creation (Psalm 19:1); His voice was heard through the prophets of old and then through the words of His Son Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1). Now His voice is heard through the sacred inspired Scriptures, wonderfully preserved for us by divine decree.

Scholars say that one quarter of the Bible is Prophecy. They also say that only one quarter of this quarter remains to be fulfilled. The great points of future Prophecy yet to be fulfilled are:

1. The rapture when Christ returns for His Church;
2. The Judgement Seat of Christ;
3. The Great Tribulation;
4. The return of our Lord to earth at the battle of Armageddon;
5. The 1000-year reign of Christ over this earth;
6. The Great White Throne judgement;
7. The New Heavens and Earth.

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Introduction

What is this ‘Gospel’?

Here we have the wonder of Revelation and Preservation!

The word ‘Gospel’ means ‘Good News’. This was Paul’s reminder to the Corinthian church: *“I declare to you the Gospel. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

This is the Gospel: Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day!

In the Old Testament we have the prophetic ‘**revelation**’ of this Good News foretold long before Christ’s coming, all pointing to His birth in Bethlehem, His life’s work as Servant, His death, burial and resurrection and His future reign and glory. These Scriptures were wonderfully fulfilled and many will be fulfilled and were all ‘**preserved**’ and kept for us so that we may be partakers of His salvation.

In the New Testament, we have Christ fully revealed as God manifest in flesh, fulfilling many prophesies. Paul, who previously persecuted and killed Christians, later believed, then ‘**received**’ that ‘**revelation**’ from God that is also ‘**preserved**’ for us down through many centuries.

Jesus said that His words will never pass away. This ‘Good News’ is so simple that many stumble over it. I used to think, ‘Surely there is something I have to ‘**do**’ to merit heaven!’ Then I learnt that Jesus ‘**did**’ the work that saves when He died for my sins on the cross, and my part was simply to believe this in my heart and commit my life into His hands for time and eternity.

God loves you, Christ died for your sins, and rose again the third day, but the question is, ‘**will you believe it?**’ Jesus put it very simply when He said, *“For God so loved the world that **He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved”*** (John 3:16-17).

You can place your name beside ‘whoever’ and receive His gift!

We are not saved by our ‘works’ but to **believe the Gospel** and then go forth ‘to do good works’ because we are saved. Here is the nail in the coffin for those who believe they are good enough for heaven because they keep the golden rule ‘*do unto others as you would have them do to you*’ along with their good works!

God will not weigh our good deeds against our bad! Jesus paid the price, for the apostle Paul wrote, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”* (Ephesians 2:8-10). ‘Grace’ is undeserved favour and it means ‘bestowal’, for it is freely given, a gift to receive!

To reject this gift is an insult to the God of all grace. We will be saved in God’s way, or we will not be saved at all!

The Gospel is quite clear: We must come to God His way and if pride or fear of what people think or may say hinders us, that will be too bad for us. God gives us all opportunity and we need to take our first steps towards trust in Him.

The hour has come to decide for or against Christ. An old Hymn: ‘What will you do with Jesus?’

Jesus is standing in Pilate’s hall, Friendless, forsaken, betrayed by all;
Hearken! What means this sudden call? What will you do with Jesus?

Jesus is standing on trial still, you can be false to Him if you will,
and you can be faithful through good or ill: What will you do with Jesus?

“Jesus, I give You my heart today! Jesus, I’ll follow You all the way,
gladly obeying You!” will you say: “This I will do with Jesus!”

*What will you do with Jesus? Neutral you cannot be;
Someday your heart will be asking, “What will He do with me”*

.....

The Prophetical Books

Daniel

In this Study we look at the remarkable prophecies revealing future events in the Book of Daniel, written about 450 years before the birth of Christ. Yes, God has spoken, for He said to Isaiah before 700 BC: *“Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them”* (Isaiah 42:8-9).

These are outlines only of this book, so it is most important that as you read this Study, you also read the Bible references. This book is, with Revelation, an ‘Apocalypse’ meaning an ‘unveiling’, giving a prophetical view of the real powers behind the nations and especially Israel.

The Jewish people are God’s people, chosen in Abraham and promised a land, the occupation of which was subject to their obedience to His laws. When Israel disobeyed and their sin climaxed, God brought the armies of Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem in **606 BC** and the city was captured, and in three deportations the nation was led captive to Babylon. The third deportation was in **586 BC** when the Temple was destroyed. For these events read 2 Kings Chapters 24 and 25.

Chapter 1

Daniel was among these captives taken in 606 BC and lived to at least to 530 BC. He was a teenager of Royal lineage who, with his friends, was selected to be educated in the ways of Babylon. This chapter details the rise of these godly young men to prominence, for they were selected by the King for Palace duties among the wise men of the realm.

The *‘times of the gentiles’* (Luke 21:23-28) began with the end of Jewish rule and the capture of Jerusalem in 606 BC and will end with **Christ’s kingdom** when He returns to rule as King of kings and Lord of Lords.

Chapter 2

V. 1-31. God chose brutal King Nebuchadnezzar to reveal His power, for this king had a dream that troubled him and that he could not recall. Daniel was able to reveal it and also interpret it to the King. What the King saw was a great image that represented four great kingdoms and their **outward splendour** and power, for this is what **men see** and glory in, quite apart from what God sees. **What the king saw in this great image:**

V. 32. The head of gold: Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, for he was the General of the Army, and inherited the kingdom from his father in **605 BC** and built up a great empire. This Babylonian empire lasted until **538 BC**.

V. 32. The shoulders of silver: Darius the Mede was the silver shoulders. He captured Babylon in **538 BC** and the Persian kingdom ruled until **332 BC**.

V. 32. The belly and thighs of brass: Alexander the Great was the thighs of brass. He expanded the Grecian empire. By his swiftness of conquest, in a few years he conquered the Persian Empire and this empire lasted from **332 BC** to **63 BC**.

V. 33. The legs of iron: This is the Roman Empire. It stamped and devoured all before it and ruled over most of the known world from **63 BC** to about **AD 476**.

The Roman Empire was revealed as having **feet** of part **iron** and **clay** and **ten toes**. The clay of corruption could not bond with iron of imperial rule and weakened the Empire. It continued in Europe in various forms. In the end times, it will be revived with **10 kings (the ten toes)** over whom the Beast will reign. He is called *'the man of sin'* and *'the lawless one'* in 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2, and is the *'beast'* of Revelation 13:1-2. We learn more about him in Daniel 9:27.

V. 34-35. The smiting Stone is Christ. He will destroy those kingdoms and set up His own on earth and reign for 1000 years. *"You watched while a stone (Christ) was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet (the ten toes) of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth"*.

V. 35-45. A mountain in Scripture means a kingdom. Daniel was able to reveal the history of the great kingdoms that would come on earth, and that Christ would destroy these at His coming in judgement to set up His kingdom, represented by the *'great mountain'* (Revelation 19:11-16).

Chapter 3

King Nebuchadnezzar made a great image. All people in his kingdom were ordered to worship it. In a coming day, all will have to worship the image of the beast (Revelation 13:11-18). After the rapture of the Church, he will rule the world for the last half of the seven years of great tribulation.

Daniel's companions refused to worship the image and were thrown into a furnace of fire and the Son of God, the Lord Jesus was with them in the fire. God used this to display His deliverance, and to humble the heart of the King, for He is able to turn the hardest of hearts to repentance and faith.

Chapter 4

The testimony of King Nebuchadnezzar. He declared to his people the great working of God in his life in humbling him. He was resting in his house and had another dream that only Daniel was able to interpret. In his dream he saw a great tree that was cut down and the stump bound with iron and bronze. Twelve months later as he boasted of his greatness his reason went and the heart of a beast given to him for seven years before his reason returned and he again ruled.

Chapter 5

Belshazzar became king. This chapter explains itself. This king held a drunken feast, drinking from the holy vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar from the Temple in Jerusalem. A hand appeared writing on the wall. The writing said his kingdom was numbered and finished, he was weighed in the balances and found wanting and his kingdom was divided and given to the Medes and Persians. That night the king was slain, for while the feast was in progress in the palace, Darius the Mede captured the city and slew the king. The Bible says, *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap"* (Galatians 6:7).

Chapter 6

Darius became king in 538 BC. This chapter explains itself. Darius made Daniel one of three chief governors over the kingdom and Daniel's faithfulness to God overruled the evil plan to have him eaten by lions. God shut the lion's mouth, and this led the king to honour Daniel's God, the true and living God. For God says that *"those who honour Me I will honour, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed"* (1 Samuel 2:30).

Chapter 7

V. 1-7. Daniel had a dream and visions. The four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea (the Mediterranean), with four beasts coming out of this sea. These are the same four kingdoms as seen with the great image of Daniel Chapter 2. They are ravenous beasts of prey, for this is how **God views these kingdoms.**

These kingdoms are: Babylon, a lion; **Medo-Persia,** a bear; **Greece,** a leopard and **Rome,** a dreadful terrible strong beast different to all others. It had **10 horns** and here the prophecy leaps from the Roman Empire ending in AD **476** to the end times, for this is the same beast that is revealed in Revelation 13:1-2.

V. 8. Daniel saw the 10 horns. These horns are **10 kings**, who will rule **after** the rapture of the Church, over **10 kingdoms** that will form the revived Roman Empire during the Tribulation period.

