

**TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE APPROACHING
ISRAEL—GOD'S TIMEPIECE**

By
Burl Haynie

Prepared especially for the
New York World's Fair 1964-1965 ministry of the
AMERICAN BOARD OF MISSIONS TO THE JEWS, INC.
Cooperating agency
BIBLICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

To
DR. DAVID L. COOPER
*My beloved teacher of the Holy Scriptures
and true friend of God's Chosen People,
the Jews, is this book affectionately dedicated*

Published by
BIBLICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY ASSOCIATES
4005 VERDUGO ROAD
Los Angeles California

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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THE REASON FOR THIS BOOK

Suppose you and I were neighbors, and a terrible, devastating storm was approaching the area in which we lived. Suppose I saw the storm approaching from some distance and knew that we were in its path. What would be the normal thing for me to do? First, having determined the best way of escape, I would urge my loved ones to flee at once and tell them which direction to go to get out of the path of the storm. Next, I would warn you of the approaching storm and advise you how to escape. Then I would flee to a place of safety, hoping that all of you would heed the warning and escape from the impending storm.

With this simple illustration, I want to convey the motive behind the writing of this book. I see a terrible time of trouble approaching which may be likened to a terrifying and devastating storm. All the inhabitants on the face of the earth are living in its path. Many are already prepared for its coming and will be delivered from its havoc. I hope multitudes of "my neighbors," people of every race and creed, will receive and believe the message of this book so that they also will be delivered from the coming storm.

This storm is not a tornado, whirling and twisting in its fury, or a hurricane ravaging the earth with violent wind and heavy rain. It is a period of unprecedented suffering that is coming upon all the earth's inhabitants. It is a time of trouble, of distress and anguish, of ruin and devastation, of darkness and gloom, of clouds and thick darkness—a time of God's wrath—that is coming upon the whole world. When that time arrives, declarations of wars will be the order of the day. Distress will be sent upon men so that they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.

I see such a time coming, and am confident it is approaching rapidly. I base my opinion on facts about present world conditions studied in the light of the Word of the living and all wise Creator. His Word, the Bible, tells that this time of universal distress will come. It also defines the characteristics of the days just before such time will start.

According to the Bible, shortly before God's time of wrath must start, society's moral fiber will deteriorate and cause iniquity to abound, violence on an unprecedented scale will be the order of the day, and knowledge will increase remarkably.

Immorality and violence are becoming more and more characteristic of the Twentieth Century. Knowledge is increasing so rapidly it staggers the imagination. These three things alone have developed so noticeably, since the turn of the century, that they have given this

short period a complexion that accurately fits the Bible's description of the end days. Almost every passing day bears a more distinctive appearance of being one of the last days of this age than the previous one.

Now, as in the past, people fill every day with actions that result from wrong thoughts and uncontrolled emotions—immoral behavior. In the past, however, lots more people worked to live right. They worked to fill their days with good deeds so as to fulfill the Golden Rule, even for conscience sake. Then they looked at right behavior and immoral behavior as definitely being on different planes. They looked up to and respected one who lived as a saint. On the other hand, they looked down on and despised anyone who behaved as a sinner. Over the past few years peoples' consciences have dulled gradually until today there seems to be only a few who perceive or value behavior on different planes. Today both saint and sinner are extolled alike. Wickedness is exalted among the sons of men. As a result, iniquity is multiplying.

As the "iniquity of the people" multiplies and fills up the earth, it brings down limited amounts of God's wrath. But when the workers of iniquity do flourish and fill the earth with vile deeds, the Almighty will arise and send down full measures of His consuming anger and fury. In the wake of his consuming wrath "the earth and all the works therein will have been burned up."

Already during the Twentieth Century many peoples have experienced frequent and unusual, yet mild, showers of the Lord's wrath locally. Such experiences will build up as the world travels toward the end of this age. And He alone knows the end. In the face of the world's precarious condition, "What action are you going to take?" I ask you to weigh the evidence presented in this book with an unbiased mind and act accordingly.

Almighty God, the One in whom we live, move and have our being, knows the end from the beginning. Therefore He graciously and lovingly revealed in His Word what will take place in the last days. He did this so that all honest and sincere persons may lean upon Him, the Holy One of Israel, in *truth* during the difficult end days. *His word is truth*. Truth never yields herself to him who esteems her lightly. I urge all who read this book to pray the prayer of King David, who wrote: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law [word]" (Psalm 119:18).

This book comprehensively and concisely covers what the Bible says will take place in the end days, and also the reasons why God will deal severely with the human family. Every precaution was taken not to speculate. Every Bible passage that is handled in this book is

interpreted under the principle set forth in the Golden Rule of interpretation: "When the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise." Besides this guiding principle, the following rule was always uppermost in my mind as I handled the Word of God: "A text apart from its context is a pretext."

I am deeply indebted to my dear teacher, Dr. David L. Cooper, founder of the Biblical Research Society and Chairman of the Board, for his most invaluable advice and suggestions while the contents were being prepared.

May the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob bring many souls to Himself through the use of this book for the glory of the Holy One of Israel.

Burl Haynie

THE SIGN OF THE END OF THE AGE

MOST PEOPLE HAVE their share of trouble and sorrow. Many seem to have more than their share. And most people at some time or other have sighed and wished for better things. Some have tried to imagine what that would be like.

Have you ever done that? Have you ever tried to answer the question, "What would it be like to live in a perfect world?"

That is a pretty hard question to answer. Perhaps no two of us would have exactly the same opinions and ideas on the subject. But I believe most of us would agree on these things: In a perfect world there would be no wars, no injustice, no crime, no poverty, no sickness, no anti-Semitism, no racial hatred.

To emphasize the positive aspect, in a perfect world men, women and children everywhere would enjoy peace, righteousness, prosperity, health and brotherly love.

What a wonderful world that would be to live in! Yet that is no idealist's dream. That is what God has planned for the human family to enjoy, and to enjoy to the full. That is the kind of world people are going to live in some day, perhaps not too far in the future.

The Bible Tells of the Wonderful World of the Future

This truth is set forth in the Word of God, the Bible, in which God has been pleased to reveal His plans and purposes for the human family. Without the Bible we would have no way of knowing what the future holds in store.

God revealed future events to His Hebrew prophets at various times down through the centuries. God, the Holy Spirit, took the prophets in vision from their native situation and surroundings, transported them across the centuries, and let them become eyewitnesses of the character or characters, circumstances, incidents, or era being presented upon the stage of eternity which God purposed to reveal. *The prophets' visions, or prophecies are recorded in the Bible.* Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled.

The Holy Spirit transported Isaiah, the prophet, across the centuries in vision and let him see the perfect world that is to come. God's Chosen People, Israel, are to play a large part in that world of the future. Therefore, Isaiah saw the Lord in Jerusalem ruling over the

whole earth as King of kings. He saw Israel as the head of the nations, bringing glory and praise to their God and King. He saw people from all nations of the world coming up to Jerusalem in that day to learn the law of the Lord and to see the beauty of the King. He saw the desert blooming as the rose. He saw lions as tame as kittens. He saw justice, peace prosperity throughout the earth in the new age to come—the *Golden Era*.

Following is one of Isaiah's prophecies about the glorious Golden Era:

2 And it shall come to pass in the later days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 and many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and 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 2:2-4).

The Bible Warns of a Time of Trouble in the Future

Although the Word of God presents this bright view of the future, it also reveals that there is to be a period of darkness, trouble and distress just before the Golden Era.

Beginning with Moses, every Hebrew prophet who predicted the great era of peace and prosperity, the Golden Era, wrote that a period of suffering or tribulation would come first.

The Reason for the Time of Trouble—Man's Wickedness

"Why," you may ask, must a period of suffering come before the Golden Era?

There is but one answer: Because man is so wicked and deceitful. The pages of history are full of the deceitful dealings of man with man and nation with nation; of man's inhumane treatment of his fellowmen; of wars and rumors of wars. Before God can bring in the Golden

Era, therefore, He will have to intervene in the affairs of man, destroy the wicked, put a stop to wars and completely renovate this old world.

Man did not have a wicked, deceitful nature when God created him. He was perfect in every respect. When he rebelled against God and fell, however, a power, or force corrupted his nature. The Bible calls this power sin. Furthermore, the Bible says that every member of the human family is affected by this power. Sin contaminates the flesh of every person. Sin in the flesh causes man to do things which he would not otherwise do, and to refrain from doing things which his better nature would lead him to do. It causes him to demonstrate what some call delinquent behavior. A very good pronouncement of man's natural tendency toward delinquent behavior is set forth in a report issued by the Minnesota Crime Commission. The report says:

What we call delinquent behavior is as old and universal as man. It is not something to which only an evil or moronic segment of humanity, different from the rest of us, is liable. It must be remembered that no infant is born a finished product. On the contrary, every baby starts life as a little savage; is equipped, among other things, with organs and muscles over which he has not control, with an urge for self-preservation, with aggressive drives and emotions like anger, fear, and love over which, likewise, he has practically no control. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it—his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmate's toy, his uncle's watch. And deny him those wants and he seethes with rage and aggression which would be murderous were he not so helpless.

He is dirty. He has no morals, no knowledge, no skills. What this means, of course, is that all children, not just certain children, are born delinquent and, if permitted to continue in the self-centered world of his infancy, given free reign to his impulsive actions to satisfy his wants, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, killer, rapist. And in the processes of growing up, it is normal for every child to be dirty, to fight, to grab, to steal, to tear things apart, to talk back, to disobey, to evade. Every child has to grow out of delinquent behavior.

Unfortunately, many individuals exhibit delinquent behavior throughout their lives. From birth to death they let the power of sin dominate them. Today the number of people who are letting the power of sin dominate their lives is increasing. The Bible teaches that, as the end of the age draws nearer, the number of criminals and wicked ones will continue

to increase until a large proportion of the human race is incapable of right thoughts or actions.

Eventually the entire human race would come under the complete dominion of the power of sin unless God intervened. In other words, left to himself man would ultimately destroy the entire human race either spiritually or physically. Perhaps both. But God will not permit this to happen. He has intervened in world affairs in the past to overrule man's mistakes and wicked schemes, and to prevent his self-destruction. He is going to do so in the future.

God has tremendous benefits in store for "all the families of the earth," and He is going to see that they receive those benefits. He is going to carry out His plans and purposes for His own glory and for the benefit of mankind. One of the Hebrew psalmists has made it plain that God is behind the scenes, directing affairs here on earth, for he wrote: "Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Psalm 103:19).

God Warns Men in Advance of Coming Judgments

When God must step in to right the wrongs and set things in order, He does not do so suddenly without warning and take men by surprise. He is just and fair in all His dealings with the human family, warning them well in advance before He steps in to judge the wicked and bring order out of chaos. The reason so many were overtaken by God's judgments in the past is that they did not listen to His prophets and heed His warnings.

During Old Testament times, God raised up Noah, Moses, Isaiah and other fearless prophets to foretell events so men could be prepared for what was going to happen.

For instance, God used His prophet Noah to warn the people of his day of the flood that was coming upon the world. Noah preached for years warning his generation that the coming flood would destroy them if they did not turn from their wicked ways.

Moses is another example. When God was ready to deliver His people out of Egypt, bring them into their own country, and place them under the Law, He raised up Moses to be His spokesman. Moses warned the Egyptians of the plagues they would have to endure if they did not let the Jewish people go. He let his own people know that God was leading them into a new era—the Age of the Law. He made it plain that God was going to deal with them *as a nation* as well as on an individual basis. He warned them that they were

responsible as a nation to obey the laws God had given them. Obedience to God's laws would bring *national* blessings; disobedience national suffering and distress.

After the Israelites were settled comfortably in the land of Canaan, the majority turned away from God and refused to obey His commandments. God used Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea and others to sound a warning to His people, the Israelites, that He was going to send them into captivity under the Assyrians and Babylonians if they continued to disobey His laws.

The Old Testament makes it very plain that God has not kept His movements a secret. He has always revealed His plans and purposes to and through His prophets throughout the history of mankind.

Looking far ahead into the future, God told His prophets of old that a terrible time of trouble was coming upon the world "in the latter days." These men wrote much about that period of trouble, or tribulation. Jeremiah called the period "the time of Jacob's trouble." Almost all of the prophets referred to that time as "the day of the Lord." Very often they referred to it by saying "in that day." In the New Testament it is spoken of as the Great Tribulation.

The Sign of the End of the Present Age

The Old Testament prophets wrote fully about the activities that will take place "in that day" and in the Golden Era which will follow it. Some of them wrote in general terms describing what will exist in the world *immediately before* that time of trouble and distress begins.

But the Lord Jesus Christ revealed the specific sign that would point to the approach of the Tribulation and the end of the age.

On the last day of Jesus' public ministry, Peter, James, John and Andrew went to Him privately and asked about the end days. While they were with Him they asked Him a double-barreled question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (Matthew 24:3)

Jesus answered them by first focusing their attention on the first phase of their question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming ...?" He said: "Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ [Messiah] and shall lead many astray" (Matthew 24:3-5).

Jesus warned His disciples of the false messiahs that will arise in Israel before He returns. He said many will come in His name—not in the name of Jesus of Nazareth but in the name of Messiah—saying, "I am the Messiah." These false messiahs will move upon the people through political power and persuasion and will lead many astray. A little later, Jesus made it plain that His coming will be dramatic and unmistakable. He said there will be signs in the heavens just before He comes, and He will come in power and great glory (Matthew 24:29,30).

Those who are interested in false messiahs should read *Messianic Speculations in Israel*, by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver.

After Jesus warned His disciples against false messiahs, He led them into the answer to the second phase of their question: "What shall be the sign ... of the end of the world [age]?" He began to speak about the period during which He would be absent from the world. He foretold that it would be characterized by wars and rumors of wars. "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet" (Matthew 24:6).

Jesus cautioned His followers not to become disturbed by associating local wars with the end of the age. He declared that local wars would come and go: "for these things [wars and rumors of wars] must needs come to pass; but the end [end of the age] is not yet."

Then Jesus said, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be great earthquakes, and in divers places famines and pestilences" (Luke 21:10,11).

What is the significance of the expression, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"? This expression is an Old Testament idiom. The prophets used this idiom to describe a war that would break out in one place and spread to another, then to another and another, until it involved all the territory which the individual prophet had in mind at the time he made his prophecy.

Isaiah used this idiom to prophesy a devastating civil war that would wreck the entire country of Egypt. He spoke for the Lord saying: "And I will stir up the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom" (Isaiah 19:2). Isaiah prophesied that in Egypt one individual would begin to fight another; neighbors would become involved in the issue; the whole cities would enter the conflict. Finally the conflict would spread until the entire country of Egypt would become involved.

It is obvious from the context in which Jesus' words are found that He had a world view in mind when He used the idiom, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Therefore, He used this expression to describe a war that would begin when one nation would rise up against another nation; the war would spread to other nations, and continue to spread until it involved all the nations and kingdoms of the world.

According to Jesus, famines, earthquakes in different places and pestilences would accompany this world war.

Since Jesus said that a world war accompanied by famines, pestilences and earthquakes in different places would be a sign of the end of the age, no one has any logical reason to expect the present age to begin to draw to a close until these things have occurred.

Has there been a period in history when there was a world war such as Jesus foretold? Yes. In 1914 Austria declared war on Serbia; Germany followed by declaring war on Russia, then on France. After Germany involved Belgium, England declared war on Germany. As time rolled along other nations were drawn into the struggle. In 1914, according to certain statisticians, there were 64 sovereign nations in the world. All but seven countries became involved in the war of 1914-1918 — Denmark, Holland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. One or two of these seven were on the verge of entering when the war stopped, November 11, 1918. Without question all nations were affected by this first global conflict.

By common consent, we label the great war of 1914-18 as World War I. The war of 1939-45 is called World War II. Frequently we hear people talking about World War III, by which the world is often threatened. According to the sure word of prophecy, there will be three world wars during the Great Tribulation—the Time of Jacob's trouble. As to whether or not there will be another world war before the Tribulation begins, no one can say. Only the Lord knows.

Was World War I accompanied by famines, pestilences and earthquakes in different parts of the world? Yes.

Famines: About that time, there were famines on an unprecedented scale in eastern and central Europe, as well as in China and the Far east.

Almost immediately after World War I two terrible famines took millions of lives. They were the great Chinese famine of 1920 and the Russian famine of 1921. A famous scientist

and explorer, Dr. Hansen, spoke of the Russian famine as "beyond doubt the most appalling that has ever happened in the recorded history of man."

Earthquakes: According to *The Encyclopedia Americana*, seven notable earthquakes occurred during the 20 year period around World War I. Most of these earthquakes were extremely severe, taking thousands of lives and causing extensive damage to property.

For example, in 1908 an earthquake in Italy took the lives of at least 85,000 people; in 1920 China was shaken by an earthquake which took a toll of 180,000 lives; and in 1923 the terrible Japanese earthquake took about 143,000 lives. Noel F. Busch in his book *Two Minutes to Noon* describes the earthquake which struck Japan in 1923 as the most destructive natural disaster in the recorded history of man.

The Encyclopedia Americana lists only 26 great earthquakes between 63 A.D. and 1896—a period of 1833 years. Therefore, for seven notable earthquakes to occur in the short span of 20 years about the time of World War I was quite remarkable.

Pestilences: In connection with World War I myriads of people were swept into untimely graves by cholera and typhus epidemics. According to some statisticians, the world-wide flu epidemic of 1918-19 caused the death of about 23 million people.

"But all these things are the beginning of travail (the first birth pain)," said Jesus. Thus He foretold that a world war accompanied by terrible disasters would be the sign notifying men that the terrible sufferings of the end of the age were coming upon the world. And he told His disciples that the generation that saw these things would not pass away until the end of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:34). (Some scholars teach that the Biblical generation—70-80 years—is given in Psalm 90:10: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore years.")

2

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

THE SIGN OF THE END of the age—a world war accompanied by famines, earthquakes and pestilences—is God's warning that the Tribulation, the time of Jacob's Trouble, is approaching. Besides this sign, God in His Word has given us a number of additional signs that unmistakably identify the times in which you and I live as the closing days of this age.

The Return of the Jews to the Land of Israel

One of the most prominent signs of our times is the return of the Jews to the land of their fathers.

