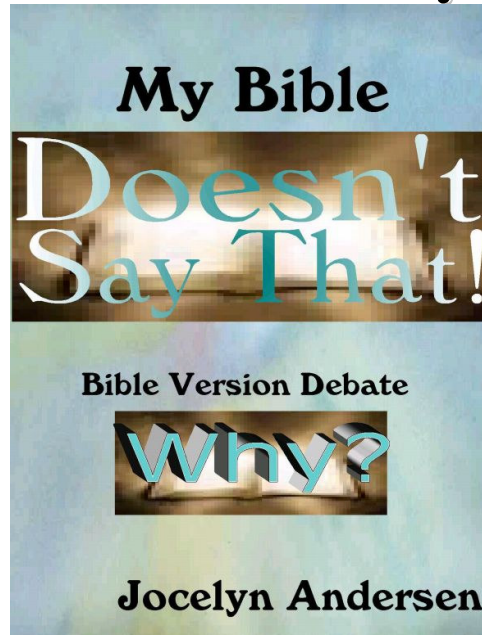


My Bible Doesn't Say That!



Bible Version Debate: Why?

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My Bible Doesn't Say That!

My Bible Doesn't Say That! By Jocelyn Andersen

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1

Make an Informed Decision

Neutrality concerning the issue of Bible versions is not a viable option. But few modern Christians realize this or have any real understanding about what is at the root of the Bible version debate. That is one of the purposes of this book, to bring back into perspective what the debate was *really* all about to begin with, and to show that, with literally hundreds of conflicting Bible versions to choose from, it is *still* a relevant issue for Christians today.

In the late 1800's, when the Bible version debate first began in earnest, it was not primarily about individual versions.

The reader may be surprised to find there is very little comparison done in this book between the various Bible versions themselves. That is because the translations themselves are only by-products of what the issue is really all about.

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One version may unarguably translate a certain verse or passage more clearly than another version. The King James Bible does indeed contain some archaic words and phrases that may require a Strong's Concordance for better understanding.

So, that being the case, does it *really* matter which version we read?

Answering that question is the purpose of this book, but before going any further, the reader is asked to consider the following questions, and ask if any of them seem ridiculous:

Does it matter what kind of food we eat...?

Does it matter which doctor we choose...?

Does it matter who we leave our kids with...?

Now consider this, **everything** we know about the God of Heaven, and Eternal Life through his risen son, Jesus Christ—we get *from the Bible*.

The answers to questions about the most important choices of our lives are found there. Choices between life and death (both temporal and eternal) are found there. Choices between sickness and health are found there. Choices between peace and chaos, poverty and prosperity are found there. Counsel on how to make choices that will positively (or negatively) affect virtually every area of our lives and the lives of our loved ones is found...in the Bible!

As believers, the basis for, and the details of, our faith is found only in the Word of God. We know that faith in Jesus is the most important thing in our lives because the **Bible** tells us so!

High Stakes

With the stakes being so high, and with literally hundreds of conflicting Bible versions to choose from, we should be very cautious about casually listening to anyone about which version is best without thoroughly researching the subject for ourselves.

About The Experts

Could it be that most of us prefer to leave the hard stuff to the “experts?”

Thank God for godly experts. But we must remember that the “experts” are not demigods who possess heightened powers of discernment above other Christians—indeed, not everyone with a degree in biblical studies are Christians or even claim to be Christian. Nor do they necessarily possess extraordinary intelligence above and beyond the average person just because they have attained a degree. They are merely humans who happen to have gained a specialized education in certain areas of study in order to be classified as “experts.”

But anyone, expert or not, *can* make an informed decision regarding Bible versions with just a small amount of research, and, most importantly, a clear understanding of what the issues are really all about.

Here is something else to consider, a person may have attained a degree in certain areas of study, but does that mean his or her conclusions are free from bias? Would the reader agree that “experts” are subject to the same varying degrees of common sense and discernment, or lack thereof, the rest of us are subject to?

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I recently had a discussion with a seminary graduate who could not get past the fact that he could read Greek and I could not. I *admitted* I had to look up individual Greek or Hebrew words in my Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of Biblical Words. And because I admitted that fact, he made no secret of the fact that he felt far superior to me in his ability to understand the Bible, as well as the issues surrounding the Bible version controversy, simply because he could read Greek.

Here is some food for thought along those lines. I was born an English speaking person. It is my native language. I have an excellent grasp of the English language. I read it very well. But because of that, can I claim to know the meaning, shades of meaning and nuances of *every* word in the English language without at least an occasional peek into an English dictionary? Can any English speaking person claim to have such knowledge?

No! They cannot, and neither can seminary graduates who have learned to read the biblical languages claim to have perfect understanding of them without ongoing references to Greek and Hebrew dictionaries. I daresay any reputable Bible scholar has more than one Bible dictionary or lexicon on their personal library shelves and reference them on a regular basis—just as I do...and just as *you should*.

The truly godly Bible Scholar will, in all humility, be happy to share with the average person whatever knowledge they have obtained during the course of their above-average pursuit of educational accomplishments. The godly Bible scholar is very aware, and unashamed to admit, that the resources today are simply too numerous, and too readily available, to give *anyone*

(who can read) the excuse of ignorance when it comes to making decisions concerning the various Bible versions.

This writer has had far too average an education to be considered an expert in anything. So this book is written from one average person to other average persons and strives to present some basic issues behind the Bible version controversy, in the simplest, most unscholarly manner possible. So that armed with some basic facts (and a smattering of common sense), the average person *can* make an informed decision concerning which Bible versions are trustworthy and which are not.

Facts or Marketing Hype?

At the time of this writing, our daughter-in-law is expecting a baby. She has a car seat to purchase. She has been researching car seats—extensively—to make certain she purchases the absolute safest one for her child.

What a wonderful, responsible parent she is already turning out to be!

But aren't choices pertaining to our eternal safety even more important than choices concerning our temporal safety? So why isn't every person, who claims to belong to Jesus Christ, taking the *Word of God* as seriously as our daughter-in-law is taking the purchase of a *car seat*?

Is There A Standard?

All Bible versions are not created equal—they do *not* all say the same thing. It is a fact, that things that are

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different are not the same. So, what is the standard for choosing a Bible version we can trust?

When we buy a ruler or a measuring tape, we trust that each foot contains 12 inches, and each yard contains 3 feet. We also trust that each inch measures exactly what it says it measures...*one* inch.

Why are we so trusting of these measurements? One reason, probably the only reason, is because there is a *standard* for such things.

What kinds of houses and structures would be built if there were no standards? Every part of the construction of a sound structure (from the architectural planning to completion) is completely dependent upon the trustworthiness of the standards of measure that are used. Without such standards, sound construction would not be possible.

On the other hand, let's take a peek at an industry, the women's clothing industry, where there seems to be no consistent standard of measure whatsoever. Each size in women's clothing sizes can vary up to five to six sizes depending on the designer. The only logical conclusion we can come to on this discrepancy is, that different clothing designers have attached sizes to their clothing that will attract and compliment the *consumer*.

In the days of "I love Lucy," a size 12 was considered perfect. Marilyn Monroe, who was the standard for beauty in her day, was a size 14. But these days, it is very complimentary to a woman who has never been able to wear anything smaller than a size twelve to find that a size four or five fits her.

Today, “thin” is worshipped to, sometimes fatal, extremes. Today, a size zero is probably the most complimentary size of all. And we have found size zero’s in some lines of clothing that were actually equal to sizes five or six in other lines!

Acceptability by the consumer seems to be the prevailing criteria used by clothing designers in setting their sizing scales. Size, along with truth, has become relative—depending on who designs and markets the clothing—and on how well the sizes sell.

Book Publishers and Bible translators understand these concepts as well as clothing designers do. And with millions of dollars invested in single advertising campaigns for one new Bible version after another, to far too many of them, truth is relative—depending on their slant and target market.

So how dangerous is it to get our information from a marketing department concerning the reliability of any product? Our daughter-in-law certainly isn’t depending on information that comes from that source in her car seat research. She is looking for facts—not marketing hype.

The facts on Bible versions are available as well, but if you choose to go to the official website of any particular Bible version—if it is a website where financial profit is involved, rest assured you *will* be getting marketing hype—*not* impartial facts.

But don’t despair. Researching the Bible version issue is not as tedious and confusing as it looks to the uninitiated. It only becomes a confusing mess when the real issue is not clearly understood. The facts presented

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in this work are well researched, but the reader is urged to check them out personally.

Truth has nothing to fear from research. Truth is never confusing or harmful. Truth is only confusing if we reject it—and cannot make it fit with what we may have already accepted as fact.

Is it outside the realm of possibility, beyond the pale so to speak, that we could be misled by very sincere, very beloved and trusted, pastors or teachers?

Perhaps years have been invested at seminary or Bible College and our choice of Bible versions is based on counsel or training received there. Are Bible Colleges and Seminaries exempt from bias and error?

The reader may not agree with everything written in this book, but if the truth is being presented, wouldn't accepting the truth be better than holding on to fondly held but *erroneous* beliefs?

2

King James Only?

Although this book is not a “King James Only” defense, it is a defense of the *source material*—the texts—from which the New Testament of the King James Bible was translated. The New Testament portion of the King James Bible was translated from the Majority Text (also known as the Textus Receptus or the Received Text). It is this Greek text that is the butt of much ridicule, controversy, persecution and libel.

It is the unreliability of the Alexandrian, Minority Texts, the source material from which the New Testaments of most modern English Versions are derived, that is being called into question.

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This book will examine both textual sources, and challenge the reader to acknowledge the need of making a choice between the two.

Do All Bible Versions Say The Same Thing?

The following is an excerpt from a letter written to a local pastor after he stated to his congregation, in the presence of this writer, that he had *thoroughly* researched the Bible version issue, and he could assure them that no matter what version they had, it was the true Word of God.

His Assistant Pastor went on to tell the congregation that all versions said the *same* thing. These men were seriously misinformed:

Dear Pastor,

We have also have researched the Bible version issue, and the history of Bible versions—extensively—and have reached a very different conclusion than you have.

We personally own over 50 different Bible versions, so we know what we are talking about when we tell you they *do not* all say the same thing...

The source material (Greek and Hebrew texts) that the Old and New Testaments of the King James Bible are translated from has been proven to be both reliable and fruit bearing.

Not only do we see the fruit of it historically, and in our own lives as well, but we also believe God's promise that his word would be preserved and available, uncorrupted, to *every* generation.

If we choose to believe modern scholarship, we are forced to conclude that New Testament writings were corrupted, and for all practical purposes lost, from the earliest days of Christianity and was not restored to the Church until the late 1800's—when the true, uncorrupted, texts were re-discovered in a monastery trash basket

and the Vatican library. Not only will this book refute that lie, but the Bible itself tells us this scenario simply cannot be true.

Can we know, without a shadow of a doubt, that we still have the uncorrupted Word of God available to us today?

Yes we can. The scriptures themselves assure us this is so, and this work will present, in an uncomplicated manner, a subject that has been unnecessarily complicated for far too long.

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3

Choosing a Bible

200+ Choices

Choosing a Bible can be a daunting task considering the plethora of choices available—Over 100 English versions of Bibles containing both Old and New Testaments, and over 200 New Testament versions. But the choice is simplified completely when we realize there are really only *two* choices.

Two Families of Texts

All Bibles are translated from only *two* families of texts (source material). These are the Greek Byzantine

Majority Texts or the Alexandrian (Egyptian) Minority Texts.

What is the “Majority” Text?

The manuscript of the Majority Text is also called the *Received Text* or the *Textus Receptus*. It is called the Majority Text because there are so many texts still in existence that are in agreement with it—over 5000 extant (still existing) New Testament manuscripts are in agreement with the text known commonly as the *Received Text*.

It is this text that underlies the New Testament of the King James Version.

This text is known by several names:

- It is called the *Majority Text*, because the vast majority of Greek texts (over 5000 in agreement with one another) are of this type.
- It is called the *Traditional Text*, because it was the text normally accepted by believers from apostolic times.
- It is called a *Byzantine Text*, because it was preserved in the Greek speaking (and writing) Byzantine Empire.
- It is called the *Common Text*, because it was widely accepted by the priesthood of believers (which is composed of all believers as opposed to leaders of hierarchal religion).
- It is called the *Received Text*, because the vast majority of orthodox believers and churches received it.

What are the Minority Texts?

Most modern English Bible versions are translated from Greek New Testament texts that are based [primarily] on two sources—Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are part of a group of texts called the *Minority Texts*. They are called *Minority Texts* because the existing texts that are in agreement with them are very few in number. *These two texts are not even in agreement with one another.*

These texts are called:

- *Minority Texts*, because the number of texts of this type, which agree with one another, are so few in number.
- *Alexandrian Texts*, because Alexandria, is where they were created and preserved.
- *Egyptian Texts*, because that is where Alexandria is located.

This book will take a close look at both *families* of texts (the Majority and Minority texts) and their respective claims to reliability.

The reader will be shown that acceptance of either family of texts *automatically excludes the other*. It is this choice, and this alone, which should determine which Bible version any believer feels is reliable.

The choice is really not “which version?” It is rather *which family of texts* is the most reliable? And which family of texts

was my version translated from? That simplifies things considerably, effectively narrowing the choices to only two.

4

Who Can We Trust

These days, if we want to research a subject, we tend to go online, type in a few key words, and up pops a screen containing more information than we can investigate in two lifetimes.

The Unreliability of the Received Text

It seems the main argument in favor of having an “anything goes” attitude concerning Bible versions is the [apparently] irrefutable unreliability of *The Received Text*. And the way most nay-sayers go about refuting it, is to first refute Erasmus—the editor of the first Greek text to be called “The Received Text.”

Much of the initial information that comes up in almost any online search concerning Bible versions is blatantly

biased and false. And the disdain with which the King James Bible is held is very evident when reading through many online sources.

Disqualifying Erasmus: What the Experts Say

Great lengths are gone to in discrediting the source material from which the King James Bible was derived as well as attempting to disqualify those involved with its translation—primarily Erasmus.

A summary of what the inexperienced researcher is likely to find concerning *The Received Text* is as follows:

- 1.) Erasmus, who presented us with the *Textus Receptus*, upon which most of the Bibles of the Protestant Reformation were based, including the King James Translation, was a Roman Catholic scholar.
- 2.) Erasmus was a humanist
- 3.) His text is a *late* Byzantine text.
- 4.) He prepared his Greek text carelessly—in haste.
- 5.) His Greek text *abounded with errors*.
- 6.) Erasmus' motivations in preparing the Greek text were questionable.
- 7.) Erasmus had very limited access to manuscripts.

8.) Erasmus based his text on only a few medieval texts of *dubious veracity*.

9.) *Modern* scholars are referred to often (as if *modern* scholars are more reliable than scholars from earlier time periods).

10.) Erasmus fabricated material for his text.

11.) Erasmus bowed to *Trinitarian pressures* by including the Comma Johanneum or the Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7) in his work.

12.) The translators of the King James Version used Erasmus' *error riddled* work in translating the Authorized (King James) Version.

After reading what the *experts* have to say about the King James Version and the source material from which it was translated, many lay down their faith, along with their Bibles, altogether.

But the reader is implored not to be so hasty.

The so-called "facts" that have just been presented are only a mild sampling of the deliberately vicious misinformation that is widely available to the modern researcher.

If we are to take the word of *modern* scholarship on the subject, we will have no choice but to believe the Received Text is trash, and that both Erasmus and the translators of the King James Version were biased and irresponsible with little to no regard for the truth.

Modern Scholarship

Now, let's take a closer look at what modern scholars are saying about Erasmus and compare it with verifiable *facts*.

It makes sense for those who want to discredit a text, to discredit the person who wrote or edited the text to begin with. If their facts are correct, it is not only a logical but also a *responsible* thing to do. It is a very valid approach.

And that is the first thing the enemies of the Received Text attempt to do. They start out by attempting to discredit and disqualify Erasmus as the translator the Protestant Bible by calling him both a Catholic and a Humanist.

In actuality, Erasmus *was* both, but, as we will show, he was also neither.

Although Erasmus never officially left the Roman Catholic Church, he remained a sharp critic of its practices until his death and even turned down a Cardinalship when it was offered to him.

At best, Erasmus could be called a very bad Catholic.

The Vatican demonstrated agreement with this conclusion when all of his works were placed on the prohibited index of books by Pope Paul IV. Pius IV continued to ban (or view with caution) some of his works in a later index.

As for his much-touted status of being a “*humanist*,” during the Renaissance, anyone who studied the classics, classical culture and education was considered a humanist. Atheism was not a factor in Renaissance humanism as it is today.

Although Erasmus could never, by any stretch of the imagination, be classified a fundamentalist Christian, the fact that he did have a rather orthodox faith is revealed by his very own words. These are the words he penned in his *Treatise on Preparation for Death*: “We are assured of victory over death, victory over the flesh, victory over the world and Satan. Christ promises us remission of sins, fruits in this life a hundredfold and therefore life eternal. And for what reason? For the sake of our merit? No indeed, but through the grace of faith which is in Christ Jesus . . . Christ is our justification . . . I believe there are many not absolved by the priest, *not having taken the Eucharist*, not having been anointed, not having received Christian burial, who rest in peace. While many who have had all the rites of the Church and have been buried next to the altar, have gone to hell . . . Flee to His wounds and you will be safe.”

What powerful words of faith! Need we look any further than Erasmus’ own words to prove that he was a true believer in the totality of Christ’s atonement with no need of any “help” from Roman Catholic ritual?

Erasmus, with his own words, proves that he was neither Roman Catholic nor Secular Humanist in his beliefs. He was a genuine believer in Jesus Christ. He was a saved man.

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5

Erasmus

Johnny Come Lately and a Careless Liar?

Erasmus' text is classified as being a late Byzantine text—which is exactly what it is. However, it is necessary to understand how the enemies of the Word of God use this classification against the Received Text.

Is Early Always Better Than Late?

In the world of biblical scholarship, early is generally considered better than late. But what is not widely understood by the inexperienced researcher is that it is also acknowledged by experts that whether or not a text is classified as early or late is completely *irrelevant* as to its potential reliability. This is covered in detail in a later chapter.

The text edited by Erasmus, *is* a late Byzantine text. But it must be remembered that he compiled his text from much older sources. So the classification of “*late*” does not automatically make it less reliable.

Was Erasmus' text really prepared carelessly and in haste?

The accusation that Erasmus prepared his text in haste (meant to imply carelessness and skewed motivations) is completely unfounded. It is true he was working under a deadline from his publisher, but the fact that he was even able to complete such a work within the space of one year is widely acknowledged as a testament to his skill as a translator. Erasmus' skillful expertise in both Greek and Latin was widely acclaimed during his lifetime.

Riddled With Errors

Is it reasonable to imply a writer may be careless in his work simply because he has a deadline to meet? Does having a deadline mean motivations for the work are wrong in the first place? If that is the case, we need to turn off the news, cancel our newspaper subscriptions, and stay as far away from libraries and bookstores as we possibly can, because one inescapable requirement in the world of publishing and media is the ability to meet deadlines!

Along with allegations of careless haste, innumerable references to *errors* are made in regards to Erasmus' first edition.

Here is what Erasmus had to say about the uproar being made about all the so-called “*errors*” in his text:

In a letter dated 13 August, 1521 to Peter Barbirius, Erasmus wrote: “I did my best with the New Testament, but it provoked endless quarrels. Edward Lee pretended to have discovered 300 errors. They appointed a commission, which professed to have found bushels of them. Every dinner table rang with the blunders of Erasmus. I required particulars, and *could not have them.*”

Why couldn't he have them? Why couldn't Erasmus have been presented with a list his blunders?

It must be clearly understood, at this point, that typographical errors on the part of the newly invented printing press and errors of carelessness on Erasmus' part are two completely different types of errors. The first is understandable, correctable and would not set the translator up for ridicule. The second, however, places responsibility for any and all errors squarely on the head of the translator.

Erasmus was one of the foremost scholars of his day. His abilities were respected world-wide. Even so, to expect perfection from a *first edition* produced on a tight deadline was unrealistic. And to blame him for printing press issues was absolutely unfair.

Even Erasmus acknowledged his first edition was not perfect and spent the next twenty years editing his text.

It is also important to note that the first edition of the Textus Receptus has never been used as a basis for any Bible Translation, so to associate any translation with it, as so many have tried to do with the King James Version, is very misleading.

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What about allegations that Erasmus simply fabricated part of his text because he didn't have enough material on hand to complete the work any other way?

Dr. Frederick Nolan was an eminent historian and Greek and Latin scholar of the 19th century. He researched Egyptian chronology and spent twenty-eight years tracing the Received Text to its apostolic origin. After surveying Erasmus' notes, Dr. Nolan recorded the following: "With respect to manuscripts, it is indisputable that he was acquainted with every variety which is known to us; having distributed them into two principle classes, one of which corresponds with ... the Vatican manuscript ... the church, he was aware, was infested with Origenists and Arians; and affinity between any manuscript and that version, consequently conveyed some suspicion that its text was corrupted."

Can we really take seriously the claim that Erasmus made his own interpretations and even fabricated material? Where is the proof that Erasmus acted dishonestly or fraudulently when preparing the first edition of the Received Text? Was he inappropriately referencing the Latin Vulgate in regards to the last six verses of The Revelation?

No, Erasmus acted entirely appropriately, and within the bounds of acceptable scholarship in this. Erasmus simply made a judgment call—and remember, we are still referring to his first edition (from which *no* Bible translation has ever been made).

Erasmus did not *fabricate* anything.

It would seem, though, that those making allegations that he did...are guilty of the very thing they are accusing Erasmus of.

6

Trinitarian Pressures?

Does 1 John 5:7 Even Belong In The Bible?

Debunking Erasmus' inclusion of 1 John 5:7 (also known as the Johannine Comma or Comma Johanneun) in the third edition of the *Textus Receptus* is considered a trump card to those dedicated to discrediting both Erasmus and his text.

The treatment of the "Comma" in this chapter will be brief and deal only with the most frequently made allegation that it should not be included in scripture because of the utterly false claim that it is not included in ancient manuscripts.

The passage in question is says, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, The Father, The Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

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Below, is a false statement which shows up in almost any online search concerning 1 John 5:7: “... *it is not present in any manuscripts (Greek or otherwise) dating prior to the 16th century, and is not present in the passage as quoted by any of the early Church fathers—even though they would have had plenty of reason to quote it in the Trinitarian debates, had it really existed back then....*” (Wikipedia)

Now, anyone who has researched the subject at all knows this is simply not true. In this instance, “Wikipedia” is certainly guilty of presenting false evidence as fact, but because they carry the title “encyclopedia,” there are those who automatically assume they must be both correct and impartial, when in fact they strive to be neither.

Here is the official policy of the English Wikipedia, which is a *reader edited* online encyclopedia: “...When editing this page, please ensure that your revision reflects *consensus*... All Wikipedia articles and other user-facing content must be written from a *neutral point of view*, representing views fairly and without bias.”

Wikipedia’s *neutral point of view* consists of nothing less than the popular consensus. Facts are subordinate to consensus—groupthink reigns supreme.

If, as the editors of Wikipedia and many other enemies of the Received Text claim,

the comma was not present in *any* manuscript dating prior to the **16th century**...

- How could it have been found in a **2nd century** Syriac manuscript dated from around A.D. 170—or in a **3rd century** Latin manuscript dated from around 200 A.D?
- How could it have been included in **5th century** resolutions made at the Counsel of Carthage in A.D. 415?
- How could Cassiodorus have quoted it in the **5th century** (A.D. 480)?
- How could 400 Bishops have quoted, and discussed it at length, in their **5th century** defense of the trinity in (A.D. 484)?

Cyprian wrote about it in the **3rd century** around A.D. 250: “The Lord says, ‘I and the Father are one’ and likewise it is written of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, ‘and these three are one.’”

The truth is that 1 John 5:7 has been found in manuscripts and quotes dating from the **2nd century**. So any claims that it cannot be

found before the 16th century are blatantly irresponsible and false.

When Erasmus was presented with proof that the comma was not only seen in antiquity, but that it had actually been widespread, he was convinced that it was indeed part of the true Word of God and included it in the third edition of the *Textus Receptus*.

The translators of the King James Version were being neither irresponsible nor bowing to Trinitarian pressures when they included 1 John 5:7 in their translation. They were simply acknowledging the facts, and the common consensus of the priesthood of believers, that from the earliest days of the church, the words of the Johannine Comma were indeed the Word of God and were rightly attributed to the apostle John, who consistently defended—in all of his writings—the deity, and the rightful place in the Godhead, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7

Apostolic Origins Of the Received Text

Quotes from Early Sources

This chapter is limited to quotes from very early sources that verify the antiquity of the writings of the Majority text and brief explanations of them.

Professor Fenton John Anthony Hort claimed that the Majority Text cannot trace its origins any earlier than the 4th Century. Can this possibly be true? If it is, then any claim to the apostolic origin of the Majority Text is refuted: “The text, found in the mass [Majority] of existing manuscripts, does not date further back than the middle of the fourth century...” Hort, quoted in Dean Burgon, *Traditional Text*, p. 91.

The following quotes show that the text of, what is now known as, the Received Text (Textus Receptus/

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Majority Text) was the *same* text used by the earliest Christians and accepted by them as coming from the apostles themselves.

Scholar, Jacob Geerlings, who has done extensive work on certain “family” branches of the Majority Text, has stated that: “Its origins go back to the autographs [the originals]” (J. Geerlings, Family E and its Allies in Mark).

Edward Miller had this to say about the early church Fathers: “The testimony of any first-rate early church ‘father,’ where it can be had, must be held to outweigh the solitary testimony of any single codex which can be named. For instance the origin and history of Codices A, B, Aleph, and C [Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Ephraemi] is *wholly unknown*: their dates and the places of their several production *are matters of conjecture only*. But when we are listening to the articulate utterance of any of the ancient ‘fathers,’ we not only know with more or less of precision the actual date of the testimony before us, but we even know the very diocese of Christendom in which we are standing. To such a deponent we can assign a definite amount of credibility, whereas in the estimate of the former class of evidence [the Greek manuscripts] we have only inferences to guide us. Individually, therefore, a ‘father’s’ evidence where it can be certainly obtained—*caeterius paribus* [Latin: other things being equal] is considerably greater than that of any single known codex.” Edward Miller, quoted in Dean Burgon, Traditional Text, 57.

When Did the Church Fathers Live?

With the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) acting as their chronological watershed, church historians will generally arrange the ‘fathers’ by the era in which they lived

- Apostolic (A.D. 75-150)
- Ante-Nicene (A.D. 150-325)
- Post-Nicene (A.D. 325-500)

The majority of the “fathers,” including the earliest of them, quoted from the Majority Text.

The writings of just five early writers (Tertullian, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria) have provided us with 30,147 Scripture citations—and the great majority of their quotations agree with the Majority Text.

As late as the year A.D. 208, Tertullian, in his defensive work, entitled “*On Persecution against Heretics*,” rebuked the skeptics of his age with the challenge that the authentic writings of the apostles were still possessed by Christians in his day: “Come now, you who would indulge a better curiosity, if you would apply it to the business of your salvation, run over [to] the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, in which their own authentic writings are read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each of them severally. Achaia is very near you, [in which] you find Corinth. Since you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi; (and there too) you have the Thessalonians. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get Ephesus. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have Rome, from which there comes even into our own hands the very authority (of apostles themselves). How happy is its church, on which apostles poured forth all their doctrine along with their blood!” Tertullian, quoted in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3, p. 260.

Papyri, which are un-disputably the earliest manuscript sources available, testify to the ancient origins of the Majority Text: “Byzantine readings which most critics have regarded as late, have now been proved by Papyrus Bodmer II to be early readings.” Hills, quoted in Dean Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, p. 54.

“Papyrus 66 supports the reading of the Majority Text.” *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 2, p. 381.

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“Some of the New Testament papyri that have been discovered show remarkable similarity with later manuscripts. In fact, several of the extant early papyri are related to many later manuscripts (fourth century and beyond) or at least share a common ancestor.” Philip W. Comfort, *Early Manuscripts and Modern Translations of the Bible*, p. 11.

The earliest Syrian Translation of the scriptures was the Peshitta—translated in A.D. 145. It closely agrees with the Majority Text. Modern liberal scholars upped the translation date of the Peshitta to A.D. 415, but the *antiquity of this early translation of the scriptures is widely acknowledged*.

Concerning the Italia, the Old Latin Translation (not to be confused with Jerome's Latin Vulgate), the first of these was made no later than A.D. 157, about 60 years after the last book of the Bible was finished. It is called the Old Latin Translation or Italia. This translation was made for the young churches established in the Italian Alps (the far northern part of Italy). It agrees closely with the Majority Text: “The old Italic version into the rude Low Latin of the second century held its own as long as Latin continued to be the language of the people. The critical version of Jerome [the Vulgate] never displaced it, and only replaced it when the Latin ceased to be a living language, but became the language of the learned.” Fulton, *The Forum*, June 1887; quoted in Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 27-28.

“The old Latin versions were used longest by the Eastern Christians who would not bow to the authority of Rome, e.g., the Donatists; the Irish in Ireland, Britain, and the Continent; the Albigenses; etc.” Jacobus, *Catholic and Protestant Bibles Compared*, p. 200.

The Gothic Translation was the first translation into a purely European language. It was prepared in A.D. 330 by Ulfilas, an earnest soul-winning evangelist. This

translation was prepared about 10 years before the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, and it agrees closely with the Majority Text: “The type of text represented in it is for the most part that which is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts.” Frederick G. Kenyon, *Critical Text of the New Testament*, 1912 edition.

Although it was translated *before* the Minority/Egyptian Texts were copied, Ulfilas’ version contains readings that Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (and modern versions translated from them) omit, i.e., “For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

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8

Why the Need For Another Version?

The average Christian believes the first Bible translated into modern English came into being because of the *outdated, difficult to understand, archaic English* of the King James Version.

Christians generally assume the Revised Version, and subsequent versions, only address modern language – Vs- archaic language issues. It is easy to believe the new version initially came about as a result of popular demand for a Bible that was easier to understand than the one that had served the English speaking population so well for almost 300 years.

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It almost makes sense. But was it really true? Were people really clamoring for a new and better translation?

No, they were not. If they were, then why did the American Standard Version which was the translation designed to displace the Revised Version and the King James Version in America go bankrupt and sell its copyright to the National Council of Churches in 1928?

According to J. Patterson Smyth, Revised Version enthusiast and author of *How We Got Our Bible* (1899), the reception of the Revised Bible was disappointing. He wrote, "*The public have largely failed to appreciate its great merits and its great value.*"

The American Standard Version, following so closely on the heels of the Revised Version, also generated a less than enthusiastic reception.