Then another **'little one'** came up among them and plucked out by the roots three of these horns. This **'little one'** is the beast that is revealed in the book of Revelation Chapter 13. He will conspire by intrigue to *'pluck out by the roots'* and remove three kings, and to take control of their three kingdoms. He will grow powerful until all the 10 kingdoms and remaining seven kings come under his control.

V. 9-10. Thrones are set. Daniel saw the Ancient of Days and the glories of heaven and the multitudes that minister to Him. He also sees the court seated and the books opened. This is the same scene as in Revelation 20:11-14 when the Lord judges the dead and all whose names are not written in the Book of Life.

V. 11-12. The sound of the pompous words of the 'horn'. He becomes a world leader, proud and arrogant, but Daniel watched till the **beast** was slain and given to the burning flame. This is the same as Revelation 19:17-21 where he is cast into the Lake of Fire. The rest of the beasts had their dominion taken away, but their lives spared. The seven kings become puppet kings in support of the beast *'for a season and a time'*, through the seven years of the great Tribulation that is revealed in the book of Revelation 7:14.

V. 13-14. Visions of the Son of Man. This is the Lord Jesus given dominion, glory and a kingdom by the Ancient of Days. He comes to take possession of the earth to set up His kingdom (Revelation 11:15, 19:11-21).

V. 15-22. Daniel wanted more information. He was grieved and troubled over the visions, and then the interpretation was revealed to him:

(a) The four great beasts are four kings who arise out of the earth (Daniel 7:1-7), but the saints of the Most High will inherit the kingdom during the 1000-year reign of Christ.

(b) The fourth beast is Rome and in its last form will be controlled by a terrible beast. The ten horns on this beast are 10 kings and the little horn is the beast. He makes war with the saints and prevails over them during the second half of the seven-year great Tribulation.

(c) The Ancient of Days comes and judgement was made in favour of the saints against the beast, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. All this is found in Revelation Chapters 13 to 20.

V. 23-28. Daniel is given more information. The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth. This is the Roman Empire that ruled with a rod of iron from **63 BC to 476 AD.**

The ten horns are ten kings that arise out of the Roman Empire. The little horn that arises after them is the beast who will persecute the saints for *'a time, times and half a time'*, the last three and a half years of the great tribulation.

God is in control and the kingdom will be given to the saints of the Most High.

Chapter 8

V. 1-8. Daniel was given a vision of a Ram that represented the Persian Empire. The Ram was overthrown by a male Goat from the west, who is Alexander the Great from Greece. He grew great and established a huge empire but died in 323 BC, aged only 32. Then his four generals, seen as four horns, divided his empire (v.8).

V. 9-14; 20-22. Out of one of these horns grew *'a little one'*, Antiochus Epiphanes, who persecuted the Jews and defiled their Temple in 168 BC.

V. 15-27. The prophecy then leaps to *'the time of the end'* and *'in the latter time of their kingdoms'*... *'a king shall arise, having fierce features'*. This again is the beast that will defile the temple as did Antiochus. He will have *'sinister schemes'* and *'destroy fearfully'* and *'rise against the Prince of princes'* (the Lord Jesus). *'But he shall be broken without human means'*, for the Lord will capture him and cast him into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

Chapter 9

V. 1-23. Daniel understood by reading in the book of Jeremiah 25:9-12 that Jerusalem would be desolate for 70 years while the land enjoyed her Sabbaths (Leviticus 25:42, Chronicles 36:21). Daniel humbled himself before his God in earnest prayer with confession over the sins of Israel his people and asked for forgiveness. His prayer was answered for Gabriel was sent and informed him he was greatly beloved!

A major Bible prophesy – see the chart on the back page

V. 24. The seventy weeks of years. The angel Gabriel informed Daniel that **seventy weeks** were determined in God's program for Daniel's people, the Jewish nation, and for the holy city of Jerusalem.

Now each 'week' represents 'seven' years. The 'seventy weeks' makes a total of 490 years, and 69 of these weeks have been exactly fulfilled, while the 70th week, the seven-year Great Tribulation is yet to be fulfilled.

Israel went into captivity to Babylon in three deportations from 606 BC to 583 BC. Cyrus was named by the prophet Isaiah more than 150 years before he was born! *"Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built,' And to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid'"* (Isaiah 44:28, 45:1-7). Cyrus reigned over the Medeo-Persian empire from 559 to 530 BC.

Ezra records that Cyrus released the Jews to return to Jerusalem (in 536 BC), as prophesied by Jeremiah 25:1-12, exactly 70 years from the first captivity of the Jews in 606 BC. Events of their return are recorded in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah and Haggai. The Temple was destroyed in 586 BC and Ezra states that the rebuilding was hindered by adversaries and was not completed until 516 BC.

V. 25. The seventy weeks begin. In 444 BC, King Artaxerxes gave the command for Nehemiah to rebuild the city of Jerusalem (Nehemiah Chapter 2). This marked the beginning of the 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy, for he first repaired the city walls and the rebuilding of the city continued for '7 weeks' or 49 years.

V. 25-26. From building the city until 'Messiah the Prince'. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince and it would be another 62 weeks or 434 years bringing us to AD 33 when Messiah the Prince would be 'cut off', that is crucified, 'but not for Himself' 'but for our sins! This makes a total of 69 weeks or 483 prophetic years to the death of the Messiah.

Daniel states that after the Messiah is 'cut of' (crucified), 'the people of the prince (the beast) who is to come', that is the Roman people, would 'destroy the city and the sanctuary'. This happened in AD 70 when the Roman army under General Titus destroyed the city and Temple, and led the Jews into captivity, dispersing them among the nations.

But this is only 69 weeks, so where is the 70th? The whole of the Church age is between the 69th and the 70th 'week, and the last 2000 years have been marked out with 'wars and desolations' as prophesied in Daniel 9:26.

The prophetic 'clock' relates to Israel. This 'clock' stopped at the death of Christ, for it was then that Israel were set aside while God gathers in a people from all nations, including believing Jews, to build His Church.

After the Lord returns for His Church at the 'rapture', **the prophetic clock** will again begin to tick with the last 'week' of seven years, the Great Tribulation prophesied by Daniel, and with events recorded in the Book of Revelation.

Then Israel again will be prominent in God's great plan for the ages. Coming events cast their shadows ahead, and since 1948 Israel is again a nation in its own land. When the Tribulation begins, they will rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem, and they are now making ready the materials and training priests to serve in the Temple that the beast will defile (Revelation 11:1-2).

V. 27. Events that follow after the Church age: The beast is 'the prince who is to come' and he comes from the Roman people. "Then **he** shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes **desolate**, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate".

The beast makes a covenant or a peace treaty with many for 'one week', that is, for seven years, but he breaks it after three and a half years. Jesus warned in Matthew 24:15 of the beast's future coming and the abominations he will commit in the Jerusalem temple.

Antichrist's reign will only be for the last 'week' of seven years during the time called 'the great tribulation' in Revelation 7:14. The first half of this week of three and a half years Jesus called "the beginning of sorrows" in Matthew 24:4-14. In the middle of this 'week' the Antichrist breaks his 'covenant with many for one week' and ends sacrifices and offerings in the rebuilt Jewish temple and sets himself up as God in the Temple and demands to be worshiped as God (2 Thessalonians Chapter 2). This is the abomination that desecrates and makes the Temple desolate.

The seventieth week of seven years is divided into two parts, each of three and a half years. The first half of the Tribulation is found in Revelation 11:3 and the second half in Revelation 12:6.

This second half begins "the great tribulation". Jesus said, "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:22).

He is a beast by name and satanic in nature, but his reign ends when the Lord returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. Then in righteousness He will judge the world and this evil one and the armies that oppose Him
(Revelation 19:11-21).

Chapter 10

In this chapter, Daniel was in prayer for three weeks by the River Tigris, when a man clothed in glory appeared to him. Daniel was 'a man greatly beloved' for his godliness. Demonic angels behind the kings of Persia and Greece opposed this heavenly man, but the angel Michael gave him help by coming in answer to Daniel's prayers.

V. 21. “*But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael **your prince**)*”. Michael, in a special way, is the Prince of the Jews to fulfill God’s purposes.

Chapter 11

The man clothed in glory reveals to Daniel the history of world empires after the Persian King Darius.

V. 1-2. The Persian Empire will have three more kings, then the fourth (King Xerxes) will be richer and stir up hostility with the realm (the kingdom) of Greece.

V. 3-4. The king of Greece, Alexander the Great, defeated this Persian king Darius the 3rd. and ruled the area from Greece to India, but Alexander died aged only 32 and his empire was divided among his four generals.

V. 5-20. Here is a detailed history of these four generals, their kingdoms and their descendants over 375 years. There will be warfare between the Southern kingdom (Egypt) and the Northern kingdom (Syria).

V. 21-35. Then a fierce and cruel Syrian king will arise, (Antiochus IV, called Epiphanes), ‘*a vile person*’, who came in peacefully, but attacked the Jews, “*So he shall return and show regard for **those who forsake the holy covenant** (the ungodly Jews). **And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress** (the Jewish Temple); **then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation**”.*

This evil man foreshadows the beast to come, for he set up an image of the god Zeus, and sacrificed a pig, an unclean animal, on the Temple altar. “*Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering* (Daniel 11:30-33).