The Lord entered into a special covenant with Abraham to give the land of Canaan to him and to his seed:

18 In that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite, and the Kenizzite, and the Kadmonite, 20 and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Rephaim, 21 and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Girgashite, and the Jebusite (Genesis 15:18-21).

From this passage it is clear that the land promised to Abraham included the vast territory from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates. Though God promised this land to Abraham and his seed, he did not possess one foot of the soil. Nor have the Jews ever possessed all the land promised to them through Abraham. The writings of the prophets make it plain, however, that some day the Lord will give Abraham and his descendants all of the land He promised them. Beginning with Moses, many men of God have prophesied that the Jews would be scattered among the nations, where they would survive many cruel days; but at the end of those days they would return to the promised land and possess all of it.

The prophet Ezekiel, saw his people scattered, and he also saw them returning to their land, in his vision of the valley of dry bones.

According to Ezekiel chapter 37, the return of the Jews to the land is a process, a development, yes, a program—as shown by the vision of the valley of bones.

37 The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of Jehovah, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. 2 And he caused me to pass by them round about; and, lo, they were very dry. 3 And he said unto me, son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O lord Jehovah, thou knowest. 4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy over these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. 5 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, an earthquake; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 And I beheld, and, lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them. 9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are all dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. 12 Therefore prophecy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel, 13 And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. 14 And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I Jehovah, have spoken it and performed it saith Jehovah (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

In verse 11 the Lord reveals that these bones represent the whole house of Israel at the time they say, "Our hope is lost, we are clean cut off." Thus, this vision does not represent the entire nation through the centuries, but only at the time when the Jewish people have given up hope.

What is the national hope of Israel?

Instantly the orthodox Bible student will reply, "It is the hope of the coming Messiah, who is to be the Redeemer of the nation." Therefore, the prophet saw a time in the future when the Jews would abandon their national hope, giving up all interest in the reliance upon the coming of the Messiah.

Since the Jewish people have held tenaciously to the hope of Messiah's coming through the centuries what period in Israel's history does Ezekiel's vision represent? Has there been a time in history when a majority of the Jewish people lost their national hope?

Those who are familiar with Jewish history know that the Jews largely lost their Messianic hope in these modern times after rationalism permeated Jewish life. Thus it is quite evident that the prophet was carried forward in vision and saw the nation of Israel at the present time.

According to Ezekiel's vision, at the time the majority of the Jewish people give up their national hope—the coming of their Messiah—something occurs that affects the nation and brings them together, just as the earthquake in the vision occurred and caused the movement which brought the bones together. Earthquakes and accompanying disasters are always destructive, something that will affect the Jewish nation materially, causing them to come together.

Has anything occurred in the world to cause the Jews to come together?

Everyone who is familiar with the events of World War I and its impact and effect upon the Jewish nation can understand what Ezekiel refers to. The great war and its aftermath affected the Jews to such an extent that they realized that they were unwelcome guests among the nations, and that their only hope of survival was to return to the land of their fathers. Thus the Zionist movement, which had been simply a little trickle of national hope and aspiration, was turned into a great stream of hope that flooded world Jewry.

Some say that World War I prepared the land of Israel for the Jews, and that World War II prepared the Jews for the land. It is a fact that the return of the Jews to their land has been accelerated since World War II.

As indicated by the coming together of the bones, the sinews appearing, the flesh growing upon the bones, and the skin forming over the flesh, this Bible passage sets forth the thought that there would be a gradual development of a movement to gather the Jews together that would be quickened by World War I with its aftermath.

God uses men and means and natural occurrences to bring about the desired results. The human side of the situation and human efforts are set forth by the coming together of

the bones, the binding of them together by the sinews, the appearance of the flesh with the skin. These are symbolic of efforts which the Jews alone put forth.

But the breathing of life and vigor into these lifeless bodies by the Spirit of God represents a supernatural event—the spiritual rebirth of every member of the house of Israel.

Zephaniah, a prophet of the Lord God of Israel, commanded the Jewish people to gather themselves together in the end days of this age. Zephaniah prophesied:

2 Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation that hath no shame;
 2 before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce
 anger of Jehovah come upon you, before the day of Jehovah's anger come upon you.
 3 Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordinances; seek
 righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger
 (Zephaniah 2:1-3).

It is clear from this passage that members from the Jewish nation will gather together before "the day of the Lord's anger" comes upon the world. In fulfillment of this prediction, approximately two million Jews have already returned to the land of Israel. The state of Israel became a reality in 1948. The Jews in the land are doing marvelous things in spite of opposition and all but insurmountable obstacles. Israel today is a modern miracle of human planning, scientific execution, and indefatigable energy. Yet the present return to the land is not that full and complete restoration of which the psalmists sang and the prophet's spoke. That will not take place until the dawn of the Golden Era.

The fact that the Jews are returning to the land of their fathers is a most significant sign of the times.

The Restoration of Ancient Babylon

Another sign of the times is the work that is being done to restore the ancient city of Babylon to its former splendor and beauty.

It is recorded in the Bible that King Nebuchadnezzar, as he walked in his palace one day, looked out over the city of Babylon and exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my

majesty?" The God of Israel had to punish the heathen king severely for his conceit and pride, to teach him that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will." But it was during Nebuchadnezzar's reign, in the sixth century B.C., that Babylon became the commercial, political and religious center of the civilized world.

Babylon was a magnificent city, situated on both sides of the Euphrates River. Some historians estimate that it was spread over an area of 196 square miles. It was surrounded by a deep, wide moat filled with water. In addition, the city was protected by an outer and an inner wall; these may have been about 300 feet high and over 80 feet wide. The city had 100 bronze gates, 25 on each side. It was a city of temples and palaces, of two, three and four story houses, of straight, broad streets, of orchards, and gardens and parks.

At the height of its glory it seemed like an invulnerable city that would live forever. But great Babylon finally died and was buried under dust and rubble for centuries.

According to the Bible, ancient Babylon is going to be restored to unbelievable beauty and glory and power. It will become the capital of the world, and it will be the most wicked of all cities during the very end of this present age.

John the apostle saw Babylon as the commercial center of the world during the close of this era and saw that it would be utterly destroyed (Revelation, chapter 18).

According to Isaiah the prophet, "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride," will be destroyed in the day of Jehovah.

Babylon is located in Iraq, in the middle east, about 50 miles south of Baghdad, near the city of Hillah. One can walk from Hillah's train station to Babylon in about 20 minutes.

Approximately 2,500 people now live in the village of Babylon. Its population has increased remarkably since 1958 because the Iraqi government is building homes and moving in workers to bring Old Babylon out of her dusty grave. The ancient city of Babylon is being "resurrected."

Babylon tops the list of ancient sites to visit in Iraq. The following is quoted from IRAQ—A GUIDEBOOK, published by the Iraqi government in 1961:

The most moving of the places to visit is undoubtedly the site of the ancient *Babylon* which goes back nearly 4,000 years. Here time and the elements, as well as man himself, have worn away what was probably the most spectacular city of ancient times, with its *Hanging Gardens*, its mighty walls and gates, its palaces, its crowds, its religious rites and ceremonies and all the other trappings of power. Dominating the scene is the great Lion of Babylon, giving a suggestion of such ponderous and almost

crushing strength as would be hard to duplicate in the sculpture of any other kind....
There are still many things to see in Babylon:

The great Street of the Processions, the Ishtar Gate with the beautiful bas-reliefs of animals so cunningly contrived as to seem almost alive, but with that quality overlaying them that will always distinguish the work of art from the natural object, the huge temples of Easgila and Etemenanki, the latter, the famous staged tower, in all probability the Tower of Babel. When you stand among the ruins you are linked in a way with Hammurabi, with Nebuchadnezzar and with Alexander the Great ...

Hillah covers a part of the site of ancient Babylon. Urban and suburban Hillah have a population of about 85,000. The city is divided by the Hillah Branch of the Euphrates River into two sections. Its citizens identify their section by saying they live in either the "large side" or in the "small side" of Hillah. The larger and newer section lies west of the river. The "small side" lies on the east. Babylon is about two miles northeast of the "small side."

Hillah is considered a wealthy city. It is principally an export center for grain—wheat, barley and rice. Saddlery and handicraft are its chief industries. Its bazaars are large. Its environs are serenely beautiful, and its climate is mild and delightful. Hillah is growing rapidly. In fact, its population expansion is on a par with that of any prosperous city of the modern world.

One of Hillah's prominent citizens, an official of the Arab Students Organization, recently stated, "I believe Hillah will become a great center of attraction for the whole world. The government (Iraqi) is waking up to see the profit to be gained from the romance and lore of old Babylonia. As the government becomes more and more stable, greater funds and energies will be poured into the redevelopment of Babylon and surrounding area."

In harmony with this official's statement is one of King Hussein's. The Jordan king Recently said:

The common destiny which we have [Arab World] envision, and for which we have committed our energies and our resources, is to forge ahead in the modern world, as speedily as we can, with a view to making the fullest contribution possible to the cause of world civilization ... and to partake in the movement of human kind towards a richer and higher life for all.

This is not, I assure you, a vain expression, but rather a deep-felt yearning which draws inspiration and sustenance from our history, our traditions and our sense of mission. The Arabs are probably one of the most history-conscious people in the world,

and it is a history which is predominantly humane and creative, liberal and tolerant and distinguished as much for its ability to learn as to teach.

In the very short period since our modern renaissance we have made far-reaching progress in every walk of life.

Jordan, Iraq and 11 other Arabic countries have become unified under the United Arab Republic within the last decade.

The middle East is growing very rapidly in power and influence. Some modern historians, among them Dr. Toynbee, believe that the center of world political gravity is shifting eastward.

If you are in doubt as to whether this age in which you live is drawing to a close, keep an eye on Babylon and on developments in the Middle East, especially Iraq.

Trend Toward a World Church

Another sign of the times is the modern trend toward a World Church. The Bible clearly teaches that there will be one great World Church at the end of the age.

This World Church is pictured in Revelation 17:1,2 as a "great harlot that sitteth upon many waters [ecclesiastical system supported by many of the inhabitants of the world]: with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication [false religious teaching]."

For almost as long as the Church of Jesus Christ has existed it has been divided on certain doctrines and practices. And as long as it has been divided there have been individuals and groups, at various times down through the years, who have longed to see it united. These have prayed, and preached and worked to unify the church. This movement has come to be known as the ecumenical *movement*—that which is concerned for the unity and renewal of the church.

None of the efforts to unify the church was successful, however, until the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement.

When did this modern movement begin?

It is generally believed that it got its start during a Protestant missionary conference.

Many missionaries on the foreign field learned that there were times when they had to pull together with other missionaries, even though their beliefs and practices might differ somewhat. They often needed each other's help and encouragement. So missionaries from

different denominational backgrounds learned to work side by side, and sometimes hand in hand.

Out of this spirit of mutual concern and co-operation, the first World Missionary Conference was born. It was held in Edinburgh in 1910. The conference appointed a committee to continue the work of the conference. As a result, the International Missionary Council came into being in 1921.

This was probably the first step taken in the modern ecumenical movement. Since then successive steps have been taken which are bringing the movement nearer to its goal—the unity and renewal of the church.

Not long after this, two other conferences came into being which have played a large part in the modern ecumenical movement.

One was a Universal Conference on Life and Works which first met in Stockholm in 1925. This conference placed its emphasis on the social responsibilities of the church.

The other was the World Conference on Faith and Order, which held its first conference in Lausanne in 1927. It met for the specific purpose of discussing those things on which the churches were divided.

As these three groups held separate conferences, all working toward the same goal the unity of the church, it is obvious that a lot of work was being duplicated. But what could be done about it? Something could be done, and was.

Out of conferences held by the three groups in 1937 and 1938 an idea developed. Why not form a World Council of Churches? The last two groups would merge; the first group, the International Missionary Council, would be associated with the World Council. The idea met with approval and plans for the merger were soon under way.

World War II delayed the merger; but after the war was over, preparations for the merger were completed. The World Council of churches became a reality on August 23, 1948. In 1961, at the third assembly of the World Council of Churches, the International Missionary Council merged with the World council to form one great ecumenical body.

The two great objectives of the World Council of Churches are the unity and the renewal of the church. The Council is not a church. It simply offers the various churches a means by which they may pray, talk and work together while striving toward the goal of unity. It has a growing membership, consisting of churches in all parts of the world.

On the Roman Catholic front, Pope John XXIII was deeply committed to the cause of Christian unity. His successor, Paul VI, is carrying on where he left off. One of the long

range goals of the Roman Catholic Ecumenical Council is to bring into one fold all of the people in the world who label themselves Christian.

The Roman Catholic Church was greatly encouraged in its drive toward unity by the meeting in the Holy Land, early in 1964, of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of the Orthodox Church. Life magazine reported that "the Pope and Athenagoras, prayed together that Christians throughout the world—not just members of the Catholic churches—might be reunited."

The Protestant publication *Christian Century* pointed out that by implication all Protestants in the World Council of Churches were involved in the meeting of Pope Paul with Patriarch Athenagoras, supreme leader of Eastern Orthodoxy." Whenever it (Eastern Orthodoxy) strengthens its ties to the World Council of Churches, Orthodoxy will pull the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches closer together," the paper said.

Dr. John F. Walvoord, an evangelical Protestant leader who is opposed to the foundation of a World Church, made this observation in the Sunday school Times: "Now, for the first time in the history of the church, the ecumenical movement is a major action toward unity with a goal, some claim, of bringing together all major elements of Christianity, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Protestant bodies into one World Church."

The moves by both Protestants and Roman Catholics toward "Christian Unity" are well worth watching. They are definitely a sign that we are in the last days and moving, perhaps slowly now, but with ever increasing speed, toward the World Church of the end days—"the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters."

Trend Toward a World Government

Steps in the direction of a World Government are another sign of the times.

Daniel, the Hebrew prophet who lived in the sixth century B.C., prophesied that the nations would come up under a one-world government at the end of this age.

Daniel was given a vision which troubled him greatly:

2 ... I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of heaven brake forth upon the great sea.

3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse from one another.

4 The first was a lion and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon two feet as a man; and a man's heart was given to it.

5 And, Behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear; and it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

6 after this I beheld, and, lo, another, like a leopard, which had upon its back four wings of a bird; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

7 after this I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it ... (Daniel 7:2-7).

While Daniel was troubled by the vision which he had seen, God, through an angel, gave him the interpretation of it:

17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings [or kingdoms], that shall arise out of the earth.

19 Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast which was diverse from all of them, exceeding terrible ...

23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces (Daniel 7:17,19,23).

Many Bible scholars believe that history has recorded the fulfillment of three fourths of Daniel's vision. The Babylonian (lion), Medo-Persian (bear), and Greek (leopard) kingdoms have had their hour of power and glory one after another, and have fallen to rise no more. The *fourth kingdom is a type of government* that began with the rise of the Roman Empire to power and has continued in some part of the world ever since. At the very end of this age *the fourth type of government* will "devour the whole earth," and the nations of the world will come up under a World Government.

Years ago men considered the idea of a one-world government impracticable and impossible. But two world wars and modern methods of communication and travel have shrunk our globe. As a result, new attitudes are being formed.

Soon after World War I was over, the League of Nations was founded to be a permanent organization through which the nations of the world could work together for peace and

progress. But World War II brought an end to the League. Before that war ended, a new world organization for peace and progress was set up—the United Nations. Today world leaders are trying to work together through the United Nations; and the majority of the nations are at least outwardly "united" to try to keep the peace and to better the living conditions of the underprivileged peoples of the world.

Of course, the leaders, who created the United Nations were not seeking to form a World Government. The United Nations does not have executive, legislative, and judicial branches, which are the standard parts of government. Neither did the League. Nevertheless, both the League of Nations and the United Nations are steps in the direction of a World Government.

And there are well-informed and influential men today who feel that a further step must be taken. They believe that a World Government is the only way to insure lasting peace among the nations.

One advocate of World Government is Grenville Clark. The following quotation is from his article, "World Order: The Need for a Bold New Approach," which appeared in *The Annals* of the American academy of Political and Social Science, July 1961:

As a first basic condition [for world order] I place the definite acceptance by the governments and peoples of the leading powers of the concept that world order requires the same kind of legislative, executive, and judicial institutions on a world scale as for the maintenance of internal order in local communities and within nations.

So, keep Daniel's prophecy in mind, and watch for a growing trend toward a one-world government. This is one of the signs that we are living close to the end of this age.

In addition to his prophecy concerning a coming world government, Daniel gave two more signs by which the end days may be recognized. He prophesied that in the time of the end "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4).

Modern Methods of Travel

Daniel wrote that "many shall run to and fro," for God permitted him to see in vision men traveling at high speeds at the close of this age. But he was not the only Hebrew prophet who saw men running to and fro at high speeds at the close of this age.

Ezekiel described airborne travel in military operations in the last days (Ezekiel 38:9).

Isaiah saw the Jews flying to their homeland in the last days (Isaiah 60:8).

Nahum saw what he called chariots dashing to and fro at tremendous speeds, having lights which reminded him of torches (Nahum 2:4). There is no doubt that God let Nahum see and prophesy automobile travel in the last days.

Of course, all the statements the prophets made about their visions of the last days must be studied in their contexts.

Until very recently the best methods of travel were very slow compared with the high speeds at which men run to and fro today. Surely these prophets who lived centuries ago described very accurately modern methods of travel in this 20th century.

As recently as 40 years ago it caused excitement in a whole community when a family piled into a Model T Ford and a 200-mile trip. Today a family can board a jet and travel 2000 miles and no one pays them any attention.

Travel is now in vogue. The New York Port of authority handled 22,856,000 travelers in the New York airports in 1964. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, people are taking longer vacations and are spending proportionally larger amounts each year for motor trips and foreign travel. Today men are running to and fro at high speeds in every part of the world! This is an important sign that we are living very close to the end of the age.

Rapid Increase of Knowledge

Linked with this sign is a second one—the increase of knowledge in the last days. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Daniel's prophecy implies that the acquisition of knowledge will be accelerated as the end of the age draws near.

If you have any doubts that this sign of the times is pointing directly to our day, just thumb through the pages of history. As you do, look for the most dramatic examples of the advances that have been made in the fields of industry, travel and transportation, communications, and medicine. You will turn many, many pages and cross thousands of years, and only now and then will you find a really great invention or medical discovery. As you approach the middle of the 18th century, however, you will come into a new era—an era of progress in all branches of science.