In the preface of the [original] Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible by James Strong, we read the following: "The Revised Version and now even the American Standard Revised Version, have fallen into relative disuse. The King James Version continues to hold the field, having withstood myriads of versions since this work appeared in 1894. For this reason we have dropped the Comparative Concordance to the Revised Version."

Less than 9 years after the Revised Version made its appearance, both it and its soon to be bankrupt American successor had fallen into such disuse, that references to it were deleted from the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.

Lack of public enthusiasm for both the Revised Version and the American Standard Version should lay to rest any idea that a clamor was being made for a new

translation with updated modern English. That was simply not the case.

The next section of this book deals with how and why the first revision of the Holy Scriptures took place. What is revealed in the next few chapters is crucial, *verifiable* information.

We have shown the trustworthiness of the man who edited the very first “Received Text.” And there has never been any significant doubt cast on the persons or motives of any of the translators of the King James Version.

Other than authorizing the translation, King James himself played no active part in the translation process past lifting the death penalty for the undertaking and setting some very reasonable guidelines for the translators to follow—one of which was the very wise admonition to have “*No Footnotes.*”

The Best Keeps Getting Bester

Anyone who loves and honors the Written Word of God deserves and needs to understand the answers to the following questions:

- What were the beliefs of those who promoted and edited the Egyptian/Minority texts?
- How were these obviously flawed codices successfully edited into a text from which hundreds of versions have sprung?
- If every new version translated from them was always the best, most accurate ever (almost all of them make that claim), why the need for so many new ones?

How It All Began

We have already shown that the New Testament of the King James Version (KJV) is translated from completely different source material than virtually every other modern English version.

It is a word for word translation taken from the Received Text (Textus Receptus / Majority Text) that was used extensively by the early church.

1881: The Year We Finally Got the Real Word of God

Almost all modern English translations of the New Testament scriptures originated from either the Hort-Westcott Greek New Testament which was presented to the English Speaking world in 1881 or from the United Bible Society and Nestle-Aland text (the two texts are virtually identical to Hort and Westcott's text).

This is how it all began; in the late 1800's two Anglican clergymen set out to give everyone a greater understanding of the ancient manuscripts.

They did this by first rejecting all previous scholarship—all previous scholarship.

Now do we honestly believe that from the earliest days of the Church until the late 1800's there was *no* reliable translation of the scriptures available? Because that is exactly what Professor Fenton John Anthony Hort and Bishop Brook Foss Wescott were saying when they rejected all previous scholarship.

The scriptures tell us that God honors his Word above his name, and that his word endures to *all* (that means each and every...) generations. If Hort and Westcott were correct in rejecting all previous scholarship, then God is a liar.

They attempted to, and succeeded to a great degree, discredit the Received Text altogether by composing a Greek New Testament edited entirely from the Egyptian/Minority Texts. So we see they not only rejected all previous *scholarship* up to that point, but also the very *source material* that, up until then, had been considered by every reputable scholar sacred, inspired and reliable.

Bishop Westcott and Professor Hort rejected, entirely, the Received Text that had been used, trusted and born incredible fruit—choosing instead for their translation, almost exclusively, two very poor manuscripts (Mss.) “Aleph” (Sinai) and “B” (Vatican).

Not only do the two Mss. they chose differ significantly one from the other, but also from 99 out of 100 other, more reliable, manuscripts!

So, the question is, why did they reject *all* previous scholarship as well as *all* previous source material in favor of two codices that most scholars, at that point, agreed were quite inferior?

We are not talking about only *some* of the scholarship up to that point, but *every single bit of it*.

It helps to know something about the people who were undertaking this revolutionary project. Bishop Wescott was a publicly professed *disbeliever* in the physical

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resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other words, *he was not even a saved man*. God only saves those who call on his name through faith in his risen SON (Romans 10:9-10,13).

Since he rejected the physical resurrection of Christ, it should come as no surprise that his translation work and choice of source material would reflect that slant.

When Westcott became the Bishop of Durham, the Durham University Journal welcomed him with the praise that he was, “Free from all verbal or mechanical ideas of inspiration.” Translated into plain English, that means that Westcott did not believe the Bible was the inspired word of God. Hort called the substitutionary, atoning death of Christ, “immoral.”

The Greek text of Westcott and Hort (and the translations based on it) refutes and/or dilutes *every* major doctrine of Christianity. When 1 Timothy 3:16 (KJV) is compared with most modern translations, the flawed theology of Bishop Westcott is clear—as well as the corrupt nature of the Egyptian/Minority Texts.

In changing the more specific “*God*” in this verse to the generic “*he*,” the message of one of the most profound statements of the Deity of Jesus Christ found in the New Testament is completely corrupted.

In 1 Timothy 3:16, the Received Text clearly says *God*. And this reading enjoys the agreement of around 4000 texts—either in mss evidence, versions or writings of the early Church fathers. That is a great deal of evidence and constitutes more than enough witnesses needed to prove the integrity of the texts chosen by the translators of the King James Bible.

The Received Text, which was used extensively by the early church, is very specific in the case of 1 Timothy 3:16, that *God* was manifest in the flesh. The Hort-Westcott Greek, on the other hand, clouds the issue.

The sad truth is that most modern English translations of the Bible are translated from either the Hort-Westcott Greek or from an “eclectic text” (Nestle-Aland or the United Bible Society’s) that is virtually identical to the Hort-Westcott text.

These versions either subtly attack all of the major doctrines of Christianity or they boldly attack them. And in hundreds of ways dilute the doctrines given to us by God that pertain to life and godliness.

Those who love the Hort-Westcott Greek (which, among others, the New Testaments of the Amplified Bible and Watchtower’s New World Translation are based entirely on) seem tireless in their efforts to discredit the King James Version. It is a blatant lie that the Textus Receptus is full of errors. It is not. It is a blatant lie that King James insisted on his particular doctrinal beliefs being brought forth in the translation that bears his name. He did not.

The King James Version is one of the very few word for word translations of the Holy Scriptures we have, and every word in it can be looked up in the *original* **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance Bible Dictionary.

When purchasing a “Strong’s” make certain you purchase the *Original Strong’s***—not the *New Improved* or *The Strongest* Strong’s—with the “updated” Greek and Hebrew! These new *Strong’s* are full of the classical Greek contained in the corrupted Egyptian/Minority Texts. The Majority/Received Text is written in Koine Greek—the everyday Greek spoken by the common

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people—not the classical Greek used in the writings of the philosophers.

It is a sad fact that most seminaries have been training their graduates in the classical Greek of the Egyptian Minority Texts for decades—thus the bias seen in the vast majority of our Christian leadership towards the King James Version and the Texts it was translated from.

A complete copy of the Received Text along with the literal English translation can be found in the *Berry Interlinear*.

9

The Minority Texts & The Hort-Westcott Theory

In 1881, a text claiming to be holy scripture, but able to claim only *1%* agreement among the comparatively few extant texts of its type, supplanted the Majority Text that enjoys over *90%* agreement among over *5000* extant texts of its type!

Although it is difficult to understand how such a thing could happen, *it did*—largely as the result of *the **Hort-Westcott theory of textual criticism* being widely accepted among the biblical scholars of that time.

****Remember**, Bishop Westcott was not even a believer in the physical resurrection of our Lord—which resurrection the eternal life of every Christian is completely dependent upon.

What Is the Hort-Westcott Theory?

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Westcott and Hort conjectured that, of all the extant manuscripts available, only two were worth considering as a primary basis for their text: the *Sinaiticus* (Aleph) and the *Vaticanus* (B). They said these were older and therefore more reliable than any of the others.

The foundation of their work was entirely based on the assumption that these two Codices were *without error*. Because of that assumption, they reasoned all variations including those contained in the 5,000+ manuscripts of the Majority Text must be copyist errors of one kind or another.

In addition to this, their theory dictates that when editing any text containing the Word of God, the texts were to be considered ***no different* from any other ancient (ordinary) book.

***Remember*, Westcott was also free from the idea that the scriptures were inspired by God and therefore sacred.

The History of the Codices

Although the history of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (each called a codex) is a mystery, they are thought by experts to have been written in the 4th Century, around A.D. 340. It is believed the codices were commissioned by Constantine I as part of an order for fifty copies. It is also believed they were transcribed in Alexandria, Egypt: “Constantine applied to Eusebius for fifty handsome copies, amongst which it is not improbable that the manuscripts B and Aleph were to be actually found.” Burgon, Traditional Text, p. 163.

Tischendorf also believed this was how the Sinaiticus originated: “Is it possible that this Bible, Aleph, could be one of

the 50 copies which Emperor Constantine ordered Eusebius to place in Constantinople, his new capital.” Tischendorf, quoted in Beale, *Pictorial History*, p. 54.

According to the Oxford Dictionary: “Most scholars believe that, like the Vaticanus, it [the Sinaiticus] was written in Alexandria, Egypt. . . The New Testament text of the codex is closely allied to that of the Vaticanus, together with which it is the chief witness to the ‘Neutral Text.’” Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 310.

It is an interesting fact that neither Vaticanus nor Sinaiticus, which form the basis for the New Testaments of virtually all modern translations, is an original or even a copy of an original.

It is accepted that both are *recensions*.

Here is what K.W. Clark had to say about them: “All are found on the same Egyptian recension.” K.W. Clark, *Today’s Problems with the Critical Text of the New Testament*, published in *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship*, ed. by J.C.R. Rylaarsdam, p. 166.

Exactly what is a “*recension*?”

It is a **revision**—no more no less.

So the 200+ modern English Bible Translations we have today are nothing more than versions which have been translated from Hort-Westcott’s *version*...which was translated from the Egyptian/Alexandrian scholars’ ***revision*** of...yet another (unknown) *version*!

The Quality of the Codices

The quality of the Codex Sinaiticus was denounced by Dr. Scrivner: "It must be confessed, indeed, that the Codex Sinaiticus abounds with similar errors of the eye and pen, to an extent unparalleled, but rather unusual in documents of first rate importance; so that Tregelles has freely pronounced that 'the state of the text, as proceeding from the first scribe, may be regarded as very rough.'" Scrivener, *Plain Introduction*, p. 267.

Burton had this to say about the impure condition of both Codices: "On many occasions 10, 20, 30, 40 words are dropped through very carelessness. Letters and words, even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately cancelled; while that gross blunder, whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the clause preceding, occurs no less than 115 times in the New Testament." Dean Burton, *Causes and Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 128.

"Between the first two [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus] there subsists an amount of sinister resemblance, which proves that *they must have been derived at no very remote period from the same corrupt original*. Tischendorf insists that they were partly written by the same scribe. Yet they vary repeatedly from one another on every page; as well as differing widely from the commonly Received [Majority] Text, with which they have been carefully collated. On being referred to this standard, in the Gospels alone, B is found to omit at least 2,877 words: to add, 536: to substitute, 935: to transpose, 2,098: to modify, 1,132 (in all 7,578)—the corresponding figures for being severally 3,455, 839, 1,114, 2,299, 1,265 (in all 8,972). And be it remembered that the omissions, additions, substitutions, transpositions, and modifications, are by no means the same in both. It is in fact easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two manuscripts differ the one from the other than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree." Burton, *Revision Revised*, p. 12.

Scrivner concurred: "That no small proportion of these are mere oversights of the scribe seems evident from the circumstance that this same scribe has repeatedly written words and clauses twice over." Philip Scrivener, *Plain Introduction*, Vol. 1, p. 120.

“The impurity of the text exhibited by these codices is not a question of opinion but of fact. . . In the Gospels...Codex B [Vaticanus] leaves out words or clauses...it bears traces of careless transcription on every page.” Burgon, quoted in Scrivener, Vol. 1, p. 120.

It is no wonder reputable scholars have consistently questioned the fitness and integrity of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus as well as the men who promoted them.

4th century Alexandria, Egypt was noted for its mixture of pagan philosophy and Christianity. The Codices in question (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) have also been linked with the notable Christian apostate, Origen: “Yet I venture also to think that it was in a great measure at Alexandria that the text in question was fabricated. My chief reasons for thinking so are the following: (1) There is a marked resemblance between the peculiar readings of Vaticanus / Sinaiticus and the two Egyptian versions—the Bohairic or Version of Lower Egypt especially. (2) No one can fail to have been struck by the evident sympathy between Origen,—who at all events had passed more than half his life at Alexandria...” Burgon, *Traditional Text*, pp. 234-235.

Another link between the Codices and Origen can be found through Jerome and his Vulgate. Fredrick Nolan saw the connection: “The striking coincidence of the Greek of the Vatican manuscript with the Latin of the Vulgate leads to the establishment of the same conclusion. This version received the corrections of St. Jerome during his abode in Palestine; it is thus only probable that the Greek copies, after which he modeled it, were those, which far from being current in Palestine, were used in the monastery into which he had retired: but these he assures us were of the edition of Eusebius. For this edition he had imbibed an early partiality, through Gregory of Nazianzum, who first put the Scriptures into his hands, who had been educated at Caesarea in Palestine.” Frederick Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, or Received Text of the New Testament*, pp. 83-84.

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Jerome admitted his familiarity with the manuscripts of Pamphilus and Origen. He said he relied on these documents as “*his unquestioned model*,” while translating the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate from a Greek Manuscript—Scrivener, *Plain Introduction*, Vol. 2, p. 226.

The Codex Sinaiticus is riddled with corrections, and *its early dating has been called into question* with very good reason: “Since this document was first inscribed, it has been made the subject of no less than ten different attempts of revision and correction [by later scribes]. The number of these attempts is witnessed by the different chirographies [handwriting styles] of the revisers, and the centuries in which they were respectively made can be approximated by the character of the different handwritings by which the several sets of corrections were carried out...Many of these corrections were contemporaneous with the first writer [copyist], but far the greater part belonging to the 6th or 7th century.” Scrivener, *Plain Introduction*, p. 267.

In spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Westcott and Hort maintained that the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus were “*pure texts*,” and that all others were partly corrupt—*especially* the ones used in the preparation of the King James Bible.

For this they have, rightly, been called unfit for the work of translating the Word of God: “Behold then the provision which the Author of Scripture has made for the effectual conservation in its integrity of this portion of His written Word! Upwards of 1,800 years have run their course since the Holy Ghost, by His servant Paul, rehearsed ‘the Mystery of Godliness,’ declaring this to be the great foundation fact, namely, that ‘God was manifest in the flesh.’ And lo! *Out of 254 copies of St. Paul’s Epistles, no less than 252 are discovered to have preserved that expression.* The copies whereof we speak were procured in every part of Christendom, being derived in every instance from copies older than themselves; which again were transcripts of copies older still. They have since found their way, without design or

contrivance, into the libraries of every country in Europe, where they are jealously guarded...We submit, as a proper and just conclusion from these facts, that *men who, in view of the evidence before them, would cast out of the Scripture at this vital point, the word 'God' and replace it by 'he who' have thereby demonstrated their unfitness for the work of revising the Greek text of the New Testament.*" Burgon, quoted in Fuller, True or False? p. 98.

How has it happened that corrupt Codices, championed by unregenerate men, have formed the basis for virtually *all* 20th century Bible translations?

The Preface of the New King James Version has this to say about the Egyptian/Minority Texts that were used almost exclusively by Hort and Westcott in editing their Greek text: "Since the 1880's most contemporary translations of the New Testament have relied upon relatively few manuscripts discovered chiefly in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. Such translations depend primarily on two manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, because of their greater age. The Greek text obtained by using these sources and the related papyri (our most ancient manuscripts) is known as the Alexandrian Text. However, some scholars have ground for doubting the faithfulness of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, since they *often disagree with one another, and Sinaiticus exhibits excessive omission.*

Frederic Kenyon, the late Director of the British Museum and author of widely used textbooks on textual criticism, wrote this about the Minority Text:

"[This New Minority-type Greek text] predominantly used...Aleph and B [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus] type readings...[The changes] amount to an extensive modification of the text. It has been *the dominating influence in all modern critical editions*... It is clear that...deliberate alteration...has been at work on a large scale in one text or the other..." Frederick Kenyon, *Text of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 197-204, 224, 231.

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Wilber Pickering, author and Dallas Seminary Alumnus says this about the Minority Text: “The minority manuscripts disagree as much (or more) among themselves as they do with the majority. We are not judging between two text forms, one representing 90% of the manuscripts and the other 10%. Rather we have to judge between 90% and a fraction of 1% (comparing the Majority Text with P75 and B text form for example). Or to take a specific case, in *1 Timothy 3:16*, over 300 Greek manuscripts read ‘God’ [KJV]... So we have to judge between 97% and 2%...”

“It really does seem that those scholars who reject the Majority Text are faced with a serious problem... They are remnants reflecting ancient aberrant forms. It is a dependence on such aberrant forms that distinguishes contemporary critical editions of the New Testament... *I submit that due process requires us to receive as original that form of the text which is supported by the majority of witnesses.* To reject their testimony in favour of our own imagination as to what a reading ought to be is manifestly untenable.” Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, pp. 114-120, 25, 149, 150, 237.

Even Hort admitted the Alexandrian manuscripts were not very good. In a letter to Westcott, he wrote: “Inaccuracy may in certain men or at certain periods run into a laxity which is *careless about words though supposing itself faithful to sense*, and which draws no sharp line between transcribing and editing, i.e. mending or completing. This last characteristic naturally belongs to the early period.” A.F. Hort, *Life and Letters of F.J.A. Hort*, Vol. 2., p. 228.

Dr. Edward Hills, author and graduate of Yale and Westminster Theological Seminary, with a Th.M. from Columbia Seminary and a Th.D. from Harvard says this: “But this suggestion leads to conclusions which are extremely bizarre and inconsistent. *It would have us believe that during the manuscript period orthodox Christians corrupted the New Testament text, that the text used by the Protestant Reformers was the worst of all, and that the true text was not restored until the nineteenth century, when Tregelles brought it forth out of the Pope’s library, when Tischendorf rescued it from a wastebasket on Mt. Sinai, and when Westcott and Hort were providentially guided*

to construct a theory of it which ignores God's special providence and treats the text of the New Testament like the text of any other ancient book..." Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 110-111.

In the following statement, Wilber Pickering questions how these flawed texts have been so widely accepted: "The distressing realization is forced upon us that the 'progress' of the past hundred years has been precisely in—the wrong direction—*our modern versions and critical texts are found to differ from the Original in some six thousand places, many of them being serious differences...*[They] are several times farther removed from the originals than are the A.V. and TR [King James Version and its foundation, the Greek Textus Receptus]. *How could such a calamity have come upon us?* ...Much of the work that has been done is flawed." Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, pp. 149-150, 237.

Dean John Burgon, the scholar who collated the earliest New Testament documents—including codices, cursive Manuscripts, papyri, lectionaries, quotations by early "fathers" (87,000 in all)—wrote this about the changes being made in Greek texts and Bible translations: "Ordinary readers...will of course assume that the changes result from the reviser's skill in translating—advances which have been made in the study of Greek. It was found that they had erred through defective scholarship to an extent and with a frequency, which to me is simply inexplicable... Anything more unscientific... can scarcely be conceived, but it has prevailed for fifty years. We regret to discover that... *their work is disfigured throughout by changes which convict a majority of their body alike of an imperfect acquaintance with the Greek language.*" Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 54, xi, 270, 277.

The modern speech revisionists have been declared to be fraudulent, unscholarly and unscientific in their methods: "Monstrously unscientific, if not dangerously obscurantist. The average well-taught Bible-believing Christian has often heard the error that the King James Version is corrected on

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the basis of better manuscripts or older authorities.” Hodges, quoted in Pickering, *Identity of the New Testament Text*, p. 160.

“Lacking any kind of technical training in this area, the average believer probably has accepted such explanations from individuals he regards as qualified to give them.” Hodges, quoted in D.O. Fuller, *Which Bible?* p. 25.

Why does there seem to be so little concern displayed by the average Christian today about something that matters so much?

Hort claimed that that the two manuscripts he chose for his revision were “*pure*” and that *all* others that disagreed with them were full of copyist errors. In light of the tremendous weight of evidence to the contrary, how could he have even been taken seriously, much less been such a prevailing force in the rejection of the Majority Text unless it was, somehow, a pre-cursor of the great delusion which the Bible says will sweep the world in the latter days (2 Thessalonians 2:11)?

This is what Mauro had to say: “Here is a document which the [1870-1881] revisers have esteemed (and that solely because of its antiquity [said to be in the 4th century]) to be so pure that it should be taken as a *standard* whereby all other copies of the Scriptures are to be tested and *corrected*. Such is the estimate of certain scholars of the 19th century...But it bears upon its face the proof that those in whose possession it had been, from the very first, and for some hundreds of years thereafter, esteemed it to be so impure [so full of copyist errors] as to require correction in *every* part...Considering the great value to its owner of such a manuscript (since it is on vellum of the finest quality) and that he would be most reluctant to consent to alterations in it except the need was clearly apparent, it is plain that this much admired codex bears upon its face the most incontestable proof of its defective character...But, more than that, Dr. Scrivener tells us that the evident purpose of the thorough-going revision which he places in the 6th or 7th century was to make the manuscript conform to manuscripts in vogue at that

time which were ‘far nearer to our modern Textus Receptus.’”
Mauro, quoted in D.O. Fuller, *True or False?* p. 75.

Modern translators have tried to distance themselves from the Hort-Westcott Greek Text. They tend to favor the Nestle-Aland Greek text or the United Bible Society’s—both of which favor the same Egyptian/Minority recensions and are virtually identical (85%) to Westcott and Hort’s.

In summary, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are not as old as the Majority Text. The Majority Text has been found in *diverse* geographical locations *worldwide*, throughout *many* time periods, and can also be traced to *Apostolic origins*, while the Codices Aleph and “B” (designated “Neutral [pure] Texts” by Hort and Westcott) can only be traced to *one* time period and *one* location—mid-4th century *Egypt*.

Woe to the rebellious children saith the Lord...that walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth....

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10

Word for Word or Thought for Thought?

“such reverence for the actual words of Holy Writ was shown in those older editions of the Bible...Butwe are not in the least concerned with a word-for-word version:...” JB Philips

Although a word for word translation may call for a bit more effort on the part of the reader in understanding the scriptures, do we really want to place ourselves

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completely at the mercy of the interpretive slant of human translators? Because that is exactly what we are doing if we embrace the thought for thought method of translating the scriptures.

The scriptures themselves prohibit the use of the thought for thought method of translation.

Unfortunately, the thought for thought method of translation is used with most modern versions. Therefore, few, if any, are true translations at all—but rather elaborate paraphrases masquerading as translations—and that includes the best selling New International Version.

What do the scriptures themselves say about how the word of God should be handled?

Proverbs 30:5-6 says, “*Every word of God is Pure...Add thou not unto his words...*”

Revelation 22:19 says, “And if any man shall *take away from* the words of the book of this prophecy, *God shall take away his part out of the book of life.*”

2 Peter 1:20-21 says, “*No prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation...*” (All Bible versions resulting from the thought for thought method of translation are nothing more than the translator’s *private* interpretation[s]—regardless of the credentials of the translator[s])

We have three scriptures here that relate to the Word of God itself. One has a broad application and includes the entirety of the scriptures. The others have a more limited scope and include only prophecies, but the message is clear. The scriptures themselves place a prohibition on translators using any method other than the **word for**

word method of translation—anything else places the translator in danger of adding to, or taking away from the word of God. **The scriptural warnings against doing this are so severe that translators who ignore them place their souls in mortal danger.

Translators who violate the prohibitions against privately interpreting, adding to or taking away from the Word of God clearly have no fear of God.

Although one version may unarguably translate a certain verse or passage more clearly than another version, and the King James Bible does indeed contain some archaic words which may require more effort on the part of the modern reader in order to gain understanding, the issue here is that any version translated using any method besides the word for word method—regardless of how well it presents *certain portions* of scripture—either adds to the word of God and/or takes away from it.

**Again, the warnings issued against tampering with scripture are too severe to be ignored. If we value our souls, and if we truly fear God, we need to be certain we are reading and promoting a version of the Bible that does not privately interpret, add to, or take away from the Word of God.

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11

Choose You This Day

- What the Bible version debate is really all about has once again been brought to the forefront, and the reader has been challenged to understand why it really *does* matter which Bible version we read.
- Basic information concerning the *history* of the most important documents anyone can ever possess has been presented.
- The reader has been shown that a choice *must* be made, and the decision has been simplified by narrowing the choices from literally hundreds down to just two.
- The claims of those who oppose the Word of God by slandering those involved with the

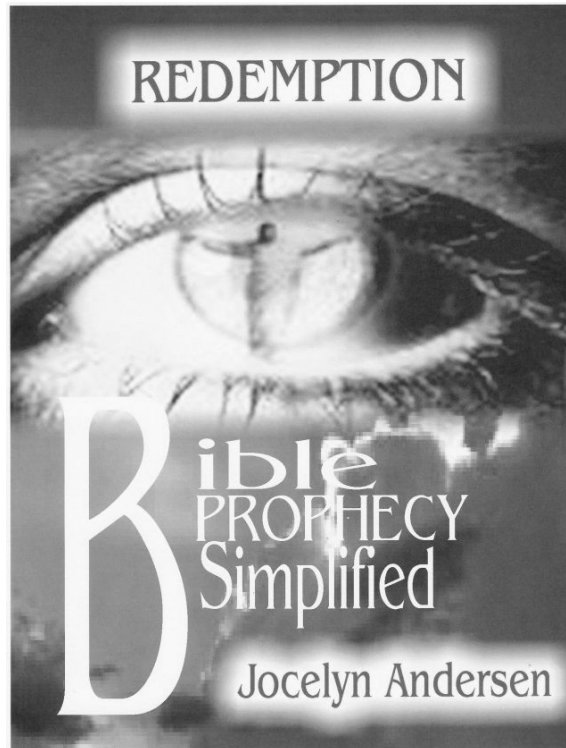
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translation of the King James Version have been debunked as being vindictively false.

- The claims of those who slander the integrity of the Received Text itself have been proven to hold no water.
- The Apostolic origin of the Received Text has been traced and proven.
- The reasons given for the need for a new translation in the 1880's have been explored and found wanting.
- The character of those who rejected all previous scholarship and texts, in spite of overwhelming evidence that the choice was not based on sound scholarship, has been examined and found wanting.
- The very revisions they chose upon which to base their revision have been examined and found to be inferior and corrupt.

To the heart that loves the truth, the evidence presented in this book is more than enough for an informed decision and righteous choice to be made. To the heart that does not love the truth, no amount of evidence will ever be enough.

He that has ears, let him hear....



*"I have been studying Revelation, and this work has helped me in that study."
David (GA)*

*"I have been a Christian for only one year. This study was very easy to understand and has strengthened the foundation of my faith."
Jason (New Jersey)*

It is not long and drawn out but simple, concise, and understandable. I was also impressed with the positive reinforcement that God is a redemptive God who has made Himself known through His word, and in these last days through His Son, Jesus. I appreciated the emphasis on The Holy Spirit being able to teach... I also like that you weave scripture throughout your writing. (Mona, Kansas City)

I'm loving how this all fits together so well! It totally disproves the idea that the rapture and second coming are one and the same. I started this just in time! I had just started hearing the "no rapture" theory, and was beginning to seriously doubt the rapture. (Samantha)

Jocelyn Andersen

REDEMPTION

Bible Prophecy Simplified

Jocelyn Andersen

ONE WAY CAFÉ PRESS

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Redemption: Bible Prophecy Simplified
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Jocelyn Andersen

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Redemption: Bible Prophecy Simplified

Bible Version Debate: Why?

Spiritual Formation – New Age Spirituality

Woman Submit! Christians & Domestic Violence

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Be careful what you eat...

To the hungry soul...

Every bitter thing is sweet.

Acknowledgements

Thank you Lord, for your mercies that are new every morning. And thank you Butch, for your unfailing patience, support and prayer on my behalf, and for your constant encouragement to... *write!*

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Introduction

In 1993, a member of a large religious cult entered into an unsuccessful campaign to draw me into her organization. Over the course of the next 3 months, each of us was committed to converting the other.

At that time I had been serving the Lord for about twelve years. Throughout those years, my habit had been to prayerfully read four chapters a day from the Bible. So by 1993, so by the time this person set out to convert me, I had read the New Testament portion completely through at least 24 times and the Old Testament a dozen times or so.

I knew my Bible very well.

After 3 months of trying to convert this dear woman, I was heartbroken over the sad results of my labor. The tortuous twists, turns and warps in her theology were of great concern to me. Even though the woman claimed the Bible as her authority for doctrine—she did not seem to believe anything it said

I prayed to the Lord about this experience and asked him for a simple, understandable, *systematic* way to present his plan of redemption to those who had been seduced and confused by false doctrines.

After praying that prayer, within a very short period of time, I received understanding from the Holy Spirit concerning what I had asked and began writing. Although I had not started out to do it, within about twenty-four hours I found I had written a short book on Bible Prophecy. For the first time in my Christian life, I had a clear understanding that Biblical Prophecy was all about redemption—nothing else.

It had to be so because God's plan of redemption had its beginning before the foundation of the earth and will finally be consummated in the New Heavens and New Earth. Everything in between was, and is, prophecy—either fulfilled or unfulfilled.

In addition to that, within a mere 56 pages (the length of the original manuscript) I had touched on and very simply explained almost every major doctrine in scripture that had to do with God's great redemption.

Up until that point, I had never been particularly interested in, nor considered myself a student of, Biblical Prophecy. But I now saw that any study of redemption is also a study of Bible Prophecy—and visa versa. The two are one and the same. They cannot be separated.

Although each chapter of this book is capable of being read and understood independently of the other chapters, understanding is broadened immensely if the chapters are read in the order they are written and allowed to lay

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a foundation for subsequent chapters. This is a Biblical approach to Bible study. The prophet Isaiah confirmed this when he penned the lines, “Line upon line, precept upon precept...”

The temptation will be great to skip chapters that deal with events that were foretold and have already come to pass. But do not do it!

Although the events described in each chapter can easily be understood by reading the chapters alone, the *chronology* of future events, dealt with in later chapters, becomes much clearer when coupled with the scriptural foundation provided in the earlier chapters.

This book provides a panoramic and chronological overview of God's plan of redemption for our souls, bodies and this earth as revealed in scripture.

Tremendous strength for remaining faithful to God and growing as Christians is drawn from having a clear understanding of these things. It is by no means an exhaustive study, but it does provide a solid foundation upon which further study can be based.

1

Cult Proof Yourself

How important to our over-all faith is having a good understanding of Biblical Prophecy? Look around, for the past few decades, just within the Christian Community, Bible Prophecy, and the importance of studying it, has been on trial.