“In his attack on Jerusalem Antiochus IV is said to have killed 80,000 Jews, taken 40,000 more as prisoners, and sold another 40,000 as slaves. He also plundered their Temple, robbing it of approximately \$1 billion by modern calculations” (from the ‘Enduring Word’).

During this time, some Jews followed this vile person, and turned to Greek idolatry, forsaking Judaism, but others stood firm, resisted and suffered greatly. Among these was a Jewish family known as the Maccabees who waged warfare

against their rulers and eventually won independence until the Romans took control of Palestine.

V. 36-45. Now the prophecy leaps beyond the centuries, including the church age, to the time of the Great Tribulation, when the beast is revealed,

This beast out of the sea (Revelation Chapter 13), will also come into Jerusalem peacefully and then set himself up as god demanding to be worshipped as god, and will defile the Temple and the altar. “*Yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him*”. This will be mid-point of the Tribulation period.

Chapter 12

V. 1. The prophecy continues on to the time when the beast arises during the Great Tribulation, the last ‘week’ of seven years. At this time, the angel Michael, who is ‘*The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people*’, will stand up to help Daniel’s people, Israel (Read Revelation Chapter 12).

It will be a terrible time, but one third of the nation will be saved: “*And it shall come to pass in all the land,*” Says the LORD, “*That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: **I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; And each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God’**” (Zechariah 13:8-9). God promised Abraham and their fathers by an oath to give them the land of Israel, and they will inherit it (Ezekiel 47:14).*

Israel are His chosen people, now set aside and spiritually blinded while God takes out of every nation, some Jews and many Gentiles, a people for His name, forming the Church (Acts 15:14). When Christ returns to judge the world (Revelation 19:11-16), the Jewish people will be restored as a nation (Romans Chapters 9 to 11), and they will become the head of the nations and Jerusalem will become the centre of world worship as is foretold in Isaiah 2:1-5.

V. 2-3. There will be a resurrection of those martyred during the Great Tribulation, and they will reign with Christ for 1000 years during the Kingdom age (Revelation 20:4). “*Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever*” (Daniel 12:3). This refers to the Tribulation saints, but we also should shine like bright lights for the Lord.

V. 4. This book that Daniel wrote was to be sealed and it became a mystery hidden to many, but in Revelation Chapter 5, the time of the end will have come, and the Lamb (Jesus) will open the seals, and then all who seek will gain understanding. At this time, *“many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase”*. We are near the end and never before in all history has there been so many people travelling the world and such increase in knowledge.

V. 5-8. Two more heavenly beings stand on either bank of the River Tigris while the man clothed with glory stood above the middle of the river, and he *“held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished”*. This three and a half years of 1260 days is the last half of the Great Tribulation. (Daniel 12:7).

During the second half of the Great Tribulation, the 70th ‘week’, the power of the Jewish nation (and today it is powerful with atomic weapons) will be shattered. Just when all hope seems lost, the Lord will return to deliver them. Read Zechariah 14 and Romans 11:26.

V. 9-10. Daniel wanted more information, but all was sealed: *“Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand”*.

V. 11-13. From the time that the beast takes away the daily sacrifice, *“and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days”*. When the Tribulation ends, the scene will be filled with multitudes of the dead and the destruction caused by war and God’s judgements, In these extra days, God will be regenerating the earth and judging the nations (Matthew 19:28; 25:31-46)

The glorious angelic man then tells Daniel, *“But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”* Daniel was resurrected when the Lord rose from the dead. At that time, many of these resurrected saints were seen in Jerusalem, and the Lord took the saints in Paradise to heaven (Matthew 27:51-52; Ephesians 4:8-9).

This concludes our study on the book of Daniel. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, dating from 200 BC and found in 1948, were fragments of this amazing book.

This discovery confirms that the book of Daniel was written long before our Lord Jesus came to earth and this confounds those who say Daniel could not have known about so many future events!

The Bible is divinely inspired and we also believe in divine intervention in preserving these prophecies over thousands of years to our own time. I am a Christian because I came to believe these things in God’s word to be true.

“Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.” (Isaiah 42:9).

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The Prophetical Book of Revelation

In this study we will look at the remarkable prophecies found in this book that were revealed to the apostle John about 96 AD.

These are Study outlines only and it is for you to fill in the details. It is important as you read this study that you also read the chapters in the Bible and the reference given as they relate to this study.

‘Revelation’ means *‘The disclosure or unveiling of what was previously hidden and unknown’*. This disclosure begins in Chapter 1 and was given by the Lord Jesus to His servant John, revealing to him things that would shortly take place. This book reveals future events mainly in the chronological order as they occur except, for the parenetical chapters as in Chapters 7 and 12.

The events in Revelation fill out the prophecies given to Daniel

The key to understanding this book is found in Revelation 1:19.

Jesus said: ***“Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this”***.

Chapter 1

(1) This the view of what John saw in the past: *“Write the things which you have seen”* (Revelation 1:19). In this Chapter the glories of the Son of God are revealed, with a special blessing on those who read and keep the sayings of this book. His place is seen in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands and these represent seven local churches, while the seven stars He is holding in His right hand represent angels or messengers of the seven churches that were sent to John.

Chapters 2 and 3

(2) **This is the view of what John saw in the present:** “*and the things which are*” (Revelation 1:19). These Chapters record the seven letters sent by the angels or messengers to the seven local churches existing in John’s day.

The true Church fills the scene, for the prophetic clock stopped at Calvary, and Israel was set aside until after the rapture of the Church. These Chapters reveal to these churches their true condition in the eyes of the Lord, calling for repentance.

These letters were sent to: **a.** The seven churches of John’s day giving warnings and correcting messages: **b.** They also give a warning to all churches in our day to repent and walk in His ways: **c.** Many godly Bible teachers also believe that they have a **prophetical view** of the progression of the churches down through the centuries from the days of John to when the Lord raptures His Church.

Here are the seven churches from the prophetical view

Ephesus, with *first love lost, and called to repent*. This represents the churches at the end of the age of the apostles, from 95 AD. These dates are only approximate.

Smyrna, is *called to overcome*. This represents the churches persecuted until the time of the emperor Constantine from 95 AD to 300 AD.

Pergamos, is *called to repent, for accepting worldly ways*, the professing churches from 300 AD to 600 AD.

Thyatira, the church *adding idolatry to worldly ways*, as did the Roman church and representing the professing churches from 600 AD onwards.

Sardis, is *spiritually dead*, the professing church, but having a few true believers, from 1500 AD onwards. In all of the churches there appears to be a mixture of saved and unsaved

Philadelphia, *the revived church*, faithful and believing, and having a door of opportunity opened by God, but with little strength, from 1600 AD onwards.

Laodicea, *Christ is outside this church*, for this is the last state of the professing church, apostate when Christ returns. They are neither hot nor cold, and so are rejected by the Lord. He counselled them to buy the refined ‘gold’, speaking of their need of Christ, the ‘white garments’ of their need of the garment of Christ’s righteousness clothing the saints, and their need to ‘anoint’ their eyes, speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit in opening their blind eyes to the Gospel of His saving grace. There are many who are unsaved in professing churches today.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is outside this church and He calls to individuals to open the door of their hearts to receive Him (Chapter 3:20).

Chapters 4 and 5

(3) **This is the view of what John saw into the future:** “*and the things which will take place after this*” (Revelation 1:19). After the Church age ends on earth.

Chapter 4 begins with **a door open in heaven**, and a voice calling to John saying, “*Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this*” (Revelation 4:1). The rapture of the Church has taken place and she is in heaven.

John hears the call, “*Come up here*”, and in heaven he sees the glory of the throne of God and the Church Age elders seated around the throne, with multitudes of the resurrected saints, angels and the redeemed of the Old Testament Age worshiping and saying, “*You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created*” (Revelation 4:11).

He saw the **seven sealed scroll** with writing on both sides, held in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, and a mighty angel saying, “*Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?*” *And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it*” (Revelation 5:2-3). John weeps because, after an intensive search, no one was able to open the seals.

This **scroll is the title deeds to the earth**, and the Lord Jesus, the Lamb who was slain, is the only one who can open the seals and has the right to own and rule the world. At this present time, Satan the usurper reigns, for he is the ‘*ruler of this world*’ and ‘*the prince of the power of the air*’ (John 14:30, Ephesians 2:2). He rules behind the thrones of the kingdoms of men, causing wars and suffering (Daniel 10). He offered all the kingdoms of this world to our Lord Jesus if He would but fall down and worship him, but this our Lord rejected (Luke 4:1-13).

Chapter 6

This chapter reveals things to happen on earth, for the **Great Tribulation** begins with the Lamb opening the seals that unleash the judgements of the last seven years before the Lord returns to judge and to reign.

With the first seal, a rider goes forth with a bow and seated on a white horse, signifying that the beast, called ‘*the man of sin*’ (2 Thessalonians 2:3), will come in peacefully and with deceit to rule the world. We have seen this evil man in the

writings of the prophet Daniel (Daniel 7:7-8, 23-26). Jesus said, “*All these are the beginning of sorrows*” (Matthew 24:8).

The second seal swiftly follows bringing **war**, the result of the beast’s activities. The judgements intensify over the first three and a half years.

The **third seal** brings famine, for that always follows war.

The fourth seal brings death, the result of war, across the fourth part of the earth.

The fifth seal reveals the souls of those slain for ‘*the word of God and the testimony which they held*’, for these were martyred during the first half of the Great Tribulation.