Why was progress in the past so slow?

Because, until about 200 years ago man had not acquired the knowledge he needed to make rapid advances in industry, transportation, etc.

Civilized man has never been satisfied with his existence. He has constantly worked to acquire more knowledge to help him open up new frontiers. He has always probed into everything he could to find new and better ways of doing things. He accumulated knowledge bit by bit, a little here and a little there through the centuries. But until fairly recently he had not acquired sufficient knowledge to relate and make practical use of the many seemingly isolated bits of knowledge he gained.

He used fire to boil water, but for centuries he knew nothing of the power of the steam.

He invented wheels, but thousands of years passed before he had the know-how to build an engine to turn the wheels.

He knew a lot about pain and suffering, but only comparatively recently did he learn that microbes cause many of his illnesses.

True, he was gaining knowledge and making progress all the time, but for a long time his forward march was very slow.

Then about 200 years ago man began to relate and apply the knowledge he had acquired through the centuries with startling results. Invention followed invention and discovery followed discovery. Soon man's way of life in the more progressive nations was completely changed, and it is still changing.

Industry

Since the middle of the 18th century increase in knowledge has brought about rapid progress in the field of industry. The first real progress was made in the spinning and weaving industry about 1770 with the invention of machines that could do the work of many men. This brought about the Industrial Revolution, for the use of machines soon spread to other industries. As bigger and better machines were made, industry grew and expanded.

In this 20th century industry continues to grow and expand at an accelerated pace as researchers constantly gain and apply new knowledge. In 1963 American firms spent 16 billion dollars on research and development programs to acquire the know how to produce new and better machines and equipment. This statement concerning industry's remarkable growth during the past 20 years was made in the United Nations publication *World Facts and Figures*: "The 1950's [was] a decade in which economic progress was extremely rapid and in which the output of the mines and factories of the world rose to a level twice as high

as the level of 20 years ago—that is to say that the world's industrial economy made as much absolute progress in those 20 years as it had in all of its history."

In other fields the picture of rapid progress due to increase in knowledge is the same.

Communications

One hundred years ago there were no telephones, motion pictures (the movie camera had not yet been invented), radios, or television sets. About the fastest means of communication available at that time was the telegraph. Then toward the end of the 19th century man's knowledge in this field increased so rapidly that he was able to take some giant steps toward the modern fast and efficient means of communication we enjoy today.

Bell took out a patent on his first crude phone in 1876. George Eastman came up with the Kodak in 1888. Thomas Edison invented the movie projector in 1893. About the turn of the century, man had acquired enough knowledge to produce radio. Television made its appearance almost 30 years later.

Now you and I can telephone to the ends of the earth in a matter of minutes. And we can see pictures of current happenings in foreign countries, bounced off man-made satellites, right in our own living rooms via television. As knowledge increases, old methods of communication are being improved and new methods are being developed almost every day.

Travel and Transportation

Tremendous advances also have been made in methods of travel and transportation in the last century, as knowledge in this field has increased.

Just 100 years ago there wasn't even a Model T Ford on the market. There wasn't a truck or bus on the road. There wasn't an airplane soaring across the sky. Satellites and rockets to the moon made exciting science fiction, but few people expected them to become a reality. Then, a train ride was an exciting experience.

Knowledge has been gained and applied so rapidly in this field within the past century, however, that today streamlined cars, high powered trucks and buses, and speedy jets are as common place as rice and potatoes. Space travel, too, is fast becoming a part of our everyday life. During 1960-63 astronauts orbited the earth hundreds of times, and plans

are ahead for more flights into space. Right now American scientists are working on Saturn V, which they hope will carry men to the moon about 1970. With payload, Saturn V will be as tall as a 37-story building, will generate 7.5 million pounds of thrust in a cluster of five Rocketdyne engines, and will weigh *six million pounds*. Yet, according to *U.S. News & World Report*, "Six years ago [1958] the United States could not get a grapefruit sized satellite off the launch pad." "Knowledge shall be increased"!

Medical Science

Nor is medical science lagging behind.

Just a little over 100 years ago no one was certain that microbes caused many of our diseases. Then Pasteur proved to himself and the world that tiny creatures too small to be seen by the naked eye were spreading disease and death.

Since that time, increase in knowledge has made possible great strides in the field of medical science. X-rays, insulin, antibiotics, vitamins, and an effective polio vaccine are just a few of the discoveries that have been made in recent years.

Today millions of dollars a year are being spent by the Cancer, Heart, Tuberculosis, and other Associations to gain knowledge that may eventually lead to the cure or control of the diseases that plague our society.

Progress in medical science may seem slow to many of us, but it is almost unbelievably rapid compared with the progress made during past centuries. The following quotation from *The Encyclopedia Americana* spotlights the amazing increase in knowledge and the rapid advances that have been made during the first half of the 20th century:

Medical Science has made extraordinary progress since 1900. Its effect may be measured by the increase of life expectancy, which during this brief period of history has been extended by one-third, representing an accomplishment greater than that achieved during the preceding 2000 years.

"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Daniel's prophecy concerning the end times is being fulfilled before our very eyes.

Increase in Crime and Immorality, and Desire for Personal Gain and Pleasure

Another sign of the times stands out in bold relief, spelling out that we live in the last days. This sign is the rising crime index, increase in open immorality, and love of material things that characterize our present day society. According to the Word of God, wickedness and a desire for the things of this world will be very prevalent in the last days.

A careful examination of history shows that man's evil, selfish nature has remained the same through the centuries. Some have erroneously thought that education, culture and refinement could change the nature of man, but they cannot. Men and women are as wicked today as they have ever been, as all right-thinking people will admit. Only God, the Holy Spirit, can refine and purify an individual within and without; the Holy Spirit does this work in the heart and life of the believer.

Increase in Crime

It is written in the Bible: "Wicked men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13).

Jesus taught that in the end days, just before He returns to the earth, wickedness will be great in the world. He compared the end days with the days of Noah, saying: "As were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:37-39).

Jesus made reference to Moses' account of the moral and spiritual condition of the people in Noah's day. Moses wrote of those days as follows:

6 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born unto them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose. 3 And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he is also flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years. 4 The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.

5 And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it

repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah

...

11 And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. 13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me: for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth (Genesis 6:1-8, 11-13).

In Noah's day the wickedness of man was so great in the earth that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Shortly before the flood came and destroyed most of the human race, man had become so corrupt that he was incapable of right thoughts or actions. Jesus said, "As were the days of Noah" so shall it be in the end of the age.

Psalm 92:6-9 throws a bright light on the moral and spiritual conditions of the world in the end time.

- 6 A brutish man knoweth not;
Neither doth a fool understand this:
- 7 When the wicked spring as the grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;
It is that they shall be destroyed for ever.
- 8 But thou, O Jehovah, art on high for evermore.
For, lo, thine enemies, O Jehovah,
- 9 For, lo, thine enemies shall perish;
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

When the wicked come up as grass and the workers of iniquity thrive and prosper, it will then be time to destroy them from the face of the globe forever. Today the wicked are springing up on every hand, and workers of iniquity are flourishing. Thus, the 20th century is rapidly taking on many of the characteristics of Noah's day. This is a sign of the times.

Crime was rampant in Noah's day, for Moses wrote of that day, saying, "The earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence," Jesus said, "As were the days of Noah" so shall it be at the end of the age.

Increase in crime, especially juvenile crime, is a growing problem throughout the world today. So great and universal has this problem become that United Nations' representatives of various nations have met to discuss this problem and try to find a solution to it.

The United Nations held its Second Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders in London, in 1960. The following quotations are from the REPORT PREPARED BY SECRETARIAT of that Congress.

The Rt. Hon. Viscount Kilmuir, Lord Chancellor of England ... observed that the Congress was meeting at a time when the problems of crime were growing in gravity and the resources of treatment agencies were increasingly diversified. Crime in many countries was still increasing; in the United Kingdom, the number of indictable offenses in 1959 was more than twice as high as it had been before the Second World War. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the situation was the disproportionate increase of crime among young people at a time of unparalleled economic prosperity.

The Rapporteur [Dr. Wolf Middendorff, Judge Freiburg in Breisgau, Federal Republic of Germany, making a report to open a debate on "New Forms of Juvenile Delinquency: Their Origin, Prevention and Treatment"] began by stressing that the question of "new" forms of delinquency referred, not to completely new types of crime not generally known in the past, but to an increase in the extent, gravity, violence, number of participants, as well as to apparent lack of motive in existing forms of delinquency. The most important new developments were found to be the growing tendency of groups of juveniles to commit crimes, and that offenses reported from many countries ranged from unorganized mass riots to well-planned robberies and murders. There could be no doubt of the increase of juvenile delinquency practically everywhere ...

Mr. Perzweig [Head of the International Affairs Department of the World Jewish Congress] stressed the corroding influence of racial and religious prejudice and the bearing it had on the development of an adequate system of values and of the part such prejudice plays in encouraging delinquent behavior. He suggested that a reason for the increase in apparently motiveless types of juvenile delinquency was the existence in certain countries of a spiritual vacuum which needed to be filled. It seemed wrong to

treat juvenile delinquency in isolation from society. It was a consequence of the failure of society, and a symptom of the disease in a sick society. Statistics and sociology should not be allowed to conceal the fact that there were deep-seated reasons for the present malaise.

Mr. Takeuchi [Director, Criminal Affairs Bureau, Ministry of justice, Tokyo, Lecturing on juvenile delinquency in Japan] indicated that post war offenses against the penal code committed by juveniles had reached a peak in 1951. There had then been a downward trend in 1955, followed by an upswing to the highest post war figure in 1959. Since 1955, statistics showed an increase in offenses of a violent nature committed by juveniles, although there had not been a substantial increase in offenses against property. The number of traffic violations by juveniles had also shown a marked increase. The main characteristics of recent offenses by juveniles were as follows: an increase in offenses of physical violence and of offenses committed in groups by younger juveniles; a greater number of the older juvenile offenders came from upper-and middle class families. Moreover, unmotivated offenses had shown signs of increase.

Crime in the United States has increased steadily over the years. According to the F.B.I. during the years 1958-63 U.S. crime increased five times faster than the gain in population. Crime climbed 40%; population gain was only 8%. For all criminal acts, excluding traffic offenses, the nationwide increase in arrests of persons under 18 was 11% greater in 1963 than in 1962. For the country as a whole, persons under 18 years of age comprised 17% of all the police arrests for criminal acts. For the offenses that relate to criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and auto theft these young persons were represented in 46% of the arrests nationally.

Increase in Immorality

Throughout the world today, while crime is rocketing, morality is plummeting. Open immorality is becoming more and more prevalent everywhere.

Immorality was as rampant as crime in Noah's day, for Moses wrote of that day, saying: "Every imagination of the thoughts of his [man's] heart was only evil continually ... [and] the earth was corrupt before God." Jesus said, "As were the day's of Noah" so shall it be in the end of the age.

There is much evidence that present-day society has produced an unusually great and ever-growing number of dishonest executives, untrustworthy employees, pandering government officials, overly-indulgent parents, unchaste high school and college students, call-girl housewives, juvenile delinquents, dope addicts, racists, terrorists, etc. etc. The time is soon coming, if it is not already here, when it can be said of great hosts of people that *every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts is only evil continually*.

General lawlessness is greater in this decade, according to the Most Rev. Author Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury. He believes that men are losing their sense of duty and of obligation and truthfulness.

The Texas Department of Public Safety Director Homer Garrison, Jr., says that there is "a general weakening of the moral fiber of the over-all population."

"You don't need to be a puritan to sense that moral standards have slackened," declared Mr. Frederick R. Kappel, chairman of the board of American Telephone & Telegraph Company, at recent news conference. He continued, "It is hard to escape the feeling that things are worse than they used to be ... to a great extent, nowadays, people simply seem to take misbehavior in stride. They don't get up in arms about it."

J. Edgar Hoover recently stated that many persons are so preoccupied with selfishness and greed they no longer know where honor stops and dishonor begins. In an F.B.I. Law Enforcement Bulletin, he wrote:

Morality is one of the more perplexing and controversial problems facing our nation ... because of individual and collective moral cowardice in society. We do not have the courage to stand in conflict with the mad rush for material wealth, indulgence and social prestige. Many persons are so preoccupied with selfishness and greed they no longer know—nor care for that matter—where honor stops and dishonor commences. Others are simply confused. Rationalization and double standards have so clouded some moral principles that right and wrong are no longer clearly distinguishable.

Because of this rationalization, of which Mr. Hoover wrote, many are turning away from divine and wholesome moral standards, and are becoming victims of what some call an *orgy of open-mindedness*. In this state no supreme moral authority exists. Its victims are guided only by conscience. Their rule of conduct has been aptly stated by the late Ernest Hemingway: "What is moral is that you feel good after, and what is immoral is what you feel bad after." Under such a code a great many people are willfully living in an anarchy of

wickedness. For "the heart [conscience] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9.)

Sexual promiscuity is probably the surest gauge to use to measure the decline of morality and the effect of this *orgy of openmindedness*. To some extent sexual promiscuity is blighting every civilized society in the world today.

Anglican Bishop Cuthbert Bardsley told the 64th national conference of the Church of England Men's Society that abuse of freedom in drama, literature, radio, and television has produced a "sexually sick society" in Great Britain. He called on Christians to return to the divine moral law of the Ten Commandments and to discard the "attractive doctrine that no absolute moral standards are any longer credible or possible."

The bishop warned that history shows that the decline of civilization begins with a decline in moral and ethical standards. "Sexual license, in particular," he said, "has been a fruitful cause of moral decay which has been nonetheless real, although the intellectuals of the time have justified it on the grounds of progressive thought."

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale reported that "a young minister was bowled over recently when the president of the youth department of his church, with whom he was discussing moral questions, came right out with crass admission that he was in the habit of having sex relations every weekend with teenage girls in the Sunday school as a matter of routine. The shocked pastor instituted a survey in a class of 30 high school students and found only five who asserted they did not go in for sex affairs. The other said they did 'more or less' and 'couldn't see any wrong in it.' 'It was the usual thing on a date,' they said. 'What do you want us to be, anti-social or something?' they challenged.

According to these young people it is socially acceptable for young folk to have premarital sexual intercourse. A French scholar observed that freedom of sexual intercourse between young men and women is fully accepted in America.

A few years ago, a Danish psychiatrist wrote that she had interviewed hundreds of women of her country about sex matters. Of the ones she talked with, only 1.4 per cent were still virgins when they married. In 1963 eight per cent of the births in Denmark were illegitimate. Abortion is legal in Denmark.

A U.N. correspondent revealed that among teenagers on the East European scene, sex experiences are casual. In Hungary in 1961 there were 20 percent more abortions than

natural births. In Budapest hospital abortions outnumbered natural births four to one during that year.

Pornographers are working fervently stimulating sexual promiscuity in our society. Their filthy and wicked pictures, literature and devices are getting into the hands of thousands of youngsters. It is reported that one firm in Los Angeles, California, dealing in pornographic materials spent \$225,000 for one mailing. Read the article in February 1964 issue of Reader's Digest, "The Battle Against Mail-Order Pornography."

Present-day sexual promiscuity certainly indicates that we are living in the end of this age. Jesus taught, "As were the day's of Noah" so shall it be in the end of the age. Sexual promiscuity flourished in Noah's day, as it is recorded in Genesis 6:4:

The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that when the sons of God came unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.

Very sobering information is given in one of Dr. Peale's articles. He wrote that "Professor J.D. Unwin of Cambridge University ... made a study of 80 civilizations ranging over a period of 4,000 years and concluded that a society either chooses sexual promiscuity and decline, or sexual discipline, which produces a surge of creative energy. Wrote Dr. Unwin, 'Any human society is free to choose either to display great energy, or sexual freedom; the evidence is that they cannot do both for more than one generation.'"

Since the present generation has chosen to follow immorality, there is little hope that the next generation will not follow in their footsteps. "Like father, like son."

Educators, sociologists, and theologians recognize that no previous generation of young people has had such an enormous and detailed amount of information made available to it concerning scientific facts. And probably none has been left so ignorant of, and so undisciplined in, ethical behavior. Also, there has never been a time in history when man was so free to perform the dictates of his own mind.

It is frightening to realize this, for a growing number of young people are using their God-given power to exercise their intelligence and make their own decisions, and they are doing so independently of God, Who is the source of all wisdom and righteousness. These are becoming victims of the *orgy of openmindedness*. Seeds of uncontrolled indulgence are being planted in the minds of many, and are producing an enormous crop of freethinkers.

It has been predicted that society may come up with a "new moral code." If the present trend continues, any "new moral code" that society may adopt will be founded on the

standards of godless freethinkers. Such a code would be far below the wholesome and uplifting moral code given in God's Word, the Bible.

In Noah's day godless society formed its own moral code, so that it is written of them, "the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Jesus taught: "As were the days of Noah" so shall it be in the end of the age. In the end days more and more men will cast off moral restraint and immorality will be rampant.

The Bible prophesies that a generation will arise with its own moral code—everyone's actions will be pure in his own eyes. In Proverbs 30:11-14 it is written:

- 11 There is a generation that curse their father,
And bless not their mother.
- 12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes,
And yet are not washed from their filthiness.
- 13 There is a generation, oh how lofty are their eyes!
And their eyelids are lifted up.
- 14 There is a generation whose teeth are as swords,
and their jaw teeth as knives,
To devour the poor from off the earth,
and the needy from among men.

Is the generation described above living today? It is frightening to think what its "moral code" will be.

Mankind's Inordinate Desire for Personal Gain and Pleasure

In addition to the increase in crime, and the decline in morality, more and more men and women are becoming obsessed with the desire for personal gain, material things, and pleasures of this world. The next time you read your newspaper, compare the following quotation with the day's news. This was written over 1900 years ago, yet the author describes perfectly our present-day society.

3 But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. **2** For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, **3** without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-

control, fierce, no lovers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; 5 holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these turn away, 6 For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, 7 ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (II Timothy 3:1-7).

These seven *signs of the times* indicate that we are living in the closing days of the present age. Besides these, the Bible prophesies other signs that will be manifest during the last days. According to the Bible, demonism will flourish in the last days. Faith in God will become rare. Atheists will increase in number. Scoffers at the truth that the Messiah of Israel is coming will grow in number. Extraordinary catastrophes in nature—great storms, tidal waves, monsoons, etc.—are to be expected in the last days.