Well the evidence has been weighed, the jury is in, and the inescapable fact is, that in this time of undeniable paradigm shifts and apostasy from biblical Christianity, the need for correct understanding of Bible Prophecy has become acute.

Is Our Eschatology Getting In The Way of Our Faith?

In one of his early books, a very popular so-called “Christian” writer wrote that although he had plenty of scripture to back up what he was writing, he wasn’t going to use very much in his book.

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He said he did this because he wanted the reader to “commune with the spirit” for confirmation of the truth—not just read a bunch of “*facts*.”

Although the Bible certainly is a factual book, is that *all* it is—just a bunch of *facts*? And is it right to elevate any subjective spiritual *experience* above the *factual* truth of the Bible?

In the same book, this writer affirmed the importance, to our over-all faith, of having a correct understanding of Biblical Prophecy. That would certainly have been a good thing... had he not minimized the basic scriptural teaching that Christ came the first time to save—and his people are commanded to be about the business of winning as many souls as possible [to him] before he comes the second time to rule... as only a *popular* view.

It came as no surprise when I reached the part in the book where this person made it clear that he considered soul-winners to be the most pathetic, least spiritually developed of all Christians.

I was appalled when I heard another pastor, one who espouses more than one doctrine of demons, say this to his congregation, “Some of you are letting your eschatology get in the way of your faith”—i.e., *unless you change your mind about what you believe concerning Biblical Prophecy, I cannot indoctrinate you into the counterfeit faith that I teach.*

Is God Interested In Impressing Us With His Ability To Foretell The Future?

In an effort to undermine the acquisition of sound doctrine concerning Biblical Prophecy, one false teacher writes that God is not interested in *impressing us with his ability to foretell the future*.

That statement could not be further from the truth and is diabolically opposed to the written Word of God which tells us it is exactly that ability we can look to, and depend on, for proof that our God is indeed the only true God, and his *written* Word is indeed the only standard by which we can measure what is, and what is not...truth (Isaiah 48:3-5).

Biblical Prophecy is found not only in the Book of Revelation and in the writings of the prophets, it is found in almost every book of the Bible. It is so intricately linked to our faith, that a wrong view of it can become a very dangerous thing—even leading to defection (apostasy) from the true faith, while a correct view of Biblical prophecy considerably strengthens and affirms our faith—even in the most difficult of times.

Many people (and organizations) who claim to be God's spokes-people tend to claim a monopoly on interpreting Biblical Prophecy. They build false doctrines by taking the erroneous approach of, "The scriptures *say* this, but they really *mean* this..." They convince unsuspecting, hungry hearts that the scriptures do not speak plainly at

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all but must be understood according to their exclusive, anointed interpretation.

In my youth, because I had questions, and it appeared they had answers, I was almost lured into such an organization. I was in full-scale rebellion against what I *thought* constituted being a good Christian. After many years of living a defeated, backslidden life, I found myself in a fearful state of desperation. I was terrified of going to hell but was convinced I was going there, so I decided to do away with hell altogether by doing away with God. I did my level best to become an atheist.

But God is merciful, and did not allow that goal to become a reality. After thorough repentance, I finally came to an understanding of biblical truth through a consistent, systematic, complete and *prayerful* reading my Bible.

My response to any person, movement or organization that claims to be indispensable to our understanding and application of the scriptures (or that the scriptures are not the *only* authority by which to gauge *all* doctrine and utterances) is this:

“The written Word of God, the Bible, gives us all the information we need that pertains to life and godliness. And we do not need anyone’s anointed, extra-scriptural, interpretation of it in order to understand and apply it to our lives. The Holy Spirit promises that He will teach us.”

This position is based the following verses:

- Thy Word is Truth (Jesus was speaking of the Written Word of God in this verse—John 17:17).

- But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that *any man* teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him (1 John 2:27).

I do not write these things in order to undermine God-called pastors and teachers. God gives ministry gifts to the church in the form of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. But it is critical to understand that these ministry gifts are not given because God's people are incapable of understanding the word and will of God without their leader's exclusive and anointed interpretation, but for the purpose of equipping the saints (*every believer*) to do the work of the ministry.

One of the most common ways a false teacher, prophet or organization establishes supremacy over others is to claim that without their anointed interpretation, and extra-scriptural revelation, the Word (and will) of God cannot be fully understood.

The best way to protect ourselves against being deceived by these types of people is to prayerfully read our Bible—everyday—always picking up today where we left off yesterday.

And do not exclusively depend on your pastor, Sunday School Teacher or Bible study leader for all of your Bible knowledge. Open that Bible, and read it for yourself. Make it a regular part of your daily routine and relationship with your creator.

A King James Bible with no footnotes or chapter headings is recommended. The book of John is a good place to start.

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Many scripture references will be provided for this study, and they will all be taken from the King James Version of the Bible—which this writer, after much research, is convinced is absolutely reliable.

2

The Plan

God always has a plan, and in his word he promises he will always reveal his plans to his servants (Isaiah 48:3-5, Amos 3:7, John 16:13).

God's plan to redeem mankind was predicted in the Bible. It is revealed clearly in the seven Feasts of the Lord found in the Law of Moses: Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles.

Understanding that these feasts are prophetic in nature and represent seven significant historical and future events is vital to having a good understanding of God's plan of redemption.

Because his plan of redemption had its beginning before the foundation of the earth and extends throughout history to finally be completed in the New Heavens and the New Earth, any study of God's redemptive plan *is* a study of Biblical Prophecy, (1 Peter 1:18-20, Isaiah 65:17, 66:22).

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Scripture reveals God's plan to redeem not only our souls, but also our bodies and the earth that was cursed because of Adam's sin (1 Peter 1:9-11, Romans 8:23, Revelation Chapters 21-22).

When Will Knowing The Future Not Help Us? There is no gain in studying Bible Prophecy just for prophecy's sake. All Bible Prophecy revolves around the person and work of Jesus Christ, and knowing what the future holds will not help us unless we know the One who holds it (John 17:3, Hebrews 10:7, 1 Peter 1:10-11, Revelation 19:10).

When we understand God's great Redemption, Biblical Prophecy is no longer complicated or mysterious. Any study of Bible Prophecy... is a study of *Redemption*!

Chapter Review:

- According to Amos 3:7, what will God do without revealing it to his servants the prophets?
- When does 1 Peter 1:18-20 say our redemption was planned?
- According to Romans 8:23, what besides our souls will be redeemed?
- Who does all Biblical Prophecy revolve around (Revelation 19:10)?

3

The Redeemer

It was God himself who first prophesied concerning *The Redeemer*, the one who would ransom mankind from the world's first hostage-holding terrorist—Satan, and from the terrible consequences of sin.

This chapter deals primarily with the redeemer who, the scriptures tell us, all Biblical Prophecy revolves around (Revelation 19:10).

An understanding of the things contained in this chapter is essential to understanding all Bible Prophecy, and gives us tremendous power to be faithful in our walk with God even when we don't feel very spiritual or close to him.

Soul Sleep

In Genesis 2:16-17, God said, “*of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge*

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of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

God's enemy, Satan, wasted no time in beginning his work of deception by telling the woman that God had lied to her. He said, “You shall *not* surely die (Genesis 3:4-5).”

Eve chose to believe the serpent's lie and ate of the forbidden fruit. Unfortunately for all mankind, Adam followed suit. And that very day, *Adam* died (God never lies), and the death sentence was passed upon *his body*, which immediately began to age, and eventually *it* died as well. You see we are much more than just a body. We *live* in our bodies, but they are not the real *us* (Genesis 3:6, 1 Corinthians 15:22, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

The moment Adam sinned, he and all of his descendants became hostages of God's enemy—Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God moved immediately on mankind's behalf in covering Adam and Eve's sin and in promising a redeemer who would pay a ransom in order to buy them back (Acts 20:28, Mark 10:45).

The dictionary defines “redeemer” as one who buys back [or redeems] by paying a ransom.

Since Adam's physical life did not end on the first day he sinned, we know that God's definition of death transcends ours. So how exactly is death defined in scripture? What does it mean to die? And why is death such a terrible thing that God would give up his only begotten and beloved son to one of the cruelest deaths ever conceived in order to buy us back from the clutches of Satan?

Some say death is being in an unconscious state or that we simply cease to exist. The Bible does say, in Ecclesiastes 9:5 that, “The dead know not anything.” Is this verse saying that when the body dies, the consciousness of a person also ceases?

No it is not.

This verse is referring only to the *body*—which is in the grave. The state of the body, in death, is often referred to in scripture as *sleeping* until it is redeemed at the resurrection. From scriptures such as Ecclesiastes 9:5, some have propagated the erroneous doctrine of soul sleep. But the scriptures never even hint at such a thing. It is only the *body* that sleeps while awaiting the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:51, Daniel 12:2).

The soul never loses consciousness. The Bible says Abraham *saw* Jesus’ day and was glad. How could that be if he ceased to exist, or if his soul fell asleep, when his body died?

And while Christ’s *body* lay in the grave *he* (Christ) was preaching to the spirits who were in prison—the disobedient ones from the days of Noah (John 8:56, 1 Peter 3:18-20).

Did Jesus Suffer In Hell?

These same scriptures also contradict the false doctrine that Jesus suffered in hell during the 3 days his body laid in the grave. His redemptive work was completed before he was ever taken down from the cross. His suffering was over the moment he gave up the ghost. He said so himself when he cried out, “*It is **finished**—paid*” (John 19:30)!”

What Happens When Our Body Soul and Spirit Are Not Preserved Whole?

Ecclesiastes 3:20-21 and 12:7 reveal that upon the death of the body, the spirit (righteous and unrighteous alike) goes upward and returns to God who gave it. *The spirit and the soul are not at all the same*. But only the two-edged sword, which is the Word of God, is able to divide the two. This happens literally to those who do not belong to Christ when their bodies die (Hebrews 4:12).

Our souls are the bridge between the physical and the spiritual. Our souls participate in every thought and emotion we have, decision we make, or action we take. It is the part of us that participates in *both* the physical and the spiritual. That is why our souls need to be saved. Our bodies will only be saved (redeemed) at the resurrection *if* our souls are saved *before* our bodies die (James 1:21, 1 Peter 1:9, Romans 8:16-23).

Our souls do not lose consciousness or cease to exist when our bodies die—Abraham's didn't, Christ's didn't, Lazarus' didn't, and ours won't either (John 8:56, Philippians 1:23-24, 2 Corinthians 5:6-8).

Before the resurrection of Christ, upon the death of the body, the souls of the righteous, those who belonged to God, went a place called Paradise or Abraham's Bosom. The souls of those who did not belong to God went directly to hell and were tormented (Luke 16:19, 23:43, Luke 16:22-24).

The only reason the righteous dead did not go directly to hell (a place created not for man but for the devil and his angels [Matthew 25:41]) was because after Adam's sin, God moved immediately on mankind's behalf by promising a redeemer and by sacrificing an innocent animal to cover

Adam and Eve's sin. God himself performed the first animal sacrifice (Genesis 3:15, 21).

It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. It was necessary that blood be shed immediately to cover Adam and Eve's sin. The Lord himself performed the first animal sacrifice, and then used the skins of the sacrificed animals to clothe (cover) the naked couple (Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:22).

This foreshadowed the redeemer who would provide the final, sacrificial atonement (covering) by shedding his own blood for the remission of our sins.

We read in Revelation 19:10 that, "*The testimony of Jesus Christ is the spirit of prophecy.*" That means that all Bible Prophecy revolves around the person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ—nothing else.

In eating the forbidden fruit, Adam gave the serpent power over him and over all of his descendants (that includes you and me). God promised to send a man, the seed of a woman, to strip the serpent of his power over mankind and completely crush him (Genesis 3:15).

The phrase, bruise thy head, in Genesis 3:15, means to strip of power or to crush (the head representing rank or authority).

But until such time as the serpent would be stripped of his power, the righteous dead were held captive, for their protection, in a place called *Abraham's Bosom* located somewhere in the heart of the earth. This place was beautiful enough to be called paradise, but it was not Heaven (Luke 16:22-25, Ezekiel 31:16, Job 14:13).

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When Jesus ascended to Heaven after his resurrection he took these captive souls with him, but first he had to *descend* into the “lower parts of the earth” to get them (Ephesians 4:8-10).

Another proof that Jesus never suffered in hell was when he told the thief who was crucified with him that they would be together in Paradise on the *very day* they both died. Remember, according to his own words, the price was completely paid while he was still hanging on the cross.

We see from scripture that Jesus was quite busy during the time his body lay in the tomb, and he did not spend any of that time burning in hell fire (Luke 23:43, 1 Peter 3:19-20).

Had Christ failed in his mission and refused to die on the cross during that long ago Passover, possession of the captive souls in Abraham's Bosom/Paradise would have defaulted to Satan, and they would have been doomed forever. Not only would they have been left without hope, but you and I would be without hope as well.

Why Did Jesus have to die on a cross?

Why was a *cross* chosen for Jesus to die on? Was it really necessary for his sacrificial death to be so cruel?

When the Bible speaks of the *cross of Christ*, it is referring to the atoning work done there—not to the symbol itself.

The *cross*, however, was chosen for a very specific reason.

The symbol of the cross is an ancient symbol. It is one of the oldest symbols known to man and traces its origins back to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It pre-dates Christianity and represents the ultimate sin—the conjunction (meeting or mingling) of opposites—i.e., good and evil. It has enjoyed widespread acceptance by false religions and the occult and by Christians as well. Satanists wear crosses—and not always upside-down.

The cross symbolizes the conjunction of opposites, and that relates directly to the knowledge of good and evil... which Satan tempted the first couple with, and by which he successfully orchestrated the downfall of an entire race.

The symbol of the cross, the conjunction or mingling of opposites, is in direct opposition to a holy God who never mingles opposites (good and evil).

God gave the first couple only one, “Thou shalt not,” which would have kept them ignorant of all evil—other than the simple fact that it existed—and would have kept them both completely safe forever.

The serpent told the couple they were missing something, and he would help them get it. He told them that God had not really given them everything they needed in order to be complete. They knew only about the good in life, and Satan told them that if they acquired the knowledge of evil along *with* the knowledge of good, that would make them whole—they would then be *just like God*.”

God says there is no common ground upon which good and evil can meet and co-exist successfully—not in the

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same mind, not in the same body, not in the same home, city, country, planet or universe.

The symbol of the cross has always been the ultimate symbol of the mingling, conjoining and conjunction of opposites—the place where good and evil meet. And the place that happened for the very first time on this planet was at the tree.

The cross has always symbolized the *lie* that the knowledge of both good and evil is necessary in order to achieve ultimate balance, harmony, oneness, or wholeness.

That is why Jesus had to die on a *cross*.

He completely atoned for sin...

By paying the ultimate price for sin...

Upon the ultimate symbol of sin...

The *cross*.

Death: Is It Really What We Think It Is?

Death is scripturally defined as *separation from the presence of God and from his power* both now in this life and throughout eternity (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, Isaiah 59:1-2, Ephesians 2:1, 5).

The word, *destruction*, in 2 Thessalonians 1:9, does not connote annihilation or cessation of existence. The ungodly in this verse are being destroyed *from*

something. They are being destroyed from *the presence of God and from his power*.

God is not a liar. Adam and Eve did indeed die the very day they ate the forbidden fruit (because, like us, they were more than just a body). They experienced *God's* definition of death—true death—the very day God banished them from his presence (not just *spiritual* death as we mortals like to call it). Spiritual death is not subordinate to or less devastating than physical death. It is quite the opposite (Genesis 3:24, Matthew 10:28).

Spiritual death is *true death*, and physical death is merely a subordinate by-product. Those who belong to Jesus Christ never experience true death. And physical death, for them, will only be temporary (John 11:25-26).

Was The Tree Just An Unfair Test?

Why was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ever placed in the garden to begin with? Was God just trying to trip up the first couple? It really seems unfair doesn't it?

No, the tree was not a trick or even a test. The tree was there to *protect* the man and woman. It was a warning.

But how could this tree possibly protect them? How could this tree warn them? Why didn't God simply tell them plainly, from the beginning, exactly who the serpent was and arm them with life-saving knowledge?

He *did* arm them with life-saving knowledge.

Protection from evil comes only through *obedience* to God. The woman and the man did not need to

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understand anything *about* the evil in order to be protected from it. In fact, any knowledge of evil—at all—was detrimental to the couple. All they needed to do, in order to remain completely safe forever... was to *obey*.

The scriptures reveal that Satan had, and still has, access to this planet. But his influence *on the people* of this planet was, and still is, severely restricted. In order to influence the people of this planet, Satan must first have a *point of contact*. It is this writer's opinion that God, in his mercy arranged it to be so. Otherwise, Satan and his minions would have unrestricted access to humans, and it doesn't take too much of an imagination to visualize the results of such access.

In the beginning, in the garden, the tree was Satan's only point of contact. The tree represented a real threat to Adam and Eve. But, as we will show, it was also a protection.

Satan's plan from the beginning was to cause the first couple to disobey God. He knew the moment they did so, their perfect, sinless, *protected*, existence would be gone. And more importantly, he knew that dominion over this planet would revert from mankind *back to him*.

By placing the tree in the garden along with only one restriction, the number of *points of contact* available to Satan, before the fall, was restricted to just one thing—*the tree*.

To have first hand knowledge of *both* good and evil is a grievous thing. A word of warning to parents, do not be seduced into thinking you must allow your children to be exposed to the bad as well as to the good in order for

them to be properly trained. That is not God's way. His way is for his children to flee from all that is sinful and to pursue only the good. If mature adults are warned to flee from all evil, how can we possibly expect any good to come from deliberately allowing our *children* to be exposed to it in order to "educate" them? According to the Word of God, we cannot shelter our children too much in regards to sin (1 Corinthians 6:18, 10:14, 1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:22).

God *told* the first couple about sin when he warned them against eating from the tree, but they had to actually *experience* sin in order to be harmed by it—which experience they gained the moment they stretched forth their hands in rebellion against God.

The tree was not there to trick or to trap them. It was there to *protect* them. Had the tree not been there, the serpent would have *still* been there. He would have *still* been carrying out his devastating agenda—without the restriction of needing a point of contact, and the couple would have been sitting ducks with no defense against his deception whatsoever.

God did not warn them against the serpent—at that point in mankind's existence knowledge of the serpent (evil) was not necessary. But He did make them aware that there was such a thing as the knowledge of both good and evil and let them know exactly how devastating it would be if they ever acquired that knowledge (death is about as devastating as it gets). God also provided them with a perfect safe guard against being deceived into acquiring that knowledge. And if they had only *obeyed* the one restrictive commandment given to them, all would have been well.

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But they did not. And because of that, they lost the privilege of constant access to the presence and power of almighty God—who alone imparts and indeed, is, life (Genesis 3:22-24).

Because of this, Adam and all of his descendents were in desperate need of a Redeemer—someone to pay the ransom and *save* them from the terrible destruction meant only for Satan and his angels (Mathew 25:41).

Jesus came in order to give us life both now and in the age to come. Jesus himself said there was no other way to have life except through him (John 10:10, 3:16, John 14:6, Acts 4:10-12).

The scriptures say we need only to believe in Jesus Christ, and to call on God to save us through faith in his risen son, and we *will be saved* (Romans 10:9-10, 13).

When we believe that Jesus is our redeemer, sincerely repent of our sins, and call upon God to forgive and save us through faith in his risen son, we can have assurance right *now* that we possess life—which is scripturally defined as having constant access to the presence and power of God both now and in the age to come (2 Thessalonians 1:9, Hebrews 4:15-16, 1 John 5:12-13, John 1:12).

Why wait another moment to have that assurance? If you do not have it, talk to God about it right now. Tell him you understand your soul is tainted and doomed by Adam's sin. Tell him you repent and want forgiveness of *your* sins and eternal life through faith in the shed blood of Christ Jesus. When you come to him on those terms, he promises he will hear your prayer (Romans 10:9-10, 13).

Chapter Review:

What is it that the ungodly are being destroyed from
in 2 Thessalonians 1:9?

In Ezekiel 28:16 what was the Covering Cherub
destroyed from?

What lie did the serpent tell Eve in Genesis 3:4-5?

How does the dictionary define “redeemer?”

When was the atonement complete according to John
19:30?

What is another name given for a place that was
beautiful enough to be called paradise but was
not Heaven (Luke 16:22-25, Ezekiel 31:16, Job 14:13)?

According to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, what is the scriptural
definition of death?

Is there any other way to have life except through
Jesus (John 10:10, 3:16, John 14:6, Acts 4:10-12)?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up
today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of
John is a good place to start.

*A King James Bible with no chapter headings or
footnotes is recommended.*

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4

Bible Predictions

The seven feasts of the Lord are *all* prophetic in nature. That means they all predict certain aspects of the redemption that came through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:1, Galatians 3:24, Colossians 2:16-17).

Of events that have already come to pass, we know they predicted the exact day of the event (though not the year), and they accurately predicted the exact *order* of the events (Hebrews 10:1, Galatians 3:24, Colossians 2:16-17).

The specific events predicted by these The Feasts of the Lord are as follows:

- The death of Jesus Christ (Passover)
- The fulfillment and putting away of the Law of Moses (Unleavened Bread)
- The physical resurrection of Jesus Christ (First Fruits)
- The time of *Christ "In" You* that began with the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost)

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The resurrection of the dead and catching up of the living—the Rapture (Trumpets)
The Great Tribulation / The Time of Jacob's Trouble (Day of Atonement)
The first 1000 years of Christ's reign on earth (Tabernacles)

Every Feast of the Lord prophetically reveals some aspect of the redemption of our souls, bodies, and this earth through the resurrected Son of God. That, alone, is what is meant by Revelation 19:10 which says, "*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*"

Revelation 19:10 is not telling us that we should be obsessed with prophesying or with only studying Bible Prophecy--to the neglect of most other Biblical doctrine.

Each feast contains a clause that no servile work can be done while it is being observed. This is because each feast represents the *finished* work of Christ who brought grace (salvation apart from the works of the law) to us.

One clear statement pertaining to the prophetic nature of the Law of Moses is found in Hebrews 10:1. This verse tells us that the things contained in the law were *symbolic* of good things *to come*.

It does need to be clarified, though, that although this study of Bible Prophecy is approached from the perspective of the Feasts of the Lord found in the Law of Moses, it is not approached from a uniquely *Jewish* perspective, i.e., that which evolved from Jewish *culture*, but rather from a strictly Biblical perspective.

The Jewish prophets and apostles were chosen to be the oracles of God, but the Bible—the Written Word of God—was dictated to them by the One who inhabits

eternity. He who inhabits eternity is not bound by such limitations as earthly cultures, and the Word He dictated *transcends all* cultures—including the Jewish culture through which it came.

Although the scriptures are clear that we are to recognize the special place the Jewish people hold in the heart of God (and in his future plans for this earth)—we are *not* to be looking *to their culture* for things pertaining to LIFE and godliness.

Those things we find in their totality within the pages of the Written Word of God—the Bible (Isaiah 8:20, Psalms 138:2, John 17:17, Romans 10:17, 2 Peter 1:3).

Those who insist the scriptures cannot be properly understood outside of Jewish culture and perspective do err—not knowing the scriptures or the power of God.

All who elevate the Jewish culture above the written Word of God, the Bible, and the understanding of it promised through the Holy Spirit of God, are guilty of *idolatry*.

Jesus called those who elevated their own culture and traditions above the written Word of God, “Blind leaders of the blind.”

He called them beautifully decorated tombs full of *dead* men’s bones.

Jesus told the religious leaders of his day that if they did not know *him*—they certainly could not know his Father. For *no* man comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ—not even a Jewish man (Galatians 1:6-9, 3:1-29).

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Jesus made it very clear that LIFE was not to be found within the Jewish culture of his day. To date, that has not changed. As it is written, all Israel *shall* be saved...ungodliness *will* be turned away from Jacob. But that has not happened as yet, and until it does happen, we would do well to heed the words of the angel to Peter and John as they ran into the tomb seeking Jesus ...

Why Seek ye the Living Among the Dead?

What Did Passover Predict?

The first Feast of the Lord is Passover, which represented and accurately predicted the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Not only was the Passover feast accurate in symbolically depicting the *manner* of the death of our Lord, it also accurately foretold the *day* of his death. Jesus died precisely on the day of Passover—the very feast that predicted his death.

The following is a comparison between the prophetic symbolism of the feast of Passover and the death of Jesus Christ:

Jesus was a male without blemish (he was perfect/sinless). According to 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Exodus 12:5, the Passover lamb was to be a male without blemish.

When was the Passover lamb to be killed? When was Jesus crucified? Compare Exodus 12:6 with John 19:14 (13-18).

The entire assembly was to kill their lamb at the same time. At the trial of Jesus, they all shouted,

in unison, “Crucify him!” See Exodus 12:6 and Matthew 27:22 (22-25).

The lamb was to be roasted whole—completely *intact*. Were any of Jesus’ bones broken (Exodus 12:9, Psalm 34:20, John 19:33)?

Was any portion of the Passover lamb allowed to remain until the next morning? Was Jesus’ body allowed to remain on the cross till the next morning (Exodus 12:10, Mark 15:42-43 [42-46])?

In preparing the Passover lamb for roasting, two spits were used. One was thrust lengthwise through the body for support over the fire and the other across the shoulders for turning—*symbolizing the cross upon which the Lamb of God was suspended*.

The people were to take the blood of the sacrificed lamb and apply it to the doorposts of their homes. When God saw the blood, death would pass over that house (that is why this feast is called *Passover*). When we apply the blood of Jesus Christ to our hearts, through faith, God sees the blood, and death *passes over* us as well (Exodus 12:7, 13, Colossians 1:14).

John (who came baptizing), *who all the Jewish people*—except the corrupt leadership—*accepted as a prophet*, identified Jesus as God’s Passover lamb (John 1:29, 1 Corinthians 5:7).

Because of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, *God’s* Passover lamb, we no longer have to endure separation from the presence of God—either in this age or in the age to come.

If you have never applied the blood of Jesus (the Messiah) to the door of your heart and would like to accept the risen Son of God, the *only* Christ, as your

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savior, call on God for salvation right now. *Do not put it off another second.* Ask God to forgive your sins and save you through faith in the shed blood of his resurrected son (Romans 10:9-10, 13).

The feast of Passover accurately predicted both the time, the day (though not the year), and manner of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Likewise, each one of the other feasts of the Lord represents a very real event that has either already taken place or will shortly take place.

The feast of Passover predicted the literal death (by crucifixion) of Jesus Christ. Three more feasts have also seen their fulfillment. And three more predict events that are yet to come.

Chapter Review:

What does Hebrews 10:1 tell us about the Law of Moses?
What are some parallels between the Passover lamb and Jesus Christ?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

5

The Law

The Feast of Unleavened Bread predicted a major event relating to God's plan of Redemption (Hebrews 10:1).

We have explored the scriptural evidence that Passover represented the atoning death of Christ on the cross. The feast directly following Passover, so closely the two actually overlap, is called *Unleavened Bread*.

Passover begins on the 14th of the month and Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th of the month (Leviticus 23:6).

The Children of Israel observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread by removing all leaven (yeast) from their homes. They were not commanded to simply refrain from using leaven during this feast but were commanded to physically remove *every bit of it* from their dwellings (Exodus 12:15-19).

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No servile work was permitted during the feast of Unleavened Bread. Again, this was symbolic of the grace Christ would bring (Leviticus 23:6, Exodus 12:16, John 1:17).

But what exactly did the leaven represent? What was symbolically *removed* from each Israelite home during the feast of Unleavened Bread?

Galatians 5:1-9 answers this question and establishes this leaven to represent the Law of Moses. The entire book of Galatians deals with only one subject—that of believers who were saved by faith but were trying to maintain their salvation through keeping the Mosaic Law.

Are Christians Required To Obey The Law of Moses?

Galatians 5:9 tells us, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

Just as a small amount of leaven permeates a whole loaf, not just part of it, trying to mix even a small amount of law with faith results in obliging an individual to observe the entire law—making Christ of *no effect* in ones life (Galatians 5:3-4).

***It is recommended at this point to read the entire book of Galatians. The book of Galatians contains only six chapters (all dealing with the same subject) and should be read in its entirety.*

Galatians 5:9 reveals that the leaven represents the Law of Moses, and during the feast of Unleavened Bread the

people were commanded to *put away all* leaven from their homes.

In Galatians 4:24, Hagar the bondwoman was a scriptural allegory representing the Mosaic Law, and Abraham was commanded to *cast out* the bondwoman and her son.

Question: *Since that was the case, why was the law even necessary in the first place?*

Answer: *In order to protect mankind until the redeemer could come, God **revealed his ways to Moses** and gave him ordinances (laws) to keep. The law not only revealed Christ, but also guarded and protected all who submitted to it until faith (Christ) came* (Galatians 3:23-24, 4:4-5, Psalms 103:7).

Adam and Eve needed to heed only one commandment before the fall, but the introduction of sin into creation mandated the need for many ordinances for the purpose of protection. The prophetic aspect of the law also acted as a tutor or teacher (schoolmaster) to bring to Christ (Galatians 3:23-25, Revelation 19:10).

Since the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are no longer under a schoolmaster (the law). Jesus fulfilled *all* the requirements of the law for us and became the *end* of the law for righteousness to all who believe (Romans 10:4, Galatians 3:25, Colossians 2:14, Romans 10:4).

The feast of Unleavened Bread and the traditions associated with it accurately predicted the putting away of the Law of Moses—which was no longer needed as of *the moment* Jesus was put to death. The feast of Unleavened Bread began to be celebrated while Christ's body still lay in the grave.

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The feast of Unleavened Bread effectively refutes the false doctrine that Christ had to suffer in hell for our sins. The sin price was paid in full with his death, before he was ever taken down from the cross, and the fact that the Law of Moses was symbolically swept away while Christ's body still lay in the grave is more evidence of the fact that no other atonement or penance on Jesus' part was necessary (Exodus 12:15, John 19:30).

It is also worth noting, again, that during the Feast of Unleavened Bread no servile work was to be done. This foreshadowed the time when forgiveness of sins would be available to men without the works and sacrifices of the law.

Chapter Review:

- What does Hebrew 10:1 tell us about the Mosaic Law?
- According to Galatians 5:4, what will happen to Christ in our life if we attempt to maintain our salvation through obedience to the law?
- Galatians 3:23 tells us we were protected under the law until when?
- Did you read the entire book of Galatians?

***The entire Bible can be read through every year by reading just four chapters a day. Read your Bible prayerfully—every day—always picking up today where you left off yesterday. The book of John is a good place to start. A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

6

He Is Risen

Why Do Christians Worship On the First Day of the Week?