The sixth seal brings anarchy with a great earthquake, with the whole creation reeling and the kings, great men and all people hiding in caves and saying to the mountains and rocks, “*Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!*”¹⁷ *For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?*” (Revelation 6:16-17).

Chapter 7

This chapter is a parenthesis or a pause. The church has been raptured and the prophetic clock begins again to tick with Israel centre-stage. A heavenly scene is introduced before the seventh seal is opened on earth. Four angels are holding the four winds of earth, saying, “*Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.*” *And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed*” (Revelation 7:3-8).

These Jewish servants are sealed at the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

Their ministry will be to preach the gospel to all people, and many will be saved during this time as is here revealed: “*a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes*” (Revelation 7:9). “*Then one of the elders answered, saying to me (to John), “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*” (Revelation 7:13-14).

This Great Tribulation will last for seven years, the time when God unleashes judgement on a world that has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. It will also be a time when multitudes will turn to the Lord. The Holy Spirit is dwelling ‘in’ God’s people during the Church age. He was ‘with’ God’s people in the Old Testament age and will again be ‘with’ them during the Great Tribulation.

Chapter 8

V. 3-4. This begins with the opening of the seventh seal. John sees seven angels “*who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets* “. Then another angel is introduced: “*Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand*”. These saints are suffering great persecution and martyrdom during this Great Tribulation period.

V. 13. The seventh seals lead to the seven trumpets sounding. The first four trumpets cause great devastation on the planets and earth, but greater are to follow. “*And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound”!* **These three ‘woes’ are to follow as the trumpets sound.**

Chapter 9

The fifth trumpet judgement sounds and the first ‘woe’ begins, with a star fallen from heaven. This star is Satan, and he opens the bottomless pit, and releases great clouds of demonic beings who attack the people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They do not kill, but their torment is like the sting of a scorpion. We read of the fall of Satan, also called Lucifer, in Isaiah 14:12-17. While Satan stands as the head of all evil powers, those released from the pit have an **angel** over them, called in Hebrew ‘Abaddon’, in Greek ‘Apollyon’, both meaning the ‘Destroyer’.

The sixth angel sounds the sixth trumpet and the second ‘woe’ begins. The command is given to release the four angels bound at the great Euphrates River, and with them a great army of two hundred million horseman (demonically inspired beings), and they kill a third of mankind for a predetermined time. But even after such great judgements, the rest of mankind would not repent of their wickedness (v. 21).

Chapter 10

Again, there is a parenthesis or a pause in sounding the trumpets. John sees another mighty angel coming down from heaven with a **‘little book’** open in his hand. Angels are created beings who run to do God’s will. Christ is *‘greater than the angels’* (Hebrews Chapters 1 and 2). As Christ’s representative, this angel is clothed with heavenly glory, and he claims both sea and earth for Christ.

The **‘little book open in his hand’** presents the Bible prophecies written centuries before the coming judgements that are now being fulfilled, and are open for all to read and understand! John had been writing down all that he heard, but now he was forbidden to write what the angel cried with a loud voice, and the things the seven thunders uttered.

Then, *“The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets”* (Revelation 10:5-7).

There would be a delay no longer, so the seventh trumpet would end the waiting time and bring in the fulfillment of God’s final judgements.

In verse 8, John is commanded to take the little book from the hand of the angel and eat it. This is symbolic, for John had to digest what was written to gain spiritual strength for the work God had for him (read Ezekiel 3:1). It was sweetness to his taste as he enjoyed the good things God promised, but bitter in his stomach as he understood what the terrible judgements of the last half of the Great Tribulation would mean for the earth.

Chapter 11

V. 1-2. During this parenthesis or pause, John is given a measuring rod. He is to measure the Temple of God, the altar and those who worship there. *“But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months”* (Revelation 11:2). The Jews will build this temple at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, and these months are the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation when the beast sits as God in this Temple (2 Thess. Ch.2).

The prophetic clock is ticking for Israel, and John stands at the end of the first half of the Great Tribulation, and the Jews have built the Temple and the altar, and they are worshipping there. They have already designed this Temple and are preparing the materials to build it and are also preparing the garments and vessels needed by the priests, who are in training. The return of our Lord is very near!

The second half of the Great Tribulation, being forty-two months or three and a half years, is about to begin with the Antichrist coming to Jerusalem to sit in this Temple claiming to be God. He and his evil forces will tread underfoot the Temple and the holy city of Jerusalem for this last half of the Great Tribulation. This will bring on the earth’s worst hour with unimaginable judgements.

V. 3-14. These verses reveal two Jewish prophets, witnesses in the city of Jerusalem, who are given great power and the protection of God to do miracles. Their witness will continue during the first half of the tribulation, *“for they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth”* (Revelation 11:3). They remind us of Zerubbabel, the Prince, and Joshua, the High Priest, rebuilding the temple in 516 BC, who were given a like revelation in the book of Zechariah Chapter 2.

The olive trees supply the olive oil which typifies the Holy Spirit and He alone enables the Lord’s servants to accomplish His work. The lampstands speak of the witness of His servants as they shine forth, preaching His will and words; *“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts”* (Zechariah 4:6). We all need the Holy Spirit’s help in ministry.

V. 7-8. As the two witnesses complete their God allotted time and finish their testimony, a beast ascends out of the bottomless pit. He is the beast revealed in Daniel, and more fully in Revelation Chapter 13. This ravenous and ferocious ‘beast’ kills these two witnesses, *“And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified”*. This is the city of Jerusalem under the control of the beast and the false prophet (Revelation 13).

The TV cameras will roll and smart phones will video and all people around the world will rejoice as they see their bodies lie unburied in the street for three and a half days by order of the beast and his agents. Satan and his man, the beast, want no second resurrection like unto Christ’s. Then the spirit of life from God entered them and they stood on their feet and a great fear came on all who saw them.

Then a loud voice from heaven ordered “*Come up here!*” They ascended in a cloud into heaven, and their enemies saw them.

V. 13. Those rejoicing in Jerusalem had nothing to rejoice over at the death of the two witnesses. At the same hour came a great earthquake that caused a tenth of the city to fall, killing seven thousand, “*and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven*”. These events have climaxed, for “*The **second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly***” (Revelation 11:14). Now this ‘beast’ will rule from Jerusalem’s Temple. Satan has no power to take life, but through his man, the ‘beast’, he will kill all who oppose his will.

V. 15. The pause has ended, and the **third ‘woe’** begins when the **seventh trumpet** sounds. This trumpet leads into the **seven bowl** judgements, just as the **seven trumpets** came out of the opening of the **seventh seal**.

These **bowls** set the final stage when poured out from Chapter 16 onwards, before the earth is brought under Christ’s rule in the millennial kingdom. A millennial means 1,000 years.

V. 15-16. “*Then the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God.*” There is great rejoicing in heaven, His Temple is opened and the Ark of the Covenant is seen. But before the bowls are poured out, John is given a great sign in heaven in Chapter 12, and other revelations through to the end of Chapter 15.

Chapter 12

Israel and Satan are seen on the stage of history: The great sign is of a **woman** clothed with the sun, symbolically representing the standing of the nation of Israel and her future glory as seen in God’s eyes. The crown of twelve stars represents the twelve tribes of Israel, for God intends to give Israel sovereignty to rule all the nations on earth (Genesis 37:9; Isaiah 60).

This woman is pregnant with the promised ‘seed’ of the woman, the Man Christ Jesus, born of the Jewish virgin Mary (Genesis 3:15-16). The result of Adam’s disobedience changed conception, for childbirth would be with sorrow and travail. Israel’s history has also been one of sorrow, travail and trouble, but her final travail would be the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:1-14).

Israel is given the valley of Achor (trouble) as a door of hope (Read Hosea 2:15 and Joshua 7:24-26). The believing remnant in Israel will be preserved through this trouble or tribulation. Read Revelation 12:5-6, 13-17 and Matthew 24:15-22. Read also Isaiah 16:3, Isaiah 26:20-21 and Daniel 11:36-45.

Israel’s final deliverance will come when Christ returns to establish His kingdom (Matthew 24:29-31, Jeremiah 30:7). Then the nations will be gathered together and judged on how they treated ‘*My brethren*’ the Jews during the Great Tribulation (verse 40 of Matthew 25:31-46). The believing Gentiles and Israelites will enter into His kingdom on earth. These will be the same great multitude we read about in Revelation 7:9.

V. 4. Satan, as a fiery red dragon, was ready to devour the Man Child, the Christ, but He was caught up to heaven. This dragon, Satan, controls the beast and the revived Roman Empire, with ten horns (kingdoms) and seven diadems (crowns) on his head. This was prophesied in Daniel 7:24-25 where he overruns three kings and rules as the eighth’s, as we also see in Revelation 13:1-2.

The dragon’s tail drew ‘*a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to earth*’. Satan rebelled against the Most High and one third of the angels rebelled with him and he fell from his exalted place. He was called Lucifer, the most beautiful of the angels, and for more on his fall read Isaiah 14:9-17 and Ezekiel 28:11-15.

V. 7-12. War breaks out in heaven. Michael is a special angel, ‘*who stands watch over the sons of your people*’, that is, over Israel (Daniel 12:1 and 10:13-21). Michael fights with his angels against the dragon and his angels, and no place was found for them in heaven and the dragon and his angels were cast to the earth. This is the mid-point of the Great Tribulation. Until now, Satan had access to heaven’s outer courts, to speak to the Lord as in Job Chapter 1.