The Bible also teaches that there will be a breakdown in family life among the Jews in the end days. Early in 1964, Mr. Maccabee, editor, *Jewish Information*, wrote,

While our culture should strive to accept the best from that of our neighbors, we should reject and resist the worst, such as: The trend toward broken homes and divorce. Although our standards are still higher than that of our non-Jewish neighbors, the trend seems to be downward. The trend toward illegitimacy, juvenile delinquency and violence unheard of among the closely knit Jewish communities in the Europe of yesteryear.

The Lord said, "Behold, I will send you [Jews] Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah [the Tribulation] come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:5,6).

The Bible is the infallible Word of God. It is true, and it will be fulfilled before our eyes. Most of the signs of the end times, which were prophesied in the Bible centuries ago, are becoming a reality today. If only one or two of these signs were evident, it would be impossible for us to say with assurance, "This is the end of the age." However, practically all of these are occurring simultaneously today; this is ample evidence that we are living near the end of the age and the Time of Jacob's Trouble is approaching.

The signs of the times definitely show that we are living in the last days of this age. In the not too distant future an unprecedented time of trouble is coming upon the world. Therefore, it is important for every man, woman and young person to know what is in store in the terrible time that lies ahead.

The remainder of this book sets forth God's purpose in sending His judgments upon the world, tells His way of escape from that terrible time, and gives a comprehensive account of what the Bible teaches about the Tribulation—the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

3

THE THREE-FOLD PURPOSE OF THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

GOD IS DIRECTING the course of history toward a goal—a perfect world. During the Tribulation, a short period of seven years, He will clean up this world and set things in order for the perfect world that is to come.

When that perfect world becomes a reality, the Eternal God will reign in His sovereign strength as King over the whole earth. Justice and righteousness will be the scepter of His throne. *The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory [majesty and power] of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* Men will know and see the majesty and power of the Lord, because they will see everyone receiving justice, men caring for one another in love, and the whole creation running smoothly. During the Golden Era the will of the sovereign God will be done upon earth even as it is in Heaven.

Now, men in general cannot see or comprehend the majesty and power of the Lord because their minds are perverted. They do not want to do the will of God. Instead, they are disobedient toward Him, selfish, unjust, wicked, war-loving; and they are an easy prey to the Devil, who works upon their perverted minds to deceive them. Besides this, they cannot see the majesty and power of the Lord because the world is in such a chaotic state. Only God can transform men's minds and bring this world out of chaos.

What God Will Do in the Tribulation

During the Tribulation God will step in and show men how vain their selfish interests are. He will overrule the injustices of men, destroy the wicked, stop all wars, imprison the Devil and create new heavens and new earth.

God will pour out His wrath upon the world during the Tribulation. He will also extend abundant mercy to all who call upon His name in sincerity and truth in that day; they will experience His goodness and lovingkindness. The prophet Nahum made the following statement to that effect:

2 Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

3 Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means clear the guilty: Jehovah hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet ... 6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken asunder by him. 7 Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that take refuge in him (Nahum 1:2,3,6,7).

God has a threefold purpose in sending the Tribulation judgments upon the world and its inhabitants. In order to better understand His threefold purpose in sending the Tribulation, it is important to consider carefully five basic Bible teachings given below.

Five Basic Bible Teachings—The First

The Bible teaches the plurality of divine personalities in the Godhead.

Moses commanded his people saying: "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah" (Deuteronomy 6:4). The literal translation of this passage reveals that Moses said, Jehovah [the Eternal], our Gods, is Jehovah a unity. In other words, Moses taught the plurality of divine personalities in the Godhead.

God has established His throne in the heavens and His kingdom rules over all. He performs His will in the world, not by power, nor by might, but by His Spirit. God Himself will enter the world at the end of the Tribulation in human form to smite the earth and slay the wicked.

To understand how God can rule in heaven, perform His will in the world by His Spirit, and enter the world in human form, we must honestly consider the plurality of divine personalities in the Godhead.

The Second Basic Bible Teaching

God revealed His character in a sevenfold statement to Moses. This is found in Exodus 34:6,7:

6 And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; 7 keeping

lovingkindness for thousands forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.

The Third Basic Teaching

God is sovereign.

God will not give His glory to another. He has established His throne in the heavens and His kingdom rules over all. Angels, mighty in strength, fulfill His Word. All the nations are as nothing before Him; they are counted by Him as less than nothing. He rules by His might forever; His eyes observe the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves. The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nought; He makes the thoughts of the peoples to be of no effect.

The Fourth Basic Bible Teaching

God gives to all His creatures—intelligent, rational beings both in heaven and on earth—the power of free choice and the exercise of the will for good or evil. But He must, because of His dominant characteristic—holiness, punish those who willfully choose evil instead of good.

God does not force the will of anyone. He allows each one to make up his own mind and act according to his preferences and choices. When an individual persists in choosing to live a godless, wicked life, however, God ultimately will have to send down His wrath upon him.

God pours out His wrath from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who in their wickedness choose to hinder the truth. ("The sum of thy word is truth"-Psalm 119:160.) This is stated in Romans 1:18,19: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; because that which is known of God is manifested in them; For God manifested it unto them."

The Fifth Basic Teaching

God is love, and He is holy. Since God is love, He loves man in spite of his sinful condition; since He is holy, He cannot look upon nor overlook sin. It was, therefore, necessary for Him to provide a means by which He could save sinful man from eternal death which would satisfy both His love and His holiness. The following Bible verses show how God accomplished this:

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son (Hebrews 1:1,2, New ASB).

Christ [Messiah, God's only begotten Son] died for our sins [the sins of the world] according to the Scriptures ... He was buried , and ... He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (I Corinthians 15:3,4, New ASB).

When He [Jesus Christ] had made purification of sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ... having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him (Hebrews 1:3; I Peter 3:22, New ASB).

The gospel [good news that Christ died for our sins] ... is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Romans 1:16, New ASB).

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED (Romans 10:9,10, New ASB).

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16, New ASB).

God's Son Jesus Christ, Who is Israel's Messiah and the Savior of the world, accomplished redemption for us on the cross of Calvary by shedding His life's blood in our behalf.

The First Purpose of the Tribulation—To Cause the Inhabitants of the World to Learn Righteousness

Though God is merciful, gracious and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, Exodus 34:7 declares that "he will by no means clear the guilty." He cannot pass lightly over sin and forget about it. Because wickedness will be great in the earth in the end days, God will have to pour out His tribulation judgments upon the world and its inhabitants. As we mentioned before, God has a threefold purpose in sending the Tribulation—The Time of Jacob's Trouble.

In this day and time, as the world travels toward the Great Tribulation, men in general are seeking satisfaction in the possession of material goods and the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. More and more men feel their independence of God, and the number will increase as this age draws to a close.

Because God loves all men in spite of their sin, He will not cast all of His wayward creatures in one lot and destroy all of them during the Tribulation. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. God knows everyone's heart. He knows that some wayward souls can be turned to their maker during the Tribulation. He knows that as He sends the terrible tribulation judgments, they will cause a host of men to turn *from* their selfish desires and worldly pleasures to Him, the living God.

Myriads will enter the Kingdom of God during the Tribulation. They will come to the Savior and will be "born again." The Scriptures declare: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew [from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God ... That which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:3,6).

Multitudes of the earth's inhabitants will be touched and influenced by the judgments of the Tribulation to seek the Lord. This is shown in Isaiah 26:9 "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee earnestly: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness."

Isaiah 26:9 teaches that God's judgments poured out upon the world will cause the inhabitants of the earth to learn righteousness. *This is the first purpose of the Tribulation.*

How will the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness?

In order for us to learn righteousness, men must hear the message of righteousness and accept it. From whom will men hear the message of righteousness during the Tribulation?

Revelation chapter 7, reveals that near the beginning of the Tribulation 144,000 Jewish servants of God will be sealed—12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

These 144,000 Jewish men will have a head knowledge of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ before the Tribulation judgments begin. After the Tribulation begins, they will believe God's Word, repent of their sins, believe in Jesus as their Messiah, Saviour and Lord, and experience the new birth. God will call them and send them forth as His bond servants. Since they will already have a head knowledge of the Bible, God will flood their minds and souls with light and truth, and will empower them with His Holy spirit. As mighty teachers, like the apostle Paul, they will go throughout the world calling men to repent of their sins and have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

God allowed the writer of the book of Revelation, the apostle John, to see in vision the 144,000 Jews and the results of their teaching:

9 after these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 and all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 saying,

Amen: Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 and one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? 14 And I say unto him, My Lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:9-14).

John was amazed when he saw this great multitude standing before the throne of God. It is clear that this innumerable host of people will be brought to God during the great Tribulation, the period of God's wrath, as a result of the teaching of the 144,000 Jewish servants of God. They will wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. In other words, they will have their sins washed away by the precious blood of Christ during

the Tribulation because they will put their trust in Him. People are saved, or cleansed from their sins, in exactly the same way today.

The statement "... when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness," studied in the light of related Bible passages, surely teaches that the major portion of the inhabitants of the world will hear the good news that Christ died to save sinners. The greater number of them will come to know the righteousness of God. They will experience regeneration.

The Almighty God knows what He is doing in sending His tribulation judgments upon the world. The Great Tribulation will not be simply an expression of His wrath and indignation against sin. Rather it will be the showing of His overwhelming, yearning, passionate love for the souls of men

The Second Purpose of the Tribulation—to Rid the World of Wickedness and Wicked Ones

Although a great host will turn to God during the Tribulation, the Time of Jacob's Trouble, some will have hearts so callused by sin that the terrible judgments of that day will only harden them more. Instead of repenting of their sin, they will grow increasingly wicked. They will hate God, curse Him, and openly defy Him.

These wicked ones will come up under a certain wicked and godless leader, during the Tribulation. He will claim to be God and will demand that all the peoples of the world worship him. The Bible calls this wicked one antichrist.

God will destroy all the wicked ones of the world and will rid the world of wickedness during the seven years of the Time of Jacobs Trouble. *This is the second purpose of the Tribulation.*

God told King David of the time He will destroy all the wicked. David sang as if this had already taken place, because he knew that with God it was already accomplished. He sang, "Thou hast rebuked the nations, thou hast destroyed the wicked; thou hast blotted out their name for ever and ever" (Psalm 9:5)

God told Isaiah of the time He will rid the world of wicked ones and wickedness. Isaiah spoke about that time in these words: "The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall sway to and fro like a hammock; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again" (Isaiah 24:20).

God revealed to the apostle John that at the end of the seven years of tribulation Satan will be taken out of the world and locked up. John's vision is recorded in Revelation 20:1,2: "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 and he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years."

So when the seven years of God's judgments are ended, the second purpose of the Tribulation will have been accomplished—the world will be free of wickedness and wicked ones.

The Third Purpose of the Tribulation—to Break... the Power of the Holy People

God has yet another purpose in pouring out upon the world one judgment after another during the Time of Jacob's Trouble. A messenger from heaven informed Daniel that the tribulation judgments will continue till they *break the power (will) of the holy people*. The messenger said, "and when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power [will] of the holy people, all these things [tribulation judgments] shall be finished" (Daniel 12:7). *This is the third purpose of the Tribulation.*

Who are the "*holy people*"? The term the holy people means a particular people set apart for God's service. In the Tenach, the Old Testament, it refers to the Jewish people. The one in whom we live and move and have our being defined His purpose in creating the Jewish people with these words: "... My people, my chosen, the people which I formed for myself, that they might set forth thy praise" (Isaiah 43:20,21) .

God began *the Hebrew race* with the miraculous birth of Isaac. Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah after their bodies were as good as dead (Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90).

God promised Abraham that He would bless all nations through him and his seed, "the holy people." He confirmed His promise to Abraham's son, Isaac, and to his grandson, Jacob. (Read Genesis 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:17,18; 26:4 and 28:14.) God selected Abraham and—his literal seed, the Jewish people, and his supreme seed, the Messiah—through whom to channel His favors and benefits to the rest of the world. He loves all men equally, but He chose *the Hebrew race* to be the channel through which love might flow out to all people. In other words, He created the Jewish people expressly to minister the things of God to the Gentile nations.

Jehovah told Moses that the children of Israel will be ministers of God:

19 In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 and when they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mount. 3 And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: 6 and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and, a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel (Exodus 19:1-6).

Note carefully, the children of Israel shall be unto God a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. Not only one of the 12 tribes will be priests of the Lord, but *the whole nation shall be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation*.

Immediately after Moses delivered the above message to his brethren, "all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do" (Exodus 19:8).

Through Moses, God commanded His people, saying:

2 I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them ... (Exodus 20:2-5).

"The Holy People" Disobey God

Within a very short time the Jewish people went back on their solemn promise to obey God's Word and disobeyed the above commandments.

The Lord had called Moses to the top of Mount Sinai. When he did not return to the people for a time, they began to get restless. After gathering together, they went to Aaron and asked him to make them an image to worship:

32 ... Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not is become of him 2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. 3 And all the peoples brake off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. 4 And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it a molten calf; and they said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5 and when Aaron saw this, he built an alter before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow shall be a feast to Jehovah. 6 and they rose up early in the Morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 7 and Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8 they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9 And Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: 10 now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. 11 And Moses besought Jehovah, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, that thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, saying, For evil did he bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14 and Jehovah repented of the evil which he said he would do unto his people (Exodus 32:1-14).

"The Holy People" Went Repeatedly Against God's Will

Beginning with the book of Exodus through the rest of the Old Testament, one record after another shows that the children of Israel, as a nation, have set their hand against their Creator and have gone against His will.

As a nation they have served God only intermittently down through history. Their history has followed a pattern. First, they forsook God. Next, He turned them over to a foreign power. Then while under oppression they repented of their sin and rebellion and cried for deliverance. Finally, the Lord heard them, delivered them from their enemies and brought them back into fellowship with Himself.

Examples of five such cycles are found in the Book of Judges.

First cycle — Judges 3:1-11

Second cycle — 3:12-30

Third cycle — 3:31-5:31

Fourth cycle — 6:1-8:35

Fifth cycle — 10:3-12:6

God exercised much patience toward the Jewish people through many cycles. He tenderly cared for them through each one in the hope that they would turn to Him and serve Him. When they persisted in their stubborn refusal to turn to Him, however, His wrath finally arose against them, till there was no remedy.

The Northern Kingdom Repeatedly Went Against God's Will

Result—The Assyrian Captivity

God's wrath arose against the Northern Kingdom in about 719 B.C. during King Hoshea's reign. At that time He allowed Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, to seize their government and banish them from the land. The reason the Lord did this is set forth clearly in II Kings 17:9-18:

9 And the children of Israel did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God: and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city; 10 and they set them up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree; 11 and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the nations whom Jehovah carried away before them; and they wrought

wicked things to provoke Jehovah to anger; 12 and they served idols, whereof Jehovah had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

13 Yet Jehovah testified unto Israel, and unto Judah, by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. 14 Notwithstanding, they would not hear but hardened their neck, like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in Jehovah their God. 15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified unto them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the nations that were around them, concerning whom Jehovah had charged them that they should not do like them. 16 And they forsook all the commandments of Jehovah their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. 17 and they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke Him to anger. 18 Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

*The Southern Kingdom Repeatedly Went Against God's Will
Result—The Babylonian Captivity*

After the Northern Kingdom fell, Judah stayed in the land for another 134 years. It is recorded against the Jews who lived in Judah during that time that they kept not the commandments of the Lord their God. Judah backslid from God so far that Jeremiah said: "Backsliding Israel [Northern Kingdom] hath showed herself more righteous than treacherous Judah" (Jeremiah 3:11).

Finally, God's anger was kindled against Judah, until it burned in the fierceness of His great wrath. In 586 B.C., He turned His people over to the Babylonians. The reason He turned them over to the foreigners is set forth in II Chronicles 36:11-21:

11 Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: 12 and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God; he humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth

of Jehovah. 13 and he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who made him swear by God; but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart against turning unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. 14 Moreover all the chiefs of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of Jehovah which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. 15 And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: 16 but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or virgin, old man or hoary headed: he gave them all into his hand. 18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. 19 and they burnt the House of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. 20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: 21 to fulfill the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths: for as long as it lay desolate it kept Sabbaths, to fulfill threescore and ten years.

A Remnant of "The Holy People" Return from Babylon

After the 70 years of captivity in Babylon were ended, about 40,000 Jews under the leadership of Zerubbabel returned to their homeland. A much greater number remained in Babylon and Assyria.

"The Holy People" Go Against God's Will

The Jews who returned to the land of Israel feared the Lord and wanted to do His will. The following generation did not; for the Book of Ezra gives evidence that the very next generation turned away from the Lord.

9 ... The people of Israel, and priests and the Levities, have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. 2 For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands: yea, the hand of the princes and the rulers hath been chief in this trespass (Ezra 9:1,2).

Malachi was the last prophet to the Jewish remnant who had returned to their land from the Babylonian captivity. He named seven sins of the people of Israel of his day and time. We can sum up the attitude of the children of Israel toward God in the following statements Malachi spoke for Jehovah of host, saying:

13 Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee? 14 Ye have said, it is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? 15 and now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape (Malachi 3:13-15).

The Bible is silent on the history of Israel for about 400 years following the days of Malachi. Secular history paints a dismal picture of the vacillation of the children of Israel in their attitude toward God during that period.

"The Holy People" Reject Their Messiah

At the end of the 400 year period, the last Old Testament prophet appeared on the scene to call the nation of Israel to repent and return to God. That prophet was John the Baptist.

In John's time the Jews were strongly divided among themselves. There were then four main sects in Israel—the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and the Essenes. Since each sect had its own idea concerning how one should serve God, hatred constantly flared up among the groups.

Soon after John began his ministry, the greatest of all teachers of righteousness, Jesus of Nazareth, appeared. He ministered for about three and one half years, and tried to call

His nation back to God. His last message to His nation's leaders shows His love and longing for His people Israel:

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. 38 Behold, your house is being left to you desolate. 39 For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD (Matthew 23:37-39, New ASB).

As their fathers had willed not to listen to the prophets of God and had persecuted and killed many of them, so the Jewish leaders (the Sanhedrin) set their wills against Jesus and demanded that He be crucified. Surely that willful act broke God's heart, so to speak, because Jesus is God's only begotten son—the one of whom Moses and the prophets spoke.

"Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?" (Proverbs 30:4).

Even though the leaders had swayed their nation to condemn Jesus to death, God graciously kept them in their land about 40 years after His Son's crucifixion. During those 40 years He sent many messengers from among the Jews to call them to repentance.

One of the outstanding messengers during that time, the apostle Peter, besought his nation to repent and turn to God and serve Him, saying:

12 ... "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him [lame beggar] walk?

13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, *the one* whom you delivered up, and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.

14 "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

15 but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead,—a *fact* to which we are witnesses.

16 "And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

17 "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

18 But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled."

19 "Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that the times of revival may come from the presence of the Lord;

20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you,

21 whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things, about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time."

22 Moses said, "THE LORD GOD SHALL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED IN EVERYTHING HE SAYS TO YOU.

23 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERY SOUL THAT DOES NOT HEED THAT PROPHET SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE.

24 "And likewise all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also have announced these days.

25 "It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, "And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

26 "For you first, God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:12-26, New ASB).

*God's Wrath Arose Against "The Holy People" in 70 A.D.
Result—They were Scattered Among the Nations*

The nation of Israel refused to receive the message concerning the Righteous One, Jesus of Nazareth, during the 40 years following His crucifixion. By 70 A.D. God's wrath arose against His people again. This time He drove the Jews out of the land of Israel and scattered them among all the nations of the world. For over 1900 years they have been scattered among the nations under the chastening hand of Almighty God.

Down through history God has had to chastise His beloved people, the Jews, for disobedience. Speaking through Moses, God told His people what was in store for them as a nation because of acts of disobedience toward Him which they would commit throughout their history. He said:

18 and if ye will not yet for these things hearken unto me, then I will chastise you seven times more for your sins.

21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.

23 and if by these things ye will not be reformed unto me, but will walk contrary unto me; 24 then will I also walk contrary unto you; and I will smite you, even I, seven times for your sins.

27 and if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; 28 then I will walk contrary unto you in wrath; and I will chastise you seven times for your sins ... 33 and you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you: and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste (Leviticus 26:18,21,23,24,27,28,33).

God's messages through His prophet Moses warning the Israelites of the punishment that would come upon them for continued acts of disobedience are recorded in full in Leviticus 26:14-45 and Deuteronomy 28:15-29:29.

*"The Holy People" Will Repent and Turn to God
During the Time of Jacob's Trouble*

Though God has severely chastised the Jewish people in the past, none of the terrible sufferings which they have endured have been sufficient to break their will as a nation. Thus far He has been dealing with them in His goodness trying to lead them to repentance. "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS" (Romans 2:4-6, New ASB).

Nothing short of the awful punishment of God in the day of His wrath, The Time of Jacob's Trouble, will be sufficient to cause the Jewish people as a nation to willingly and whole-heartedly repent, turn to God and become His servants—a holy nation, a kingdom of priests.

When the terrible judgments of the Time of Jacob's Trouble finally end, God's threefold purpose in sending the Tribulation will have been accomplished: The inhabitants of the world will have learned righteousness; the world will be rid of wickedness and wicked ones; and the breaking in pieces the power of "the holy people" will have been accomplished—Israel will truly be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests, and a blessing to all the families of the earth.

4

THE ACT THAT PRECIPITATES THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

TIME HERE ON EARTH IS FIXED. You can't speed it up or slow it down. Every minute is bringing us closer to something. A new home; A new job; New acquaintances; Joy; Sorrow; Health; Sickness; Old age; Retirement; Death. And every minute is bringing us closer to the *Time of Jacob's Trouble*.

The signs that announce the approach of the Time of Jacob's Trouble have already been enumerated. Also, we have seen that these signs are accumulating today at such an alarming rate that we can be sure that the Great Tribulation is drawing near.

But these are just signs that the time is *approaching*. Will there be a sign that will mark the *beginning* of the Time of Jacobs Trouble?

Yes, God told Daniel, the prophet, the sign that will mark the beginning of that day. For "Surely the Lord [Jehovah] will do nothing except he reveal his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Every prophet beginning with Moses, wrote about the day of the Lord, the Time of Jacob's Trouble. But it was to Daniel that God chose to make known the event that will set in motion that time.

Through the prophet Daniel, God gave a comprehensive, yet concise, account of the things that will happen during that time. In addition, He made it plain when that time will begin. This secret recorded in Daniel 9:24-27, was given to Daniel while he and his people, the Jews, were in captivity in Babylon.

Daniel, an Orthodox Jew

Daniel was a strict orthodox Jew in his outlook. He had a firm belief that God would send the promised Messiah to his people. He believed that when Messiah came He would defeat all of their enemies, give them all the land of promise, and lead them into the glorious Golden Era of peace and prosperity.

Being an orthodox Jew, he longed for the day when he and his people would be back in their land. Being a man of God, he searched the writings of the Hebrew prophets carefully to see how God was dealing with them.

Daniel Read a Prophecy of Jeremiah and Rejoiced

One day while he was reading God's Word, he was arrested by two passages in the writings of the prophet Jeremiah:

11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith Jehovah, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it desolate for ever (Jeremiah 25:11,12).

10 For thus saith Jehovah, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith Jehovah, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope in your latter end. 12 and ye shall call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 and ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found of you saith Jehovah, and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith Jehovah; and I will bring you again unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive (Jeremiah 29:10-14).

Daniel received new light on God's Word as he read these passages: "and it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place [the land of Israel]." Daniel saw the Babylonian captivity was almost over; for at the time he read these words the Jewish people had been in captivity 68 years.

Surely joy flooded Daniel's soul when he realized that in two years he and his people would be free to return to their beloved land. So unbounded was his joy that he evidently incorrectly interpreted Jeremiah's words to mean that in two years the Golden Era would dawn.

Daniel Did Not Fully Understand Jeremiah's Prophecy

Daniel did not understand exactly what Jeremiah had written. Perhaps he did not consider that the Lord often gave a message in which He told of two similar but widely separated events.

There are two widely separated events recorded in Jeremiah 29:10-14. In the first part of that message, Jehovah told Jeremiah that after the 70 years of captivity under the Babylonians He would cause the Jews to return to their land. He said, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you ... thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope in your latter end."

In the last part of Jeremiah's message, the Lord let it be known that a time will come when the Jewish people will be scattered among the nations. There they will search for Him with all their heart, and He will be found of them. He will gather them from all the nations where He had driven them and bring them again into their land.

It is very clear that in the first part of God's message to Jeremiah, He spoke about the return of the Jews to their land after the Babylonian captivity.

In the last part of His message, God spoke about the return of the Jews to their land after they have searched for Him with all their heart. At that time, He will turn again their captivity and will gather them from all the nations and from all the places where He has driven them.

All during this present age the Jews have been scattered throughout the nations. Without doubt, Jeremiah prophesied concerning the end of our present age in the latter part of his prophecy.

But Daniel evidently concluded these two events—the Babylonian captivity and the scattering among the nations—were the one and the same thing.

Jeremiah prophesied that in the end days, "the latter end," the Jewish people will seek the Lord with all their heart, and He will hear their prayers and will regather them from among the nations. "And ye shall seek me, and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you ... and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith Jehovah" (Jeremiah 29:13,14).

Daniel surely interpreted these words to mean that when he and his people sought the Lord with all their heart, He would bring them out of the Babylonian captivity; for he began to pray fervently to the Lord on behalf of himself and his people.

God Sent Gabriel to Give Daniel Understanding

While Daniel was praying, confessing his sin, and the sin of his people Israel, God dispatched the angel Gabriel from heaven to speak with Daniel. He came and instructed Daniel, saying, "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee wisdom and understanding."

What wisdom and what understanding did the angel give Daniel?

Remember Daniel was an orthodox Jew in the strictest sense. He believed the Word of God. The Word of God assured him that the Babylonian captivity was drawing to a close. It also assured him that Messiah was going to come and usher in an era of righteousness, peace and prosperity—the Golden Era.

Because Daniel was mistaken in expecting the Golden Era to come at the end of the Babylonian captivity, the angel was sent to show him his error and to teach him God's order of events.

70 Sevens—490 Years—Decreed Upon the Jewish People

Gabriel came to Daniel and instructed him that the seventy year period Jeremiah prophesied was not decreed to bring about events leading up to the glorious reign of King Messiah. He disclosed that there were *seventy sevens* decreed upon the Jewish people before that glorious time would come to pass.

Seventy sevens of what? Seventy sevens of years. Since Daniel was thinking in terms of one period of 70 years of the Babylonian captivity, it is logical to believe he understood that the angel spoke of 70 periods of seven years (490 years).

The angel gave Daniel this message:

24 Seventy weeks (The word translated weeks in Daniel 9:24ff, literally means sevens in the original language) are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. 25 Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth

of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. 26 And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. 27 And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate (Daniel 9:24-27).

The angel told Daniel that "seventy sevens" were decreed upon his people and upon the holy city of Jerusalem so that six things might be accomplished:

1. To finish transgression,
2. To make an end of sins,
3. To make reconciliation for iniquity,
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness,
5. To seal up vision and prophecy,
6. To anoint the most holy.

When these things have been accomplished the kingdom of God will have been established upon earth, and God's love and benefits will flow out to all the families of the earth.

The Three Divisions of the 490 Years¹

The message the angel Gabriel gave was explicit. He told Daniel that the 70 periods of seven years, or 490 years, would be divided into three separate periods: seven sevens, or 49 years; 62 sevens, or 434 years; and one seven, or seven years. Each of these periods would represent a particular period of Israel's future history. Now let's see what period each one of these divisions represents.

¹ The 490-year decree began the date Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a proclamation that Jews exiled in Babylonia were to return to their land and rebuild the Temple. See Chapter XIV, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, by David L. Cooper.

The First Division of Seven Sevens, or 49 Years

The Jews would restore and rebuild Jerusalem during the first 49 years after they returned from the Babylonian captivity. This has been literally fulfilled.

The Second Division—62 Sevens, or 434 Years

The city of Jerusalem which the Jews rebuilt during the 49 troublesome years would stand for 434 years until the anointed one, Messiah, came and was cut off (killed). This also has been literally fulfilled.

The Gap of 1900 + Years

Let us restate the information Daniel received. During the 49 plus 434 years, or 483 years, following the Babylonian captivity the Jews would rebuild Jerusalem and reoccupy their city. At the end of that period the anointed one, the prince, would make his appearance and be killed.

Who is this "anointed one," or Messiah, the prince, of whom the angel Gabriel spoke?

What prominent figure claiming to be the Messiah of Israel came to the Jewish people and was killed about 483 years after the decree was issued ending the Babylonian captivity? Only one answer can be given: Jesus of Nazareth.

It has been centuries since Jesus, the Messiah, was cut off. Yet not one of the six purposes mentioned in Daniel 9:24 has been accomplished. Therefore the *70th week*, or the *last seven years* of the 490 years, could not have immediately followed Christ Jesus' crucifixion. At the end of the 483 years the Lord's special clock stopped ticking off the time of the decree, for the 490th year is to be followed by the Golden Era.

The prophet Micah predicted that God would give Israel up "until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth" (Micah 5:3). This prediction is nothing short of God's stating that His clock, which measures the time of the decree, the 70 weeks, would stop when the people of Israel rejected their Messiah. It would not start again until Israel entered a period of travail—the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

Thus there is a gap of over 1900 years between the 69 periods of seven years and the last period of seven years.

The Third Division—One Seven, or Seven Years

The Beginning of this "week," or seven-year period, marks the beginning of the Time of Jacob's Trouble, the Tribulation.

Since the first and second divisions of Daniel's prophecy have been completely and literally fulfilled, we can be sure the things that are predicted to happen during the third division—seven years—will come to pass.

Note that the angel told Daniel that a specific act will mark the beginning of the *last seven years* of the 490 years.

The angel said: And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week (Daniel 9:27).

According to this statement, a certain individual will make a strong contract with "many" for "one week"—seven years. Who will that individual be? Who are the many with whom he will make a contract? what will the contract be?

Immediately preceding the statement, "And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week," the angel said:

And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (Daniel 9:26).

Therefore the antecedent to "he" in Daniel 9:27 is the *prince that shall come* in 9:26. The *prince that shall come* is of the people who destroy the city and sanctuary. Surely the angel predicted the destruction of Jerusalem (the city) and the Jewish Temple (the sanctuary) by the Gentiles under the imperialistic power of the Romans in 70 A.D. Thus "the prince that shall come," the one who will make the covenant with "many", will be a Gentile at the head of the *last* great imperialistic world power of this age. Rome was the *first* great imperialistic power of the present age. (In connection with this, read Daniel's prophecy in chapter 7 of his book, noting especially verses 7,17,19 and 23.)

The "many" with whom "the prince that shall come" makes the contract for seven years are of the Jews who will be living in the end days. We can be sure of this, for Daniel's people—the Jews—are the people under the 490 year decree.

In the last days, many developments will rapidly take place that will bring about the rise of the powerful world dictator, "the prince that shall come." Out of these developments a crisis will arise in Israel that will cause the Jews to seek that mighty dictator's favor and help.

Some time in the near future the Jews will acquire the ancient site of their Temple on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem. After they gain this site, they will rebuild their Temple and restore the Mosaic ceremonies of Temple worship—daily worship services and the offerings of animal sacrifices. During this time anti-Semitism and other racial problems will grow increasingly severe. Jews who believe what the prophets of old taught know that their people will find life more and more difficult. "The day is coming," some of them say, "when the living will envy the dead."

The Act That Will Start the Time of Jacob's Trouble

Since anti-Semitism will grow rampant, and the Jews will regain the old Temple site, rebuild their Temple and reinstitute Temple worship according to the Mosaic Law, an acute international problem will arise. After they become organized in their Temple worship, they will be harassed while they try to worship, and their enemies will become so fierce that they will need strong protection in order to carry on their religious services. Instead of seeking the help of God, they will turn to the powerful dictator for help. The Jews will make a contract with him under which he will agree to give them military protection from their enemies.

The signing of that contract will mark the beginning of the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

5

A WAY TO ESCAPE THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

CAUGHT UP IN A VISION by the Holy Spirit, Zephaniah the prophet was permitted to see a dreadful time far in the future. He saw the Day of the Lord—the Time of Jacobs Trouble. Writing about that day, Zephaniah pictured it as a time of wasteness and desolation, darkness and gloominess, wars and great destruction of life and property. A time of trouble—terrible trouble!

14 The great day of Jehovah is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of Jehovah; the mighty man crieth there bitterly. 15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements. 17 And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against Jehovah; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy; for he will make an end, yea, a terrible end, of all of them that dwell in the land (Zephaniah 1:14-18).

Jews Commanded to Gather Together Before Time of Jacob's Trouble

Through His servant, Zephaniah, God warns His people of the coming day of trouble and distress. And even as He warns them, He tells them how they can escape that terrible day. Speaking to the generation of Jews living at the very threshold of that time, He commands them, saying:

2 Gather yourselves together, yea gather yourselves, O nation that hath no shame; 2 before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce day of Jehovah's anger come upon you. 3 Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger (Zephaniah 2:1-3).

"O nation that hath no shame, gather yourselves together" cries the prophet of God, addressing his people the Jews. The Hebrew word which is here translated *shame* also means *longing*.

Why would Zephaniah address his people as a "nation that hath no longing"? Longing for what? The prophet is probably referring to the fact that the Jewish people living in the end days, who are the ones to whom he is speaking, will have lost their longing for God.

It is obvious that very few modern Jews have a true and sincere longing for the things of God. Very few are longing for Messiah to come and end anti-Semitism, bring them into full possession of their land, and settle the problems of the world.

The Command is Being Carried Out

The Jewish people who are returning to the land of Israel under the Zionist movement are doing so in order to build up a national home. They are not gathering together in their homeland out of a longing for God and His Messiah and a desire to do His will.

Although they are not returning to their homeland out of a longing for God and a desire to do His will, God's will is being done. Through Zephaniah, God issued a command to His people to gather themselves together; and, whether they are aware of it or not, His command is being carried out.

Their regathering in the land of Israel is a process. The *initial regathering* will take place before the Time of Jacob's Trouble. The *final regathering* will occur afterward.

*The initial gathering together*¹ of the Jews is to be "before the decree ... before the fierce anger of Jehovah come upon you." In other words, they are to gather together immediately before the Time of Jacob's Trouble begins.

An Invitation to Seek God, Seek Righteousness and Meekness

Zephaniah also gives an invitation to "seek ... Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger." It is clear that the prophet is speaking primarily and directly to the

¹ The initial returning to the land of Israel, which is going on at the present time, does not necessarily imply that every Jew will return. It simply implies that a representative number will return.

Jews who heed his command to gather together in the land. They are urged to seek Jehovah their God before the decree of seven years—the Time of Jacob's Trouble—starts.

The ones who are urged to seek the Lord are "all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordinances." Through Zephaniah, God gives a clear call to the Jews, especially devout, sincere Israelites who are seeking the truth, to seek Him earnestly. They are urged not only to seek Jehovah, but to seek righteousness, seek meekness. God loves righteousness and meekness but resists those who are proud and haughty. A man's pride shall bring him low; But he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor (Proverbs 29:23). God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble (I Peter 5:5).

How Jew and Gentile Can Seek and Find God, Righteousness and Meekness

How can a Jew seek righteousness? How can a Gentile seek righteousness? How can a Jew or Gentile seek meekness?

According to King David, it is not a normal thing for anyone to seek after God. He said that none is righteous, no, not one.

2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there were any that did understand,
That did seek after God.

3 Every one of them is gone back;
they are together become filthy;

There is none that doeth good, no, not one (Psalm 53:2,3).

The prophet Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Jeremiah also said, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to evil" (Jeremiah 13:23)

Together with these passages there are many others in the Bible which declare that all are unrighteous.

Zephaniah did not say, "Be righteous" or; "Become righteous". He said, "*Seek righteousness.*"

What is righteousness? Webster defines the righteousness of which Zephaniah spoke as "the state of acceptance with God."

If we were to keep all of God's laws perfectly we would be accepted of Him and would be well pleasing in His sight. Who among us, however, can keep God's laws perfectly? Not one of us.

Moses charged "Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them" (Deuteronomy 27:26).

Elsewhere the Word of God says: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all" (James 2:10).