The feast of First Fruits accurately foretold the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This feast *always* takes place on the *first* day of the week, and the scriptures reveal the very first Christians *immediately* began to honor the first day of the week as the Lord's Day. That is the day they met for worship (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Revelation 1:10).

First fruits is the first of three *harvest* feasts (Leviticus 23:10-11).

Early in the harvest season the people took a small handful of wheat or grain and gave it to the priest to offer as a wave offering before the Lord. This was a faith offering given in anticipation of the larger harvest expected to come later. This feast was called First Fruits

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(Leviticus 23:10).

We saw in the feast of Passover, the physical death of Jesus Christ. This was absolutely necessary. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:22).

We saw in the feast of Unleavened Bread the putting away of the Law of Moses. This was absolutely necessary. Grace was not possible under the law. The law had to go (Galatians 5:4).

That little handful of grain, waved before the Lord at the feast of First Fruits, represented much more than grain. It represented Jesus Christ rising from the dead—physically. This was absolutely necessary. Without the physical resurrection of Christ, we have no hope of a physical resurrection for ourselves (1 Corinthians 15:13-14, 1 John 3:2).

And the anticipated harvest represented much more than grain as well. It represented *souls*—*saved* souls, many souls from down through the ages, being reunited with their bodies at the Resurrection of Life (John 5:29, 1 Corinthians 15:20).

What Is Jesus Resurrected Body Like?

Jesus was but the first of many to rise from the dead in a glorified *physical* body (Acts 26:23, Roman 8:29).

Question: *Why was it necessary for Christ's body to rise from the grave? Do the scriptures really teach a literal physical resurrection of the man Christ Jesus rather than simply a spiritual one?*

Answer: 2 John 7 says this: “*For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come(ing) in the flesh. This is the deceiver and an antichrist.*”

2 John: 7 is written in the future tense, and the scriptures are clear that Jesus Christ cannot *return* in the flesh unless he first *rose* in the flesh.

The entire 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians deals with only one subject—the fact that unless Christ rose *physically* from the dead, we cannot possibly hope to.

In light of that fact, was it absolutely necessary for Christ’s body to be raised? Job said, “And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my *flesh* I shall see God (Job 19:26).”

The scriptures speak of believers who will never experience death, but the *bodies* they already have will be *changed*.

Without dying, in a moment of time, they will be changed from mortal beings, capable of dying physically, to immortal beings that will never die again. Their mortal bodies, cursed to death because of Adam’s sin, will instantly become glorious bodies free from the curse of sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:51-53, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Jesus said, in John 2:19-22, that his *body* would die, but three days later that same *body* would live again. In fact, that was the proof he gave of his authority to be doing and teaching the things he did concerning eternal life and the Kingdom of God (John 2:18).

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In order for us to obtain a physical resurrection from the dead, it was absolutely necessary for Christ to rise physically *first*.

When Jesus appeared in his resurrected body, everyone was alarmed. They thought they were seeing a spirit. Jesus' response to this was to assure them it was he, *himself*. He pointed out that a spirit would not have *flesh* and *bone* like he did (Luke 24:36-40).

Acts 2:30-32 is very revealing as to the nature of his resurrected body. It reveals that Christ's *flesh* saw no corruption. It reveals that, genetically, he died a physical descendant of David, and when he rose—he was still, genetically, a physical descendant of David. When Jesus Christ returns to this earth again, and sits on the throne of David—it will be as a physical descendant of David. And this is due to his *physical* resurrection from the dead. Verse 30 is very specific on this—according to the *flesh*, he (God) would raise up Christ to sit on his (*David's*) throne.

2 John 7 makes very clear that anyone who denies that the man, Christ Jesus, is returning in the flesh, is a *deceiver* and an *antichrist*.

1 John 4:3-4 goes into even more detail in identifying the spirit of antichrist. Verse 4 clearly states that anyone who denies that Jesus Christ is come *is not of God*.

This verse is not as simplistic as it appears on the surface. Verse 4 is written in the imperfect tense [in Greek], which is synonymous with the perfect tense in English. It is not written in a simple present tense. The imperfect tense indicates *ongoing* action—permanence.

Because of the tense this verse is written in, it makes very clear the fact that Jesus not only came, but when he arrived, he was *already* the Christ. This rules out the concept of many Christs in conjunction with what is known as the "Christ Consciousness. It is very important to understand this fact as there are many who teach that Jesus was not the only Christ. Jesus himself warned that many false Christ's would come. Fortunately the scriptures give a foolproof method for identifying the true Christ among the plethora of false Christs.

Jesus did not *become* the Christ as some claim. He was *born* the Christ. The phrase "is come," being framed in the imperfect tense, tells us there never was a time when Jesus was not the Christ, and there never will be a time when he will not be the Christ.

Jesus, the only Christ, was born in the flesh, died in the flesh, rose in the flesh, ascended in the flesh, lives continually (remains perpetually) in the flesh, and will return to this earth in the flesh (Luke 2:11, 1 John 4:3-4, 2 John :7).

So believe not every spirit! But test the spirits to see whether or not they are of God.

As the scriptures say, 'there is only one mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).' This verse tells us that Jesus not only presently exists as *the* Christ (not "a" Christ as some falsely teach), but he also presently exists as a *man*. Both his Christhood and his incarnation as a human being are irrevocable, ongoing, *permanent* conditions. 1 John 4:3-4 makes that abundantly clear, and 2 John :7 backs it up.

If anyone teaches eternal life is possible without the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, *they have no*

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scriptural authority to be doing so. They are preaching another Jesus and an unauthorized gospel. The real Jesus said his authority would be based upon the fact of his *physical* resurrection (2 Corinthians 11:3-4, Galatians 1:8, John 2:19-22).

What Will Our Resurrected Bodies Be Like?

¹ John 3:2 should effectively answer any questions we may have concerning what our resurrected bodies will be like. When we are raised from the dead, in incorruptible bodies, our bodies will be exactly like Christ's—for the scriptures say we shall be *like him* (¹ John 3:2).

When Thomas saw Jesus after his resurrection, he still had the wounds from his crucifixion. Jesus' body could have been raised without scars or any other blemish. But it is the opinion of this writer, that he kept his scars as reminders, through-out eternity, of his boundless love for us, and as proof of his life, death, resurrection and permanent existence as the *man* Christ Jesus (John 20:25-27, ¹ Timothy 2:5).

Chapter Review:

- According to ² John 7, who is the deceiver and antichrist?
- According to Luke 2:11 was Jesus born the Christ or did he become the Christ at some later date?
- In what condition will Job see God after the worms destroy his body (Job 19:26)?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, **the book of John is a good place to start.** A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.

7

The Mystery Hidden From the Ages

Christ admonished his disciples not to leave Jerusalem, to begin any sort of ministry, until the promise of the Father arrived. He went on to define the promise as the one given by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11).

That promise arrived precisely on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5, 2:1).

The feast of Pentecost occurs seven weeks and one day after the feast of First Fruits—exactly fifty days later. The word, Pentecost, means fiftieth (Exodus 34:22, Deuteronomy 16:9-10, Leviticus 23:15-16).

****NOTE** - Detailed instructions on each of the Feasts of the Lord can be found in Leviticus 23, Deuteronomy 16 and Exodus 12 and 34.

Remember the first harvest feast, called the First Fruits, predicted the *physical* resurrection of the *man* Christ Jesus (Acts 26:23, Romans 8:29).

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According to Acts 2:1-4, on the fiftieth day after Christ rose from the dead the *mystery* that had been hidden from the ages was revealed. This mystery was so amazing that had Satan known of it, he would never have crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Corinthians 2:7-8).

Before the resurrection, it had not been possible for salvation to be obtained by simply calling upon the Lord. From the time Adam stretched forth his hand in rebellion against God *all* mankind, because of sin, was born under a sentence of death—and simply calling on God to remove it was never going to be enough.

But through the atonement of Jesus Christ, through his resurrection from the dead, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, God pulled off the impossible. He made it possible for men to be born a *second time*—this time without the death sentence that accompanied the first birth!

How did God do it? What was this wonderful mystery so carefully hidden from the ages?

The mystery was Christ “*In*” You. The feast of Pentecost (also known as the feast of Weeks) predicted the incredible harvest that would be taking place during the time of Christ “*In*” You. It predicted a time when men would simply be able to *call* on the name of the Lord to be saved—by faith—*without the works of the law*. It foreshadowed the time when men could be born *again*. Men could now be sanctified (made clean) through the Holy Spirit and through *belief* of the truth (Ephesians 2:8-9, 3:2-4, Colossians 1:26-27, 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

A new dispensation (of grace) had begun, and both its beginning and ending was foretold through the Feasts of the Lord.

There are those who claim we are still waiting for, or are just now entering into, the end-time harvest. This is not true. The end-time harvest began exactly fifty days after Christ rose from the dead—on the day of Pentecost. And has *never* let up since (Acts 2:16-21).

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit of God took up residence within the *bodies* of all who came to him by faith in Jesus Christ. What was a mystery to the prophet Joel, and to those of his time, is no longer a mystery to us today (1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16, John 14:17-18, Joel 2:32/Acts 2:16, 21).

****NOTE** - There are those who say the *body* is nothing; that in God's scheme of things, it does not count. If the body is insignificant, why then, when God simply spoke everything else into existence, did he take the trouble to fashion our *bodies* with his own hands? He cared enough about our *bodies* to include them in his plan of redemption and saw fit to make our *bodies* his dwelling place here on earth. In the resurrection, these *bodies* will rise from the graves as God's glorious possession. Dare we say that anything created by God, and chosen to be his temple, is *nothing* (2 Corinthians 6:16, John 14:17)?

But Pentecost is a harvest feast. What has all this to do with a harvest?

Everything!!

Remember, at the feast of First Fruits, that small grain offering represented not only grain—but souls. The feast of Pentecost ushered in the greatest age of harvest (soul

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winning) this world has ever known. *Three thousand* souls were won into the Kingdom of God on the first day the Holy Spirit descended, and remained, upon the people of God (Acts 2:41)!

Mankind has been living in the last days ever since the Holy Spirit descended on that first Pentecost after Christ ascended (Acts 2:1-4,16-17, Ephesians 3:2, Acts 2:21).

Joel's prophecy (that a man could be saved by simply calling on the name of the Lord) was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. This had been both unheard of and impossible under the Law of Moses (Joel 2:32, Romans 10:13).

There are those who minimize the importance of soul winning. They maintain that Christians who focus primarily on soul winning are fairly pathetic specimens of Christianity and spiritually undeveloped. Do the scriptures bear that out?

The apostle Paul was very concerned about those who may have been led astray by those who didn't find the simple gospel exciting enough. Paul defined the gospel clearly in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. It is simply the good news that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day.

In 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, we see Paul pleading with his people not to get stars in their eyes over a more exciting Jesus than the Jesus he preached, or over another more exciting spirit than the one who comes from Christ, or another more exciting gospel than the one they had already heard. This, he feared, was having the affect of *corrupting* them from the simplicity of the *gospel* of Christ.

There is only one gospel, and it is the one clearly defined in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 by the apostle Paul himself.

All spiritual gifts are for the purpose of lifting up the one who saves and are subordinate to the saving of the soul.

God used the prophet Joel to prophesy of a time when men could simply *call* upon the name of the Lord to be saved. That concept was incomprehensible even to Joel when, in obedience to the Holy Spirit of God, he spoke that prophetic word. Had those who first heard it been suddenly given the privilege of simply calling on the name of the Lord to be saved, there is no way the gift of salvation would have been sneered at in favor of *subordinate* spiritual gifts.

When Jesus gave his disciples (not just the 12 he called apostles—but the seventy others as well) power over all the power of the enemy, he told them not to be rejoicing in the *power* that was being demonstrated through them. He specifically told them that having all that power was *not* the most important thing at all.

Think about it. Before Satan and his angels fell, they had great power. After they fell, we find no scriptural evidence that they didn't retain some or all of the same powers they had before. But there is one thing they did lose—one thing they would most likely trade all that power in exchange for... if only they could.

According to Jesus, what is the better thing?

Eternal Life.

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He told his disciples to rejoice because their *souls were saved*. What good is all the power in the universe if it is only temporary—and in the end our *souls* are lost (Luke 10:20)?

Most people agree that a person's last words before leaving this world are usually about the things they consider the most important. Well, Jesus' last words had nothing whatever to do with developing subordinate spiritual gifts; they had to do with...

Soul-winning.

*Recommended READING: Acts 2:16-21, Joel 2:28-32

The *Church—the Body of Christ* was born on the day of Pentecost. The Church is not a building or any particular organization. The Church is a living *organism*. And it consists of all believers who have ever been born again through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ (John 3:3-7, 16, Ephesians 1:22-23).

The feast of Pentecost began the time of *Christ In You*, which will be completely fulfilled *before* the next event on the prophetic calendar which is predicted by the Feast of Trumpets.

Before the time of *Christ In you*—God's dealings with people had been primarily through the nation of Israel. Salvation was to the Jew first, and then to the gentile. In fact, the only reason salvation was offered to the gentiles was because the Jewish people rejected it when it was first offered to them (John 4:22, Acts 3:25-26, Ephesians 3:2-6, Romans 11:7-11).

Lest we become conceited over the fact that Jesus was rejected by the Jewish people and was accepted by the gentiles, we would do well to remember that part of the reason the Jews rejected the Messiah was because it was in God's sovereign plan they do so in order for everyone to be offered salvation. Even so, the very first Christians were *all* Jews, and God still extends to the Jew as well as to the gentile the opportunity to accept or reject his Christ (Romans 11:25, Galatians 3:26-29, 1 Timothy 2:3-4).

But Israel, *as a nation*, will be given the opportunity, once more, to receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah, and next time... *they will do it* (Romans 11:25-29).

The only nation ever directly *created by God*, is the nation of Israel. When the Jewish people rejected Jesus as their Messiah, God stopped dealing with them on a *national* level—though never on a personal, individual level (Isaiah 43:15, 1 Timothy 2:4).

The Jewish people eventually ceased from being a nation (as predicted in scripture), and for many centuries were scattered throughout the world—a people without a country—but *only* until the times of the gentiles are fulfilled (Hosea 9:17, Luke 21:24, Romans 11:25).

Another, very erroneous, teaching that is quite prevalent within the Body of Christ today is the assumption that all, as yet unfulfilled, prophecies concerning Israel are now transferred to the Church. This assumption continues to gain ground within the Church largely due to erroneous *Kingdom Now* and *Dominion* Theology. Bibles that contain unscriptural footnotes and chapter headings often perpetuate this false doctrine.

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We need to understand the subjective nature of all commentary (which is all footnotes and chapter headings are). Just because something is inserted within the pages of a Bible, does not make it scripture. That is why this writer recommends a King James Bible *without* chapter headings or footnotes.

The fact that the Body of Christ is *the Israel of God* and the *Spiritual Seed of Abraham*, in no way negates the fact that there are some very specific promises given to physical Israel. The Church may ultimately share in some of those promises but they are in no way *transferred* from physical Israel to the Church.

In fact, the Church benefits now, and the world at large will benefit from the commonwealth of physical Israel during the millennial reign of Christ (Galatians 3:29, Ephesians 2:12, Romans 11:12).

In 1948 we saw the scriptures fulfilled, literally, concerning the restoration of the Jewish people back to their land, and the Jewish people will see other prophecies fulfilled just as literally (Isaiah 43:15, Romans 11:5-7, Ezekiel 12:15, 11:16, Romans 11:25-26).

During the dispensation of grace (the time of *Christ In You* which began on the Day of Pentecost), salvation is available to any person, Jew or Gentile, who will accept Jesus Christ as the promised Redeemer and by faith receive him as Lord and savior along with true repentance from their sins (Colossians 1:26-27, Ephesians 3:2-5, Romans 10:9-10,13).

****SUPPLEMENTAL READING:** *Read the entire chapter of Romans 11.*

The first four prophetic Feasts of the Lord (Hebrews 10:1, Revelation 19:10) were fulfilled literally and in the exact order in which they were observed—on the very day on which they were observed. Is there any reason to believe the events predicted by the remaining three feasts may not also follow the same pattern?

Every part of God's great redemption was planned, and the times and seasons were *set*, **before the foundation of the earth**. *Not one single thing having to do with any part of it is dependent upon the behavior of any man, woman or movement in order to usher it in or release it* (Ecclesiastes 3:1, Daniel 8:19, Psalm 103:13, Acts 1:7).

The events we have already looked at did not take place in a haphazard manner. They were not *ushered in* by anything or anyone. They were planned, and their times were *appointed* from before the foundation of the world. It is the same with *all* of the prophetic events foretold in the Feasts of the Lord—*every last one of them*.

Chapter Review:

- When does Acts 2:16-17 say the *last days* began?
- According to Acts 2:21, how can a person be saved during the last days?
- What does Romans 11:11 tell us about how the gentiles benefited from the fall of the Jews?
- What is the mystery that has been *hidden* from the ages (Colossians 1:26-27)?
- Who was offered salvation first (Romans 1:16)?
- Whose power are the *set times* and seasons in (Acts 1:7)

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, **the book of John is a good place to start.** A *King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

8

The Rapture

The resurrection and catching up of those who belong to Christ is predicted in the Law of Moses through the Feast of Trumpets. Remember, the law was prophetic—symbolically foreshadowing our redemption and the good things *to come* (Galatians 3:24, Colossians 2:17, Hebrews 10:1, Revelation 19:10).

Who Will Be Raised?

Also known as the Feast of *Ingathering*, the Feast of Trumpets ends the harvest season with the sound of a trumpet. The cycle of harvest for the dispensation of Grace, the time of *Christ In You*, will be completed at this feast.

This final harvest feast predicts the resurrection of the just and the catching up of those living in Christ at that time. This is when the real *ingathering* will take place (Exodus 34:22, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

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The apostle Paul tells us that *all* living saints (a saint is anyone who belongs to Christ) will be changed at that time—not just the *best*. There is no class system within the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:51-53, Galatians 3:26-28, 1 Corinthians 12:13-20).

When the dead are raised, they will be raised with glorified bodies that will never die again. Those who are living at that time will receive the same type of glorified bodies as the resurrected ones—the only difference is they will not have to die to get them.

The Great Re-Union: It's Not What We Think

What exactly will be taking place when the dead are raised?

When Christ descends from Heaven to meet us in the air, the bodies of the dead (only those “in Christ”) will be reunited with their souls and spirits—which have been in Heaven with the Lord ever since the death of their bodies (2 Corinthians 5:6-8).

In our resurrected and gloriously changed bodies, we will accompany Christ back to Heaven to stand before his judgment seat and receive rewards for the things done while living on earth (John 14:2-3, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

It is at the resurrection of the dead and the catching up of the living (the rapture) that God's redemption plan for our *bodies* will be fulfilled (Romans 8:23).

When Will the Age of Grace End?

The catching up of the living saints, more commonly known as the *Rapture of the Church*, signals the end of the time when men can simply *call* on the name of the Lord to be saved. From this point on, men will no longer simply be able to *call* on the name of the Lord to be saved. Jesus said they must now *endure to the end* to be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8, Romans 11:25, Ephesians 3:2, 1:10, Matthew 24:13).

Understanding this scriptural truth combats lethargy in Bible believing Christians and incites them to become aggressive soul winners—not the opposite. Below is an example of erroneous teaching criticizing Christians who believe the scriptures reveal a pre-tribulational rapture:

- “*Focusing on a rapture has caused many to lose their burden for the lost. This escapism mentality has caused lethargy in the church, because they are waiting to be caught away from the claws of the Anti-Christ.*”

This reasoning has become quite prevalent among Christians today—especially among those involved in the Prophetic (apostle-prophet) Movement, but is it at all scriptural?

I find that just the opposite occurs when we focus on the scriptural teaching of a pre-tribulational rapture. Hearts are ablaze to win souls in order to prevent as many as possible from having to experience the horrors that will be described in the next few chapters.

Aside from that, an *escapist* mentality is very scriptural in connection with The Great Tribulation and other situations. Paul admonishes Christians to *flee* from temptation, and *Jesus* told us to pray that we would be

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counted worthy to “*escape*” all the horrors that will be coming on the earth (Luke 21:36).

Jesus commanded us to pray that prayer. I believe his word is dependable, and if he advocates escapism in regards to The Great Tribulation, then I will certainly not be the one to argue with him.

The order of the Feasts of the Lord is just one evidence of a pre-tribulational Rapture. There are many more contained within the scriptures—some of which will be covered in later chapters. Prior to the feast of Trumpets (which foretold the resurrection/rapture), each event predicted by each feast, occurred in the exact order, and on the very day, it was observed. This is strong evidence that God is revealing the *order* of things as well as the events themselves in the observation of these prophetic feasts.

Summary of what we have covered so far:

- Passover: Christ's Physical Death
- Unleavened Bread: The Law is Fulfilled
- First Fruits: The first Harvest Feast / Christ's Physical Resurrection (***Souls Redeemed***)
- Pentecost: The second Harvest Feast / The Holy Spirit is Given / The Dispensation of Grace / The Time of *Christ In You* / The End-Time Harvest begins
- Trumpets: The third and Last Harvest Feast / The Resurrection of the Dead in Christ and the catching Up of the Living (***Bodies Redeemed***)

The order of the Feasts of the Lord, reveal that the resurrection of the dead, and the catching up of the living (only those in Christ) is a *pre-tribulational* event. The first four feasts were fulfilled *literally* and in the

exact *order* the feasts were observed. There is no scriptural evidence that the pattern will change with the final three.

In the next few chapters we will be looking at the feast that foretold the Time of Jacob's Trouble—also called (by Jesus) *The Great Tribulation* (1 Thessalonians 5:9, Revelation 3:10, 2 Thessalonians 2:2-8).

If there is any lingering doubt that the feasts contained in the Mosaic Law are prophetic in nature, there are scriptures that clearly tell us the law reveals things to come in general, and that those things pertain *to Christ* in particular (Galatians 3:23-24, Hebrews 10:1, Revelation 19:10).

Do You Belong To Christ? If there is any doubt at all as to whether or not you belong to Him and would like to have scriptural assurance that you will be included in the Resurrection of Life, which includes the rapture of the church, simply call on God right now. Ask him to forgive you of your sins and save you because you believe that Jesus Christ is his risen son (John 5:29, Romans 10:9-10, 13).

Then follow these simple steps to learn how to follow Christ and begin to grow in your newfound faith:

Prayerfully read your Bible every day (always picking up today where you left off yesterday). The book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

Talk to the Lord daily in prayer. It doesn't matter if you pray silently or out loud. He can hear you either way (Philippians 4:6).

Meet regularly with other Bible believing Christians (Hebrews 10:25).

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Be baptized according to our Lord's command (Matthew 28:19 & Acts 2:38).

Begin telling others (immediately) about what Jesus has done for you. His Holy Spirit will help you and use your testimony to draw others to himself.

Also, it is important to realize that trials and temptations will *still* come. The choice now is, will you deal with them your way or God's way? The only way to know the difference between the two is to read your Bible.

Begin adding to your faith. 2 Peter 1:4-11 gives us a list of the things that must be added (deliberately and *systematically*) if we are to follow Christ successfully. That same passage is equally adamant in assuring us that if we do not add these things we will constantly suffer defeat in our Christian walk.

What if we sin after we are saved? 1 John 1:8-10, 2:1-2 tells us, we certainly will sin after we are saved and how to deal with it when we do.

What if the good feeling goes away, and we don't feel saved anymore? From time to time, the good feeling will go away. It is important to understand that we are not saved simply because we feel like it or don't feel like it. We are saved because we chose to repent of our sins and believe on the name of the resurrected Son of God. On that basis, we called upon the Lord to save us and now belong to him (1 Corinthians 6:19-29, 1 John 5:11-13, Romans 10:9-10, 13).

Believe the word of God—not our feelings.

Romans 6:4 says, "Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we *should walk in newness of life!*"

Chapter Review:

According to 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, will only some who belong to Christ be changed or will *all* who belong to Christ be changed?

According to Romans 8:23, when will our bodies be redeemed?

In Matthew 24:13, how did Jesus say men could be saved during the great tribulation?

What did Jesus say we should pray for in Luke 21:36?

What other scripture besides Hebrews 10:1 reveals that the Law of Moses was prophetic in general and all about Christ in particular?

What passage of scripture contains a list of things to add to our faith along with a promise that if we do add these things we will always be successful as Christians?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with **no chapter headings or footnotes** is recommended.*

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9

The Great Tribulation

The feast of *The Day of Atonement* is a time for the people of Israel to afflict (trouble grievously) their souls through fasting and prayer. It foreshadows *The Time of Jacob's Trouble* spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet. Among other things, this particular time period is also known as a *Time of Trouble* and *The Time of the Heathen* (Leviticus 23:27-31, Daniel 12:1, Ezekiel 30:3).

The Feast of *The Day of Atonement* predicts the actual day of atonement when the Lord will reconcile Israel back to himself through their national acceptance of his resurrected son, Jesus Christ, as the true Messiah (Jeremiah 30:7, Matthew 24:21, Zechariah 12:10).

This world has always seen tribulation in one form or another (through oppressive governments, natural disasters, epidemics, etc.), but in the 24th chapter of Matthew, Jesus tells of a future tribulation like this world has never seen before... or will ever see again.

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We know The Great Tribulation Jesus spoke of is still a future event, because, *according to the prophets, approximately 75 to 80% of the world's population will die within a time period of just 7 years—that has not happened yet.* Jesus said this period would be so horrendous and full of death, that if the days were not shortened, all mankind would be annihilated (Matthew 24:22).

The prophet Joel warns his people to tremble at the very thought of having to go through The Time of Jacob's Trouble. We are told in scripture to be horribly afraid of it (Daniel 7:25, 9:27, Revelation 13:5, Joel 2:1-2).

Will Christians Have To Go Through the Great Tribulation?

Jesus said to pray that we would be counted worthy to escape all the things that are coming on the earth, and many believe we are now living in the last days (1 Thessalonians 5:2-9, Luke 21:36, Revelation 3:10, Matthew 24:4-8).

The warning to *tremble* issued in Joel 2:1-2, is extremely contrary to the usual admonitions we receive in the scriptures to, "Fear not." The reason we are told to be horribly afraid of this particular time period is because *no one has to go through it.*

It will be a time of unprecedented wrath and judgment being poured out, from God, on a rebellious and unrepentant world—not a time of testing for Christians (Luke 21:36, 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Revelation 3:10).

Although Jews and Gentiles alike will suffer greatly during The Great Tribulation, *The Day of Atonement* will be a time when God will be dealing primarily with

the Jewish people. Remember, the Church—the *Body of Christ*—will be caught up when the time of *Christ In You* is fulfilled and culminated at the Feast of Trumpets.

During The Day of Atonement, mankind will no longer simply be able to call on the name of the Lord for salvation but must now **endure to end** in order to be saved. Enduring to the end for salvation and calling on the name of the Lord for salvation are mutually exclusive—not at all compatible. They are not the same thing (Matthew 24:13).

Just as a change took place on the day of Pentecost (which began the time of *Christ In You*), a change will also take place after the Feast of Trumpets.

A major change will take place when the Holy Spirit (he who restrains) is taken out of the way via those who are his temple here on earth. The Day of Atonement will officially begin when the Man of Sin sets his image in the Holy Place and demands worship for himself as God (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Matthew 24:15-22, Daniel 9:27).

The “end” that Jesus is speaking of, in Matthew 24:13, is not the end of one’s natural, physical life here on earth, or even the last day of earth (which will never come) but rather, he is speaking of the end of The Great Tribulation.

Israel’s national sin, of rejecting Jesus Christ as the Messiah when he came the first time, will be brought to full maturity when they finally accept an imposter as their long awaited Savior (John 5:43).

Because of Israel’s national rejection of Jesus Christ, they were, in turn, rejected—nationally—by God. They

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were afflicted with a spiritual blindness and scattered throughout the world having no country to call their own (Romans 11:20, 25, Deuteronomy 28:64, Hosea 9:17, James 1:1).

Individually, any person, Jew or Gentile, can be saved during “The Accepted Time” (Time of favor) generally known as the time of Grace. At the time of this writing, salvation is available to *all* who, in true repentance, call upon the name of the Lord believing in his resurrected son Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10,13, Ephesians 3:2, 2 Corinthians 6:2, Isaiah 49:8).

****NOTE** - There are religious groups who call themselves “The *Remnant*.” There is no scriptural evidence that anyone other than physical Israel (Jacob) is ever called the remnant. There are those who falsely teach that physical Israel no longer matters, that all promises made to Israel have now been transferred to the Church. This is not true. God made a promise to Abraham concerning his *physical* descendants (the Jewish people) as well as to his spiritual descendants (those who belong to Jesus Christ), and the one in no way negates the other.

Although Israel was rejected nationally by God, and scattered throughout the world, when they rejected Jesus as Messiah, they have God's promise this will not be a permanent situation. Before 1948, the Jewish people had the assurance of the prophets that they would be restored back to their *land*—and they have been. They now have the same assurance that they will be restored back to their *God*.

Ezekiel Chapter 37 describes both the physical and spiritual resurrection of a *dead* nation. Verse eleven identifies this nation to be the nation of Israel (Ezekiel 37:21, 11).

History tells us that in A.D. 70, Jerusalem was sacked, the Jewish people were scattered. At that time, they literally became a “people without a country (Hosea 9:17).”

In fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy, the Jewish people were restored back to their land in 1948. Until that time, it had been unheard of for a nation that had been extinct for centuries to live again—and *it had all been predicted in scripture.*

The prophecy concerning the restoration of the Jewish people back to their **land** has been fulfilled. The feast of the Lord, *The Day of Atonement* (along with many other prophecies), foreshadows the time when, through repentance and acceptance of his risen son, Jesus Christ, as the true Messiah, the Jewish people will be restored back to their **God** (Romans 11:25-27, Hebrews 10:1).

During the time of Jacob’s Trouble men will no longer be able to simply *call* on the name of the Lord for salvation but must rather *endure to the end*. This will be a fearful time for all men and women (Jew or Gentile) who choose to look for the coming of the Savior (Matthew 24:4-5, 13, 21).

When the restraining force of the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way (by catching up the saints who are his permanent dwelling place here on earth), the way will be clear for an especially evil person to come on the scene (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8).

Israel will accept this person as their long awaited Messiah and will enter into a disastrous agreement with him. Isaiah calls it an agreement with *hell and death*. But Israel will not be alone in her deception. The entire world will become infatuated with this man and will

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follow after him (John 5:43, Isaiah 28:14-15, Daniel 9:27, Revelation 13:3).

The scriptures have many names for him: Man of Sin, Antichrist, and *the Beast* are only a few of them (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 1 John 2:18, Revelation 13:9-18).