V. 10-11. There is rejoicing in heaven. “*Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death*”.

Woe is pronounced against earth’s inhabitants, for Satan’s wrath is great and his time is short. He is enraged (verse 17) and makes war with the rest of the woman’s offspring (Israel) and the true believers who have the testimony of Jesus Christ. From this point on the beast seeks to destroy all who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord. But God moves people on earth to hide and protect His people.

Chapter 13

The beast who rises up to be ruler and god of this world

V. 1-10. The rapture of the Church will bring anarchy to the world as millions are taken home to heaven. This opens the way for this 'beast' rising out of the sea of humanity to revive the Roman Empire and to be their deliverer. The sea speaks of the Gentile nations for the beast is a Gentile as foretold in Daniel 7:24-25.

This beast represents both a man and the revived Roman Empire that seemed dead, with one of the seven heads (kingdoms) of this Empire wounded as if mortally, but it will revive in the last days and form up into 10 kingdoms.

This beast will be satanically empowered and will emerge as a great leader who will take control of the ten kingdoms as Emperor and the entire world will follow him as he promises hope amidst chaos. They worship him as he sits as god in the temple of God (2 Thessalonians 2). To him it was granted to make war with the saints, the followers of Jesus.

The Antichrist, the false Christ and great deceiver

V. 11-18. John saw another beast coming out of the earth from God's earthly people Israel. The religious pretender called the Antichrist is a Jew who counterfeits Christ. He seems innocent like a lamb as he speaks but is empowered by Satan and does miracles and causes all on earth to worship the beast who sits as god in the temple of God.

He tells those he deceives by his signs to make an image to the beast that all must worship or else be killed (see the image of Daniel 3). He brings total financial control on the earth causing all to receive the mark of the beast. Some believe this may be a computer chip in the right hand or forehead. Without this mark, no one will be able to buy or sell. Amazon now uses a swipe of the hand to buy and sell in their stores!

The beast has a number – 666. This is man's number and the best sinful man can achieve, but it falls short of God's perfect standard. For God's number is 7, meaning perfect completion, for in seven days He made all things and 'finished' His creation and saw that all was 'very good'!

Chapter 14

V. 6-12. John saw three angels flying in the midst of heaven. **The first angel** proclaimed the everlasting Gospel, the last opportunity for people to turn to God.

The second angel proclaims that Babylon has fallen, the great city who made all nations drink of the wine of her fornication. More of this is seen in Chapter 17.

The third angel warns that anyone who receives the mark of the beast will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, suffering eternal torment.

Powers for good and for evil

There is the trinity of perfection in heaven - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, working for His glory and for the good of His people.

There is a trinity of evil on earth counterfeiting what is in heaven - Satan, the beast and the false prophet, working for the destruction of all that is good.

V. 13. John hears a voice speaking of the blessedness of the dead who die believing in the Lord! These tribulation martyrs will find eternal rest. Then he is granted a vision of the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, coming with a sickle to reap the earth, for her harvest of wickedness is ripe!

The city is Jerusalem and the last great battle is called **Armageddon** and the blood of the slain will flow for many miles around the city and the Valley of Megiddo where the armies gather. See Revelation 19:11-21.

Chapter 15

V. 1-4. John saw another great and marvellous sign, the **seven angels** having the seven last plagues completing the wrath of God on the earth. He also saw the martyred saints of the tribulation standing on a sea of glass with harps of God and singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. These martyrs had the victory over the beast, for they refused to worship his image or receive his mark.

V. 5-8. John looked and saw "*the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was open*". Out of the Temple came the **seven angels**, having the seven plagues, and to them was given **seven golden bowls** full of God's wrath. The heavenly Temple was filled with smoke while these bowls were poured out.

Chapter 16

V. 1-12. The bowls of final judgement are poured out on the earth. These are self-explanatory. Where possible, we should take literally what is written.

V. 13-16. Here are seen spirits of demons doing signs. They look like frogs, coming out of the mouth of the satanically inspired beast and false prophet. They do signs to deceive and to gather all the kings of the earth and all the armies of the whole world to the battle of '*that great day of God Almighty*', to the place

called **Armageddon**, into the Valley of Megiddo in northern Israel, where they confront the Lord Himself as He comes in Glory! Revelation 19:19.

V. 17-21. The **seventh angel** poured out the seventh bowl. A loud voice from heaven and from the throne says, *'It is done'*. Great noises are heard as even heaven is convulsed at the severity of the final judgements on the nations, thunderings and lightnings, the greatest earthquake ever seen, the great city (Jerusalem) was divided into three parts and the cities of the nation's fell. Please read Zechariah 14.

Great Babylon was remembered before the Lord. Babylon, called Babel, a name meaning confusion, was built by Nimrod. This city introduced idolatry to the earth after the great flood of Noah's day (Genesis 10:8-11 and 11:1-9).

Chapter 17

The Judgement of Religious Babylon

V. 1-5. Religious Babylon is revealed as a spiritually adulterous woman who draws together **all religions** and will be headed up by Rome. She exerts her influence by riding on the back of the scarlet beast, for she is a **political opportunist** and is behind much of **world commerce**. The beast carrying the woman is Satan's man revealed in Chapter 13, full of names of all the blasphemy men have ever uttered.

The woman is richly arrayed, for she has coveted and heaped together wealth and she is holding in her hand a golden cup full of her spiritual abominations. She has deceived multitudes, killed many saints and has opposed the truth of God's word. Multitudes will be in hell because of her sorceries.

V. 5-6. On her forehead is her name: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. She burnt copies of God's word, shed the blood of the saints through the centuries and will join with the beast in shedding the blood of the martyrs of Jesus in the first half of the Great Tribulation.

V. 7. What John saw shocked him, for the angel asked him, *'Why did you marvel?* The angel then revealed the mystery of the woman and the beast she sits on, with seven heads and ten horns. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms of the revived Roman Empire. The beast is the eighth head of the revived Roman Empire, made by ruling over the ten kings. This Empire will be different from all others with total rule and control of the entire world by force and intrigue.

V. 9-11. John is told that wisdom from God is needed to understand what follows. The seven heads are seven mountains (kingdoms), and they represent seven kings and their kingdoms that have moved across the page of history. The first five are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Mede-Persia and Greece. The sixth is the Roman Empire, but the seventh was yet to come, the Church age intervening.

In Europe, the seventh head will form the revived Roman Empire, made up of the ten kings and their kingdoms now developing in the EU. These are the ten horns and the ten toes of Daniel's prophesy seen on the beast.

V. 14. These make war with the Lamb but He overcomes them, *"For He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful"* (Revelation 17:14).

V. 15-18. The waters represent the peoples of all nations. The ten horns represent the ten kings of the beast. They hate the whore and destroy her. This happens at the mid-point of the Tribulation, for the beast is about to sit as god in the temple in Jerusalem and all will have to worship him as god.

This beast will not allow the rival religion of the adulterous woman to exist.

Chapter 18

The Judgement of Commercial Babylon

With religious Babylon destroyed, the beast will take total control of commercial Babylon, for all peoples must have his mark to buy or sell. Covetousness is at its heart, for it is the dwelling place of demons and of every vice and wickedness. Men manipulate the world's markets to deceive and to hoard up wealth for themselves.

This beast is the greatest dictator ever, for from the **mid-point** of the Great Tribulation till the Lord comes in mighty power, he goes about to kill all who do not submit to his will. He claims all that belongs to God, and sits as God in Jerusalem, the city of the great King, and all have to worship him (2 Thes.2:1-6).

V. 1-4. God's judgment now falls on commercial Babylon, for a mighty angel with great authority proclaims: *"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"* ³ *For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury".*

That is why God's people are called to come out of mystery Babylon, religious and commercial, for the time of her judgement has come.

V. 5-24. The wickedness of Babylon is fully revealed, and she is totally destroyed. The blood of the saints and prophets are found in her. The blood of Abel cried to God from the ground, and He will not pardon those who have slain His people and aborted babies in the womb. God's people rejoice over the total destruction of such evil.

Chapter 19

V. 1-6. The judgement and destruction of mystery Babylon brings great joy and rejoicing in heaven. They cry '*Alleluia!* (Praise the Lord!) *her smoke rises up forever and ever*'. The twenty-four elders, the four living creatures, the martyrs and those named in Revelation Chapter 4 fall down and worship God.

V. 7-10. These heavenly hosts continue their cry: "*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready*". *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints*" (Revelation 19:7-8).

First, the Judgement Seat of Christ, then the Marriage

2 Corinthians 5:9-10. Before the marriage of the Lamb, the raptured Church must appear at the judgement seat of Christ for the saints to receive rewards or loss of rewards according to the deeds done in the body. This prepares them for the wedding for '*His wife has made herself ready*'. They appear in white garments, '*arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright*'.

The marriage of the Lamb (Christ) to His wife (the Church) is in heaven. The marriage follows the customs practised in Israel where the marriage was performed and then consummated, and then the marriage supper followed.

The Lamb's wife will be displayed in all the glory Christ bestows upon her in shining bright robes. These robes reflect her righteous acts, the rewards for the saints walking in the Spirit, shining as lights in this world and doing the works of faith that God has prepared for them. "*Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward*" (Hebrews 10:35, Ephesians 2:10, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, Matthew 5:6).