Zephaniah did not say, "keep the law to the letter." He knew that would be impossible. He said, "Seek righteousness."

Wise King Solomon wrote "He that followeth after righteousness and kindness, findeth life, righteousness, and honor" (Proverbs 21:21). King Solomon implies that if anyone sincerely craves to be obedient to God's laws, and exerts much energy to be kind, he will find life, righteousness, and honor.

If we honestly and sincerely attempt to keep God's laws and commandments and to be kind to others, however we will find ourselves stumbling at every turn of the road. Honesty will compel us to admit that we are bankrupt sinners in need of help.

Does this not contradict Solomon's statement? No, it does not. For though not one of us can live a righteous life in his own strength, God has provided One Who can enable us to live a godly life.

Who is that One? Messiah.

The law condemns us and teaches us that we need Messiah's help. The apostle Paul wrote, "The law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ [Messiah], that we might be justified by faith"(Galatians 3:24).

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Believe in God, believe also in me ... I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14;1,6). Again He said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

If we harmonize what Solomon said with Jesus' statements, we will find life in Jesus Christ.

One of the New Testament writers states that we become righteous before God only through Jesus (I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21). The basis of this teaching is that Jesus Christ died and shed His blood in order to cover our sins. Both Jews and Gentiles must accept this truth by faith in order to be righteous in God's sight.

Moses wrote, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life" (Leviticus 17:11).

How Both Jew and Gentile Can Escape the Time of Jacob's Trouble

We can conclude, therefore, that Jews who escape the day of the Lord's fierce anger, according to Zephaniah's promise, do so through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will find God and find righteousness and humility by believing that Jesus Christ gave up His life upon the cross and shed His blood as a sacrifice for their sins.

Zephaniah assures those who find God that they will be hidden "in the day of Jehovah's anger." The prophet implies that they will be protected from the judgments of that day.

In the New Testament, God promises all who come to Him through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, that they will not go into that period of wrath. No doubt, the Jews addressed by Zephaniah who are promised escape from the threatened wrath are those who accept God's grace and are beloved in His son. This promise is made to all, both Jews and Gentiles, who make peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

9 ... Ye turned unto God ... to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come (I Thessalonians 1:9,10).

This passage and the following one teach that all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be taken out of the world before the Time of Jacob's Trouble, the Tribulation, sets in. You may have heard this called "the rapture of the church."

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 17 then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore, comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:14-18).

There is no need for anyone, Jew or Gentile, to go through the terrible sufferings of the Time of Jacob's Trouble, for God has made a way of escape from that awful day. All who accept His way of escape by faith will be delivered from the Day of His Wrath.

6

CALAMITY BEFALLS THE JEWS DURING TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

"AND THESE ARE THE words that Jehovah spake concerning Judah. For thus saith Jehovah: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:4-7).

All nations will suffer when God's judgments are poured out upon the earth; however, the period is called the Time of Jacob's Trouble because the Jewish people will suffer far more than any other nation during that time.

"But is that fair?" you may ask. "I can see why God would punish the Jewish people for their sins just as He will punish the others; but why should He punish them more severely?"

It is true that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. It is true that all deserve punishment—everlasting punishment and shame for their rebellion against the Holy One of Israel.

The Jews to Receive Double for Their Sins

It is also true that God has declared in His Word that His people will receive *double* for all their sins:

17 For mine eyes are upon all their ways (the children of Israel's ways); they are not hid from mine eyes. 18 And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable things, and have filled mine inheritance with their abominations (Jeremiah 16:17,18).

Speaking as though a future event had already taken place, as the prophets frequently did, Isaiah cried: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye Comfortably to Jerusalem: and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1,2).

Who has a right to challenge the justice and righteousness of God? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25.)

The Reason Jews Will Suffer More Than Others

God gave the Jewish people increased light, opportunities and benefits which He gave to no other race. These brought with them added responsibilities. The reason they will suffer more than others during the Tribulation is because they failed to live up to their privileges and responsibilities.

When God performed a biological miracle upon the bodies of Abraham and Sarah that made possible the birth of Isaac, He injected into the blood stream of the Jewish race potentialities and powers no other race possesses. He revealed to them His Holy and righteous laws. He lavished His goodness upon them more than any other nation.

19 He showeth his word unto Jacob,
 His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel.
 20 He hath not dealt so with any nation;
 And as for his ordinances,
 they have not known them (Psalm 147:19,20).

God gave the Jewish race increased light, opportunities and benefits so that they might be a unique people among all nations of the world.

Unique in their worship of the one true God: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Deuteronomy 5:7).

Unique because their land was to be free from idols or any material representation of God, Who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth: "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them" (Deuteronomy 5:8,9).

Unique because they were to observe the laws, commandments and precepts given by God. From the heart of God came these words to Moses: "Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29.)

Unique in their anticipation of a coming Messiah Who would be a blessing to Jew and Gentile alike, thus fulfilling God's promise to Abraham: "I will make of thee a great nation ... and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:2,3).

Unique because they were to be the channel through which the Messiah would come into the world: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:5,6).

This unique people, with increased light, opportunity and benefits were to glorify God in their personal, national and social life. They were also to be a light to the heathen nations around them, leading them to the one true and living God.

Up to the present time, however, the people of Israel, as a nation, have failed to bring God the glory that is due Him, and have failed to lead the godless nations of the world to a knowledge of Him.

Their Past and Present Sins and Past and Present Suffering

After they were established in their land, the majority of the Jewish people turned from God, worshipped gods of the Gentiles, and set up idols in their land. Moses prophesied they would do this and told them of the sufferings they would have to endure as a consequence:

25 When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have been long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image in the form of any thing, and shall do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, to provoke him to anger; 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over the Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. 27 And Jehovah will scatter you among the peoples, and ye shall be left few in number among the nations, wither Jehovah shall lead you away (Deuteronomy 4:25-27).

Throughout most of their history, all but a small remnant of Israel turned away their ears from hearing the Word of the Lord and refused to obey His commandments:

15 And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: 16 but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy" (Chronicles 36:15,16).

Following the Babylonian captivity a subtle change began to take place in the attitude of many of the Jewish people toward the Word of God. They began to substitute the traditions and teachings of their spiritual leaders for God's written Word.

In early post-exilic days the high priest together with a number of the chief of the priests and certain ruling elders were set apart to judge legal matters for the Jews. Their assembly became the highest court of the land. It was designated Gerusia (council of the elders). This Gerusia was the ruling body that was later called the Sanhedrin. Although this Great Assembly was primarily organized to decide civil matters, it also acted as the guiding spiritual body of the Jewish community in Jerusalem.

The Sanhedrin studied and interpreted the Torah (five books of Moses). They added new laws, illustrations, and examples thinking they were making the Torah clearer to the people. Besides interpreting the Torah, making new laws, etc., that body designated certain holidays for the Jews to celebrate, and laid great emphasis upon the celebration of age-old holidays and customs. As a result, multitudes of them have been lulled into believing that if they celebrate the Jewish holidays and keep up the tradition of their fathers, they will be brought closer to God.

Isaiah prophesied concerning some of his brethren who have substituted the traditions and teachings of men for the Word of God, saying:

13 And the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw nigh unto me, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught them (Isaiah 29:13).

The Jewish people were steeped in the traditions and teachings of men by the time Jesus of Nazareth came and presented Himself to them as their Messiah. Only a very small remnant knew and believed the Word of God as it is written. These recognized that Jesus came in fulfillment of the promises of God through Moses and the prophets. The rest were blinded by their spiritual leaders, who resented Jesus' teachings and were unwilling to accept Him, so that they could not recognize Him. Under the leadership of the Sanhedrin

the Jewish people, turned against Jesus. This led to their great national sin—the rejection of Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, Savior and King.

For over 1900 years the Jewish people as a nation, under the guidance of their spiritual leaders, have spurned God's love which was manifested in the giving of His only begotten Son, Jesus, to die for their sins and the sins of the World.

Jewish history records three great sins that God's Chosen People committed against Him: they worshipped idols; despised His Word; and rejected Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. Because of these three great sins God brought upon the nation of Israel three great times of affliction; the Assyrian captivity; and the dispersion under the Romans in 70 A.D., followed by persecution and suffering during the past 1900 years.

Their Future Sin and Future Suffering

Since the Jews have had to endure great affliction and suffering for their past sins, what will they have to endure for all their past sins *plus their future sin*?

Calamity!

What is the *future sin* the Jewish people will commit?

It will be the signing of the contract with Antichrist in which he will agree to protect them from their enemies. In addition to relying upon that evil one instead of God in the end days, many Jews will turn again to the worship of idols. When the Jewish people play harlot with Antichrist and the idolatrous system of that day, they will stir God's wrath to a point it has never reached before against them. The God of Israel will become a consuming fire! Figuratively speaking, He will allow the nations of the world to become a furnace of affliction for His people, the Jews.

Beginning with the afflictions under the Assyrians and the Babylonians, God's wrath has arisen against His people from time to time. During the pogroms under the Roman Empire, France, Spain, Czarist Russia, and ending with the diabolical massacres in Germany, God has allowed the individual nations to become furnaces of affliction for the Jewish people.

Horrible as these pogroms were, they were the work of individual nations at various times in history. But the day is fast approaching when the leaders of many powerful nations are going to meet together to devise a plan to annihilate every Jew on the face of the earth. *They will organize a pogrom on a world-wide scale, the like of which the world has ever*

known. This diabolical pogrom will take place during the day when many living will envy the dead, the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

Surely the prophet Zechariah prophesied concerning the great pogrom in that day when he spoke saying, "and it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Jehovah is our God" (Zechariah 13:8,9).

Ezekiel prophesied that half of the two parts will die by pestilence and famine, the other half by the sword (Ezekiel 5:12).

Jesus Prophecy Concerning Anti-Semitism During the End Days

The lord Jesus Christ confirmed the prophets' warning about the pogroms and Jew-hate of the last days, saying, "Then [during the travail of the last days] shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated for my name's sake" (Matthew 24:9).

The anti-Semitic spirit of which Jesus prophesied will burst into flame when antichrist sets up his image in the Jews' Most Sacred Temple in Jerusalem, and requires the inhabitants of the world to bow down and worship it. Jesus warned His people about this, saying:

15 When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), 16 then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains: 17 let him that is in the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house: 18 and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. 19 But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! 20 and pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath: 21 for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened (Matthew 24:15-22).

Jesus also prophesied that many Jews will stumble and turn against their own during those terrible days. He said, "And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another,

and shall hate one another" (Matthew 24:10). In other words, many Jews will turn against their own during the Tribulation. For further light on this point read Isaiah 3:5, and Micah 7:5.

Jesus' Prophecy Concerning False Prophets

In addition to His prophecies about the rise in anti-Semitism, the horror of the Tribulation, and the unfaithfulness that will develop among His people, Jesus warned that many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray" (Matthew 24:11).

Having sounded this warning, Jesus warned His brethren, the Jews, not to believe the messages of the false prophets, saying:

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe it not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 Behold, I have told you beforehand. 26 If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe it not. 27 For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. 28 Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together (Matthew 24:23-28).

You will notice that these false prophets and false messiahs will do much more than simply make false claims. They will back up their claims by performing great signs and wonders. So convincing will these signs be that, if possible, those deceivers would lead astray even the people who will be sincerely trying to remain faithful to God through those terrible days.

How will they perform these wonders? according to some they will perform sleight-of-hand tricks. This, however, is a hasty conclusion. These will be very unusual and powerful signs. No doubt they will be supernatural wonders—genuine miracles of Satan. Satan always opposes God, and he will be particularly busy during the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

In order for you to better understand what Jesus predicted, let me give you an example of the activities of some false prophets who operated centuries ago. When Moses appeared to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, the Spirit of God gave him power to perform miracles. Moses went before Pharaoh and performed certain wonders. Immediately the

magicians of Egypt appeared on the scene and duplicated the first two miracles Moses had performed.

How did they do it? There can be only one answer—through the power of Satan. Their signs were just as supernatural and convincing as those performed by Moses. The only difference was the source of their power. The power that energized Moses was that of the holy, eternal God; that which worked through the magicians was from the adversary of the soul—Satan.

These false prophets who will arise in the midst of the Time of Jacob's Trouble will declare that the Messiah has made His appearance. Some will claim that He is in the city, others will declare that He is in some secret place in the rural districts.

Knowing that the false prophets will try to deceive the people, the Lord Jesus Christ warned His followers against the impostors. In order that they might not be deceived, Christ declared that His coming will be like the flashing of the lightning across the heavens as it passes from the east to the west.

At this point in His prophecy concerning the Tribulation, Jesus made this unusual prediction: "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles (the Greek word means *vultures*) be gathered together" (Matthew 24:28).

What did He mean by this statement?

In order to understand it, we must remember that vultures are attracted by the odors from a decaying carcass. Whenever they scent the presence of something dead, they immediately fly to the scene and soar in the air above the spot where the carcass lies and finally light and feast upon it. This well known fact proved to be a suitable illustration of the point which the Lord Jesus Christ had in mind.

What then in this prediction corresponds to the carcass in the illustration? The answer probably is found in Deuteronomy 28:26: "and thy dead body shall be food unto all birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the earth; and there shall be none to frighten them away." When we read the passage in its context, we see that the body here referred to can be nothing except the political body of the Jewish nation.

Since we understand that the carcass indicates the Jewish nation, to whom do the vultures refer? The false prophets are no doubt compared to the vultures against whom Christ has given warning. Just as the vultures devour the carcass which they find these false prophets will prey upon the Jews who will not be holding to the truth in the end time and will take advantage of their willingness to believe wild rumors.

Jesus revealed that in addition to the ones who will be led astray by false prophets, there will be others who will grow cold and hard in their attitude toward their fellow Jews. He said, "Because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of many shall wax [grow] cold" (Matthew 24:12).

Jesus Prophecy Concerning the Faithful Remnant of Israel

But Jesus knew that there will be other Jews who will not yield their lives to the diabolical teachings of the false prophets and the wickedness around them during that time. He spoke of them when He said: "But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved [delivered]" (Matthew 24:13).

Who is the one that endures to the end (the end of the Tribulation)?

Among the Jews living during the Tribulation there will be some that follow after truth and righteousness. These will be members of the "remnant of Israel." They will not rely upon Antichrist and his world system, but will lean upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. This faithful remnant will return unto the mighty God.

Isaiah prophesied concerning these saying:

20 and it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and they that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more lean upon him that smote them, but shall lean upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. 21 A remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. 22 For though thy people, Israel, be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return: a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness. 23 For a full end, and that determined, will the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, make in the midst of all the earth (Isaiah 10:20-23).

The faithful "remnant of Israel" that will trust in the Holy One of Israel and return to Him will be made up of Jews who will "endure to the end" of the Tribulation. When Jesus said, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved," He was speaking of spiritual endurance, not physical.

What conditions will exist then that will press upon an individual and require spiritual endurance for him to live righteously? Jesus made it clear why spiritual endurance would be required in that day. He prophesied that during the Tribulation anti-Semitism will be rampant, hate will flare among Jews, wickedness will hold high carnival, and false prophets will busily spread their wild rumors.

The Proper Attitude for a Jew to Have During the Time of Jacob's Trouble

A Jew who sincerely wants to live a righteous life and remain faithful to God's Word during the Tribulation, therefore, will not harbor malice against anyone; he will not hate or despise his fellow Jews; he will not have any part in the wickedness of that day; and he will not heed the teaching of the false prophets.

Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Habakkuk and other prophets prophesied that some of their people (the faithful remnant) will return to God's Word and will be obedient to it in that day.

King David sang about the remnant of his people who will live according to truth in God's word, and who will remain faithful to the Holy One Of Israel throughout the time of Jacob's trouble. His words are as follows:

- 3 Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
And who shall stand in his holy place [during the Golden Era]?
- 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
- 5 He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- 6 This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, even Jacob (Psalm 24:3-6).

The Effect of the Time of Jacob's Trouble upon Three Groups of Jews

The Time of Jacob's Trouble will indeed be a time of unprecedented suffering and testing for the Jewish people. Some will be so godless and wicked that they will harden their hearts against God in that day and refuse to repent; for them that day will be the entrance into eternal darkness and endless suffering. Others will repent and turn to God with their whole heart while His judgments are being poured out upon the earth; these will be "born again" and will enter into eternal life in the presence of God, their Savior. Still others, the "faithful remnant" among the Jews, will be seeking after God, and striving to obey His word during the Time of Jacob's Trouble; these will be miraculously protected throughout the

Tribulation; they will repent of their sins and wholeheartedly turn to God at the very end of that time, and will enter into the glorious Golden Era.

7

THE WORLD-WIDE SCOPE OF THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

THE WORD OF GOD is chock full of prophecies that tell of the world-wide and universal scope of the judgments of God during the tribulation. Trouble will swirl like a whirlpool around the State of Israel in that day. From there it will reach out and encompass the whole world.

Everyone living upon the earth during the Tribulation will be affected by the earth-shaking, earth-shaping events that will occur. Rich and poor. Young and old. Employer and employee. Industrialist and farmer. Businesswoman and housewife. If you are here then, these events are going to have a direct effect upon your life.

The events that will take place during that day were shown to the prophets in vision. These visions were not fantasies. That which was seen in vision will one day be a reality. "Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except he reveal his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Men Will Flee Before the Terror of Jehovah

The prophet Isaiah was an eyewitness in vision of many things that will happen during the Day of the Lord. One of his visions is recorded in Isaiah 2:12-22.

12 For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low; 13 and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, 14 and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, 15 and upon every lofty tower, and upon every fortified wall, 16 and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all the pleasant imagery. 17 And all the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day. 18 And the idols shall utterly pass away. 19 And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth. 20 In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver, and their idols of gold, which have been made for them to worship, to the moles and to the bats; 21 to go into the caverns of the

rocks, from before the terror of Jehovah, and the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth. 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

*A Man Will be More Rare Than Fine Gold
Babylon Will be Utterly Destroyed*

As you read the next prophecy, remember the city of Babylon will be prominent during the last days. As has already been mentioned as a sign of the times, ancient Babylon will be resurrected and become a great political, economical, and cultural power during the last days. The first part of the prophecy is world wide in scope (vss. 6-16). Then it narrows down to a specific prophecy about the city of Babylon, which will be the most wicked city on the face of the earth during the end days (vss. 19-22).