The antichrist will remain in power for a total of seven years. During the first 3-½ years of his reign, the Jews will resume temple worship—including the daily animal sacrifices. Halfway through the seven years, the Man of Sin will viciously turn on them—and on anyone else who opposes him and refuses to worship him as God (Daniel 9:27, 11:36-37, 2 Thessalonians 2:4, Revelation 13:15).

The Beast will initially demand worship for himself by setting up his image in the Holy Place—the Holy of Holies—which can only be located in the Jewish Temple which will be rebuilt in Jerusalem.

The Holy of Holies was a place so sacred the Jewish high priest entered it only once each year—*on the Day of Atonement*—and then only after offering sacrifices for himself and for the people so he would not be killed when he entered into the presence of the Lord.

The image of the Man of Sin being set up in the Holy of Holies—*on the Day of Atonement*—will signal the beginning of terror and atrocities that will come with such devastating swiftness, Jesus had only one message for God-fearing people living in Israel at that time.

Flee! Get out of the cities *as fast as you can* (Matthew 24:15-21, 2 Thessalonians 2:4, Daniel 8:11-13, 11:31-36).

Although he will have an especial hatred for the Jewish people, the antichrist will persecute all people who refuse to worship him or his image. He will require everyone to take a mark of allegiance to him in his or her right hand or forehead.

Without this identification, it will be impossible to buy or sell anything legally. All national currencies will be abolished, and a worldwide debit system will be implemented. Imagine going to Wal-Mart and not being permitted to buy anything without an exclusive ID, because that is exactly the way it will be. All business transactions (buying or selling), retail purchases (food and clothing etc.), housing, employment and medical care will be reserved for those who have professed loyalty to the Man of Sin by receiving his mark in their right hands or foreheads. Everyone else will be considered enemies of the state, and there will be but one sentence for them... death (Revelation 13:15-18, Revelation 20:4).

The persecution of all who refuse to worship the Man of Sin will be global and so severe that if Christ does not intervene, mankind will be completely annihilated (Matthew 24:21-22, Revelation 13:7, Daniel 7:21, 25).

Midway through his reign, the antichrist's power will be given to him directly by Satan. This will be taken from him at the return of Jesus Christ when both he and his false prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire (2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 13:2, 19:20, Isaiah 11:14, Daniel 7:11, 22, 8:24).

****NOTE** – The various aspects of this momentous time period make it impossible to discuss adequately in just one chapter. So for the next few chapters, we will be looking at

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critical events that will be taking place during the time period predicted by the Feast of the Lord, *The Day of Atonement*.

Chapter Review:

- What does Ezekiel 30:3 call The Great Tribulation?
- According to Matthew 24:13, how can a person be saved during The Great Tribulation?
- In Matthew 24:22, Jesus told us something would happen that would prevent all mankind from destroying himself during the Great Tribulation—what is that?
- What attitude does Joel 2:1-2 tell us we should have concerning the time known as “The Great Tribulation?”
- Does Romans 11:25-27 tell us there will be a time when the Jewish people will no longer reject Jesus Christ as Messiah?
- Who will be revealed when the restraining force of the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8)?
- What does the prophet Isaiah call the disastrous treaty Israel will make with the false Messiah (Isaiah 28:14-15)?
- What does Revelation 13:9-18 call the Man of Sin?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

10

Babylon the Great

The Man of Sin

No one knows who the antichrist (Man of Sin) will be as he will not be revealed until the restraining force of the Holy Spirit is removed when the time of *Christ In You* is culminated at the rapture of the Church (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8).

We first saw the Holy Spirit descending on a human being and *remaining* there permanently in the man, Christ Jesus, after his baptism by John. The Holy Spirit descended and remained again, in the second chapter of Acts, when he descended and made the *bodies* of all believers his dwelling place here on earth (John 1:33, Acts 2:1-4, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16).

When “he who restrains” (the Holy Spirit) is taken out of the way, those he indwells will be taken out of the way as well. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would be with us *forever*. The Bible says he will never leave or forsake us (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8, John 14:16).

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When the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way, the mystery of iniquity that is already at work, even today, will be fully revealed in the Man of Sin. This evil person will eventually be empowered and indwelt by Satan himself (2 Thessalonians 2:3-9, Revelation 13:2-8).

In Scripture, the Man of Sin is never directly referred to as *the* antichrist. However, he is alluded to as such. That the early church believed in such a person is clear from the statement made by the Apostle John, “*As ye have heard that antichrist shall come...*” John was speaking of a human being in this verse (1 John 2:18).

The fact that there is indisputably a spirit of antichrist and many antichrists (1 John 4:3, 2:18), in no way negates the fact that the scriptures do reveal a very specific, evil person who will be in power for at least 7 years just prior to the physical return of Jesus Christ—and whose power will come directly from Satan himself during the final 3 ½ years of that time (2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 13:2-5, Daniel 8:24).

This evil person is called by many names in both the Old and New Testaments:

- The Man of Sin: 2 Thessalonians 2:3
- The Wicked (one): Isaiah 11:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:8
- The Son of Perdition: 2 Thessalonians 2:3 (he is the only person besides Judas to have that infamous title bestowed upon him)
- The Beast: Revelation 13:17-18, 19:19-20, 20:4,10 (the Beast is identified as a *man* in Revelation 13:18)
- The Assyrian: Isaiah 10:5,24, 14:25-26
- A King of fierce countenance: Daniel 8:23
- The king: Daniel 11:36
- The King of Babylon: Isaiah 14:4

- The man that made the earth to tremble: Isaiah 14:16-17
- The hand that is stretched out upon *all* nations: Isaiah 14:26
- The hammer of the whole earth: Jeremiah 50:23
- *He/Him/His/Himself*: Revelation 13:4-7, 14:11, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:4,6, Daniel 7:24-25, 8:11,24-25, 9:27, 11:36-45

His Capital City

Many debates continue to take place concerning whether or not the prophecies concerning Babylon in the last days are literal or merely symbolic.

One of the most compelling reasons to believe that Babylon must literally be re-built is because *not one* of the prophecies concerning the sudden, catastrophic destruction of Babylon, and the land area surrounding it becoming an utter wasteland, has yet been fulfilled.

It is prophesied that Babylon will be destroyed suddenly. It is prophesied that, after that happens, Babylon will remain uninhabited—*forever*. It is prophesied that the geographical location of Babylon and a very large area (thousands of square miles) surrounding it will become fire, brimstone and a perpetual wasteland (Isaiah 13:19, Jeremiah 50:40, Deuteronomy 29:23).

The Biblical prophets repeatedly foretold the sudden, catastrophic and *complete* destruction of Babylon. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah said it would be as (exactly like) the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed suddenly, catastrophically, and *permanently* by fire and brimstone (Genesis 19:24-28).

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Not only has the site of ancient Babylon not been turned into fire and brimstone, it has also not remained *uninhabited* (1 Peter 5:13).

As recently as 1898 Babylon (renamed “Hillah” at that time) contained about 10,000 inhabitants. But the prophets are specific about the fact that when God’s final judgment comes upon Babylon, *not one single* stone of it would survive to be used again.

That has not happened yet. Bricks from ancient Babylon have been used and reused over the centuries. They can be found in buildings all over Iraq. In fact, for quite a few years, the city of Babylon itself has been undergoing restorative construction. Festivals have even been held there.

One of the most interesting scripture passages relating to The Great Tribulation, the Antichrist, and to Babylon is found in Zechariah chapter 5. This passage is quite symbolic, but taking the trouble to unlock the symbolism is well worth it.

In the first two verses of Zechariah chapter 5, the prophet looks up and sees a flying **scroll.

****Point of Interest:** In December of 2006, an Israeli airline, *Israir Airlines*, became the first airline to maintain an authentic Torah Scroll (Law of Moses) onboard for its passengers to read. This scroll is officially known as “Sky Torah” and has been dubbed “*The Flying Scroll*.”

Zechariah is told the scroll represents a worldwide curse (judgment).

****How could the Torah (Law of Moses) possibly contain a curse?**

Read the following scriptures:

Luke 16:28-31
Luke 24:27
Hebrews 10:7
Galatians 3:23-24

The Torah reveals the true Messiah. The coming judgment (curse) of The Great Tribulation is coming only because the true Messiah, Jesus Christ, who has been fully revealed in the Law, was rejected by his people Israel and by the world at large (Malachi 4:5-6).

There are only three worldwide judgments spoken of in scripture. The first was the flood in Genesis—which wiped out all but eight people. The second will be The Great Tribulation, which will destroy approximately 75 to 80% of the world population within a short period just seven years. And the third will be the fiery purge that will take place at the end of the first 1000 years of Christ's reign on earth (Zechariah 5:1-3 [1-5], Genesis 6:11-13 & 7:19, Matthew 24:21-22, Isaiah 24:1,3-6, Revelation 20:9).

The worldwide judgment in Zechariah chapter 5 is clearly referring to the time of The Great Tribulation (as there is no mention of either a flood or of fire being used as the main instrument of judgment).

In this passage, the prophet was shown how the antichrist will strategically come to power and where his base of operations will be located.

Zechariah is told by the angel to *look* and *see* what is going forth—that is good advice for us today. When Christ came the first time, those who were alert and knew the scriptures, understood that they were living in

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the time of his coming and were actively looking for his arrival (Zechariah 5:5, Luke 2:25-26).

Jesus himself said the signs of the times could be observed and understood. And he had nothing but harsh rebukes for those who ignored the obvious...simply because the truth did not suit them.

There is a massive falling away predicted to occur within the Body of Christ just prior to the rapture of the Church. At that time, many will be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ and go whoring after another Jesus, another gospel, and will receive another spirit. The Bible says they will defect from the true faith, and God will turn them over to the lie which will ultimately cost them their souls (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8, 2 Corinthians 11:3-4).

The Bible says God will allow a great delusion to overcome all who love *not* the truth. This is a specific reference to an *end-time* apostasy/ defection from the true faith. This is taking place even now in alarming numbers (Luke 12:54-56, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 10-11).

It is a dangerous thing, particularly in these last days, when the great falling away is predicted, to reject the truth (which is contained *in its entirety* within the pages of God's Written Word—the Bible). Any so-called *truth* that does not line up with what has *already* been written is no truth at all, but rather a lie. And the Written Word of God warns that those who love the lie will be given over to it (Isaiah 8:20, 2 Thessalonians 2:11).

Not only will those individuals who trade their birthright for a bowl of pottage be left behind when the rapture occurs, they will be given no opportunity to repent afterwards. Hebrews 6:4-6 is clear that once a person *falls*

away, renewal into repentance becomes an impossibility (Hebrews 12:16-17, Genesis 25:30-34, 27:34-38).

There are those who claim the falling away, spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, took place during the 2nd or 3rd centuries. They maintain that “truth” was lost to the church very shortly after the apostles died. The scriptures do not bear that out. Get away, quickly, from anyone who teaches such heresy. That interpretation of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 is in direct opposition to Psalm 100:5, which assures us that not one single generation will ever be lost because they have been deprived of God’s truth. “His Truth endures to every generation (most modern English Bibles contain a corrupted version of this verse).”

The falling away predicted in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7-8,10-12 is a direct reference to an *end-time* apostasy, and it will happen shortly *before* the Man of Sin is revealed. The scriptures say the rapture must take place before the identity of the Man of Sin can be revealed.

This will be a ***deliberate defection*** from known, revealed, truth due to rebellion *against* the truth, not a result of truth being lost.

****This is worth repeating:** The defection will be so overtly rebellious and contrary to the written Word of God that the Lord will give the defectors over to the lie they are whoring after. They will not only be left behind when Jesus comes to raise the dead and catch up the living, but they will be given no chance to repent during The Great Tribulation. *They will lose all chance of obtaining eternal life.*

This is not the time to blindly follow those who encourage the use of unscriptural, subjective spiritual experiences and eastern forms of meditation such as centering prayer, soaking prayer, contemplative prayer

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and other spiritual “disciplines” that replace the Written Word of God in discerning the true from the false. This is not the time to place our trust in those who claim their unbiblical message is validated by experiences, signs or wonders. These who foster such practices imperil souls. Below are quotes from the sort of teaching and teachers that should be avoided:

God is a lot bigger than doctrine

The church is so hung up on Bible study they don't know Jesus!

It doesn't matter that the Hindus, Buddhists and New Agers use this kind of prayer and meditation in their religion. As long as our goal is to glorify God, we can adopt their methods. It is the motive—not the method—that matters.

If we keep recruiting people to evacuate the earth, then every person who gets saved is taken out of the action....

All of the above statements defy scripture. The first two fly in the face of every verse which *commands* and encourages the study of the Bible and the acquisition of sound doctrine. Doctrine is not a dirty word! And how do we resolve the third with the clear scriptural command not to imitate unbelievers and to learn *none* of their ways (Jeremiah 10:2)?

Those who attack the pursuit of sound doctrine via Bible study do not know Jesus. It is as simple as that. **Doctrine** is derived from **Bible study** and we are admonished in the scriptures to *pay close attention to doctrine* (2 Timothy 4:2).

Jesus warned us about following false prophets or teachers in Matthew chapter seven. They will stand

before him at the Judgment of the Nations woefully crying, “Lord, Lord! Didn’t we do many miraculous works in *your* name?” The Lord will assure them that they are workers of iniquity, that he never knew them, and will proceed to condemn them to hell (Matthew 7:22-23).

Do not allow *spiritual experiences*, miracles, signs (Jeremiah 10:2) or wonders to be a basis for deciding whether someone or something is or is not from God.

The Bible clearly warns that those who are given over to believing the lie will be deceived by means of *lying wonders*. That could conceivably include the experiences described by those who meditate using unscriptural meditation aids that include but are not limited to vain repetitions of the names of Christ, etc.. This is a form of mantra meditation and Jesus clearly commands his people not to engage in any such activity (Matthew 6:7).

The Bible also reveals that just before Christ returns, spirits of devils working miracles will be very prevalent. And by means of *miracles* will deceive the people of the earth (2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 13:14, 16:14).

In Zechariah 5:2-3 the angel calls the prophet’s attention to a strange sight. Zechariah was told to *look* and *see* what was going forth. Something was happening. The winds of change were blowing. Something was *moving forward*. And the thing he was told to be looking at was an *ephah* (a basket).

Remember that this entire prophecy will be taking place during a time of worldwide judgment, which, by process of elimination must be referring to the time of *The Great Tribulation*. So we know this prophecy must be for

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those who will be living during that time or very close to it—possibly in the time known as The Beginning of Sorrows (Zechariah 5:6, Matthew 24:1-8, 21).

Jesus said the time of the Great Tribulation would be so horrendous that this world has never seen anything like it before nor ever would again. Considering the horrors this world has already seen—that's pretty bad. The scriptures reveal that up to 75 to 80% of the world's human population will die during that time. The Jewish population will be so reduced that Isaiah predicted even a child could write them. No wonder God said to tremble at the very thought of it—to be *horribly* afraid... (Isaiah 10:17-21, Joel 2)

Look, see, pay close attention to what is happening—*right now*. This prophecy is for the very near future and gives important details as to how the Man of Sin will come to power and where he will be operating from after he comes to power.

But what possible significance could an ephah (not just any measuring basket—but specifically an *ephah*) have concerning a judgment that will go forth over the whole earth?

Notice the order of events: first we see a curse (a judgment) moving forward. Then we see an *ephah* moving forward (Zechariah 5:3, 6).

An ephah was a *basket*. It was the largest measure in use among the Jewish people of Zechariah's time, and was commonly used as a symbol of *commerce* (much like the "basket" is used today in connection to the **Euro).

** Euro: The name for the composite monetary unit that has replaced national currencies in several European countries. The

Euro was introduced on January 1st, 1999 and went into general circulation on January 1st, 2002 (the specific amounts of euro in the valuation basket...).

ECU: (European Currency Unit). A composite monetary unit consisting of a basket of European Community currencies that served as the predecessor to the Euro.

The ephah (basket) Zechariah saw moving forward symbolized currency and *commerce*—both in his time and now, again, in ours as well.

The angel elaborated further and said the ephah was *disguising* something. The resemblance (the outward appearance) of it looked good. It looked like commerce was getting a well-needed boost and was moving forward. The angel said the resemblance (the outward appearance of a commercial boost) would deceive the *whole* earth.

It is crucial, at this point, to have a King James Bible. Most other versions corrupt this passage—especially verse 6—obscuring the entire purpose of the passage, which is to expose the game plan of the enemy (Zechariah 5:6).

The ephah, in Zechariah's vision had a lid made of 100 lbs of lead. This lid effectively hides the contents of the basket. What we *see* can be very deceptive. But what exactly will be hidden in this ephah (Zechariah 5:7)?

The scriptures tell us a woman will be hidden in the container. The angel introduced the woman by saying, "This is Wickedness." A more literal rendering of the angel's words are, "her *name* is Wickedness" (Zechariah 5:7-8).

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Why would a female be used to represent wickedness? Is it because women are inherently more wicked than men? As far as the commonly accepted perceptions of mankind go, history would validate that idea. Both men and women have participated in, and perpetuated, discrimination against females. But the answer is, “No,” all mankind is inherently wicked, not just the females of the species (Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:10).

Could it be that a female is used to represent this wickedness because it will quickly *multiply* and infect the whole earth? After all it is females who are fertile, conceive and give birth.

Or is it possible this might represent a female who will be a major player in end-time events? Only time will tell.

At any rate, the scriptures reveal it is a *woman* whose name is *wickedness* that is hidden in the basket, and the ephah represents a commercial boost, or at the very least, the promise of one.

Zechariah watched as the lid was lifted, and the woman stood up (or was lifted up by the angel). She was *momentarily exposed*, but the angel immediately cast her back into the container and replaced the lid in order to keep her hidden (Zechariah 5:8).

***It is important to note here, that it is always God who is in control of the times and the seasons—even the horrendous season of The Great Tribulation. It is God allowing the woman whose name is wickedness to remain hidden (although it/she will be temporarily exposed to those who are alert).*

God knows those who are alert and love the truth will not be motivated by ungodly lusts to deviate from the simplicity found in Jesus Christ. But those who love not the truth, who rebel against the *simplicity* of Christ, who are greedy for personal power and gain, and who seek after spiritual experiences, signs and wonders, will be deceived and will ultimately be destroyed by whoring after these things. These things will not come looking overtly sinful and evil. They will come well disguised behind a seductive veneer of spirituality and godliness. Many who will lose their souls in the last days apostasy, will do so believing they are truly following Christ (Matthew 7:22-23, 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11, 1 Timothy 6:9, 2 Timothy 4:3).

Zechariah looked again and saw two women with wings. They had wings like a stork, and he saw that the wind was in their wings. The two women with wings picked up the basket containing the woman (Zechariah 5:9).

These women are spiritual beings. *They are not angels.* They have wings like a stork, which according to scripture, is an unclean bird. Thus they are identified as being unclean spiritual beings. The wind is in their wings which means they can fly very fast. When they pick up the basket containing the woman, they will get it/her to its final destination with amazing speed.

****Note** – These are the only women with wings found in the entire Bible. Women with wings are not angels. Images of women with wings do not represent angels (regardless of the intention of the artist). Although wings are seen in scripture as a symbol of God's protective covering (Psalm 91:4), they are also depicted as an abominable covering (Daniel 9:27). The women with wings in Zechariah Chapter five have the wings of an unclean bird. This reveals that any covering they might represent will be an *unclean* spiritual covering—i.e., an

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unclean false religious covering (Psalm 91:4, Revelation 12:14, Zechariah 5:9, Isaiah 30:1).

This writer believes the women with wings, seen by the prophet, Zechariah, will be connected with the false religion described in Revelation 17—called the Whore of Babylon.

The false religion represented by the Whore of Babylon is filthy rich, causes worldwide spiritual adultery and has shed so much blood of true saints, the Bible says she is drunk with it (Revelation 17:1-2,4,6,15, 18:1).

Do not be fooled by the image of a *woman* representing wickedness and dismiss Zechariah's vision as having nothing to do with the Man of Sin. His vision had everything to do with the Man of Sin!

The Man of Sin will use the woman whose name is wickedness and commercial prosperity [at least the promise or illusion of] in his rise to power. There may even be an actual woman involved, but the power will ultimately go to the Man of Sin (Daniel 8:25, 2 Thessalonians 2:9).

Zechariah was told precisely where the unclean spiritual beings will take the wickedness. They will carry the wickedness to the land of Shinar. And the purpose of transporting the wickedness to Shinar will be to build it a house there. It will become its "*own base*"—a military term meaning home base or base of operations (Zechariah 5:11).

It is also important to note that Zechariah 5:11 specifically says the land of Shinar, so this rules out the possibility that this verse is referring to any vague,

spiritual location. This wickedness is heading for a very specific *physical* geographical location.

The land of *Shinar*, in verse 11, is referring to the physical locale of ancient Babylonia. The name is also used in scripture to describe the physical location of the ancient city of Babylon.

The ancient city of Babylon will be *completely rebuilt*. It will become the personal capital of the Man of Sin, and, during his reign, it will also become the capital city of the entire world.

******Zechariah's vision reveals a time when most of the world population will be deceived by the Man of Sin, and the entire world will experience the judgment and wrath of Almighty God.

The Antichrist will be assisted in his meteoric rise to power by a false religion and a boost to commercial prosperity, which will effectively, for most, disguise a desperately wicked agenda.

This will all happen very quickly, and a base of operations will be set up in the rebuilt city of Babylon—referred to in The Revelation as...*Babylon The Great* (Revelation 13:3-4,14, 18:10-13,15-19, 20:10).

Chapter Review:

- When will the Man of Sin be revealed according to 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8?
- How long does John 14:16 tell us the Holy Spirit will be with us?
- What does 1 Peter 5:13 tell us about the city of Babylon?
- What is one of the things 2 Thessalonians 2:3 tells us will happen prior to the identity of the Man of Sin being revealed?
- What does the apostle Paul say God will do to those who love not the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11)?
- What does Isaiah 8:20 tell us we had better not deviate from?
- According to Hebrews 6:4-6 is it possible to be renewed back into repentance once we fall away?
- Which generation will not have God's truth according to Psalms 100:5?
- What does the apostle, in 2 Timothy 4:2, tell us we need to pay attention to?
- In Matthew 7:22-23 Jesus high-lights a specific group that he wants to make very clear he never had anything, what-so-ever, to do with. What activities will these rejected ones have been engaged in?
- What will be the driving force behind those who will not endure sound doctrine according to 2 Timothy 4:3?
- Does Zechariah 5:9 identify women with wings as angels?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

11

The Day Christ Returns

The battle of Armageddon will bring the Day of Atonement (The Time of Jacob's Trouble / The Great Tribulation) to a climactic end with the physical and visible, return of Jesus Christ (2 John 7, Matthew 24:27-31, Revelation 19:11-21, Isaiah 66:15-16).

Jesus will return to a world almost completely devastated by drought, famine, disease, war, violence, sorcery, greed and sensuality (Matthew 24:4-7, Revelation 6:2-8, 2 Timothy 3:1-4, Daniel 7:23-24, Isaiah 47:8-13, Revelation 18:12-13).

During the 3 ½ years immediately prior to His return, the Jewish people and all followers of Christ will suffer intense persecution at the hands of the Antichrist—the most brutal in the history of the world. (Matthew 24:9-22, Zephaniah 1:14-15, Joel 2:2-6, Amos 5:18-20, Daniel 7:21-22, 25, Revelation 13:7,15, Revelation 12:5,13).

The world economy, on the day Christ returns, will be intricately linked to one city—*Babylon the Great*.

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Early on this day, an event will take place that is so catastrophic the shock waves will be felt worldwide.

After the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fell, September 11, 2001—911—can we doubt that one event can rock the entire world (Isaiah 30:25)?

By a decree of divine judgment, Babylon The Great, the capital city of the world, will be suddenly, violently, catastrophically, and *completely* annihilated—just as the prophets predicted (Revelation 18:1-24, Jeremiah 50:46, 51:1-64, Isaiah 14:4-9,19-22).

On that same day (the day Christ returns), a great army consisting of every nation on earth will advance on Jerusalem—very possibly in response to a worldwide market crash caused by the supernatural destruction of Babylon the Great.

Is it a farfetched notion that Israel will be blamed for the destruction of Babylon the Great, resulting in global retaliation (Zechariah 12:3, 14:1-2, Joel 3:2, revelation 16:16)?

The fighting will be fierce. It will be the bloodiest battle in recorded history. The Bible says the mountains around Jerusalem will be literally soaked in blood (Isaiah 34:3 [1-8], Revelation 14:20, Ezekiel 39:17-20).

One half of the city of Jerusalem will be captured. Rape and pillage will be taking place, and Israel will be losing the battle. At dusk, Jerusalem time, the sky will be lit up with an indescribable brilliance. A dazzling sight will appear on the eastern horizon as Jesus Christ sweeps on the scene followed by the armies of Heaven (Matthew 24:27, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Isaiah 66:15-16, Zechariah 14:2,5-B).

The Armies of Heaven

The armies of Heaven will consist of the angel armies and the Children of the Resurrection (all the resurrected and caught up saints from down through the ages). The angel armies will include the chariots and horses of fire the Prophet Elisha witnessed.

Scripture references:

Saints: Revelation 19:14(11-21), Jude 14-15, Colossians 3:4, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, Zechariah 14:5

Angel armies: Isaiah 66:15, 2 Kings 6:17, 2 Kings 2:11

There is no way to adequately describe the brilliance of this event. But the effect this spectacle will have upon the Jewish people will be to open the eyes God blinded 2000 years before, and the people of Israel will fall on their faces in soul wrenching repentance for their rejection of Jesus Christ as the true Messiah.

The entire nation will be saved in one day, and the prophecies concerning Israel's restoration back to *her God* will see their complete fulfillment on the day Jesus Christ physically returns to this earth (Romans 11:25-27, Zechariah 12:9-11, 13:9[6-9], Isaiah 66:8).

Touchdown Jesus

Jesus will not simply come in the air when he returns for the 2nd time, but his feet will actually touch down on the Mount of Olives causing a massive earthquake which will split the mountain in two creating an escape route for those trapped in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:3-5[1-5]).

Every eye shall see him. Again, after September 11, 2001, can we doubt the entire world can watch as an event actually takes place? But even without modern

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technology, anything man can do God can do better
(Revelation 1:7, Isaiah 40:5, Zechariah 12:10).

The *man*, the only Christ—Jesus—the *physical* *descendent* of King David—who was born in the flesh, died in the flesh, and raised in the flesh, will return *in the flesh* (2 John 7).

***If anyone belongs to a group or organization that denies the physical/visible return of the man Christ Jesus (Matthew 25:31)—do not fear them or their false doctrine or threats of excommunication. They are preaching another Jesus. Simply turn to the real Jesus. The Jesus who was Christ at his birth, who physically died, physically rose and who is physically coming again for those who belong to him. Call on the Almighty to forgive your sins and save you by faith in his resurrected son (Romans 10:9-10, 13). If you do this, you will be safe in God's hands, and **no one** will be able to pluck you out of them (John 10:27-29). Only those who belong to Christ will inherit eternal life.*

Armageddon

The armies of the tribe of Judah will be charged up at the sight of the Lord's return. During the battle of Armageddon, the scriptures say there will be some heroic fighting taking place from those who belong to the tribe of Judah. God intends to honor the tribe Christ sprang from—especially the house of David—and God always keeps his promises (Zechariah 10:6-7, 12:6-8[3-9], 14:14, Isaiah 65:8-9).

The enemies of God will be destroyed in a variety of ways on the day Christ returns. Christ and his Heavenly armies will cause supernatural destruction. Cavalry troops will be prominent in this war (some believe this indicates a severe fuel shortage), and God will literally

blind the horses the enemy will be riding. He will confuse the attacking armies so much they will turn on each other and begin destroying themselves (Isaiah 66:15-16, 11:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 19:15, Zechariah 12:4, 14:13, Revelation 9:16, 14:20, 19:18).

It will be a gruesome battle. Scripture indicates the fighting may last through the night (remember, Christ returns at dusk Jerusalem time). In any case, the battle will be over by morning—with Christ the indisputable victor (Isaiah 17:14, Zechariah 14:7).

Will there be a nuclear explosion? Some believe so. It is believed by many that the following verses accurately describe the effects of a nuclear explosion on the human body and environment: Zechariah 14:12-15, Isaiah 24:20 [17-23, 34:4].

Further evidence of a nuclear explosion is indicated in passages that describe some sort of contamination that requires special handling for quite some time after the battle (Ezekiel 39:11 [1-22]).

Part of the clean up will be accomplished by a massive influx of birds. This will not be a normal gathering of scavenger birds. Instead it will be a supernatural gathering of birds called by Christ especially to accomplish his purpose (Revelation 19:17-18, 21, Matthew 24:28, Luke 17:37, Ezekiel 39:4).

When the slaughter is almost over, the antichrist and his false prophet will be captured and thrown alive into the lake of fire. Then, what is left of his army will be wiped out. Finally, Satan will be captured and imprisoned in the bottomless pit for 1000 years (Revelation 19:20-21, 20:1-2).

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***The book of Revelation is written in three kinds of language—literal, figurative and symbolic. The literal passages are self-explanatory. Do not be discouraged by the figurative and symbolic passages. The figurative passages are explained by the context, and the keys to interpreting the symbolic passages are found elsewhere in the scriptures.*

The Bible is a complete book. The Word of God defines itself. Outside sources are rarely (if ever) needed to unlock the secrets of any symbolism contained within the scriptures. That is why it is vitally important to read the Bible not only daily but *systematically*.

What is meant by systematically?

Read your Bible in such a way that the entire volume is being read and re-read on a regular, ongoing basis. This is the only way to gain in-depth knowledge of its contents. Prayerfully read the Word of God every day—always picking up today where you left off yesterday. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

Using this method, over time, a generalized knowledge of Bible content is gained that no other method of Bible study can give. With the help of the Holy Spirit, an ability is developed to match up companion scriptures (scriptures found in different parts of the Word of God that go together or describe, possibly from a slightly different aspect, the same thing or event).

The imagery contained within the scriptures becomes less confusing as this discipline is practiced, and our piecemeal understanding becomes more complete as we become more intimately acquainted with the Word of God as a whole.

The ability to rightly divide the Word of God must be prayerfully developed (2 Timothy 2:15). This does not happen over night, and there is no substitute for daily Bible reading. The effort is worth it, worth it, worth it!

***Note on the Book of Revelation: The orientation of the Book of Revelation is future. It was a future prophecy when John wrote it. And, as of the date of this writing, it is still future. It deals with the time of The Great Tribulation in which approximately 75 to 80% of the human population (world wide) will die during a period of just 7 years. In all of recorded history, that has not happened yet. The Revelation is completely composed of prophecy—not flashbacks of previous events. It is a description of progressive events, and is written in chronological order*
(Revelation 1:1-13, Matthew 24:21-22).