The angel said to John, "*Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!*" And he said to me, "*These are the true sayings of God.*" John went to worship the angel, but the angel said to him, "*Worship God*". In

Scripture, angels refuse the worship of man. We also bear testimony to Jesus by our words of witness and by living godly lives.

V. 11-16. The Lord Jesus Christ comes in glory to earth on a white horse and is called "*Faithful and true, and in righteousness He judges and makes war*". He comes to judge a world that has rejected Him (Matthew 24:29-31, Zechariah 14).

He is followed by the armies of heaven, His glorified saints with Him, to bring in His thousand years reign of peace. He has eyes like a flame of fire, His head is crowned with many crowns and He has a name written that only He knows!

He is clothed with garments dipped in blood and His name is called 'The Word of God', "*Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*"¹⁶ *And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*".

The prophet Isaiah spoke of these days: "*He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore*" (Isaiah 2:4). The nations certainly are learning war today, spending billions on arms!

V. 17-20. An angel, standing in the sun, called all to the supper of the great God. There will be a terrible massacre of millions, free and slave.

The beast and the kings of the earth marshal their armies to Armageddon ready to make war against our Lord. He strikes them with the sword of His mouth. The beast with the false prophet are captured and cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, for this is their eternal destiny.

Chapter 20

The Millennial Reign of Christ

V. 1-3. After this, Satan is bound by the angel in 'the bottomless pit' for the one-thousand-year reign of Christ that then begins. Then the earth will be regenerated and will return to be almost like the Garden of Eden (Matthew 19:28). Life expectancy will be greatly increased for the elect who survive the great tribulation and those who are born during the kingdom age. A man dying at 100 years will be counted as a child (Isaiah 65:20).

During this time, Satan will not be able to tempt man while he is bound in the bottomless pit, but those born during this time will have sinful natures and will have to make decisions about accepting the Lord as Saviour and obeying His will. Sadly, many do not and are accursed (Isaiah 65:20).

Christians, although a heavenly people, will have access to the earth and will have responsibilities as judges among the nations in the Kingdom Age (1 Corinthians 6:1-3). The apostles will be judges over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). David will reign as Christ's regent in Jerusalem (Eze. Ch 34 & 37).

A great and beautiful Temple will be built in Jerusalem, sacrifices will be resumed and these will be a reminder to those nations of the sacrifice of Christ, for all the nations will come to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. For a description of these wonderful times read Ezekiel Chapters 40 to 48.

V. 4-6. What John saw: *“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them”*. Christians will judge the world and angels (Matthew 19:27, 1 Corinthians 6:1-3). The nations will be brought before the Lord and He will separate the sheep (true believers) from the goats (unbelievers). They will be judged according to their treatment of those who He calls *‘my brethren’*, the Jewish elect, those saved during the great tribulation. Those who enter the kingdom age will only be the surviving saved Jews and gentiles (Matthew 25:31-46).

There will be a completion of the first resurrection, when the believing souls beheaded by the beast for their testimony are raised: *“And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years”* (Revelation 20:4-6).

It is a wonderful thing to be saved, and to be absolutely sure of being among the blessed dead!

However, *‘The rest of the dead’* are all the unsaved held in Hades, the holding house of all lost souls (read Luke 16:19-31). The *‘second death’* is the Lake of Fire, the place prepared for the devil and his angels, the place of eternal torment.

Hell is not the loss of being, but the loss of wellbeing. If you are born once you will die twice, but if you are born twice, you will only die once!

V. 7-10. At the end of Christ's 1,000-year reign over the renewed earth, Satan will be released to again deceive the nations, for many born during this time are not saved and will join him in his final rebellion against God. *“They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city”*. The beloved city is Jerusalem and great will be her glory (Isaiah 4:2-6).

Then the Lord judges those nations: *“And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever”* (Revelation 20:9-10).

V. 11-15. John saw what Daniel saw: *“I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened”* (Daniel 7:9-10).

God has recorded every evil act ever committed. The unsaved dead, small and great, stand before God and the ‘books’ are opened to show His judgement is just. The ‘Book of Life’ is opened, for the names of all who believe are written in this book (Philippians 4:3).

The sad chapter of earth's sinful history ends and this opens the door into the glorious future God has planned.

Chapter 21

Time as we know it has ended

This Chapter begins with the revealing of the eternal state. The heavens and earth as we know them will pass away and as promised, and God will bring in new heavens and earth (2 Peter 3:10-13). *“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”* (Revelation 21:2). **This city is not figurative, but real,** and what this chapter reveals is self-explanatory, with a glorious eternal place inhabited by the believers of the Church and Old Testament age who *“waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God”* (Heb. 11:10).

It is written of the heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11: *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the*

earth.¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a **homeland**.¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a **heavenly country**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, **for He has prepared a city for them**” (Hebrews 11:13-16).

God will wipe away every tear, there will be no more death or sorrow, crying or pain, for all these things pass away, for He makes all things new, with His promise, “Write, for these words are true and faithful” (Revelation 20:5).

John is shown the bride, the Lamb’s wife (the Church), and this beautiful city descending out of heaven from God. The city is surrounded by a great wall of beautiful gemstones. It has twelve gates with names written on them of the twelve tribes of Israel. This wall has twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles written on them.

This city is huge. There are about five furlongs to one kilometre, and the city is a cube of approximately 2400 kilometres or 1500 miles! The glory of God lights the city and the nations of those who are saved walk in its light. It is a place of indescribable beauty, illuminated by the Lord Himself with no night there. And no one practising evil will enter, only those written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

We shall then forever thank and praise Him who shed His blood on the cross to redeem us and to prepare such a place for us (John 14:1-3).

Chapter 22

V. 1-2. John is then shown more features of our heavenly home. Central to heaven is the throne of God and of the Lamb, first seen by John in Revelation 4:1-6. From this throne flows a river of pure water. On either side there is a street, where grows the tree of life with twelve fruits and with leaves for healing the nations. The tree of life was in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9), but when Adam sinned, he and Eve were driven from the garden and cherubim guarded the way to it (Genesis 3:24). Then that tree will be available for all to benefit.

V. 3. Adam brought a curse on all of creation: “*And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him*”. There will no longer be any weakness, failing or sin to hinder His servants, for, “*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we*

shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:2-3).

This teaches us to be pure and ready for His coming.

V. 7. The book of Revelation begins and ends with a blessing: “*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near*” (Revelation 1:3). “*Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book*”.

V. 10. Daniel was told to seal up the words of the prophesy (Daniel 12:9). Now all may read and benefit from these wonderful prophesies: “*And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand*”.

V. 11. With promised blessing there are also severe warnings of judgment. Sadly, multitudes around us are not listening to the words of this book and will continue to live unjustly with unholy lives as they move on their way to a lost eternity.

V. 12-14. The coming of the Lord is imminent. He is coming quickly and there is a reward for faithful work and a blessing pronounced on those who do His commandments.

V. 17. There is an invitation and a promise to all who seek. The water of life flows freely to all who will stoop in humility and partake. “*And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires let him take the water of life freely*”.

V. 18-19. There is a curse on all those who add to or take away from the book of the words of this prophesy. This remarkable book ends with a promise and a prayer: “*He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! This is a prayer that we can all pray!*

Revelation 22:20-21. The Bible ends with this beautiful and meaningful benediction: “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen*”

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The Prophecies of Haggai

To a people living at ease

His name **Haggai** means ‘Festive’ and he was ‘*the Lord’s messenger with the Lord’s message*’ (Haggai 1:13). He was in touch with God and the Word of the Lord was delivered in power. We also need to be in touch with Him to know His will and to fulfill our ministry.

Haggai and Zechariah both prophesied together to the returned remnant. Haggai spoke to the conscience of the Lord's people and Zechariah spoke to their heart.

As we review Jewish history, we know that Isaiah prophesied in the reign of four kings that are named in Isaiah 1:1 between the years 740 to 680 BC. Isaiah named Cyrus at least 150 years before he was born! (Read Isaiah 45:1-4). God's purposes were fulfilled.

After 70 years of captivity in Babylon from 606 BC, the decree of Cyrus in 541 BC allowed the Jews to return to their land under Zerubbabel the Prince, and Joshua their High Priest, and to the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra Ch. 1). Haggai and Zechariah prophesied under Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 5:1-2).

Sadly, adversaries hindered the work for 21 years. In 520 BC, Darius ruled in their favour (Ezra Chs. 1, 4 and 5). Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem 75 years later. This continued from 445 to 430 BC.

Chapter 1

V. 1-2. The first message, rebuke. *'Consider your ways'*. The Jews had sat inactive for 21 years, but Haggai and Zechariah, with Zerubbabel the Prince, and Joshua the High Priest, turned God's work around. The result of materialism and self-seeking led to discouragement, indifference and complacency.

V. 3-5. 'Consider your ways'. This means to *'set your heart on your ways'*! What were their hearts set on? Building a panelled house or building God's Temple? He called them to self-judgment. With no Temple, there were no sacrifices and few gatherings of the congregation. The things pleasing to the Lord were being neglected. Personal comfort was put before their duty to God.

V. 6-11. Sowing and reaping. They were under God's chastening hand, failing to follow the principle of 2 Corinthians 9:6 and putting God first. Jesus said: *"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you"* (Matthew 6:33).