6 Wail ye; for the day of Jehovah is at hand; as destruction from the Almighty shall it come. 7 Therefore shall all hands be feeble, and every heart of man shall melt: 8 and they shall be dismayed; pangs and sorrow shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman in travail: they shall look in amazement one at another; their faces shall be faces of flame. 9 Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. 10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in it's going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine. 11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. 12 I will make a man more rare than fine gold, even a man than the pure gold of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of its place, in the wrath of Jehovah of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. 14 And it shall come to pass, that as the chased roe, and as sheep that no man gathereth, they shall turn every man to his own people, and shall flee every man to his own land. 15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is taken shall fall by the sword. 16 Their infants also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be rifled, and their wives ravished (Isaiah 13:6-16).

What a burden Isaiah carried! Wouldn't you have a heavy burden if you saw New York city or London or Tokyo, being destroyed—old people, women, children, babies being wiped out by the thousands?

The fierce anger of the Lord will lay waste the land, destroy the sinners, cause the moon and stars to cease shining and cause the sun to be darkened. He is going to punish the world for its evil.

Ancient Babylon, having come out of its grave, will play a most vital role in the end time—only to be cast down from the pedestal of human glory.

19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there. 22 And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged (Isaiah 19-22).

The site of Babylon will be marked by the ruins of the overthrow as were Sodom and Gomorrah. It will remain notoriously desolate all during the Golden Era.

Edom Will be Cut off Forever

Edom is another place that is going to be severely punished in the Tribulation. Let's read part of a sermon that the prophet Obadiah preached to the Edomites:

10 For the violence done to thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever. 11 In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. 12 But look not thou on the day of thy brother in the day of his disaster, and rejoice not over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction: neither speak proudly in the day of distress. 13 Enter not into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, look not thou on their

affliction in the day of their calamity. 14 and stand thou not in the crossway, to cut off those of his that escape; and deliver not up those of his that remain in the day of distress (Obadiah 10-14).

Obadiah warned the Edomites of the consequences of the violence they will do to Jews during the Tribulation. He told them they will become an accomplice with other nations that ransack Jerusalem. He warned them that whatever crime they commit against the Jews will return upon their own head. "For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine own head (Obadiah 15).

When anyone wrongs the Jewish people he touches the "apple of God's eye," and he surely will suffer for it. God said of Abraham and his descendants, "I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse."

All Will Suffer —Rich and Poor, Great and Small, Young and Old

One of the most comprehensive prophecies about God's dealings with the earth and its inhabitants during the Tribulation is found in Isaiah chapter 24.

24 Behold, Jehovah maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. 2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with he maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the creditor, so with the debtor; as with he taker of interest, so with he giver of interest to him. 3 The earth shall be utterly emptied, and utterly laid waste; for Jehovah hath spoken this word. 4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the lofty people of the earth do languish. 5 The earth is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are found guilty: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. 7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry hearted do sigh. 8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. 9 They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. 10 The waste city

is broken down; every house is shut up, that no man may come in 11 There is a crying in the streets because of the wine; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. 12 In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction. 13 For thus shall it be in the midst of the earth among the peoples, as the shaking of an olive tree, as the gleanings when the vintage is done.

14 These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout; for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud from the sea. 15 Wherefore glorify ye Jehovah in the east, even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea. 16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs: Glory to the righteous.

But I said, I pine away, I pine away, woe is me! the treacherous have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous have dealt very treacherously. 17 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. 18 and it shall come to pass, he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble. 19 The earth is utterly broken, the earth is rent asunder, the earth is shaken violently. 20 The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall sway to and fro like a hammock: and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again (Isaiah 24:1-20).

Recapitulation of Isaiah's Prophecy

Notice some of the facts Isaiah brings to our attention. During the Tribulation period— God will empty the earth, make it waste and turn it upside down. The north pole will be where the south pole is, and vice versa.

People will flee from populated areas.

All will suffer alike; it will make no difference who they are or what they have.

The people of the earth will become so corrupt that they will bring the great destruction upon themselves.

The gay life of the cocktail lounges, night clubs and taverns will cease.

Alcoholics are going to be numerous. They will be miserable and drink will be bitter to them.

Waste and destruction are going to be on every hand throughout the world

Isaiah saw the destruction of life and property and the dismal social conditions resulting from the Tribulation judgments that God was pouring out upon the world. Then he saw something that lifted his spirit to great heights of ecstasy. He draws our attention to what he saw saying:

14 These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout; for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud from the sea. 15 Wherefore glorify ye Jehovah in the east, even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea. 16 From the uppermost part of the earth have we heard songs: Glory to the righteous (Isaiah 24:14-16).

Here in the midst of his prophecy about the terrible judgments of the Tribulation, Isaiah mentions a group who will be praising God and giving glory to Him during those days. Do you know whom Isaiah is talking about here?

Remember, one of the purposes of the Tribulation is to cause many to turn from their wicked ways and place their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah, no doubt, saw the 144,000 Jewish servants of God (Revelation 7) teaching their dejected fellowmen who are under the trials of the Tribulation days. The 144,000 servants of God cry aloud exhorting their fellowmen to glorify the Lord, even Jehovah, the God of Israel. They shout this message throughout the earth. Then Isaiah heard songs coming from the uttermost parts of the earth, sung by those who respond to the message of the 144,000. They rejoice because they have come to know God through Jesus Christ, and they sing a hymn, "Glory to the Righteous."

Those who have put their trust in Christ today sing songs that express a note of joy and rejoicing similar to that which Isaiah heard in his vision. One of the Christian hymns reads as follows:

When all my labors and trials are o'er,
 And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
 Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
 Will through the ages be glory for me.
 When, by the gift of His infinite grace,
 I am accorded in heaven a place,
 Just to be there and to look on His face,
 Will through the ages be glory for me.
 Friends will be there I have loved long ago;
 Joy like a river around me will flow;

Yet, just a smile from my Savior, I know,
Will through the ages be glory for me.

Chorus

O that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me;
When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.

But now back to what Isaiah saw and heard. On one hand he heard a group of people who had been brought out of spiritual darkness rejoicing in the face of the extreme difficulties of that day. On the other hand, he saw men, women and young people who were gloomy and discouraged. It will take a miracle in a person's life, even the salvation of God, to cause him to rejoice in those days, when a tyrant will be wielding a whip over the inhabitants of the earth. The treacherous tyrant Antichrist will deal treacherously. Remember Hitler? Antichrist will be far more diabolical than Hitler. Remember the Gestapo? Antichrist's henchmen will be far more sadistic than the Gestapo.

Comparison of the Prophecies of Jesus, the Messiah, and Isaiah

The Lord Jesus, the Messiah, confirmed some of Isaiah's statements on a certain occasion. (When a New Testament prophet spoke about what is to happen during the day of the Lord, he only confirmed what the prophets of old had spoken.) Jesus told four of His disciples, Andrew, Peter, James and John, that some catastrophic changes would take place in the heavens and on the earth during the Tribulation. He said:

25 And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; 26 men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken (Luke 21:25,26).

Let us compare Jesus' statements with some things Isaiah said about the end days:

Jesus said: "There shall be signs in the sun and moon and stars ... the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

Isaiah said: "The windows on high are opened."

Jesus said: "There shall be ... upon the earth distress of the nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world."

Isaiah said: "The foundations of the earth tremble. The earth is utterly broken, the earth is rent asunder ... The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall sway to and fro like a hammock."

Order of Tribulation Events Recorded by John in Revelation

God revealed all the major Tribulation events to the Old Testament prophets, but he did not show any of them the sequence in which the events will take place. He chose to reveal the chronological order of Tribulation events to the apostle John in a vision about 96 A.D. John was on the Isle of Patmos at the time.

The chronological order of events, as seen by John, are recorded in the book of Revelation, chapters 6, 8 and 9 and 16. People living during the Tribulation period can study these chapters and determine the progress of events.

John wrote the book of Revelation in graphic and symbolic language. In it he quoted the Old Testament prophets 285 times and made 550 references to the things they taught. In the greater portion of his book, he describes what will take place during the Tribulation and its aftermath. That portion includes chapters 4 through 20.

The Time of Jacob's Trouble will start ticking off when the Jewish leaders sign a contract with Antichrist (Daniel 9:27). As soon as this takes place, the Tribulation will begin.

The signing of the contract will appear to be just an ordinary event in the course of world affairs. Few will recognize that Antichrist's gradual rise to power will be the *first major Tribulation judgment*. God will allow Antichrist's nefarious reign to become a terror to the inhabitants of the world.

The *second judgment* will be World War I of the tribulation. It will also seem to be an ordinary happening.

The *third judgment* will be a world-wide famine. It likewise will be looked upon as just another tragic event that will go down in history.

The *fourth judgment* will be a severe local war. From man's viewpoint it will be another usual event.

The *fifth judgment* will be a world-wide martyrdom of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. To many this will seem to be nothing more than a wide-spread pogrom to annihilate those who believe in God and His Messiah.

While these judgments are taking place, few will be aware that God is behind the scenes silently directing the judgment to become more severe than the previous one.

When the *sixth judgment* occurs, a mighty earthquake will take place. Concurrent with the earthquake, the sun will cease to give its light, the moon will become blood, and the stars of heaven will fall upon earth. Then men will begin to notice that God is pouring out His wrath upon the world. All of the judgments from the sixth through the last, the 19th, will be so severe that men will know that they are being meted out under the direct and sovereign order of the Almighty.

A "Countdown" of Tribulation Events

The following is a "countdown" of the Tribulation events as they are listed in Revelation, chapters 6,8 and 9 and 16.

1. The apostle John introduces the Antichrist under the symbol of the rider on the white horse (6:2).

2. World War I of the Tribulation period (6:3,4).

3. World-wide famine (6:5,6).

4. A local war affecting one-quarter of the earth (6:7,8).

5. The evil forces declare open season upon those who stand for the word of God, and many become martyrs (6:9-11).

6. A great earthquake occurs and the world is plunged into a total blackout. The citizens of the earth of every social strata, from kings to common laborers, hide themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and cry out to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" (6:12-17).

7. A great fire sweeps the earth, destroying one-third part of the trees and all the green grass. Along with this conflagration, hail mingled with blood is cast upon the earth (8:7).

8. A great and massive object, probably a huge meteorite, is cast into the sea. It causes a third part of the sea to become blood and destroys one-third part of the creatures of the sea and a third part of the ships at sea (8:8,9).

9. A great body falls from heaven. It contaminates one-third of the rivers of the earth. Many men die because the waters are made bitter (8:10,11).

10. One-third part of the sun, moon and stars are smitten so that they become darkened. This judgment results in a 16-hour night and an eight-hour day upon earth (8:12).

11. A great host of locusts that have the power of scorpions are turned loose upon the earth. They come up in a great smoke from the abyss. The smoke darkens the sun. The locusts do not hurt any vegetation; they hurt only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. The locusts are not permitted to kill men; but they torment men for five months, and their torment is as the torment of a scorpion, when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it. The locusts are demons loosed on the earth (9:1-11).

12. Four great angels are loosed in the world. They lead 200 million demons forth to kill one-third part of men who worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass stone, and wood. The idolaters who escape being killed do not repent of their idolatry, nor of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts (9:13-21).

The last seven judgments occur during the last three and one-half years of the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy. During these years, the intensity of God's judgments increases.

13. Men who follow Antichrist suffer noisome and grievous sores upon their bodies (16:2).

14. A certain sea becomes blood as of a dead Man. Every living thing in the sea dies (16:3).

15. The drinking and domestic waters of the earth become blood. God pours this judgment out upon the wicked to avenge the blood of His saints and the prophets who have been slain during this terrible time (16:4-7).

16. Men experience having their bodies scorched with great heat because the normal functioning of the sun is disturbed (16:8,9).

17. God's bowl of wrath is poured out upon the throne of Antichrist, whose kingdom becomes darkened. His subjects gnaw their tongues for pain and blaspheme the Almighty God in heaven because of their pains and their sores (16:10,11).

18. The great river Euphrates is dried up, so that the way might be made ready for the kings of the east to march to Har-Magedon for the War of the Great Day of God the Almighty. All of the kings of the earth are gathered together for this great conflict (16:12-16).

19. The fierceness of the wrath of God is poured out in the final judgment. An earthquake shakes the earth as no other has done since there were men upon it. Babylon receives the brunt of the fierceness of the wrath of God. Cities of the nations of the earth fall. Islands and mountains vanish and cannot be found. Great hail stones, the weight of a talent (over 100 pounds) come down upon men out of heaven; and men blaspheme God because of the plague of the hail, because it is exceedingly great (16:17-21).

How God's Judgments Will Affect Mankind

God's judgments will be terrible in the earth—matched only by man's terrible sins that compelled Him to visit His wrath upon the inhabitants of the world. He must send His judgments because the earth will be polluted under its inhabitants who have transgressed His laws, violated His statutes, and broken the everlasting covenant¹. Read again Isaiah 24:5,6.

The judgments of the Tribulation will affect men everywhere in one of two ways. On the one hand, they will drive many men to their extremity, causing them to seek the mercy and help of their Creator. All of them who turn to the Lord by faith will experience His salvation, even life eternal in His presence and glory. On the other hand, the fierceness of God's wrath will cause others to harden their wicked hearts so that they arrogantly blaspheme and defy the Holy One, the Lord Jesus Christ, and will "suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His Might."

¹ The everlasting covenant is given in Genesis 9:1-7. The provisions of the covenant are: 1) Men may eat meat for food. 2) They are to set up their own form of civil government. 3) They are to enforce capital punishment. 4) They are to multiply and bring forth abundantly in the earth.

8

FALSE MESSIAH'S REIGN OF TERROR DURING THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

DAILY, SOMETIMES HOURLY, a new crisis develops somewhere in the world, or a new personality comes into prominence in world affairs. No one knows what new leader is destined to gain power in the future. No one knows what is going to happen in world affairs from one minute to the next. No one, that is, except the One in Whom we live and move and have our being—the Eternal God. He alone knows the end from the beginning. And from the beginning He has been pleased to reveal facts concerning many prominent men and events of the future through His servants the prophets.

Beginning with Moses, most of the Old Testament prophets wrote about a coming world dictator and his nefarious reign. New Testament writers describe this great dictator as the false messiah and call him Antichrist. Antichrist will be one of the leading characters during the Time of Jacob's Trouble. Since he will have almost unlimited power and authority over his subjects during part of his reign, everyone should acquaint himself with what the Bible teaches about him.

Antichrist's cunning devices and atrocious reign will entrap and enslave multitudes. Knowing of his connivings will keep many from becoming the victims of his treacherous schemings. The Bible says, "And such as do wickedly against the covenant [the law] shall he [Antichrist] pervert by flatteries; but the people that know their God shall be strong" (Daniel 11:32).

Antichrist's identity will be revealed the moment he signs a seven-year contract with leaders of the nation of Israel—the contract of Daniel's 70th week.

Daniel's Description of Antichrist

The prophet Daniel had reference to Antichrist when he wrote about the willful king who will rule over the earth in the end days. Here are Daniel's words:

36 And the king shall do accordingly to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods; and he shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done. 37 Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor the

desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all. 38 But in his place shall he honor the god of fortresses; and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones and pleasant things. 39 And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god: whosoever acknowledgeth him, he will increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for a price (Daniel 11:36-39).

Daniel fills out many more details of the picture of Antichrist elsewhere in his book. He will be a "contemptible person" among world leaders in the beginning of his rise to power and will gain authority and influence by his flatteries. He will rise to world prominence along with ten other kings. Daniel's prophecy implies that he will engage in military operations against some of the other ten kings during the early part of his reign. After he succeeds in killing three of these kings, he will gain sway over the remaining seven.

Antichrist's Reign Described in Revelation

Details concerning Antichrist's reign are set forth in the book of Revelation. There we are told that in the midst of his reign, an image of Antichrist will be set up in the Temple on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem. All the inhabitants of the earth will be required to worship his image. Those who refuse will be condemned to die. In addition to this, a decree will go out into all the world commanding the rich and poor, free and slave to take Antichrist's mark upon their right hand, or upon their forehead; no one may buy or sell who does not have Antichrist's mark upon his body.

How Antichrist Will Gain Supernatural Power

Daniel reveals that all things will be given into his (Antichrist's) hand for the last three and one-half years of his reign (Daniel 7:25). The prophet's language indicates that all things will be given into Antichrist's hands suddenly, and that he will have complete dominion over the whole earth for three and one-half years just before his doom. When Antichrist suddenly becomes world dictator, he will manifest an unusual power. People will marvel at him, saying, "Who is able to war with him?"

How will Antichrist suddenly gain so much power? In order for us to answer this question, let us go back to the beginning of man's history. Back to the time when, in the

Garden of Eden, man first disobeyed God. There in the garden Satan deceived Eve, the first woman, and persuaded her to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which had been forbidden by God. She gave the fruit to her husband, Adam, and he ate. Because of their disobedience, God cast them out of the Garden of Eden and subjected them to sorrow, suffering and death.

At that time God spoke to Satan, saying: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

Notice what God told Satan: There will be *enmity between his (Satan's) seed and the woman's seed*.

In Bible language the word *seed* as it is used in (Genesis 3:15), refers to an offspring (seed) of the woman.

Satan is the most powerful creature the Almighty ever created. In the beginning he was a glorious angelic being who reigned in heaven with the Eternal God. He was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Afterward he rebelled against God. For this act, God cast him out of Heaven, and he became Satan, the adversary. When God cast him out of Heaven, He did not strip him of his power, however, for it is apparent that since his fall Satan has used his power in every conceivable manner to block the progress of the plans and purposes of God in the earth.

For long ages Satan has been at liberty to walk to and fro upon the earth. Down through man's history Satan has gone about as an angel of light to deceive, or as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. As an angelic being he has the privilege to accuse the children of men. He is the inveterate enemy of all who worship and serve the true and living God. *Satan has a special hatred for the nation of Israel*. The Bible calls him "the prince of the power of the air," and "the god of this world."

At the middle of the Tribulation, Satan, knowing his doom is prophesied and seeing that the date of his doom is near, will make an all-out effort to thwart God's plans. Thus the "god of this world, the prince of the power of the air," will give his power to the most powerful ruler of the day—Antichrist.

How will Satan do this?