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Chapter Review:

- What does Isaiah 30:25 say happened on the day of the great slaughter?
- Who does 2 John 7 say is a deceiver and an anti-Christ?
- What does Revelation 19:20-21 say will happen to the Man of Sin and his false prophet when Jesus returns?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

12

The Lake Of Fire

The Bible tells of a geographical location, on the surface of this planet, where the *streams* will be turned into pitch, the *dust* into brimstone, and the *land* will become burning pitch. Isaiah goes on to say that once this fire is started it will *never* be quenched. But the smoke of it will go up *forever and ever* (Isaiah 34:9-10).

There is scriptural evidence that this will take place on the last day of The Great Tribulation immediately prior to the physical appearance and return of Jesus Christ at the battle of Armageddon (Isaiah 34:2-10[10-16]).

When compared with companion scriptures, it is revealed that this will take place on the site of ancient Babylon (Isaiah 13:19-22, Jeremiah 50:39-40, 51:29, 37, 62).

The prophecies concerning the sudden and complete destruction of Babylon (and the land area surrounding it becoming an utter waste) have not yet been fulfilled (Isaiah 13:19, Jeremiah 50:40, Deuteronomy 29:23).

My Bible Doesn't Say That!

***Reminder: The Biblical prophets repeatedly foretold the sudden, catastrophic, complete, and **permanent** annihilation of Babylon. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah said it would be as (exactly like) the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

Sodom and Gomorrah were both destroyed suddenly, catastrophically and permanently by fire and brimstone. Not one of these prophecies concerning Babylon has yet been fulfilled (Genesis 19:24-28).

There is only one way for these prophecies to be fulfilled according to the word of God, and that is for the city of Babylon to be rebuilt. Revelation 18:2 says this will happen. Remember, according to Revelation 1:1-3, the entire book of Revelation has a *future* orientation. It is all prophecy—not historical flashbacks. Revelation 18:2 is speaking of the future destruction of the rebuilt city of Babylon.

There is a reason for Babylon to be rebuilt in the latter days, and there is a reason why it will be destroyed so violently. Babylon the Great will be the Antichrist's seat of power during his reign. At that time, it will also become the occult capital of the world as well as the world center of commerce (Revelation 18:2-3, 9-23, Isaiah 47:9 [5-9], 12-13).

Merchants worldwide will become wealthy through their dealings with Babylon the Great, but God reach his limit in tolerating the filth, violence and corruption that will once again be polluting the world through this ancient city. At that time, God will judge Babylon the Great for both her *present and her **ancient sins (Revelation 18:4-8).

- *Present: Revelation 18:5-a “...for her sins have reached Heaven.”
- **Past: Revelation 18:5-b “...and God has *remembered* her iniquities.”

Babylon the Great will be destroyed in one day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah were. She will be burned with fire and swallowed by an earthquake. Her streams will be turned into pitch and her dust into brimstone. The land will become burning pitch. The Bible says this fire, once started, will *never* be quenched (Revelation 18:8-10,17-18,21, Jeremiah 50:46, Isaiah 34:10).

Where Is Hell?

The Bible teaches that hell is located in the lower parts of the earth. The Bible also teaches that hell will one day *enlarge* itself (Amos 9:2, Psalms 63:9, Isaiah 14:9, Habakkuk 2:5-a, Isaiah 5:14).

How Will the Lake of Fire Be Formed?

There is scriptural evidence that the earthquake that will swallow Babylon the Great will be caused by hell enlarging itself and breaking through to the *surface* of the earth. According to Isaiah, hell will *move up* to meet the King of Babylon (the Man of Sin), and, at that time, will form a literal lake of fire on the surface of our planet (Isaiah 14:9, 5:14, Revelation 19:20).

The physical site of ancient and rebuilt Babylon will literally become a lake of fire that will burn *perpetually*—through-out eternity—and the land area surrounding it will become, and remain, a wasteland forever.

My Bible Doesn't Say That!

****Point of interest:**

According to Clarence Larkin, in his book *Dispensational Truth*, the foundation of the ancient city of Babylon is underlaid with bitumen—better known to modern man as asphalt.

The Biblical word for this substance is... *brimstone*.

Chapter Review:

- How long will the fire burn that turns the land and streams into pitch and brimstone (Isaiah 34:9-10)?
- Where will this take place (Isaiah 13:19-22, Jeremiah 50:39-40, 51:29, 37, 62)?
- Have the prophecies concerning the sudden, complete and permanent destruction of Babylon been fulfilled yet (Isaiah 13:19, Jeremiah 50:40, Deuteronomy 29:23)?
- Where does the Bible teach that hell is located (Amos 9:2, Psalms 63:9, Isaiah 14:9, Habakkuk 2:5-a, Isaiah 5:14)?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

13

The Judgment of the Nations

The feast of The Day of Atonement, which foreshadows the Time of Jacob's Trouble and which represents The Great Tribulation, will end with the physical and visible return of Jesus (the *only* Christ) to this earth.

When he returns, he will defeat all of his enemies, and will then go on to judge the mortal survivors of The Great Tribulation.

We know from scripture the antichrist will set his image in the Holy Place and demand worship as God. From that point on he will openly and brutally persecute the people of God. His reign of terror will last for *forty-two months (1260 days) and will end with the physical, visible return of Jesus Christ at the battle of Armageddon.

*The time periods in the book of Daniel and The Revelation are reckoned by the Jewish calendar which consists of 30-day lunar months.

My Bible Doesn't Say That!

The Man of Sin will be overthrown at the return of Jesus Christ 1260 days (42 months) after he breaks his treaty with Israel and demands worship for himself (Daniel 12:11-12, Revelation 13:5, Revelation 19:11-20).

Daniel also mentions a time period of 1290 days, which is 42 months + an additional 30 days (Daniel 12:11)

What will be going on until the 1290th day

The time period is further extended by an additional 45 *days*—bringing us to a total of 75 *days* when Daniel says that blessed is he that *waits* and *comes to* the 1335th day (Daniel 12:11-12).

So we see something critical will be happening from the time the Man of Sin is removed from power on the 1260th day until the 1335th day.

What will be going on for 75 days after Christ returns [Daniel 12:11-12])?

The Gathering

When Jesus returns to this earth as the undisputed King of kings and Lord of lords, and sits upon the throne of his glory, the Bible tells us that *all nations* (the mortal survivors of The Great Tribulation) will be gathered before him to be judged concerning whether or not they are worthy to be granted entrance into his earthly kingdom. This will take some time (Matthew 25:31-32[31-46]).

The scriptures make it clear that Christ will be assisted in this judgment in various ways. The twelve apostles of the lamb will judge the 12 tribes of Israel, and others of the *Children of the Resurrection* will assist him in

judging (then ruling over) the mortal survivors of The Great Tribulation. This may also be the time that part (or all) of the scripture is fulfilled which says the saints will judge angels (Matthew 19:28, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, Revelation 2:26-27, 5:10, 12:5).

The Holy angels will also be present to assist in carrying out of sentences (Matthew 13:41-42, 49, Mark 13:27[26-27]).

The word “*waits*,” in Daniel 12:12, has an interesting connotation implying the period of the 75 days may still be difficult for those who have not yet submitted to the antichrist during his reign (most likely referring to Jews, because that is primarily who Daniel’s visions concern).

There are no details given in scripture concerning this time period except those that relate directly to the Judgment of the Nations, so we have to accept by faith that the promise will indeed be relevant for those who will be living on earth when Christ returns, and that they will understand and draw enough strength from it to persevere just a few days longer.

At any rate, all preliminaries to the official beginning of the first 1000 thousand years of Christ’s reign will be completed within 75 days of his arrival. Tribulation survivors along with the resurrected and raptured saints will be rewarded by hearing the words, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34).”

Many passages in scripture refer to the Judgment of the Nations. The following are just a few examples:

- The gathering of the nations for judgment: Matthew 25:32-34, Isaiah 43:5-9, 56:8, 66:18
- The administrators of Christ’s government: Matthew 19:28

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- Angelic involvement in the gathering and the judgment: Mark 13:27, Matthew 24:31,13:39, 41,49
- The 75 days: Daniel 12:11-12

Below are other scriptures referring to the Judgment of the Nations:

- Matthew 13:37-43,49-50, 25:31-46
- Ezekiel 20:37-38
- Proverbs 29:16
- Isaiah 2:4, 45:20-24, 60:12

Criteria for Entrance into Christ's Kingdom

Everyone surviving The Great Tribulation will pass under the rod of judgment after the battle of Armageddon. At this time the just and unjust alike will bow their knees to Christ and confess that he is LORD (YHWH—Yahweh—the Almighty) to the glory of God the Father (Romans 14:10-11, Isaiah 45:20-24, Philippians 2:9-11, Revelation 1:8).

Just as those who took The Mark of the Beast not only professed allegiance to the Man of Sin but worshipped him as Almighty God as well, all who are still living at the visible return of Christ will be compelled to renounce all false gods/christs and acknowledge Jesus Christ as the *only* Christ, the Lord of lords, and the God of gods.

That confession however, will not necessarily grant the confessor entrance into his kingdom. All who swear allegiance to the Antichrist during The Great Tribulation by will be automatically doomed. There will be no second chances for anyone who takes his mark. They

will be thrown into the lake of fire along with The Beast and his false prophet (Revelation 14:9-11, 19:20).

Upon what other criteria will the survivors of The Great Tribulation be judged?

Matthew 25:34-40 lists some of the requirements for being granted entrance into Christ's earthly kingdom:

- Seeing Christ hungry and feeding him
- Seeing him thirsty and giving him something to drink
- Taking him in even though he is a stranger
- Seeing him naked and clothing him
- Caring for him when he is sick and in prison

In this passage Jesus vividly describes the plight of *tribulation saints*—not just any time of tribulation but specifically The *Great Tribulation*. We know this because the context of the passage makes it clear that he is speaking to those who have been judged either worthy or unworthy to enter his earthly Kingdom.

Those who will be granted entrance To Christ's Kingdom will fall into one of two categories. They will either be believers who have gone hungry, thirsty, without shelter, without proper clothing, and suffered imprisonment for the name of Christ, or they will have refused to worship the Man of Sin as God (by taking the Mark of the Beast) and ministered to the needs of God's people at great risk to their own lives.

Those being judged unworthy to enter Christ's Kingdom will ask, "When did we not do these things for you?" And His answer will be, "When you did it not unto the least of those *my brethren*, you did it not unto me (Matthew 25:40, 45)."

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Who are Christ's brethren? Jesus tells us that whoever does the will of his Heavenly Father is his mother, sister and *brother*. Jesus goes on to clarify that helping a tribulation saint will be the same as doing it for him personally (Matthew 12:50).

Before the apostle Paul was converted, while he was still called Saul, he cruelly persecuted those who professed Jesus as the Christ. When Jesus appeared to him at his conversion, he did not ask Saul why he was persecuting his people. Jesus asked Saul why he was persecuting *him*.

Jesus takes the persecution of those who belong to him very personally (Acts 9:4-5).

The Jewish people will be included in the definition of Christ's brethren during The Great Tribulation (remember, Jesus is a *Jew*). The Jewish people will be given supernatural assistance from God during this time of terror (Revelation 12:14, Daniel 12:1).

Jesus himself tells us that those who manage to survive The Great Tribulation without swearing allegiance to the antichrist must pass under the rod of his judgment after the battle of Armageddon. At that time, they will be granted or denied entrance into his kingdom based upon their treatment of the tribulation saints—both the heavily persecuted Jewish people and the non-Jewish (gentile) believers (Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 12:42-46).

Aside assisting the saints along with refusing to worship the Man of Sin as God by taking his mark, there will be one other requirement for being granted entrance into

the earthly Kingdom of Christ...*submission to Israel as the head nation*.

Isaiah elaborates on this when he says the nation or kingdom that will not acknowledge Israel as the head nation—will *perish* (Isaiah 60:12).

No nation will survive the Judgment of the Nations and retain its national identity in Christ's Kingdom without doing the following three things:

Refusing to swear allegiance to the antichrist during his reign.

Ministering to the needs of the brutally persecuted tribulation saints.

Swearing allegiance to Israel as head nation (Isaiah 60:14).

The Man of Sin will have an especial hatred in his heart for Jews and Christians alike and will set out to destroy them completely (Revelation 12:17, Matthew 24:21, Daniel 7:25).

Those who refuse to assist Christ's *brethren* in their time of desperate need will be cursed and banished—forever—from the presence of God. Their place will be found in the lake of fire along with the Beast and the false prophet (Matthew 25:41, Revelation 19:20, 20:10, 14:9-11).

Weeping, Wailing and Gnashing of Teeth

This will be a terrifying judgment for those who don't "make it." Jesus predicts that weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth will be the response from those who are condemned and denied entrance into his kingdom (Matthew 13:42, 50, 8:11-12).

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The Judgment of the Nations is the only judgment where there will be any question at all of who “makes it” and who does not. That is the sole purpose of this judgment.

Conversely, all who stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ have “*made it*” already. That judgment, which will take place in Heaven after the Resurrection of Life, is for determining rewards—not for determining salvation. Only the saved will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ in Heaven. Likewise, only the lost will stand before the Judge of All the Earth at the Great White Throne Judgment. All who are judged at either the Judgment Seat of Christ or the Great White Throne will know, in advance, whether or not they have “*made it*” (more on these judgments in later chapters).

If, at this moment, you are unsure of whether or not you will “make it,” then take a moment and communicate with your creator about it. Don’t put it off another second. We have God’s word on it that all who come to him in a state of true sorrow for their sins and call on God to save them through faith in His risen son, that He will hear, forgive and save (2 Corinthians 7:10, Romans 10:9-10,13kiv).

It is impossible to describe, or even imagine, the emotional fear and torment that will result in weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth at the Judgment of the Nations. And the scriptures say this emotional torment will *never* be relieved. These unfortunates will have no chance of reprieve and *no rest* day or night—*forever* (Revelation 14:11).

People today will do anything they possibly can to find relief from emotional distress. For sleeplessness, depression, fear, and anxiety, they turn to physicians and

medications such as sleeping pills, anti-depressants, alcohol, illegal drugs or escape into sexual immorality. Some are so desperate for relief they take their own lives.

Aside from the physical torments of hell, everyone who dies without belonging to Jesus Christ is condemning themselves to an eternity of indescribable *emotional* torment. There will be no access to the anesthetizing drugs or behaviors that were previously used to bring relief from emotional distress.

They will want to die but will be faced with the awful realization that they are already dead. They will understand, too late, that death is not a cessation of existence or source of relief at all, but rather a permanent separation from Christ—the only true source of peace that exists.

Too many will find themselves eternally confined to the torments of hell, because, while they had the chance to determine their eternal destinies, they sought relief in everything but Jesus.

Many who *thought* they had eternal life, giving lip-service to God while very comfortably living life only for themselves, will find out too late they were following *another* Jesus—not the Jesus of the Bible at all. Isaiah spoke of these when he penned the words: *This people draw near to me with their mouth, but their heart is far from me.*

It is only while we are here, on earth, that we have the opportunity to prepare for eternity. Once we cross over from time to eternity—it is too late.

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Many of us work very hard preparing for our uncertain futures here on earth while neglecting to make preparations for the one thing that is an absolute certainty—the day of our death.

Those condemned at the Judgment of the Nations will find themselves pleading, unashamedly, for their lives—begging for just *one more chance*. Many will have sincerely thought they were ministers of righteousness, deceiving many by the spiritual experiences they led their followers into, or by the miracles, signs and wonders that accompanied their ministries. They will be found desperately reminding Jesus of all they had done *in his name* (Matthew 7:21-22, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 2, Revelation 13:13-14, 16:14, Corinthians 11:13-15).

These will have exalted themselves and lorded it over the people of God with titles of their own choosing, but Jesus will deny ever knowing them and will call them by their true titles—*workers of iniquity* (Matthew 7:23).

Do not follow after spiritual directors, self-designated prophets or apostles who use unscriptural spiritual experiences, signs and wonders to validate their ministries. It is these particular types of ministers that Jesus carefully singles out and highlights as being deceptive and false (Matthew 7:15-23).

He says they will look just like sheep, but in reality they are *ravens* wolves. Satan has the ability to transform himself into an angel of light. His ministers can transform themselves into ministers of righteousness. Paul said such are false apostles, *deceitful workers*, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. *They will look like the real thing. They will sound like the real thing.* But they will *not* be the real thing. They

will be false, and any association with them has the potential of becoming eternally terminal.

When the blind lead the blind.... Who did Jesus say falls into the ditch (Matthew 15:14)?

In these latter days, many people are testifying to experiencing *paradigm shifts* concerning their beliefs. This is serious business. The apostle Paul warned that a major paradigm shift would take place shortly before the Man of Sin is revealed. He wrote, "Let no man deceive you, that day shall not come except there be a *falling away* first..."

A falling away is a defection. A defection takes place when one loyalty is rejected in favor of another. In the case of world view or religious beliefs, that defection would accurately be classified as a *paradigm shift*. Among professing Christians, we're hearing a great deal about paradigm shifts these days.

What will Jesus mean by the words, *I never knew you*? If he is referring to those who may have fallen away or defected from the true faith through an unfortunate paradigm shift, wouldn't he be lying if he said, "I *never* knew you?"

Consider this scripture from Ezekiel: "If a wicked man shall *turn* from all his sins... all his transgressions that he has committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him...but when the righteous man *turns* away from his righteousness...all his righteousness that he has done shall not be mentioned...Ezekiel 18:21-24"

Do not think that cannot happen. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 says it can and it will! And Hebrews 6:4-8 backs it up. If you need more convincing, read Jesus' letters to the churches in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of The Revelation.

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When Jesus denies ever having known these deceitful workers, will he be saying he was never aware of their existence or identities?

Of course not, he is aware of every detail of the existence of every one of us—from before we were ever created. He is our creator. He knows all *about* us. And yet he describes a time when he will be telling many who performed miracles, signs and wonders *in his name*, “I never knew you.”

The Word of God teaches that knowing Jesus entails much more than just knowing about him or learning—taking in a lot of information (knowledge)—about him. We can know all *about* him, yet never really *know* him.

We know that knowing all *about* someone is not the same as *knowing* that person. We can thoroughly research everything that can be found out about the President of the United States. We can know so much about him we could be certified as experts on knowing all about this person. But even with all that knowledge, could we claim to have a *relationship* with this person? Could we honestly say we *know* him? Of course not, and if we ever meet this person could he honestly say, “*I know you*,” based on all the study and knowledge *we have taken in* concerning him? Of course not.

The scriptures say that eternal life can only be attained by personally *knowing* Jesus Christ. Leading someone into “the love of Christ” will not save them. Jesus loves the world. Jesus died for the sins of the world. But the world is not saved simply through knowledge of that love.

Jesus said, “You must be born again.” How does that happen? The Bible says we are baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit and if we do not have the Holy Spirit, we do not belong to God. How does that happen (John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 12:13)?

Being born again and being baptized into the Body of Christ are the direct result of coming to God on *His* terms. His terms involve *repentance from sin* and profession of faith in his risen son, Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38, Romans 5:23, 10:9-10,13).

There are many people who have no trouble at all admitting that they are fully aware that Christ loves them but also are honest enough to admit that they are not yet heirs of eternal life because they have not yet chosen to respond in faith and repentance to the Gospel message that Christ, the Son of God paid the price for our *sins* by dying, being buried and rising from the dead—only those who respond in faith to the *preaching of the Gospel* are saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Jesus commanded us to preach the gospel, because only through the preaching of the gospel can men and women be saved. The Bible tells us *the Gospel* is the power of God unto salvation—nothing else (Matthew 7:23, John 17:3, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:21, 15:1-4).

If anyone belongs to an organization that says anything different from what Jesus says about this, *do not fear them* or their threats of excommunication. Jesus Christ (the physically resurrected Son of God), alone saves—without any help from any earthly or heavenly so-called mediator. The Bible says Jesus is the *only* mediator between God and man, and *no one* can pluck us out of his hand. Turn to the real Jesus, and be saved today (Acts 4:10-12, Romans 10:9-10, 13, John 10:27-29).

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If anyone is affiliated with a movement that elevates meditation, spiritual experiences, prophesying, signs, and wonders above all else, take special heed. It is this group Jesus singles out to illustrate the dangers of thinking one knows Christ, *but in reality does not*.

Those who profess Christ and are affiliated with these things, who do not repent and renounce all unscriptural spiritual experiences, lying wonders, signs and gifts—now—before he comes to raise the dead and catch up the living, run a serious risk of being given over to believe the lie. And if that happens, all possibility of salvation will be gone forever. The Judgment of the Nations and The Great White Throne Judgment is what you will have to look forward to (Matthew 7:15-23, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 9-11).

The Judgment of the Nations will take place after the battle of Armageddon, and when it is complete, Jesus Christ will be recognized as the undisputed King of kings, Lord of lords and God of gods. Israel will be acknowledged as the head nation on earth, and a new era of unprecedented peace will begin.

Chapter Review:

What will happen to the nation or kingdom that will not acknowledge Israel as the head nation when Jesus returns to earth (Isaiah 60:12)?

What particular types of ministers does Jesus carefully single out and highlight as being deceptive and false (Matthew 7:15-23)?

What, according to 2 Thessalonians 2:3, will happen before the Lord returns to raise the dead and catch up the living?

Is knowing all *about* people the same as knowing them (Matthew 7:23)?

Who did Jesus say could pluck us out of his hand (John 10:27-29)?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

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14

1000 Years of Peace

The feast of Tabernacles foreshadows a time of rest and rejoicing that will take place while Christ tabernacles with men during the first 1000 years of his reign here on earth (Leviticus 23:35, 40, Isaiah 11:10, Hebrews 4:8-9, Revelation 20:4).

The First Resurrection

The mortal survivors of Judgment of the Nations along with all of the Children of the Resurrection will enter into this rest. The *Children of the Resurrection* will consist of the New Testament saints (the Body of Christ—his Church), Old Testament saints, the 144,000 Jews (who are redeemed from the earth) and the tribulation martyrs (Matthew 25:34, 1 Corinthians 15:22-23, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Daniel 12:13, Job 19:25, Hebrews 4:8-9, Revelation 16:1-4, 20:4-6).

The unsaved dead will remain in their graves until the first 1000 years are finished (Revelation 20:5).

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After the judgment of the nations is complete, and all things that offend and do iniquity are removed from the earth, the establishment of Christ's worldwide government will be complete (Matthew 13:41-42, Isaiah 9:6).

This government will be like no government the world has ever known. Judges will judge righteously. Justice will be done. Dirty politics where the strong oppress the weak or the rich oppress the poor will be gone forever (Isaiah 32:1[1-5]).

For the first time since the garden, there will be worldwide peace (Isaiah 9:7).

Christ's resurrected and caught up saints will administrate this glorious government. But who, exactly, will they be governing?

Mortals in Christ's Kingdom

The physical survivors of the Judgment of the Nations will enter Christ's kingdom in their mortal conditions. Their bodies will not be gloriously changed like the Children of the Resurrection. One of the scriptural evidences for this includes the fact that survivors of the Judgment of the Nations will marry and bear children. They will reproduce and repopulate the earth—some will even die (Isaiah 11:8[6-8], 40:11, 65:20-23).

In contrast, Jesus specifically said the *Children of the Resurrection* will be as the angels and will not marry in the resurrection (Luke 20:35-36).

The mortal survivors of The Great Tribulation are not the *Children of the Resurrection*. This is yet another evidence of a pre-tribulational rapture. Those, in Christ,

who are alive at the *Resurrection of the Just* will be changed and become like Christ, the angels, and the resurrected saints. The Children of the Resurrection will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ—in Heaven—before he returns to earth at the Battle of Armageddon, not at the Judgment of the Nations, which will take place on earth, or at the White Throne Judgment that will take place at the end of the 1000 years (1 John 3:2, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, Luke 14:14, Revelation 19:11-14, 20:5, 11-15).

Death in Christ's Kingdom

Christ's Kingdom will be primarily an agricultural society (Isaiah 2:4, 65:21).

Death will not be abolished during this time; it will not be completely done away with until the first 1000 years are finished, but life spans will be greatly increased, and death will be rare (Revelation 21:4[1-5], Isaiah 65:20,22).

Satan will not be around to instigate evil, and the entire world will be at peace. Peace and safety will be taken for granted to such an extent that locks, bars and gates will not be used in the Kingdom of Christ (Ezekiel 38:11, Jeremiah 30:10, Isaiah 32:17-18, Revelation 20:1-3).

Mankind will be given an opportunity to start fresh in a perfect world with no devilish temptation to deal with, and for 1000 years will live in a society that honors God.

To What Extent Is Revelation Chapter 20 Symbolic?

There are those who contend that the one thousand years spoken of in Revelation chapter twenty is not a literal

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time period but rather representative of an obscure or unlimited period of time. The scriptures, however, do not bear out that conclusion.

The one thousand years cannot represent an unlimited period of time, as it has both a beginning and an end. Revelation 20:5 specifically tells us the one thousand years will come to an end—not only that, but the one thousand year time period is mentioned repeatedly in this chapter, and the events that are to take place when the thousand years are *expired* are clearly outlined.

Revelation Chapter 20 is not a symbolic chapter. Everything in it will happen—literally—just as described.

Sadly, even without the influence of Satan, there will be some who *will* dare to sin during the first one thousand years of Christ's Kingdom. But sin will be dealt with so swiftly the peaceful society will not be threatened. Corruption of any sort will not be tolerated. If anyone sins during this time, they cannot claim the devil made them do it (Jeremiah 17:9, Isaiah 65:20, Matthew 12:32).

The writer of Hebrews made reference to the wonderful rest that will take place in the Kingdom of Christ—which is the age to come. It is important to note that the word *world*, used in Matthew 12:32, is more literally translated *age*. Jesus Christ truly will be ushering in a new age (Hebrews 4:8-9, Matthew 12:32).

Chapter Review:

- What does the feast of Tabernacles foreshadow (Leviticus 23:35, 40, Isaiah 11:10, Hebrews 4:8-9, Revelation 20:4)?
- How long will the unrighteous remain in their graves (Revelation 20:5)?
- When will world peace be accomplished (Isaiah 9:7)?
- List one scriptural proof that survivors of the Judgment of the Nations will enter Christ's Kingdom in their physical, mortal condition (Isaiah 11:8[6-8], 40:11, 65:20-23)?
- What differentiates the Children of the Resurrection from the mortal survivors of the Judgment of the Nations (Luke 20:35-36)?
- Will death be completely abolished during the first 1000 years of Christ's reign (Revelation 21:4[1-5], Isaiah 65:20, 22)?

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15

The Final Rebellion

In spite of the fact that Satan will be bound during the first millennium, there will still be those whose hearts are foolishly rebellious against the rule of Jesus Christ.

This will prove once and for all the scripture is true that says the heart of man is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things—even without Satan's help. God knows who the rebellious ones are, and it is part of his plan to expose them and rid the earth of the wicked completely and *permanently* (Ezekiel 38:10-12, 16, Jeremiah 17:9).

The Devil Made Me Do It?

Even in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, there will be those who will think evil thoughts and plot against the good people of the land. Since there will be no war for 1000 years, there will be no safeguards against invaders. To these evil-thinkers, the peaceful inhabitants of the land

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will appear to be sitting ducks. In order to expose these rebellious ones, God will allow Satan one last period of freedom (Revelation 20:7-8, Ezekiel 38:10-12).

Satan's agenda never changes, and once again his focus will be on Jerusalem (Revelation 20:9).

There will be no excuse for the people of Christ's Kingdom to be deceived or taken by surprise when Satan is released from the Bottomless Pit. Just as the present end-time defection from the true faith is revealed in the scriptures for those of us who are living today, the final rebellion at the end of the 1000 years is clearly spelled out in the word of God as a warning for the future inhabitants of Christ's Kingdom. Those people will have access to the Written Word of God just as we do.

In fact, they will have even more of an advantage than we do, because the Word of the Lord will flow uncorrupted and uninterrupted from Jerusalem for fully 1000 years before God allows the final deception to be loosed. Before that happens, just as the scriptures predict, the World will literally be filled with the knowledge of God (Matthew 24:35, Isaiah 2:3,11:9, Psalm 12:6-7, 100:5).

In that age as well as this one, there will be those who understand Bible prophecy, believe it, and proclaim it. But all teaching in Christ's Kingdom will flow through authorized channels—from Jerusalem.

There will be no itinerant ministries, prophets or preachers in the Kingdom of Christ (Amos 3:7, John 16:13, 1 Timothy 2:4, Zechariah 13:2-3).

Satan will not be released in order to *cause* men to think evil thoughts. They will already be doing that. Although, no doubt, he will immediately busy himself with giving them a steady stream of new ideas (in addition to those they have already conceived on their own). Satan will be released in order to *expose* them and to help spread the treachery as far as it will go.

In the final rebellion, just as is happening now, in the falling away that is taking place within the Body of Christ today, the Lord will allow anyone and everyone who is inclined to defect to do so. There is a great shaking going on as this book is being written, and the Bible predicts a great shaking will also take place at the end of the first millennium. At that time, Satan will deceive rebellious people (just like he did the angels who fell) into believing they can actually take over the reins of Christ's government (Ezekiel 38:10-12, Isaiah 65:20, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Hebrews 12:26-27, Revelation 20:7-8).

Satan's efforts to deceive the nations will be an incredibly successful operation (Isaiah 24:5).

Satan cannot tempt or deceive us with anything that does not appeal to us. The people that cooperate with Satan's agenda during the final rebellion cannot plead ignorance or blame their sin on the devil any more than Eve could—or anymore than *we* can (Genesis 3:13).

If we were not capable, with the help of the Holy Spirit, of understanding the truth and standing against the wiles of the devil, God would not expect it of us. But the fact is we are and He does.

Those who rebel against Christ at the end of the one thousand years will be ensnared in the same way Satan

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ensnares people today—by their own lusts (James 1:14 [12-16], 2 Timothy 4:3).

The people who reject the lordship of Christ and follow Satan in the final rebellion will be without excuse just as those are today who reject, or defect from, the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:3).

The nation that will spearhead the invasion against Jerusalem will be called Gog (Ezekiel 38:14[8-23], Revelation 20:8).

The final rebellion is described in the following passages:

- Isaiah 24:5
- Ezekiel 38:8-23
- Revelation 20:19

How long this rebellion lasts is not known. Scripture does not say. But we do know that, in the end, Gog's rebellion will not be successful.