These are the words of Jim Elliot, who was martyred January 8th, 1956 by Auca Indians in Ecuador. *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."* Jim lost his life in trying to reach a savage tribe.

V. 12-13. The second message, encouragement. They then obeyed the voice of the Lord and the people feared His presence. **The first promise:** *'I am with you, says the Lord'*. They knew Haggai was the Lord's messenger, speaking the Lord's message. Have we lost this sense of His presence and power today?

V. 14-15. The Lord stirred up the spirit of the leaders and the people. *"And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God"*.

Chapter 2

V. 1-4. The third message, encouragement. *'Be strong...and work'*. Haggai would not allow their present weakness and any departure from God's word as an excuse for failing to build! God had called them to **'work'**.

God gave them a reminder of the former Temple that Solomon had built, and the older men wept who knew its beauty (Ezra 3:12). The Lord again gave encouragement, *'Be strong and work... 'For I am with you'*

V.5. The second promise. The Lord reminded them of their deliverance from Egypt, and He who worked then would again help them, *'My Spirit remains among you'*. *'Do not fear'*. The Lord has also helped us in the past and will in the future.

V. 6-7. The prophet set the hope of His coming before them! At His coming He will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land (Hebrews 12:26-27). He will shake all nations and they will come in recognition to the Christ, their Desire. He will fill the Temple in that day with glory. Christ came to Herod's Temple and was rejected, but His glory will fill and cover the millennial Temple like a wedding canopy (Isaiah 4:5-6).

V. 8-9. Who owns the silver and gold? It *'is Mine' says the Lord of hosts'*! *"And in this place I will give peace"*. The glory of the future Temple will exceed the former and it will be greater than Solomon's Temple.

V. 10-14. The fourth message, rebuke. The people are defiled, *'So is this people'*! An unclean thing or person cannot be made holy by touching a holy object. There is no holiness by association except with the Christ.

The cry of the prophets still sounds out: *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone"* (Matthew 23:23).

The lesson is: Religious observances while self-serving and unholy living do not counteract disobedience to God's word! *"Depart! Depart! Go out from there, Touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, Be clean, You who bear the vessels of the LORD"* (Isaiah 52:11).

V. 15-19. The fourth promise. God blessed their obedience and work. *“But from this day forward I will bless you”*. God had chastened them for their self-seeking and complacency, but as they began to build, He blessed with abundance, *“For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: “In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” But you would not...”* (Isaiah 30:15). This wonderful truth stands for all generations.

V.20-23. The fifth and final message and promise. There will be eternal rewards for faithful servants. This message was given to faithful Zerubbabel. God will shake heaven and earth, then His people will receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:23-29).

In that day Zerubbabel, a chosen vessel, will be made a signet ring, a symbol of royal authority and responsibility in the Christ’s coming kingdom. Zerubbabel had overcome ridicule and opposition from surrounding peoples and also apathy and possibly opposition from among his own brethren. Like Nehemiah, Zerubbabel would not compromise: Jesus said, *“But hold fast what you have till I come”* (Revelation 2:25).

Zerubbabel recognised and submitted to the Word of the Lord as it came to him through Haggai, the Lord’s messenger with the Lord’s message. He also led the people in obedience to that word. Paul also stood firm: *“For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor”* (Galatians 2:18).

As the prince of Judah, Zerubbabel pictures the Lord Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah who will rule over all nations.

At the judgment seat of Christ, all those who have served the Master faithfully in obedience to His will and Word will also likewise be rewarded.

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The Prophecies of Malachi

Lessons for Last Days

His name Malachi means ‘My Messenger’ and he prophesied some years after Haggai and Zechariah. Then there were 400 silent years with no word from God between the Book of Malachi and the Gospel of Matthew.

This Book bridges between the Old and New Testaments and is the last message from God until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He foretold the ministry of John the Baptist.

Malachi was written after the book of Nehemiah as the temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt. Sadly, the Jews had become occupied with their privileged place and position and this resulted in the cold legality of the Pharisees. Eight times in this Book the Jews questioned God!

Malachi 1:2-5. Failure to love God. *“I have loved you,” says the LORD. “Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us’”*. God’s love is seen in His love for Jacob and hatred of Esau. They were both descended from Jacob, but the Edomites (‘Esau’), Esau’s descendants, had often attacked Israel and so by divine decree their cities were laid waste.

Malachi 1:6. Failure of the Priest and Levites. *“A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honour? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts to you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’”* To give ‘honour’ is ‘an act of homage’ and ‘reverence’ means ‘to bow in humility’ to Him. There was no respect or true worship, and they despised His name.

Malachi addressed the failure of the priests who were the teachers of the Law, and their failure led to the failure of the people. They were allocated cities by Joshua throughout Israel and when they were supported by the tithes and did their ministry, Israel prospered (Numbers 35:1-8). The revival in Israel under King Hezekiah resulted from him sending the Levites to teach the people the word of the Lord (2 Chronicles 29 to 31).

Malachi 1:7-10. They offered polluted offerings. *“You offer defiled food on My altar. But say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.”* The **brazen altar** called ‘The table of the Lord’ was where ‘the bread of your God’ was offered and all sacrificed animals were for God’s acceptance. (Leviticus 21:8, 22: 25). But it was held in contempt and defiled with blind, lame and sick animals offered. He would not accept them.

Malachi 1:11-14. His future glory. God will overrule the priest’s failure, for His glory will one day be seen among all nations. In that day Jerusalem will be the centre of worship and Israel will be head of the nations (Isaiah 4).

They said, *“Oh, what a weariness!”* to serve God and He said, *“And you sneer at it”*. All their religious service had become a weariness and God rejected them and their offerings and they brought a curse upon themselves. *“For I am a great King,” Says the LORD of hosts, “And My name is to be feared among the nations”* (Malachi 1:14).

Malachi 2:1-9. The failure of the priests. God called them to give Him glory or He would send a curse on them and their descendants. God had made a covenant

of life and peace with the tribe of Levi in the days of Moses (Numbers 26:10-13) and He always keeps His covenants. Both Moses and his brother Aaron were of the tribe of Levi, the tribe set apart to be the priests (Numbers 3:5-10). They were to seek knowledge and teach the law, but by the time of Malachi they had departed from the way God commanded and *'corrupted the covenant of Levi'*.

Malachi 2:10-16. The holy institution of marriage was being profaned. God was highly displeased, but the Jews said, *"For what reason"* (2:14). They were dealing treacherously by divorcing their wives, causing them and their children to weep before the altar in the Temple of the Lord. They also sinned by marrying forbidden women of other nations who served gods who were no gods.

Failure in marriages hinders what God seeks, being a *'godly offspring'*. He **'hates divorce'** as wives and children suffer and this creates great problems in all societies that fail to teach children God's word. Children need loving and caring parents who live in harmony in a godly home.

Malachi 2:17. The Lord was weary of them. *"You have wearied the LORD with your words; Yet you say, 'In what way have we wearied Him?'"* In that you say, *"Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delights in them,"* Or, *"Where is the God of justice?"* They were calling evil good and justifying their conduct. Because God was not immediately judging their sin, they thought that they could ignore His justice. God causes nations to fall who reject Him, and He will bring every person and work into judgement (Rev. Ch. 20).

Malachi 3:1. Two Messengers promised. John the Baptist would be the **first** messenger who prepared the way for the **second** messenger, **the Lord Jesus Christ**. *"Behold, I send My messenger (Christ), And he (John) will prepare the way before Me (Jesus). And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,"* Says the LORD of hosts".

It was prophesied of John, *"He will also go before Him (before Jesus) in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord"* (Luke 1:17). John preached a 'baptism of repentance' and multitudes were baptised in the Jordan River. Then Jesus began His ministry for He is *'the Messenger of the covenant'* brought in by the shedding of His blood for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28).

Malachi 3:2-5. The Refiner of the sons of Levi. The second half of the great tribulation will be a refining time of great suffering for Israel and especially for the sons of the Levite priesthood. *"But who can endure the day of His coming?"*

And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness".

Many will be saved at this time and prepared for the Lord's return when He comes to judge the nations and to establish His kingdom. Then the sons of Levi will offer sacrifices for that are acceptable and pleasing to the Lord. Read Ezekiel 40 to 48. *"And I will come near you for judgement; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien—Because they do not fear Me,"* Says the LORD of hosts".

Malachi 3:6-7. God will be faithful even to sinful Israel. They had long strayed, but He will call upon them to *'return to Me'*. *"For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,"* says the LORD of hosts. *"But you said, 'In what way shall we return?'"* Despite the sad situation in the nation, He was ready to restore them. This was infinite grace, for God is longsuffering.

Malachi 3:8-12. They were robbing God. *"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings".* If they would bring in their tithes to provide food in His house for the offerings and the priests, then He would pour out a blessing. *"And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,"* Says the LORD of hosts'. God now calls to us also to honour Him: *'Those who honour me I will honour'* (1 Samuel 2:30). *"Honour the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine"* (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Malachi 3:13-15. They could not see their own evil doings. *"Your words have been harsh against Me,"* Says the LORD, *"Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?'"* They saw no profit in serving Him or in keeping His ordinances. The proud were blessed, the wicked were raised or built up, while those who tempted God went free and often the righteous suffered and were persecuted.