At the middle of the Tribulation period some of the kings of the earth will pit their military strength against Antichrist. This conflict will develop into World War II of the

Tribulation.¹ In this war Antichrist will be slain. Then a miracle will happen—his death stroke will be healed and he will live again. This resurrected king will be a supernatural being, for he will be indwelt by Satan who will give him all of his power. Thus Antichrist will literally become *Satan's seed*.

The apostle John gives us a solemn and graphic account of what takes place on this occasion:

13 And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and a great authority.² 3 and I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast; 4 and they worshipped the dragon³ because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? 5 and there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them (Revelation 13:1-7).

Blasphemes of Antichrist

Antichrist's chief characteristic will be his wicked, atheistic attitude and his hatred of all who worship God. John points out that Antichrist will open his mouth to blaspheme almighty God—he will blaspheme God's name, His Temple (the Jews' Temple in Jerusalem), and even His tabernacle in Heaven. Besides this, he will set his hand to annihilate everyone who stands for the things of God and Messiah.

¹ World War II is described in Daniel, Chapter 11.

² Rev. 13:1,2 describes the last potentate that heads the last great world power of this age.

³ The dragon is Satan. He is probably the foreign god mentioned in Daniel 11:39.

Daniel wrote that the *willful king*, Antichrist, "shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods."

Writing to the church in Thessalonica, the apostle Paul also prophesied that Antichrist will deify himself, He wrote:

2 The day of the Lord ... 3 will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, 4 he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God setting himself forth as God (II Thessalonians 2:2-4).

What did Paul mean when he wrote that the day of the Lord will not be until the son of perdition (Antichrist) is revealed? Since Daniel prophesied that Antichrist will be revealed when he signs the contract with the Jews at the beginning of the Tribulation, Paul no doubt referred to that occasion.

Antichrist's Enmity Against God's Messiah

When Paul wrote that the son of perdition will oppose and exalt himself against all that is called God, he surely referred to Daniel's prophecy about the willful king. And there is a prophecy of King David which he probably had in mind also. That prophecy, which follows, is recorded in Psalm 2:1-5:

- 1 Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against Jehovah, and against his anointed, saying,
- 3 Let us break their bonds asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.
- 4 He sitteth in the heavens will laugh:
The Lord will have them in derision.
- 5 Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his sore displeasure.

David, in vision, saw an atheistic, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, politico-religious conclave of the kings of the earth during the Tribulation—"the day of God's wrath." This conclave will be headed up by Antichrist. These kings will gather together to oppose God, but their council will be a vain thing.

Note the term "set themselves." David uses this expression in this prophecy to show that the kings of the earth assemble with their minds already made up to take a stand against God, and His anointed. The Hebrew word translated *his anointed* is literally *His Messiah*, or translated from the Greek, *His Christ*. No doubt it was from this word and this prophecy the New Testament writers name the flattering, treacherous and sadistic king of the end days—Antichrist.

A driving spirit will characterize the kings of whom David speaks, prompting them to assemble themselves and take counsel together. That spirit is a *spirit of enmity against God's Messiah*. That spirit of enmity will characterize Antichrist, the seed of Satan, in particular.

Who is God's Messiah with Whom Antichrist is at Enmity?

Who is God's Messiah with whom Satan's seed, Antichrist, is at enmity?

Undoubtedly the answer to this question can be found by determining who the *seed of the woman* is who is mentioned in Genesis 3:15. In that prophecy God told Satan that there would be enmity between Satan's seed (Antichrist) and the woman's seed: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, thou shalt bruise his heel."

Note, the Spirit of God carefully chose the expression "her seed" in Genesis 3:15. Nowhere else in the Bible is this expression used. A prophecy in Isaiah shows the reason for God's choice of the expression, "her seed." Isaiah, speaking to the house of David (the Jewish nation) said: "The Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [God with us]" (Isaiah 7:14). In this prophecy God foretold that a woman who had never been with a man—a virgin—would conceive and give birth to a son, who would be called Immanuel—God with us. Since the offspring of this woman would have no earthly father he would rightly be referred to as the seed of the woman.

Has this prophecy been fulfilled?

Yes. The birth of Jesus the Messiah came in fulfillment of God's Word through Isaiah.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

19 And Joseph her husband, being a religious man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly.

20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US" (Matthew 1:18-23, New ASB).

Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied concerning Jesus Christ, saying:

68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for his people,

69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us

In the house of David His servant—

70 As he spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—

71 SALVATION FROM OUR ENEMIES,

AND FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US (Luke 1:68-71, New ASB).

Again Isaiah prophesied, saying:

11 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse [King David's father], and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of council and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. 3 And his delight shall be in fear of Jehovah (Isaiah 11:1-3).

Jesus Christ introduced Himself to the Jewish people, saying that He was the One upon Whom the Spirit of Jehovah rested, and that He had come in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies. (Read Isaiah 61:1-3 and Luke 4:16-30.)

Jesus Christ, therefore, is the Seed of the woman with Whom Satan's seed Antichrist, will be at enmity.

Beware Antichrist!

Antichrist's chief characteristic will be his spirit of enmity against God's Messiah and against God and all who worship Him. He will use strong efforts to rid the world of the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and all who worship God. Antichrist will lead the pogrom against the multitude who will become martyrs for Christ's sake during the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation (Revelation, chapter 7).

The enmity between Satan's seed, Antichrist, and the woman's seed, Jesus Christ, will continue until Messiah crushes Antichrist's head and strips him of all his power and authority. If any man has an ear, let him hear—Beware Antichrist!

THE EVENT THAT BRINGS AN END TO THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

THE LORD IS SLOW to anger and great in mercy. Because of this, He has been very patient with sinful man during this Age of Grace. As this age draws to a close, however, God's anger is being aroused; and it will continue to be aroused until He pours down His judgments upon the earth in the fierceness of His great wrath.

In these end days four things will cause the wrath of God to rise until it becomes a consuming fire.

First: As evil men and seducers grow worse and worse and increase in number, God's anger will arise against the wickedness of man in the earth. Even before the seven-year Tribulation begins, He will express His anger against the wickedness of man through extraordinary catastrophes, such as earthquakes, storms, signs in the solar system, tidal waves, etc., which will increase in frequency and intensity as the end of the age draws nearer.

Jesus warned His born-again ones that unusual catastrophes will increase noticeably before He takes them out of the world to deliver them from the Tribulation judgments. Associating this violence with the wrath of God that will be poured out during the Tribulation days, He said:

25 And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress among the nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; 26 men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken ... 28 But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption [the rapture] draweth nigh (Luke 21:25-28).

Second: When the Jews sign the contract with Antichrist, God's fury will increase in intensity. He will begin to pour down His Tribulation judgments immediately after this event takes place.

Third: In the middle of the Tribulation, when Antichrist cancels his contract with the Jews, sets himself forth as God, and sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem, the fierceness of God's wrath will increase yet more. From that time on, His judgments will be far more severe than they were during the first half of the Tribulation. And they will increase

in severity as the Tribulation progresses. Antichrist's image becomes the idol that makes desolation.

Fourth: When the kings of the earth "set themselves" to rid the world of the testimony of God and His Messiah, God's wrath will become a consuming fire. He will then begin to maneuver affairs to bring those wicked kings into the final conflict of the age—the War of the Great Day of God the Almighty—in order to destroy them, together with all the wicked ones of the earth.

Satan has tried for centuries to get rid of the Jews. He knows that could he do so he would be able to thwart God's program and at least postpone his doom. As the Tribulation progresses and the day of his doom draws closer, Satan will work harder than ever to destroy the Jewish race. In the person of antichrist, he will assemble the kings and rulers of the earth to devise a plan to rid the world of everything and everyone connected with God. Antichrist and the other wicked rulers will purpose to annihilate every follower of Christ and every Jew.

Their evil plan will draw down upon them the scorching heat of God's wrath. So terrible will be the judgments God will send down upon them that Antichrist and his godless forces will gnaw their tongues for pain and will blaspheme the Holy One.

The Apostle John saw a vision of that time and recorded it in these words:

16 and I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

2 and the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image.

3 and the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, even the things that were in the sea.

4 and the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood.

5 and I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: 6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy. 7 And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works (Revelation 16:1-11).

Antichrist Will Assemble His Troops Together to Destroy the Jews

Although Jews will be scattered all over the world in that day, just as they are now, Jerusalem will be the capital of Jewish interests. The godless forces, therefore, will launch repeated attacks against Jerusalem in their endeavor to carry out their plan to destroy the Jews. Their sieges will prove troublesome according to Zechariah:

2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about, and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem. 3 and it shall come to pass in that day, that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it (Zechariah 12:2,3).

The War of the great Day of God, the Almighty

In preparation for his final and all out effort to annihilate the Jews in Jerusalem and its vicinity, antichrist will assemble his troops from all over the world in Har-Magedon to strike against them.

12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising. 13 and I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: 14 for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the

great day of God, the Almighty¹. 15 (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) 16 and they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon (Revelation 16:12-16).

Har-Magedon will be a vital military base for the War of the Great Day of God, the Almighty. Har-Magedon will be to the War of the Great Day of God, the Almighty, as England was to World War II.

Prior to V-E Day in World War II, the allied armies gathered together in England under General Eisenhower's command. They launched their attack upon the Reich from there. As Antichrist prepares to attack Jerusalem he will launch his attack on the Jews.

The prophet Joel describes preparations for the War of the Great Day of God, the Almighty.

9 Proclaim ye this among the nations; prepare war; stir up the mighty men; let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. 10. Beat your plow-shears into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. 11 Haste ye, and come, all ye nations round about, and gather yourselves together (Joel 3:9-11).

God permitted Zechariah to see a day when nations will gather against Jerusalem for battle. Zechariah visualized the battle in which Jerusalem will fall into her enemies' hands for the last time: "Behold, a day of Jehovah cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee [Jerusalem]. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle ..." (Zechariah 14:1,2).

¹ This war, which is commonly called the Battle of Armageddon will be the last great conflict of the age. It will not be a local conflict—a battle. It will be a world war. "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Behold, evil [calamity] shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest shall be raised up from the uttermost parts of the earth. And the slain of Jehovah shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the face of the ground: (Jeremiah 25:32,33).

Jerusalem Will Be Taken by Antichrist

After Antichrist's hosts gather together in Har-Magedon, they will swoop down on Jerusalem and take the city. Zechariah prophesied: "And the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city" (Zechariah 14:2).

Although many Jews will be in Jerusalem during the closing days of the Tribulation, others will take cover from Antichrist in Edom. Edom and Moab will not fall to Antichrist during the day of his power: "He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom, and Moab, and chief of the children of Ammon" (Daniel 11:41).

After the Jews in Jerusalem are defeated, what remains of their nation's military strength will be concentrated in Edom, in the vicinity of Bozrah, Teman and Petra. In conjunction with his attack upon Jerusalem, Antichrist will send a great contingent of his evil forces against the flock of Jews taking refuge in Edom.

Bozrah—the Jews Last Stand

When Antichrist attacks the Jews assembled in the vicinity of Bozrah, he will find many have taken refuge in Petra, a renowned, natural military stronghold. But no natural stronghold will be sufficient to protect the Jews from the incessant attacks of the evil forces. The Jews in the vicinity of Bozrah will be hemmed in for slaughter. There Antichrist will rise his arm to give them the death blow. Micah gives us a glimpse of what transpires as Antichrist's troops swoop down upon the Jews in Bozrah:

12 I [Jehovah] will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men (Micah 2:12).

The Jews, gathered in Bozrah like a frightened flock of sheep, will realize that they are hemmed in for annihilation. When they see the mighty arm of Antichrist coming down upon them their hope for national survival will vanish. Under the incessant blows from Antichrist's troops, the Jews' spirit will be broken.

The Jews Will Turn to Messiah in Their Darkest Hour

At that time—the darkest hour of all history—they will remember the message of the 144,000 Jewish teachers. The message that the Lord Jesus Christ is Messiah ben David, and that He, and He alone, can deliver them out of their miserable predicament will pierce their hearts.

Their stubborn will and their pride broken, the Jews will humbly confess their national sin of rejecting God's beloved Son, Jesus Nazareth, as their Messiah.

The Jews' National Confession

Under the inspiration of the spirit of God, Isaiah set forth their national confession:

53 Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of the Jehovah been revealed? 2 For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: he hath no form or comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth (Isaiah 53:1-9).

In connection with the Jews' confession of their *national* sin, their political and spiritual leaders will trumpet the following invitation to their fellow Jews around the world:

6 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 after two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him. 3 And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth (Hosea 6:1-3).

Then together, the penitent remnant of Jews will beseech Messiah's grace and mercy, praying:

80 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,

Thou that ledest Joseph like a flock;

Thou that sittest above the cherubim, shine forth.

2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,

stir up thy might,

And come and save us.

3 Turn us again, O God;

And cause thy face to shine,

and we shall be saved (Psalm 80:1-3).

6 Pour out thy wrath upon the nations that know thee not,

And upon the kingdoms that call not upon thy name.

7 For they have devoured Jacob,

And laid waste his habitation.

8 Remember not against us the iniquities of our forefathers:

Let thy tender mercies speedily meet us;

For we are brought very low.

9 Help us, O God of our salvation,

for the glory of thy name;

And deliver us, and forgive our sins,

for thy name's sake (Psalm 79:6-9).

God will respond to this great conversion, and His Holy spirit will do His great work in the Jews' hearts. They will be "born anew". Then will have been fulfilled that which was spoken by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel: "and I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken it and performed it, saith Jehovah" (Ezekiel 37:14).

Messiah Will Return and Deliver the Jews

Shortly following the Jew's return to God, heaven will open. Then, as the lightning comes forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west, Messiah Jesus will come forth prepared to avenge His people and arrayed to do battle with the wicked.

Here is the apostle John's marvelous prophecy about this momentous occasion:

11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. 13 And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. 15 And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:11-16).

Moses wrote about this very important occasion—the coming of Messiah, the Lord God Almighty, to avenge His people, the Jews, in the day of their calamity. Moses impersonated the Lord, saying:

39 See now that I, even I, am he,
 And there is no god with me:
 I kill, and I make alive;
 I wound, and I heal;
 And there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

40 For I lift up my hand to heaven,
And say, As I live for ever,

41 If I whet my glittering sword,
And my hand take hold on judgment;
I will render vengeance to mine adversaries,
And will recompense them that hate me.

42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
And my sword shall devour flesh;
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the head [Antichrist] of the leaders of the enemy (Deuteronomy 32:39-42).

In harmony with Moses' account of Messiah's coming, Jeremiah prophesied that Messiah, the Lord of Hosts, will enter into judgment with all flesh and will destroy the wicked. Jeremiah spoke for the Lord, saying:

30 Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, Jehovah will roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he will mightily roar against his fold; he will give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. 31 A noise shall come even to the end of the earth; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the nations; he will enter into judgment with all flesh: as for the wicked, he will give them to the sword, saith Jehovah.

32 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Behold, evil [calamity] shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest shall be raised up from the uttermost parts of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the face of the ground (Jeremiah 25:30-33).

When the Lord Jesus Christ descends from heaven with eyes of fire, mounted upon a white horse, arrayed to make war with Antichrist and his wicked ones, He will first come to the Jews' defense in Bozrah. They will exuberantly hail Him: "BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD." He will break out against their enemies, and the Jewish people will jubilantly follow on.

In vision the prophet Micah saw this special event, and he prophesied:

13 The breaker is gone up before them: they have broken forth and passed on to the gate, and are gone out thereat; and their king is passed on before them, and Jehovah at the head of them (Micah 2:13).

There Antichrist's forces will take stand to do battle against Messiah, and against His army: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against his army" (Revelation 19:19).

Messiah's Glorious Triumph over His Enemies

Jehovah, Messiah ben David, the Lord Jesus, will majestically and with tornadic force lead His kinsmen against their foes.

14 And Jehovah shall be seen over them; and his arrow shall go forth as the lightening; and the Lord Jehovah will blow the trumpet, and will go with whirlwinds of the south. 15 Jehovah of hosts will defend them; and they shall devour, and shall tread down the sling-stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, like the corners of the alter. 16 And Jehovah their God will save them in that day as the flock of his people (Zechariah 9:14-16).

Messiah will march triumphantly over His adversaries on His way toward His beloved city, Jerusalem.

God favored Isaiah by letting him be in Jerusalem in vision at the time the Lord Jesus Christ triumphantly approaches that city. Here is the dramatic account of Isaiah's vision:

63 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine vat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with me: yea, I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. 4 For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. 5 And I looked, and there was none to help and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me:

and my wrath, it upheld me. 6 And I trod down the people in mine anger, and made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth (Isaiah 63:1-6).

Messiah will triumph over His inveterate foes, capture Antichrist, and slay the rest of His enemies with the sword.

20 And the beast [Antichrist] was taken ... [and] cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh (Revelation 19:20,21).

The Dawn of the Golden Era

Messiah's overwhelming victory will be declared as He stands upon the Mount of Olives: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east ..." (Zechariah 14:4).

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7 And the glowing sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water: in the habitation of jackals, where they lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. 8 And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed: the way-faring man, yea fools, shall not err therein. 9 No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: 10 and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35:5-10).

Messiah's great victory will result in Israel's becoming the head nation of the world. Then the world will begin to enjoy the fullness of God's promise to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:18).

"Jehovah shall be King over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:9). In that day the "Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," will have established His throne in Jerusalem, and "of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever" (Isaiah 9:7).

4 [And] it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow into it. **2** And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; **3** and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off; and 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. **4** But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it (Micah 4:1-4).

Then the dark night of the Time of Jacob's Trouble will have ended, and with the dawning of the Golden Era will come the fulfillment of the wonderful prophecy found in Psalm 149:4 "... Jehovah taketh pleasure in his people; He will beautify the meek with salvation." His people will rejoice exceedingly forevermore in this great salvation. It will have delivered them from all their troubles and sorrows.

Only through the salvation of the Lord can you escape eternal troubles and sorrows and enter into the eternal glory that the Lord God has in store for His children.

Salvation of your soul is the most important consideration in your life. Life is short. Eternity is long. Assuredly, no one will escape eternal troubles and sorrows—yes, God's wrath—if he fails to recognize Christ as Lord and Savior. For, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Jesus declared, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

"... God sent not the son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him" (John 3:17).

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3.)

Come now, and let us reason together. BEHOLD, TODAY IS THE DAY OF SALVATION.