The final battle, in the final rebellion, will be characterized by the following:

- The Lord will cause Gog's armies to turn their swords against one another (just as he did to the armies surrounding Jerusalem at Armageddon), and they will begin destroying themselves.
- God will strike them with some sort of highly contagious disease.
- And finally, he will rain fire and brimstone out of Heaven to finish them off (Revelation 20:9, Ezekiel 38:21-22).

Pandemic

So many of the earth's inhabitants will participate in this final rebellion against the rule of Christ, the entire earth will become infected with the treachery and become defiled. The rebellion will be world-wide. Because of this, the Bible says the inhabitants of the earth will be burned up (Isaiah 24:6[5-6]).

Notice that verse 6 says there will be *few* men left. We know, because of this, that some people will miraculously survive this final, fiery purge. The Bible doesn't say how, but we know that God is well able to deliver those he accounts worthy to escape his wrath. Whether they will be caught up and changed (like the raptured saints before The Great Tribulation) or whether they will be kept safe in the midst of the fire (like the 3 Hebrew children in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace) we do not know. But we do know some will somehow survive, and they, along with the Children of the Resurrection, will continue to inhabit the earth forever (Psalm 37:9, 115:16, Isaiah 24:6, 45:18, Daniel 3:16-17, Matthew 5:5).

After this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire. The Bible says all who are thrown into the lake of fire will be tormented day and night *forever* (Revelation 20:10).

The Lord now has only one thing more to do before creating a new heavens and a new earth that can be inhabited peacefully forever.

The wicked dead must be raised and judged...at the *Great White Throne Judgment*.

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Chapter Review:

Will anyone rebel against Christ's leadership in his kingdom (Ezekiel 38:10-12, 16, Jeremiah 17:9)?

Where will the Word of the Lord flow from in Christ's Kingdom (Isaiah 2:3)?

Will there be itinerant ministries, prophets or preachers in the Kingdom of Christ (Amos 3:7, John 16:13, 1 Timothy 2:4, Zechariah 13:2-3)?

How successful will Satan be in his efforts to deceive the nations (Isaiah 24:5)?

Can Satan tempt or deceive us with anything that does not appeal to us (Genesis 3:13, James 1:14 [12-16], 2 Corinthians 11:3, 2 Timothy 4:3)?

What will the nation be called that will spearhead the final rebellion against Christ's government (Ezekiel 38:2, 14[1-23], Revelation 20:8)?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

16

The Great White Throne

*"And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it...
(Revelation 20:11)."*

Another Resurrection

At the end of the 1000 years there will be one more resurrection. This will be the only judgment where a *second death* takes place.

The reason those at *The Great White Throne Judgment* suffer death twice is, because after they have endured the agony of complete separation from the presence and power of God, after they have lost all hope of salvation when their physical life here on earth ended, their *bodies* will be raised for a final judgment. During this judgment, they will once again come into the presence and power of God—only to be cast from his presence...to die a *second time* (Revelation 20:12-14).

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****Remember the scriptural definition of death is *separation from* the presence of God and from his power (2 Thessalonians 1:9, Revelation 20:12, John 5:29, Daniel 12:2, Revelation 20:5-6, 14)?**

This will be a fearful judgment for those condemned to suffer the second death. There will be no place to run and no place to hide (Revelation 20:11).

Naked Before God

Those who rejected Christ, during their lives on earth, will now stand before the throne of God, in their physical bodies to receive judgment for the deeds and choices they made during their lifetimes here on earth. They will be held accountable for everything they did, or did not do, during their earthly existence. *Every* word and deed will be brought into judgment. Not one single stone will be left unturned. Nothing will remain hidden (Matthew 10:26, 12:36-37, Revelation 20:11-13, John 5:27-29).

The horror and shame of this judgment cannot possibly be comprehended. How different it will be from the Judgment Seat of Christ where the righteous will be rewarded and given white robes to wear—the Bible says nothing about those at the Great White Throne Judgment being given anything to wear (Revelation 20:11-12).

Just as the souls and spirits of the righteous dead were reunited with their bodies at their resurrection, so the bodies of the unrighteous dead will be raised and reunited with their souls and spirits to stand and receive judgment in the presence of God—but the resurrected bodies of the unrighteous dead will not be changed into glorious, incorruptible bodies like Jesus and the Children of the Resurrection received when they were raised (Revelation 20:13, John 5:28-29, 2 John 3:2, Daniel 12:2).

Why the “Soul” Needs To Be Saved

Communication with God is only possible through the spirit. The physical body cannot have communication and fellowship with God. Our soul is the part of us that connects with, and participates in, both the physical and the spiritual. That is why the apostle Paul prayed that God would preserve the saints *whole*—body soul *and* spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Ephesians 2:18, Romans 8:16).

There are those who teach the soul is simply our physical life (flesh). Scripture does not substantiate this view:

- Our flesh cannot depart when we die. It does not go anywhere except where it is carried (Genesis 35:18, 2 Timothy 4:6[6-8]).
- The body is distinguished from the soul in several scriptures (Matthew 10:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 4:12, Isaiah 42:1).
- God has a soul (Isaiah 42:1).
- Man is a composite unity just as God is. One of the ways man is created in God’s image is that man is a triune being. We are three—body, soul and spirit—yet we are one (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- We have a spirit (Numbers 16:22).
- We have a soul as God does (Isaiah 42:1).
- We live *in* a body. Paul referred to our bodies as tents—dwelling places (2 Corinthians 5:1, 4[1-8]).
- The reason our soul needs to be saved, is because it is the part of us that participates in *both* the spiritual and the physical aspects of our lives. Our soul is the *real* us. Our soul participates in and makes choices that affect us both spiritually and physically and is thus held accountable.

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Unless our souls are saved first, our bodies *cannot* be redeemed at the first resurrection (Mark 8:36-37).

Those who experience the second death will not be preserved whole. The bodies, souls and spirits of the ungodly will be reunited for the judgment, but when they are cast into the lake of fire they will be deprived of their spirits which will return to, and remain with, God. Thus they will be prevented from ever again having access to the presence of God—this is the second death. Their bodies will then burn forever, but will never be consumed (Ecclesiastes 12:7, James 2:26, Isaiah 66:24, Mark 9:43-48, Revelation 20:10).

There is no need for anyone to experience the second death, but there is only one way to avoid it. Jesus, the *only* Christ, is the only way, the only truth and the only life. All who come to God in true repentance asking him to forgive their sins and save them, through faith in his resurrected son, will receive eternal life (John 14:6, Romans 10:9-10, 13).

Call on Jesus *now*. Ask him to forgive your sins and save you according to Romans 10:9-10, 13. Then begin reading your Bible. Read prayerfully every day—always picking up today where you left off yesterday. The book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

Chapter Review:

What is the scriptural definition of death (2 Thessalonians 1:9, Revelation 20:12, John 5:29, Daniel 12:2, Revelation 20:5-6, 14)?

How are the saints preserved whole (1 Corinthians 2:13-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Ephesians 2:18, Romans 8:16)?

What is one way God created man in his image (1 Thessalonians 5:23)?

Is it necessary for anyone to experience the second death (John 14:6, Romans 10:9-10, 13)?

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17

New Heavens/New Earth

After the first 1000 years of Christ's reign has been completed and the final rebellion put down, the sin corrupted earth, along with the heavens surrounding it, will be destroyed by fire along with most of its inhabitants.

God will then completely restore both the earth and the heavens to their original perfection (Revelation 20:4-7, Isaiah 24:6, Revelation 20:9, Isaiah 65:17, Revelation 21:1).

Why Do The Heavens Need To Be Made New?

There is no scriptural evidence that the Heaven where God lives needs renewing. There is no sin there. However, there is much scriptural evidence that the heavenly places surrounding this earth, our atmosphere and beyond, are presently the abode of fallen angels. It seems the very heavens surrounding our earth's

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atmosphere are infested with these fallen beings and has been corrupted by sin. So the heavens will need renewing along with the earth (Revelation 12:9, Daniel 8:10, Ephesians 6:12).

The new earth will continue to be inhabited by all the saved from down through the ages (Matthew 5:5, Revelation 21:24, Psalm 115:16).

Death will finally be abolished in the new earth, and all broken hearts will be healed. The inhabitants of the New Earth will never again experience sickness, pain, death or SORROW (Revelation 21:2-4).

But God's great redemption will not be forgotten in the new earth. The City that God will send down from Heaven will be a visible reminder of it (Revelation 21:10-27).

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel, the nation through whom our redeemer came, will be written upon the twelve gates of the Holy Jerusalem. Each of these magnificent gates will be made of one great pearl (Ezekiel 48:31-35, Revelation 21:21).

The wall of that city will have 12 foundations. Each foundation will be made of a different precious stone in which the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb will be inscribed. The brightness of the Holy Jerusalem will light the whole earth (Revelation 21:14, 23-24, Isaiah 60:19-20).

Those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be permitted to enter the city, and there the saints will walk on streets made of gold so pure it is completely transparent (Revelation 21:21, 27).

Yearly Reminders

The people of the new earth will observe new moons and Sabbaths just as they did during the millennium (Isaiah 66:22-23).

As the Feasts of the Lord, in the former times, *foretold* Christ and God's plan to redeem our souls, bodies and the earth, the new moons and Sabbaths on the new earth will serve as *reminders* of God's great love, mercy and redemption (Exodus 12:14, Leviticus 23:21, Isaiah 66:22-23).

There will be one other act of remembrance performed by the people of the new earth, a reminder, not of God's mercy, but of His justice. Pilgrimages will be made to the one place on earth that will not be made new.

The Lake of Fire, formed when hell enlarged itself by moving up and breaking through to the surface of the earth (on the day Christ returned), will remain. And the land area surrounding it will remain a desolate wasteland—*forever*. This will be a grim reminder to all that God is a God of justice as well as a God of mercy (Isaiah 14:9, 34:9-10, Ezekiel 47:11).

Indeed, it is impossible to display love and mercy without the justice that, of necessity, must accompany it. The people of the new earth will make pilgrimages to this desolate area to look upon the carcasses of those who will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Isaiah 66:24, Revelation 14:9-11, 20:10, Mark 9:43-48).

The scriptures do not contradict themselves when we are told, on the one hand, that the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever and on the other hand they are called *carcasses*. The word carcass accurately describes these suffering transgressors, because the Bible

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consistently refers to people who are separated from God through sin as *dead* (Matthew 8:22, Ephesians 2:1, 5, Colossians 2:13, 1 John 3:14, Revelation 3:1).

Those who will be consigned to the lake of fire, those who will die *twice*, will not be preserved *whole*, because their spirits will be taken from them at the second death, and James tells us the body without the spirit is dead.

Their souls, which cannot die, and their dead bodies—the same bodies that were raised and judged at the white throne judgment—which will never be consumed, will remain united in the lake of fire—forever—but with no way to access either the presence or the power of God. That will be their destruction (1 Thessalonians 5:23, James 2:26, Luke 16:23-24).

The soul is that *hidden man* that Peter spoke of, and of which he said, “Is not corruptible.” That means it cannot decay or cease to exist (1 Peter 3:4).

Those whose names are not written in the Lambs Book of Life will be cut off, forever, from the presence and the power of the God who is the source of all life (2 Thessalonians 1:9, Ephesians 2:1).

These carcasses will be in a constant state of decay, and will burn forever, but will never be consumed (Isaiah 66:24, Mark 9:43-48).

The people of the new earth will be able to physically *look* upon the carcasses of these transgressors. And they will do so with abhorrence. The men and women who transgressed during the time of God's mercy and grace, who rejected the salvation so freely offered, who rebelled after having lived for 1000 years under the rule

and reign of Jesus Christ himself, are past redemption and past pity. They are now looked upon, rightly, with nothing but contempt (Isaiah 66:24).

There will be no brokenhearted wives, husbands, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, sisters, friends or brothers sobbing over their fate. Jesus will have thoroughly wiped those tears away when he made all things new (Isaiah 65:17, Revelation 21:4).

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior, or if you are in any way unsure of your salvation—please make certain of it now—Repent of your sins. Ask God to forgive you of your sins and save you through faith in his risen son *today—right now*. There will be no second chances when this life is over. This is it (Hebrews 9:27, Luke 12:16-21, Romans 10:9-10, 13).

The scriptures say, “*Take heed to the things we have heard*, lest at any time we should drift away from them. For if a word spoken by angels was certain and every transgression received a fair repayment: How shall we escape...if we neglect so great a salvation?”

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Chapter Review:

Why will the heavens need renewing along with the earth (Revelation 12:9, Daniel 8:10, Ephesians 6:12)?

Who will inhabit the earth forever (Matthew 5:5, Revelation 21:24, Psalm 115:16)?

Will the brightness of the Holy Jerusalem light only part of the earth (Revelation 21:14, 23-24, Isaiah 60:19-20)?

Who will be permitted to enter the city where saints will walk on streets made of pure gold (Revelation 21:21, 27)?

Will new moons and Sabbaths be observed by the people of the new earth (Isaiah 66:22-23)?

What will serve as a grim reminder for the people of the new earth (Isaiah 14:9, 34:9-10, Ezekiel 47:11)?

How do the scriptures refer to people who are separated from God through sin (Matthew 8:22, Ephesians 2:1, 5, Colossians 2:13, 1 John 3:14, Revelation 3:1)?

According to 1 Peter 3:4, can the soul cease to exist?

According to Hebrews 9:27, are there any more chances to accept Christ after we die?

Are you reading your Bible daily, always picking up today where you left off yesterday? If not, the book of John is a good place to start. *A King James Bible with no chapter headings or footnotes is recommended.*

18

Additional Studies

The Beginning of Sorrows

Many believe we are now living in the last of the last days. What does the Bible say about world conditions in the latter days? Before answering that question, let's look at what the scriptures have to say about the condition of humanity in those days.

In 2 Timothy 3:1-7 we are given a description of what the human race will be like in the latter days. There is little doubt that the time period described in 2 Timothy, mirrors the society we are currently living in.

In the latter days, men are prophesied to be: Selfish, covetous, boastful, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, lacking in self-control, fierce, Despisers of those that are good, traitors, full of

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themselves/conceited, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

That is quite a list of negative attributes, and though it may have shocked the people of Timothy's day, it is neither shocking nor unbelievable to those of us living today. The description leaves little doubt that we are living in the perilous times described by the apostle Paul to Timothy.

Now, concerning what the Bible has to say about world conditions in the latter days, in Matthew chapter 24, Jesus described events he called the *Beginning of Sorrows*.

Before going on, it is necessary to understand that when Christ used the word *sorrows*, he was not referring to *hard times that will make us sad*. The word he used means labor pains or *birth* pangs.

The events he describes as the Beginning of Sorrows are birth pangs that are designed to result in a *birth*. The question is the birth of what?

The Bible says the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now for the redemption of *our bodies*. That will happen at the resurrection of the dead and the catching up of the living—rapture of the church (Romans 8:22-23).

But are we already in the *Beginning of Sorrows*?

Perhaps not, because after the raising of the dead and the catching up of the living takes place, Israel (the woman depicted in Revelation 12:1) is shown to be in travail—she

gives birth to the *man-child and, *after that*, the redemption of all Israel comes to pass. That event is repeatedly referred to, in scripture, as a birth (Isaiah 66:8-9, Romans 11:26-27, Revelation 12:1-5, 14:1-5).

*This writer is in agreement with those who identify the birth of the man-child as the sealing and catching up of the 144,000 rather than the birth of Jesus Christ. There are no flashbacks in The [book of] Revelation. Revelation chapter 12 is consistent with Revelation Chapters 7-14 which depict the 144,000 being sealed for their protection, then caught up to Heaven at the conclusion of their ministry—before the final 3 ½ years of The Great Tribulation begins (Revelation 1:1, 3, 7:1-8, Revelation 12:1-6, 14:1-5).

Why did Jesus use birth pangs as an example?

Because they accurately describe how we can expect the events He is describing to progress. Labor pains generally start small and come rather far apart. As the labor progresses, the pains increase in both intensity and frequency. Just before the birth occurs, the pains become very intense and are almost non-stop.

The events Jesus describes in Matthew 24 are as follows: Wars and rumors of wars, diseases and earthquakes in many different places. These align perfectly with events described in the 6th chapter of The Revelation (which takes place *after* the Body of Christ is redeemed from the earth).

There is no argument that we have been experiencing these things on earth for quite some time now, and the frequency and intensity of these things has been increasing.

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The whole creation is groaning and travailing even now for the redemption of our bodies. But this is not the Beginning of Sorrows. The Beginning of Sorrows will be just a prelude to the short but absolutely devastating time period prophesied in the Bible and called, among other things, The Great Tribulation.

After the rapture of the Church, the birth pangs (sorrows) will begin in earnest and will continue to escalate in both frequency and intensity until everything that has been prophesied, concerning the redemption *of Israel* has literally come to pass (Romans 11:26, Isaiah 66:8)

Why Can't I Find the Word "Rapture" in the Bible?

Many are being led into serious error, even defecting from the faith, because of doctrinal difficulties having to do with Biblical Prophecy.

One very serious issue among Christians concerns the use of the word "rapture" and the doctrinal claims made by those who oppose it.

The word "Rapture" *is* found in the Bible—just not in any *modern* Bibles. It is found in older versions that were translated from a Latin version.

Some theorists who oppose the use of the word refer to the *W.E. Vines Expository of New Testament Words* as an authority to claim the word "rapture" has no rightful place in New Testament vocabulary. Below are 2 reasons the Vines should not be used as an authority in this case:

The Vines commentary is not comprehensive. It does not contain all of the words used in the New Testament.

The word "rapture" is found in *Latin* translations of the Bible—not Greek Translations. The Vine's Expository does not deal with Latin Translations.

Therefore, using the Vines as an authority on the subject is very misleading to those unfamiliar with the limited scope of the work.

Some argue against the Greek Word, *harpazo*, being translated, *caught up*, in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. They

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maintain that it has a very forceful connotation and can also be accurately translated, *caught, snatched or seized*.

They are correct.

The problem presents itself when they go from there to attack the use of the word “up” being used in connection with the word *caught* (forming the phrase—caught *up*). They oppose this as an inaccurate translation of the word *harpazo*.

But can they back up that opposition with facts?

In scripture, we see the Greek word, *harpazo*, used in other applications having nothing whatsoever to do with being caught up or snatched up. But is that proof it was translated erroneously in 1 Thessalonians 4:17? Is that reasoning logical considering the end result? After the event described in 2nd Thessalonians, where do we find those who have been *snatched* or *caught*...(1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)?

Were they not caught up...? Into the air...? with Christ?

The translators of the King James Bible were responsibly looking at the entire context and were in no way misleading anyone when the decision was made to translate the Greek word, *harpazo*, as “caught up.”

In looking at other passages in which the word *harpazo* was used, the end location of those who were seized or snatched was not necessarily up—and the seizing or snatching was not necessarily a good thing. So we know the word, *harpazo*, by itself, has no connotation of good, evil, or of direction (up, down, east, west etc.). The

context of each passage must determine both the purpose and the direction of the catching, snatching or seizing (Acts 8:39, 23:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

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CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE RAPTURE AND THE 2ND COMING

Below is a list of contrasts between the time Christ returns in the air *for* his saints and the time he physically returns to the earth *with* his saints:

1. Before the rapture, whoever *calls* on God through the name of his resurrected son, Jesus Christ, shall be saved (Romans 10:9-10, 13). / After the rapture, only those who *endure to the end* shall be saved (Matthew 24:13).
2. Before the rapture, the criteria for salvation is faith alone—without works (Ephesians 2:8). / After the 2nd Coming of Christ, one of the criteria of judgment for entering His Kingdom will be works (Matthew 25:31-46).
3. Before the rapture, no one knows the day or the hour the son of man will come (Matthew 24:36, 42). / After the rapture, the *days* can be counted (Daniel 12:11).
4. At the rapture, Jesus will be coming out of Heaven without his saints. He will be coming to earth for his saints (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). / At the 2nd Coming, his saints will be coming out of Heaven with Him (Zechariah 14:4, 1 Thessalonians 3:13).
5. Before the rapture, we are looking for a sudden, imminent appearance (Hebrews 10:37). / After the rapture, the days to Christ's appearance can be counted. Christ's appearance will bring an end to *The Great Tribulation* (Daniel 12:11).
6. At the rapture, the Archangel will blow the trumpet (1 Thessalonians 4:16). / At the 2nd Coming, God (Jesus) himself will blow the trumpet (Zechariah 9:14, Isaiah 27:13, Matthew 24:31).

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7. At the rapture, the trumpet signals the resurrection of the dead and changing of the living. No angelic gathering takes place (1Cor15:52). / At the 2nd Coming, the trumpet precedes an angelic gathering—no resurrection of the dead or changing of the living takes place (Matthew 24:31, Mark 13:26-27).
8. At the rapture, those resurrected and caught out will be changed and become as the angels (Matthew 22:30). / At the 2nd Coming, survivors of the Great Tribulation will first be judged at the Judgment of the Nations. They will then enter Christ's Kingdom in their mortal, *physical*, condition. During the first 1000 years of Christ's Kingdom, some will marry and give birth. Some will even die (Isaiah 65:20-23).
9. At the rapture, Christ is coming for all who belong to him—those *in* Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). / At the 2nd Coming, Christ is coming as deliverer only to those who are looking for him (Matthew 24:44-51).
10. At his first coming, Christ came to reconcile. The resurrection from the dead and the catching up of the living are included in that reconciliation (Colossians 1:20). / At his 2nd Coming, Christ is coming not to reconcile but to subdue (Philippians 3:21).
11. When Jesus comes in the air at the rapture, there will be only raised and changed bodies (1Thessalonians 4:16-17). / At His 2nd Coming, there will be dead bodies (Luke 17:37, Revelation 19:21).

These contrasts present great doctrinal difficulties for those who fail to differentiate between Christ's coming out of Heaven for his saints and his coming out of Heaven with his saints. When it is understood that these

are two completely separate events, contradictions disappear (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Jude: 14).

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Is Daniel's 70th WEEK The Great Tribulation?

The name of *The Great Tribulation* comes from the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus is quoted as using the phrase “Great Tribulation” in reference to the time many believe is the same time period Jeremiah calls *The Time of Jacob's Trouble*.

In the book of Daniel, “70 weeks of years” are introduced (Daniel 9:24).

Many scholars believe that everything prophesied concerning the 70 weeks has already been fulfilled with the exception of one week—the final “*week*.” This is most often referred to as the 70th Week of Daniel or Daniel's 70th Week (Daniel 9:25, 27).

Does the 70th week of Daniel correspond to The Great Tribulation / Time of Jacob's Trouble? Is it indeed the *same* time period?

What Do the 70 Weeks Concern?

To answer the above question it is necessary to ask another one. What, or more correctly—*who*—do the 70 weeks concern? Daniel 9:24 says, “*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city.*”

In the verse above, we see two things explained:

- The 70 weeks concern thy people (Daniel's people—the Jews).
- The 70 weeks concern thy holy city (Daniel's holy city—Jerusalem).

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In Daniel 9:21-24, Gabriel is speaking to Daniel and making a reference to *Daniel's people*—the Jews. And in Daniel 6:10, we see Daniel praying towards his holy city—Jerusalem.

Daniel's prophecy concerns not only the Jews and Jerusalem exclusively, but it concerns the Jews *only when they are in possession of* their holy city, Jerusalem. That is the reason for the long gap between the 69th and 70th weeks. That gap represents the time the Jewish people were in exile—not in possession of their land—and more specifically, when they were not in possession of their *holy city*.

70 WEEKS DEFINED

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jews) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem).

In order to understand this passage, the seventy weeks need to be defined scripturally. The 70 weeks are not referring to 70 7-day weeks. Verse 25 makes that clear.

Genesis 29:27-28 gives the key to understanding how long each week is: “Fulfill her *week*...serve with me yet seven other *years*. Jacob did so and fulfilled her *week*.” Thus we see that, according to scripture, the 70 weeks in Daniel 9:24 are *70 weeks of years* with each week equaling 7 years.

When we multiply each of the 70 years by 7, it comes to a total of 490 years ($70 \times 7 = 490$).

The prophecy we see in Daniel 9:24-26 Covers the time period beginning with the commandment to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem up to the time of the crucifixion of

Christ. Both history and Daniel 9:25 agree that the total time period, from the proclamation to rebuild the wall to the crucifixion of Christ, equals 483 years (which according to Genesis 29:27-28, equals 69 weeks).

But 70 weeks of years equals 490 years ($70 \times 7 = 490$), not 483 years (69 weeks). That means there is a total of 7 years (1 week) left *unaccounted for*.

For good reason, many believe the remaining 7 years, the final *week*, to be The Time of Jacob's Trouble. *The Time of Jacob's Trouble* encompasses both *The Beginning of Sorrows* and *The Great Tribulation*.

After the Church is caught up, the Man of Sin will pretend to be a savior to Israel. They will believe him and make a 7-year treaty with him—which he will honor for only 3 ½ years—The Beginning of Sorrows. Then he will renege and spend the next 3½ years in brutal persecution of them and anyone else who opposes him—The Great Tribulation (3 ½ years Beginning of Sorrows + 3 ½ years Great Tribulation = 7 years).

The Beginning of Sorrows and The Great Tribulation take place during the final 7 years preceding the visible and physical return of Christ. *The Time of Jacob's Trouble* and the 70th week of Daniel are one and the same.

Although the Church, the spiritual seed of Abraham, will share in the promises given to the Jewish people, none of the promises given to Abraham concerning his physical descendants have been, or will ever be, *transferred from* the Jewish people to the Church.

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When Christ was rejected by his people, Israel, and crucified, God's *focus* shifted from the nation of Israel, to His Church—the Body of Christ. No transfer of promises took place at that time or ever will take place at any time in the future. After this present dispensation is completed, God's focus will shift once again. Only this time it will be from His Church (which will no longer be on earth but in Heaven with Him) *back to his people Israel*—to fulfill his promises to them and to fulfill their purpose here on earth.

Because the 70 weeks that have been determined upon the people of Daniel and on their holy city are for a certain purpose, they can only be fulfilled while the Jewish people are in possession of their holy city, Jerusalem.

That has been the case since 1967.

And the 70 weeks can only be fulfilled after God fulfills His purpose for, and shifts his focus from, His Church back to His people Israel. That will not happen until this present dispensation of grace, the time of *Christ In You*, is fulfilled at the raising of the dead [in Christ] and catching up of the living. (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8).

PURPOSE OF THE 70 WEEKS

We have seen that Daniels's vision of the 70 weeks concerns only his people (the Jews) while they are in possession of his holy city (Jerusalem).

The 70 weeks have been Biblically *defined* as being weeks of *years* (as opposed to 7-day weeks) with each week equaling 7 years. But what exactly is the *purpose* for the 70 weeks?

In Daniel 9:24, six purposes are given for the 70 weeks. The 70 weeks are ordained to:

- Finish the Transgression
- Make an end of sins
- Make reconciliation for iniquity
- Bring in everlasting righteousness
- Seal up the vision and prophecy
- Anoint the most Holy

The Six Purposes Examined

Purpose One

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to... "***Finish the transgression...***"

The word translated *finish* in Daniel 9:24 means literally to finish, restrict, hold back, prohibit. The first purpose of the seventy weeks is to stop the progression of, and bring to an end, the transgression.

The “transgression” in Daniel 9:24 is not necessarily referring to sin in general (which afflicts all men, is indeed progressive, and which Jesus made atonement for), but to a uniquely Jewish transgression which will cause worldwide destruction if it is permitted to **run its full course**.

The transgression referred to in Daniel 9:24 is the national rejection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel. First, the religious, political leadership of that nation rejected him, and then the population at large followed suit (Luke 19:39-44, 47, 23:1, 21, 23).

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Jesus predicted that when the false messiah came, the imposter would be accepted (John 5:43).

That transgression will continue to progress and come to full maturity when the false messiah is accepted by the nation of Israel. And if it is not held back, prohibited, restricted, brought to an end, and *finished*—utter **planetary** destruction will follow. But God, in his mercy, has made it clear through Bible Prophecy that he will not allow that to happen (John 5:43 John, 18:38-40, Mark 15:11-15, Malachi 4:5-6).

Isaiah 28:14-18 gives a brief overview of what will be happening during the time the transgression will be hurtling towards its devastating conclusion. Israel will enter into a disastrous treaty with the false messiah. Isaiah calls it a covenant with *hell and death*. And the only thing that will ultimately save Israel (and this planet), is that her husband—Almighty God—will *disannul* her agreement according to the Law of Moses (Isaiah 54:4-8, Numbers 30:8-9, Malachi 4:5-6).

That means the consequences of the transgression will also be restricted, held back and *prohibited*, because Israel's husband is going to make certain the agreement made by his adulterous wife **will not stand** (Isaiah 28:18).

Purpose Two

*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to...**make an end of sins.***

The word *end*, as used in Daniel 9:24, means to close up, to seal up, to stop sins. Remember, this passage is referring to Daniel's people (the Jews) and to Daniel's holy city

(Jerusalem). And it is the *Jewish* sin of rejecting the true Messiah and accepting the false that will be stopped.

According to Daniel 9:24, when the 70 weeks are finished, and the consequences of the transgression have been prohibited, **The Transgression** will come to an end, and *never again* will the Jewish people deny that Jesus, the son of David, is the Christ, the anointed one of God. Their eyes will be opened, and their ears will no longer be dull of hearing.

Purpose Three

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to...make reconciliation for iniquity.

It did not take Christ 490 years to make reconciliation for iniquity. He did that in a matter of hours. The reconciliation brought about by the death Christ on the cross is available, right now, to all (both Jew and Gentile) and has been ever since his resurrection (John 19:30, Colossians 1:20-22).

Yet we see here, in Daniel 9:24, the prophet Daniel being told it was going to take 490 years to complete the six items listed in that verse—one of which was to make *reconciliation* for iniquity.

What iniquity?

The reconciliation referred to in this passage is a Jewish reconciliation. Mankind in general (Jew and gentile alike) has been given the privilege of being able to draw near to God, through Christ, at any time. No individual needs to wait until Daniel's 70 weeks are completed before that can happen (Colossians 1:20-22).

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But God has a special purpose for reconciling Jacob to himself *as a nation*.

God, the nation of Israel's maker and husband, will prohibit and bring to a permanent end, the consequences of Israel's rejection of his Christ. He will open the eyes of his adulterous wife. She will never again be unfaithful, and he will disannul her agreement with hell and death.

Knowing everything in advance, God, Israel's husband/creator, inserted a loophole into the Law of Moses to use later in rescuing his wayward wife (Isaiah 54:5, Numbers 30:8-9).

But once she is rescued, she must still be *reconciled*.