Israel entered the land under the leadership of Joshua and were a disciplined and faithful people. But at the close of the Old Testament, they reached a low moral and spiritual condition. This has been the history of all the great revivals.

Malachi 3:16-18. Promises for future fulfillment. Here it is recorded that the Lord watched over the faithful remnant and a book of remembrance was kept of

those who feared the Lord and meditated on His name. *“Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. They shall be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.”* The Lord also sees our faithfulness and all is recorded and He will one day reward us (Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Malachi 4:1-6. The day of the Lord. The book closes with warnings that the day of the Lord is coming and those who feared His name would be blessed. He would send Elijah to prepare the way for His coming: *“But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness (the Lord Jesus Christ) shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves”*.

This last book of the Old Testament was written to the nation of Israel and **closes with a curse**. *“And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse”* (Malachi 4:6).

The last book of the New Testament **closes with a blessing** and with the coming of Christ as the hope to be kept before us. *“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city”* (Revelation 22:14). *“He who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen”* (Revelation 22:20-21).

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A Study on

The Kingdoms of Scripture

The first major Kingdom among men was that of Nimrod, a great grandson of Noah. He walked away from God and set up a Kingdom of idolatry and built the Tower of Babel (Genesis 10:8-12). Next came the Pharaohs of Egypt, then the kings of Assyria, Babylon, Media Persia, the Greeks under Alexander and the Romans who subdued all kingdoms and ruled with a rod of iron.

The Kingdoms of this world

The Bible leaves us in no doubt about who the real world ruler is. In the Gospel of Luke 4:5-7, the devil claimed to be! *“Then the devil, taking Him (Jesus) up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for*

this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” But the devil was a liar from the beginning, from the time when he deceived Eve and corrupted the world systems.

The book of Daniel clearly reveals that there is a greater authority over-ruling in the Kingdoms of men, with the devil and his demons behind the evil in earthly Kingdoms but with God’s angels intervening as He sees fit. King Nebuchadnezzar for God took his reason from him: *“till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses”* (Daniel 5:21). As we look back over Kingdoms and evil rulers, we see they had a limited day, and *“that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men”* (Daniel 4:17).

Under such base rulers, believers have suffered, yet *“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church’* and more are saved under suffering than during times of peace and prosperity. The Lord Jesus perfectly set forth the responsibility of Christians: *“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”* (Matthew 22:21). The Bible also says, *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God”* (Romans 13:1).

We also have to obey a higher authority in matters of conscience and in obedience to God’s word, for Peter and the apostles were put in prison for preaching the Gospel and in their defence said, *“We ought to obey God rather than man”* (Acts 5:29).

The Kingdoms of God

The term ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ is found only in the Gospel of Matthew, while the term ‘Kingdom of God’ occurs in all four Gospels and other New Testament books. In some respects, these Kingdoms are the same, for the only way to enter is by the new birth, as Jesus said to Nicodemus, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3).

Mere ‘profession’ of faith brings one into the sphere of God’s Kingdom, coming under its influences but not to salvation. For only by faith and by ‘confessing’ Jesus as Lord and Saviour and forsaking sinning can one enter the Kingdom of God. In the Lord’s Prayer Jesus said: *“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven”*. This is God’s will for believers in all ages.

Jesus spoke of “*the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew Chapter 13). Here is good seed (the word of God) falling on hard and rocky ground and on good soil, with good seed growing with tares, for tares are ‘darnel’ a plant that looks like wheat until harvest. Also with good and bad fish in the fishing net. In this world we have ‘Christendom’, people professing to be Christians who are often church going but not born of the Holy Spirit, mixed with the true believers.

The day is coming when Jesus with His angels will visit this earth and will sort out the true Christians from the false. “*The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*” (Matthew 13:41-43). Those who enter the Kingdom of God practice righteousness and peace, for the Bible says: “*the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men*” (Romans 14:17-18).

The ‘mysteries’ of the Kingdom are only revealed to those who are born of the Spirit (Matthew 13:11-17). In the Kingdom of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is supreme and has all authority! He said “*The Kingdom of God is among you*” (Matthew 12:28), and it was revealed in Christ, in the words He spoke and the miracles that He did among them. “*Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation;²¹ nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.*” Luke 17:20.

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Angels and their Ministry

The word ‘Angel’ means ‘to send with a message’, thus a ‘Messenger’

The Old Testament Hebrew word for angel is ‘mal’ak’, and the New Testament English word for angel is taken from the Greek ‘angelos’, meaning ‘a messenger’. **Angels** are supernatural messengers sent by the Lord with a particular message. There were **prophets** who were messengers in the Old Testament (2 Chron. 36:15-16). The **apostles** were also messengers, chosen and ‘ones sent forth’ by the Lord. We believe that the “*angel of the Lord*” is the pre-incarnate **Lord Jesus Christ**, for this Angel’s attributes are the same as God’s (Genesis 16:7; Judges 6:11, 13:21). This Angel could judge sin (1 Chron. 21:16).

Angels are created spiritual beings

The Lord Jesus Christ created these beings: “*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made*” (John 1:3). Created living creatures, angels, seraphim and cherubim surround the throne of God in heaven. (Read Genesis 3:24; Isaiah 6:1-6; Ezekiel 1; Revelation 4:6-9; 5:2, 11).

Two Angels are named in the Bible

Michael is called ‘*the chief prince*’. He is involved in great spiritual warfare with the demonic beings behind world empires and in Daniel 10:10-13 opposing a demon, “*the prince of the kingdom of Persia*”. Michael and his angels also will one day fight against Satan, the dragon, and his fallen angels (Revelation 12:1-9). Michael also contended with the devil over the body of Moses (Jude 9). He is also “*The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people*”, that is, over Daniel’s people, Israel (Daniel 12:1).

Gabriel is the other angel named in the Bible. The Lord sent him to give Daniel understanding (Daniel 8:15-19, 9:20-22). He was the angel sent to Zacharias telling him that his old and barren wife Elizabeth would have a son, John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-20). It was in the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy that Gabriel was sent to Mary to tell her that she would “*conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus*” (Luke 1:26-38).

The ministry of Angels

Angels move as a flame of fire in perfect and instant obedience, powerful servants doing God’s will (Psalm 104:4). One was sent to give Daniel understanding of visions. They are involved in spiritual warfare with demonic beings behind the thrones of this world’s kingdoms.

Angels watched over Jesus’ tomb: “*And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain*” (John 20:12). Angels surround God’s people: “*Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*” (Hebrews 1:14).

Angels observe conduct towards little children, for their angels “*always see the face of My Father who is in heaven*” (Matthew 18:10). Angels surround and observe the conduct of local churches: “*For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels*” (1 Corinthians 11:10).

Prophets and apostles have revealed great blessings reserved for us: “*things which angels desire to look into*” (1 Peter 10:12). Angels observe and **rejoice** when a sinner is saved: “*Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents*” (Luke 15:10).

Angels were involved when Old Testament saints died: *“So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom”*. They were not alone in the valley of death. But angels are silent when the lost die: *“The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom”* (Luke 16:22-23).

Angels are ministers of judgement

Angels are also involved in bringing God's judgment on the earth, as in the book of Revelation. Two angels were sent to warn Lot of Sodom's destruction (Genesis 19:1) and one was sent to destroy Jerusalem because of David's sin in numbering the people (1 Chronicles 21:16). In a coming day, *“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness”* (Matthew 13:41).

“So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:49-50).

“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

But angels do not know all that God plans: *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only”* (Matthew 24:36).

Fallen Created Beings

Satan was the most beautiful of all God's created heavenly beings. He was called *‘Lucifer, son of the morning’* (Isaiah 14:12-15). He was also called the *‘anointed cherub that covers’* (Ezekiel 18:11-19). But in both of these scriptures we see how the corruption of the best became the worst – a liar, a deceiver and a murderer from the very beginning!

Jesus said *“I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven”* (Luke 10:18). When he fell he drew many angels with him (Revelation 12:9). Of these angels who fell from heaven it is said they *“did not kept their proper domain, but left their abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgement of the last day”* (Jude 6).

Satan and his angels and demons form ordered ranks to corrupt world order, blinding souls, and opposing God's will and opposing and moving his minions to martyr His people. Satan attacked Job's body (Job 1 and 2). Satan tried to even tempt the Lord (Matthew 4:1-11) and was behind the crucifixion of our Lord.

Jesus said to His disciples, *“I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world (Satan) is coming, and he has nothing in Me”* (John 14:30). He is the sinless Son of God. Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, *“When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness”* (Luke 22:53).

Christians can easily fall into the snare of the devil (1 Timothy 3:6-7). There was nothing sinful in Jesus that Satan could lay hold of, but there is in us and we must always be on guard and put on the full armour of God to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-17).

Angels and the Lord's coming

1. *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory”* (Matthew 25:31).
2. *“But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him”* (Hebrews 1:6). This will be when He reigns.
3. *“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works”* (Matthew 16:27).
4. *“And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”* (Matthew 24:31).

Then heaven and earth will resound with: *“Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!”* (Psalm 148:2). *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”* (Philippians 4:4)

The Saints in Heaven

The saints will be eternal living beings as are the angels: *“But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are **equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection**”* (Luke 20:35-36).

Now we have the opportunity to shine as lights in this dark world and overcome all temptations as we serve our Lord: *“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels”* (Revelation 3:5).

We will join with the angels in worshipping and praising Him forever.

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