Being rescued and being reconciled are two completely separate activities. We see a beautiful picture of Israel's future reconciliation in Zechariah 3:1-5. Joshua, who was a high priest of Israel during the Prophet Zechariah's life, is shown standing before the angel of the Lord clothed with filthy garments. In this passage, Joshua is representing the nation he is high priest of at the time—Israel.

The Lord said, "Take away the filthy garments... I have caused thine iniquity ("The Transgression") to pass from thee (we are *reconciled*)...." This is a *national* reconciliation not a personal/ individual one. Israel is the only nation ever personally created by God. He will see that *nation* reconciled to him. As of this writing, Israel's reconciliation back to her God is still *future* (Zechariah 3:1, Haggai 2:2, John 5:43, Isaiah 28:14-18, 43:15, Daniel 9:24)

Purpose Four

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jews) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem) to...bring in everlasting righteousness.

The bringing in of everlasting righteousness has to do specifically with the Jewish people (remember who and what the 70 weeks are for).

When Jesus visibly and physically returns to this earth, peace and everlasting righteousness will be brought in **through his government**. Israel will become the head nation, and Jerusalem will become the capital city of the world. The scriptures tell us a day is coming when, “Out of *Zion* shall go forth the **Law** and the Word of the Lord from *Jerusalem* (Isaiah 2:4, 9:7).”

That means that during *Christ’s* reign, his righteous law and judgments will go forth from his capital city here on earth—*Jerusalem*.

Purpose Five

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jews) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem) to...seal up the vision and prophecy.

The word translated, *seal*, means just that—close up, seal, stop.

It was only the Jews who were the oracles of God. It was the Jewish people through whom Christ descended, and it was the Jewish prophets who foretold his coming. We were given the Word of God through Jewish prophets and Jewish apostles. It will be during the 70 weeks,

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spoken of in Daniel 9:24, that all prophecy, and all vision, will be sealed up—stopped permanently. There will be no more (Romans 3:1-2, 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, Zechariah 13:2-3).

We are told, in 1 Corinthians 13:8,12, that when *that which is perfect (complete) is come*, that which is in part (knowledge [learning], unknown tongues and *prophecy*) will cease. There will be no more bits and pieces, no more line upon line, here a little, there a little. When Jesus returns, we will receive the missing pieces of the puzzle that learning, tongues, and *prophecy* dole out for us, now, a little at a time (Isaiah 28:9-11).

By the end of the 490th year (the length of time allotted to Daniel's people for the 6 purposes of God to be accomplished) all vision and prophecy will be ended forever.

The scriptures say that anyone who prophesies during the reign of Christ will be executed. There will be *no itinerant prophets* after Christ returns and sets up his Kingdom here on earth. The Word of the Lord will go forth through approved channels only—from *Jerusalem* (Zechariah 3:2-5, Isaiah 2:3).

Purpose Six

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jews) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem) to...anoint The Most Holy.

Anoint means to rub oil on, to *consecrate*.

If we have not been convinced that Christ must physically and visibly return before the end of the

seventieth week, purpose number six confirms it. No one, but Jesus Christ, can be called the *Most Holy*.

The anointing of the *Most Holy* completes the six purposes of the 70 weeks. Jesus Christ is presently our savior, friend, brother, high priest and captain. But he has not yet been anointed the reigning King of *Israel*.

Let us not forget that Daniel 9:24 is dealing with Daniel's people (the Jews) and Daniel's holy city (Jerusalem). The Jewish people know full well that when Messiah comes, he will be the physical descendant of *David*, and it will sit upon the throne of David *as the King of Israel*. David was promised a dynasty that would never end. And he will get it (2 Samuel 7:16-17).

Israel rejected God from being their *king* while the prophet Samuel was judge. They re-affirmed this when they rejected Jesus by saying to Pilate, "We have no king but Caesar!"

God had Samuel *anoint* Saul as King over Israel and after him, David, who was followed to the throne by some of his descendants. However, the descendant of David who is next in the succession to the throne of Israel is the *man* Christ Jesus, and he has yet to be *anointed* as King (John 6:15).

When he returns, there will be a coronation. Jesus will be anointed, and the Nation of Israel will once again have their *God* reigning over them as *King* (2 Samuel 8:7, John 6:15, 19:15, Colossians 2:9).

Jesus qualifies for succession to the throne of Israel on *both* counts as man—and as God.

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The 69th week of Daniel ended when the leadership of Israel, followed by the general population, rejected Jesus Christ as both their Savior and their King. At that time, God stopped dealing with Israel as a nation. From the time he created the nation until they rejected his Christ, regardless of what they had done, God had always dealt with them nationally, because God is Israel's "*maker*" as well as her husband (Isaiah 43:15, 54:5).

Israel became a widowed wife when she killed her husband, but since he did not stay dead, her widowhood will be nullified along with her agreement with hell and death (John 19:15-16, Isaiah 28:15-18, 54:4-5).

Daniel's people are presently in possession of their holy city, but the 70th week has not yet begun. In order for that to happen, this present age—the dispensation of grace—the time of *Christ In You*—must be consummated. Then God will once again begin dealing with his people Israel on a *national* level (Ephesians 3:2-4, Colossians 1:26-27, 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7).

What Happens After We Die?

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, only the saved will be judged and rewarded (1 Corinthians 3:12-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10).

No one at this judgment will be concerned about “making it.” The righteous, who will stand before the Son of Man at the Judgment Seat of Christ, will be standing before him in Heaven, already acquitted (1 John 5:11-13).

These will receive whatever rewards they earned from the works they did while on earth. Eternal life is not a reward for good works; it is a free gift for believing on the risen Son of God (1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Matthew 25:21-23, 34, 46, John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9).

According to Hebrews 6:1, one of the principles of the doctrine of Christ, *that all Christian leaders are held responsible for teaching* to all new believers, is the doctrine of eternal judgment. So, in light of that, how would most Christians answer the question of, “What happens when we die?”

Very likely they would go the simplified route by saying, “We either go to heaven, or we go to hell.”

That answer, according to the scriptures, is essentially correct, but it leaves a great deal unsaid. So, if that is the case, what *does* happen when we die?

Let’s take the answer to that step-by-step.

The scriptures teach there are only two options (destinations) available to any of us after the death of our bodies. The scriptures further teach that either

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destination is arrived at immediately upon the death of the body and is permanent—no soul sleep, no purgatory, no second chances (2 Corinthians 5:8, Luke 16:19-25, Hebrews 9:27).

But at some point in the future, after our bodies die, after we arrive at our final destination, our bodies will be raised, and we will all be forcibly hauled into a courtroom—not a pleasant experience for anyone—whether they are defendant or plaintiff—guilty or innocent.

Forcibly means no one will be given a choice in the matter.

This is a court hearing in which no one will have the option of being held in contempt for not showing up. Whether we like it or not—we will *all* show up (2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11-12).

Everyone, righteous and unrighteous alike, will stand before the Judge of all the earth—though not in the same courtroom (Philippians 2:10-11, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11-12).

Everyone, righteous and unrighteous alike, will watch as *written* records are produced and evidence concerning their cases is presented to the judge (Malachi 3:16, Matthew 12:36-37, Revelation 20:12).

Everyone, righteous and unrighteous alike, will have witnesses to attest to the truthfulness of the evidence that is presented (1 John 5:7, Matthew 12:41-42).

The books will be opened for both the righteous and unrighteous, and each individual will experience judgment being passed on their lives based on what is

written in those books (Malachi 3:16, Romans 2:16, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11-12).

All similarities between the judgments of the righteous and unrighteous will end there.

The righteous will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ already acquitted—already entered into life. The unrighteous will stand before The Judge of All the Earth already condemned (1 John 5:11-13, John 3:18).

The righteous will have an advocate (defense attorney) provided for them (1 John 2:1).

The unrighteous will have only a prosecutor, because in the courtroom of *The Great White Throne Judgment*, all defendants will have previously waived their right to an advocate. However, the records will be diligently searched, and witnesses will be sought, and found. But the one witness that can produce the evidence needed to free the defendants will not be found (Matthew 12:36-37, 41-42 Revelation 1:5).

At *The Judgment Seat of Christ*, the saved will receive whatever rewards (in addition to eternal life) they may have earned (1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Matthew 25:21-23, 34, 46).

At The Great White Throne Judgment, the unsaved will receive eternal damnation (Matthew 25:41, 46).

The Judge of all the earth was put on trial once. But his courtroom will not be a kangaroo court like the one he chose to endure for our sakes (Mark 14:55-65).

Just like the unrighteous—who will all stand before him, he was given no advocate for his day in court either.

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This was his pre-determined choice. He made such a choice in order to give all mankind the opportunity to have an advocate present when their day came.

Unlike earthly courts, in the heavenly courtroom, the mere presence of the advocate guarantees acquittal (Mark 15:4, Romans 3:10, 23).

At his trial, The Judge of All the Earth had no witnesses testifying on his behalf—only accusers—liars—bearing false witness against him (Mark 14:56). But all of the witnesses and all of the evidence that will be brought forth in his courtroom will be absolutely trustworthy (Matthew 12:36-37, 41-42, Revelation 20:12).

Jesus' earthly judge did not judge righteously, but rather, with full knowledge of what he was doing, condemned an innocent man (Mark 15:14-15).

The Judge of All the Earth, however, will judge righteously. All who have their condemnation re-affirmed at the Great White Throne Judgment will know they have been judged righteously (John 3:18, Romans 2:1-16).

Jesus said by our words, we will be justified, or by our words, we will be condemned. That is a frightening thought for most of us. During the course of a lifetime we speak many words, and we do not always choose our words wisely (Matthew 12:36-37).

The wisest choice of words we can ever make is to confess with our mouth that the Lord Jesus Christ is the risen Son of God. If we come to God on those terms, with a truly repentant heart, we are promised eternal life. A broken and contrite heart, he will not despise (Romans 10:9-10, 13, Psalm 51:17).

Here is what it all boils down to. Our God is merciful and loving. He does not unnecessarily complicate things. Romans 10:9-10, 13 says that if we confess with our mouth (words) that Jesus is the Son of God, and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead...

We...

Will...

Be...

Saved.

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When We Come To Christ

When we come to Christ, does God require us to give up the cultural identity and heritage we were born into?

Absolutely not!

But everyone who does come to Christ should be willing to give up everything that will hinder the development of his or her new identity in, and service to, Jesus.

When we surrender our lives to Christ, we no longer belong to ourselves but to the God of Heaven and the Father of our Lord (as in master) Jesus Christ who *purchased* us with his own blood. We are not our own—for we have been bought with a great price (1 Corinthians 6:20).

In the book of Genesis, we see Abraham being instructed to leave his country, his kindred, and his Father's house to go to an unknown land that God would show him.

That could not have been easy for Abraham. He lived in a culture where family ties and responsibilities meant a great deal, but, none-the-less, he was obedient to his God in this command.

Abraham was neither asked nor required to adopt the ways and trappings of another cultural Identity when he chose to follow God. But he was required to allow God to develop his life and lifestyle into something completely new.

When we come to Christ, the scriptures say old things are passed away... and all things are become *new*. We

My Bible Doesn't Say That!

become a completely new creation and are instructed to walk in newness of life.

At some point in time most of our ancestors followed an *old* way. When following the old way, if a new God or spirit were introduced, wasn't the proper worship of, or way of relating to that entity sought and adhered to?

Why then, would we not be willing to do the same for our Redeemer and Creator, the great God of the universe, the one *True* God, Christ Jesus?

In Acts chapter 19:17-19, we see people entering their new life in Christ with a healthy fear of God. We witness them enthusiastically bringing items which were used in "curious arts" i.e., occult (demon worship—"old ways") and burning them.

These new followers of Christ had no desire to retain anything of the old ways—ways that had never been able to bring life.

We would be wise to follow their example as we examine and carefully evaluate some of the things we allow ourselves to come into contact with and become influenced by (via our old life and activities, associations, possessions, and various forms of media we allow ourselves to be exposed to).

The cultural situation we were born into constitutes a large part of who we are, but being a *New Creation* in Christ supersedes even that.

Absolutely *everything* in the life of a Christian is superseded by the new identity now possessed in

Christ—regardless of what earthly culture one is born into.

Whether we are black, white, Jew, Gentile, Native American, Asian..., the list can go on and on, if we love tradition and the ways of our earthly culture more than Jesus, if we choose to identify with our earthly culture more than with Jesus...

He tells us we are not worthy of him.

If we love this world and the things it contains (including the cultural heritage we were born into) more than Jesus...

The love of the Father is not in us.

Just as Joshua challenged the children of Israel before they crossed over into the Promised Land, the Spirit of God challenges us today to, “*Choose* you this day...”

Do you love your Savior enough to examine the things you may have held dear, even sacred, your entire life? Would you like to be able to say, along with Peter, “Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee...?”

Are you willing to give up everything for Jesus?

He gave up everything for you.

Testimony of the Author

*"I was finished with God, Jesus, Heaven, Hell, Christianity and anything that had to do with it. God truly found me at a time when I was **not** looking for him..."*

I was only six years old the day I decided I wanted to belong to Jesus Christ. I went home feeling a sense of euphoric joy. *A sense of joy that was not to last...*

I don't remember the sermon topic that day. Theology was not a concern at the time. I only knew that when the Pastor gave the invitation to "join the church," I wanted to. And as he counseled with me and prayed with me, my six-year-old faith connected with God through belief in his risen son, and I knew something special had happened to me.

I would like to say I was faithful to God after that, but I wasn't always.

My Mother made sure we were at Church almost every Sunday, and I said my prayers at night sometimes, but I never made Jesus a real part of my life. I had no idea how to do that.

As an adolescent, I went my own way and stopped going to Church altogether.

A fear of dying and going to hell descended on me and stayed there for the next eighteen years. The only thing I knew about being a Christian was that you were supposed to go to Church and live a certain way, and I

didn't want to do that. To be perfectly honest, church bored me.

As a young adult, I began living a lifestyle that I could not reconcile with my conscience (and with what I had been taught in Church and in Sunday School throughout my childhood).

In 1979 the guilt and fear became almost unbearable, and I decided I did not want to believe in hell anymore.

The only logical way I could accomplish that goal...was to stop believing in God.

I know it sounds ridiculous, but I was very serious about it. I reasoned with myself that if the scriptures were true and there was a God, then there surely was a hell, and in spite of my profession of faith at age six, I was certain I was going there.

I could not think of a single reason why I should be granted eternal life when I died. I did not understand that it was faith in what Christ had done and not in my own good works that saved me.

I will never forget the first time I announced to another person that I did not think I believed in God. The words shocked us both. But lightning didn't strike, and I felt encouraged to pursue my goal of becoming an atheist.

Between 1979 and 1981 I worked very hard at it. Sometimes, during the day with all its distractions, I was somewhat successful. But at night, when the silence descended, I could not squelch the conviction of the Holy Spirit that the scriptures were true and that God was real.

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In 1981 I was invited to go to church with some friends and family, and I went. I did not go to worship God that Sunday morning. My goal was to discount everything the preacher said and prove that Christianity was a myth.

I successfully (to my own satisfaction) shredded everything the preacher said. I sat through the songs, prayers, preaching and altar call completely untouched emotionally or spiritually. I walked out of church unchanged and very satisfied with myself.

I went back again the next week. I knew that if I could sit through one more sermon and altar call unmoved, as before, that I would be free forever from this Christianity thing that tormented me so.

I planned on walking away from God that morning and never looking back.

I sat down on the very back pew, the one closest to the exit, and waited for the service to begin. The congregation stood up, said a few prayers, and sang a few hymns, then sat down.

I felt nothing—so far so good.

Then the preacher (who did not know me) raised his arm and pointed his finger directly at me and thundered the first words of his sermon...

“And God gave them up!”

When he uttered the last word of that sentence, something seemed to fly out of the end of his finger and slam straight into my heart. In that moment all of my atheistic hopes were shattered, and I became acutely

aware of the existence of my God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I immediately cried out to him in my heart. I told him I knew he was real, and I was sorry for ever denying him. I do not remember anything else the preacher said that morning, but I was the first one to reach the altar when he finished preaching.

I picked up my Bible that very afternoon and began reading the New Testament book of Matthew. I have been reading my Bible daily for over twenty-five years now. I read my Bible straight through, over and over, always picking up today where I left off yesterday. It has changed my life.

It took me almost twenty years to pick up where I left off when I was six, but I know that God allowed a little child to come to him, and *then held on to her* and mercifully revealed his awesome presence, even as she tried with all her might to throw him away.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

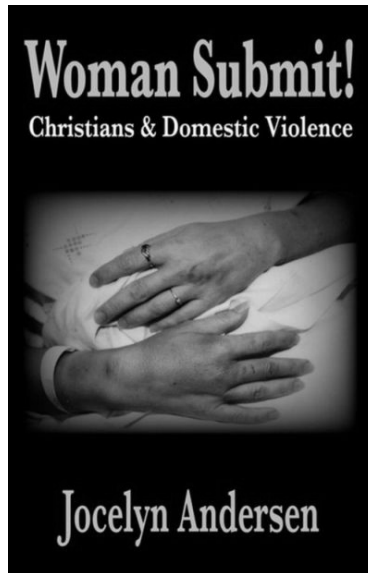


Jocelyn Andersen, co-host of the radio talk shows, "Recover Me..." Extreme Discipleship and "Sunday Stew," is an avid student of Biblical Prophecy. She is also an expert media commentator on issues related to domestic violence in the church. Her informative, challenging, and often provocative radio commentaries can be heard on Sharecropper Christian Radio.

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Woman Submit!



Christians & Domestic Violence

The woman whose spirit is being crushed and whose life is endangered by domestic violence needs straight answers—not unrealistic expectations or clichéd, stereotypical platitudes.

In this book, she will get straight answers, clear scriptural direction, and some tough challenges from one who has been there but is there no longer.

Turn page for excerpt...

The Christian woman whose spirit is being crushed and life endangered by domestic violence often deals with church sanctioned oppression through unscriptural counsel to submit to her husband regardless of the circumstances.

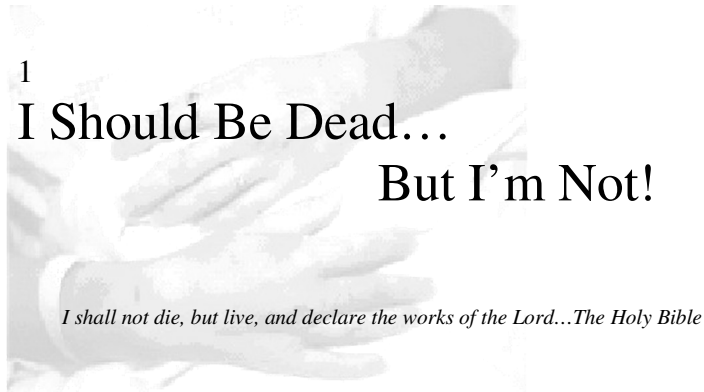
The well-intentioned counsel these women receive from friends, family and spiritual leaders often ranges from disappointing at best to life threatening at worst.

The Christian woman experiencing abuse is faced with a unique burden and needs straight answers—not unrealistic expectations or clichéd, stereotypical platitudes.

Woman Submit! Christians & Domestic Violence, addresses the emotionally charged social ill of domestic violence among Christians in a no-nonsense, straight-forward, albeit somewhat controversial way.

Solid biblical answers are provided to some of the battered Christian woman's most perplexing questions. She will get straight answers, clear scriptural direction, and some tough challenges from one who has been there but is there no longer. Direction is also provided to those she is most likely to turn to for support.

Excerpt From Chapter One of “Woman Submit!...”



My pastors and I had made the difficult decision not to hide the abuse from our church family any longer.

As a member of the Praise Team, I was accustomed to standing before the congregation, but this particular evening, the bruises on my face made the public appearance a bit more difficult. Due to the unusual absence of my husband, the person responsible for the bruises and an *associate pastor* of our church, it was imperative that the issue be dealt with as quickly, delicately, and honestly as possible.

He was evading arrest. This was the second time in six months he had tried to kill me.

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## My Bible Doesn't Say That!

*In my distress, I called upon the Lord....*

*Friday, 8:30 a.m., August 29, 2003*

“Jesus won’t help you!”

With those words ringing in my ears, John brought his loafer-encased foot crashing down onto my face. Then, as suddenly as the violence started—it stopped.

I sent up a silent prayer of thanks saying, “*Yes you did, because everything stopped.*” It had not yet occurred to me that I was lying on my back, staring at the ceiling, in the opposite direction, and in a completely different position than I had been in just moments before (or so I thought) when I had cried out to Jesus for help.

John was standing over me pacing back and forth and ranting about letting me live, “*this time.*” It wasn’t until he stopped, looked down at me, and said, “Oh my God, *look at you,*” that I realized something else must have happened. It also began to dawn on me that I could not raise myself up from the floor. I was not in any pain. I simply could not get up.

After John lifted me off the floor, I knew he must have injured me very badly. Besides not being able to focus my eyes clearly, close my mouth all the way, or sit or stand without assistance, I was afraid I was going into shock. Although it was August and very hot outside, I was freezing—I was shivering violently.

I asked him if he would take me to the Emergency Room. He said, “No, you’ll call the police.” When I asked if I could call someone else to take me to the Emergency Room, he said, “No, either God will take care of you or he won’t.”

It was obvious he was afraid he had fatally injured me, and I could see that my repeated requests for help were beginning to agitate him. I knew I had said all I could safely get away with, so from that point on, I asked for help only from God. I consigned myself to His care and began praying for rescue.

There was a telephone on the nightstand just next to the bed I was lying on, but I was too injured to reach for it. Unable to do the slightest thing for myself, a portion of the sermon our assistant pastor had preached just two days previously kept running and re-running through my mind, “The devil,” he said, “comes to steal, to kill and to destroy, but *I have come...*” Those words were a like a lifeline to me. I repeated them over and over to myself and said to the Lord, “You came, Jesus. You *came...*”

But the circumstances looked hopeless. I was injured, isolated, and completely helpless. I was at the mercy of a man who had just tried to kill me and was steadfastly refusing to allow me to receive help of any kind. He was more willing to allow me to die than to face possible arrest and incarceration for assaulting me.

John was on a frightening emotional roller coaster. His behavior was erratic and unpredictable. At times he appeared very calm, then for no apparent reason, he would begin raging again—particularly against women he felt wanted to *rule over men*. I knew my position was precarious at best. Whenever I was forced to speak to him or answer his questions, I chose my words very carefully. I knew only the Holy Spirit could help me navigate the situation and keep me alive until help came.

It concerned me that I did not have a definite sense of the Lord’s presence. I remember asking, “*God, where*

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*are you?"* He answered my question with a question of his own, **"Do you feel this peace?"**

*Yes I did.* And I knew peace only came from one source—God. It was good to know I was not alone.

I had not looked in the mirror yet, so I did not know I had what the emergency room physician would later describe as "raccoon eyes." I had not yet seen that my right jaw was grotesquely swollen, though it concerned me greatly that I could not close my mouth completely—I could not bring my teeth together. I felt certain I had a broken jaw. I was experiencing severe dizziness and equilibrium problems. I could not sit or stand without assistance; walking was completely out of the question; I was very nauseous, and each time John lifted me to a sitting position, I began retching violently. If he let go of me, I collapsed like a rag doll. I was having severe problems with my vision; I could not focus clearly on anything. And whenever I moved, even slightly, the vertical hold on the room would spin out of control. Within a short period of time, I also realized blood was seeping from both ears. I learned later that most of my symptoms corresponded with those of a skull fracture. My right hand and arm were fairly useless but, besides a mild headache, were the only real source of pain I experienced. That was my condition for about 20 hours.

Sometime during the early hours of the next morning I woke up and realized I felt different. I felt *better*.

I thought, "*I think I can sit up,*" and I sat up.

I thought, "*I think I can stand up,*" and I stood up.

I thought, "*I think I can walk.*" And I walked!

I knew that a supernatural healing from God had just taken place.

This was an exciting development. The first thing that occurred to me, of course, was not to tell John. I reasoned that if he thought I was still helpless, he might relax his guard and I could get away from him. But instructions from the Holy Spirit came quickly and clearly—I was not to try and deceive him. It did not seem at all logical, but I knew I had heard from God. So, when daylight came, I confided to him that I had been able to get up by myself during the night. His answer was chilling. He said, “I know—I *was awake*.”

In spite of my desperate circumstances, the peace of God guarded my heart, and I was in a deep sleep most of the time. I awoke at some point during the second morning and found myself alone; of course I headed straight for the telephone. *But it wasn't there*. John had removed all of the phones from the house.

This was a *big* problem, because even though I could walk and the visual disturbances I had been experiencing were now gone, my balance was still extremely bad. I was still very weak, and I was too slow and unsteady on my feet to attempt leaving the house with no guarantee that anyone would be near-by to help.

We had a large fenced yard that, in my condition, looked as large as a football field. I knew it would take me quite a while just to make it to the street, and if John came home before I cleared the yard, it would take no effort at all for him to drag me back inside. If that happened, I knew that I would not survive the consequences of trying to escape. I was confident the Spirit of the Lord was leading me not to try just yet.

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When John returned, I asked, “Am I a prisoner?” He said, “No.” I was nervous about questioning him, but felt a boldness to go on. “Then why are all the phones gone?”

He said he had removed them so I could not call the police. I promised him, before God, that if he would return the phones I would not call the police; *and he did*. Then he left again!

But now I had another problem. I had just made a vow before God that I would not call the police. I stared at the phone and mentally worked through my options—breaking my vow was not one of them.

I did not know how much time I had before John returned, and most people I knew lived at least twenty miles away. Simple things overwhelmed me. I could not remember telephone numbers, and John had taken my cell phone with my frequently called numbers programmed in it. The phone book wasn't any help, because (besides my mother and my pastor) I could not think of anyone to call. *I could not remember who I knew*.

I picked up the cordless phone, looked at it, thought about it—then carefully replaced it.

I knew I was having a difficult time thinking clearly, but, again, I was confident God was leading. John returned after being gone only a short while and made a point of looking to see if the phone had been moved. It had not. I had returned it exactly as he left it. Then, after a few hours, he left again.



This time, with no hesitation, I picked up the phone and quickly dialed my pastor's cell phone number. God's timing is always perfect—my pastor and his wife “just happened” to be in my neighborhood—only blocks from my home. Within minutes I was safely on my way to the emergency room where X-rays and an MRI confirmed what I already knew; nothing was broken, and there was no internal bleeding, because God had already healed me of the most serious of the injuries inflicted on me 32 hours earlier.

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There is not a doubt in my mind that I should not be alive today to tell this story. Had it not been for the immediate and supernatural intervention of a great and mighty God, I am convinced that my life and death would already be a statistic.

I would have either become a missing person (mysteriously disappeared) or my family and friends would most certainly have found me, within a just few days, lying in my home—beaten to death. And every year on August 29th, they would celebrate a tragic anniversary. Some would make pilgrimages to my gravesite to offer me flowers and heavy hearts filled with remorse. Others would remember missed opportunities, and guilt would gnaw at them for the miserable comforts they had offered in their frantic concern for my safety. They would wish with all their hearts they could take back unkind and condescending words and actions they now understood had only acted as wedges—alienating them from their beloved daughter, sister, mother or friend.

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But what could they have done differently? What could my pastor, family or friends have said or done that could have helped me? What could *I have done* that could have helped me, and why couldn't I have done it sooner?

These questions must be answered. *Lives* depend on it. It is time to stop the useless rhetoric. *Why doesn't she just leave? If she stays, she deserves what she gets... well if I were her....*

Well we're *not* her!

To my everlasting shame, there was a time in my own life when I said the same hateful things. I knew that *I* would never tolerate abuse. My attitude towards the battered woman was more condescending than compassionate. Certainly she was an object of my pity but more so of my contempt... until I unwillingly joined her ranks.

Then I experienced, first hand, the terrible dynamics that bind a wife to an abusive husband.

If this book helps shed a little light, into a very dark arena, from the perspective of one who has been there but is there no longer, if it can help induce compassion where formerly there was little or none, perhaps save a life and give a happy ending to someone else's story, then it will have accomplished its purpose.

In this I am reminded of the story about a small boy walking along a beach that was littered with dying starfish. It seemed thousands of them had been washed ashore, but the little boy walked among them picking

them up and, patiently, one by one, threw each back into the ocean where it belonged.

A gentleman approached the boy and asked why he bothered. How in the world, the man asked, did he think he could make a difference when there were simply too many to throw them *all* back?

In reply, the boy stooped down, picked up another starfish, tossed it into the waves, and said, “It makes a difference to *this* one.”

Being a support to a battered or abused woman is a frustrating experience at best and frightening at worst. She is often indecisive and cannot be counted on to keep her promises to get out, and stay out, of the line of fire. Her abuser holds tremendous emotional influence over her...and we do not. The temptation is great to throw up our hands and say, “I’m through with you! You deserve what you get! Let yourself be beaten to death if that’s what you want!”

But do *not* do it.

We need to remember that we are merely inconvenienced—she is genuinely suffering and possibly in very real danger. Our friendship and support can make all the difference to an abused woman in the face of seemingly overwhelming circumstances. Our friendship and support can help make her existence a little more bearable, thereby giving her the strength she needs to make choices that, ultimately, may help to change her circumstances and possibly even save her life....

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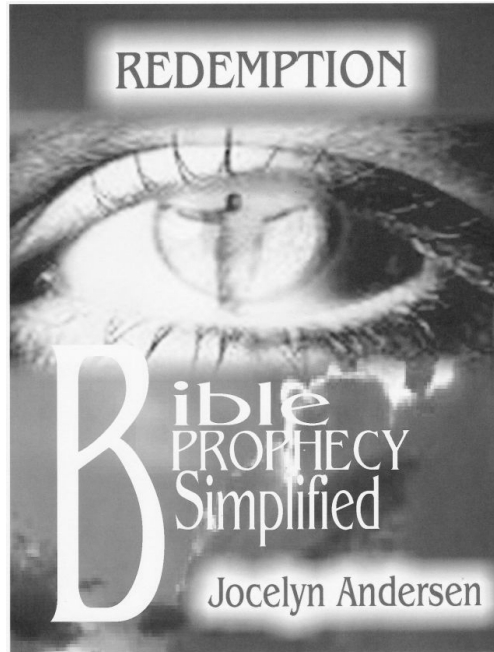


There are two movements advancing at lightning speed through the Body of Christ today. Both movements promote a spirituality which corrupts believers from the simplicity found in Christ by weaving New Age/Occult precepts and practices into the very fabric of their lives and faith. This is done in such clever, subtle, and seductive ways that a complete

paradigm shift begins to take place. Once this happens, the believer is completely unaware that the process of becoming prodigal has begun. The Word of God becomes secondary to the experiential, and the danger of becoming apostate, at that point, becomes a real possibility.

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