

# **History Of the World & Beyond**

*By Michael H. Exton*

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## WARNING TO THE READER

When will Jesus Christ be returning? I DON'T know and neither does anyone else.

In the last chapter of this book I give dates for several events that are prophesied to occur in the *future* (events that will occur within seven years of Christ's return). I do NOT know the exact dates for these events and neither does anyone else. I just made up these particular dates (as well as some of the names of the individuals involved) to help the reader better understand these end-time events, and to help these events come alive. The events described could occur a few years sooner than the dates given in this book or they could occur several years later. Only God knows for sure when these prophesied events (including the return of Jesus) will take place. (Also, the date given for the creation of angels in chapter two of this book as well as the date given for the creation of the universe in chapter three are both fictitious. I do NOT know when these events occurred).

But *much more important* than knowing the exact date of Christ's return is the answer to this question: Will YOU and I be *ready*? Let's do our best to see that WE are!

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20).

## Chapter One

# In the Beginning...

“**I**N THE BEGINNING was the WORD, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was [also] God*. He was in the beginning with God [the Father]. ALL THINGS WERE MADE THROUGH HIM, and without Him nothing was made that was made.... And *the Word became flesh* [a flesh and blood human being—JESUS CHRIST] and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.... For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through JESUS CHRIST” (John 1:1-17).

As the apostle John points out, in the very beginning nothing else existed except for TWO Beings: God (the Father) and God (the Word). That’s right, nothing else existed—no humans, no animals, no plants, no earth, no universe, no angels, nothing! Nothing except for TWO members of the God Family: God (who would later become known as God the Father), and the Word (who would eventually divest Himself of His glory and power as God and become a human being—Jesus Christ—the Son of God).

God has always existed—He was NOT created nor did He evolve.

Eventually, the TWO members of the God Family would decide to create. But *what* would They create *first*?

## Chapter Two

# Angels

**I**T IS 7 BILLION BC, and the first thing that God creates are *angels* (“messengers”). However, these angelic beings are NOT made of physical matter but are created of SPIRIT.

Being composed of spirit, angels do NOT decay nor grow old and die like things in the physical world. Instead, they are *powerful spirit beings* that live forever. And they are just as vibrant today as they were when they were first created!

But God created different types of angels with different functions. The three most powerful angels (archangels or cherubs) that God created were: *Michael* (meaning “Who is like God?”), *Gabriel* (meaning “God is my strength”), and *Heylel* (meaning “shining one,” a Hebrew word referring to the “morning star”). This word is sometimes translated into English as *Lucifer* and can also mean “light-bearer” (Jude 1:9; Luke 1:19; Isaiah 14:12).

After creating angels, God would eventually decide to create something else. But this time, instead of creating something made of spirit, They decide to make something physical—something made of matter. So God creates...

# The Universe

**I**T IS 4.5 BILLION BC, and God creates the *universe*, with its trillions of stars, planets, solar systems, galaxies, etc. (including our home—planet Earth).

Upon seeing the universe created right before their very eyes, *the angels shout for joy and sing together* (Job 38:4-7). They must have been absolutely ecstatic at what they were witnessing! Imagine if you and I would have been alive at that moment in time—what an amazing spectacle it must have been!

## Planet Earth

The universe at that time was MUCH DIFFERENT than it is today—as all the planets in our solar system—as well as *all the planets throughout the universe*—WERE BEAUTIFUL AND HOSPITABLE. It wouldn't be until many years later that they would become terribly marred and no longer capable of supporting life (the way they are today). But even back then—when all the planets were gorgeous and hospitable—one relatively small planet stood out as a special jewel among the many gems—planet EARTH! With its lush green grasses, deep blue skies, beautiful plants, sweet-smelling flowers, dazzling beaches, crystal-clear streams, magnificent waterfalls, scintillating mountains, stunning rainfor-



ests, and a brilliant sun with breathtaking sunsets and sunrises—it indeed was a sight to behold.

### **Angels Live on Earth**

After creating the universe, God then decides to allow *many of the angels to live on planet Earth*. And God chooses a very special, powerful, incredible angel to rule over them—LUCIFER. This amazing angel was no doubt instructed by God to reign over his fellow angels in righteousness as ruler of the Earth. The angels who were chosen to live on Earth must have been thrilled to not only live in such a spectacular new environment but to have such an impressive angel as Lucifer to lead them. So off to Earth they went, with the rest of the angels remaining in heaven with God.

### **Lucifer Rebels & Becomes Satan**

Lucifer and his fellow angels must have started off in their new home in bliss as they had the whole planet to themselves to explore and enjoy. But unfortunately the joy and peace that Lucifer and his angels were enjoying was not to last—as *Lucifer eventually became discontented with his home on earth and became greedy and vain—wanting to not only reign over the Earth but wanting to rule over the entire universe (including God Himself)!* So Lucifer left his habitation on Earth and stormed into heaven in an attempt to overthrow God!

Lucifer (Hebrew “Heylel,” “Shining One,” “Brilliant Star,” “Morning Star,” “Shining Star,” “Light-Bearer,” “Light-Bringer”) had now become Satan, the Devil, the Serpent, the Dragon, the Adversary, the Accuser, the Destroyer. In his REBELLION against God, Satan convinced many other angels to revolt with him (*perhaps as many as one third of all the angels*; Revelation 12:4)! Satan and the

angels that joined him in his insurrection against God had now become **FALLEN ANGELS!** No longer were they holy, sinless angels. Instead, *they had become evil, wicked demons!*

“How you are fallen from heaven, O *Lucifer*, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground... For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I WILL EXALT MY THRONE ABOVE the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, *I will be like [or replace] the Most High*’ ” (Isaiah 14:12-14). Or, as another translation (MSG) puts it: “...I’LL TAKE OVER AS KING OF THE UNIVERSE!”

“Thus says the Lord God: ‘You were the *seal of perfection*, full of wisdom and PERFECT in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed CHERUB who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.* By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering CHERUB, from the midst of the fiery stones. *Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor...*’ ” (Ezekiel 28:12-17).

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael [the archangel] and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and

his angels [demons] fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, WHO DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD; he was cast to the earth, and his angels [demons] were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7-9). Jesus would later tell His disciples, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

### **The Universe Becomes Marred**

In Satan’s attempted coup against God *the universe paid a very heavy price as it became disfigured and terribly damaged*. Instead of the planets being beautiful, and capable of supporting life, they now became uninhabitable and horribly marred. Earth was also terribly affected, as all living things on Earth, including both plants and animals (including DINOSAURS), were suddenly obliterated as a result of this titanic battle between good and evil.

*The Earth was now an ugly, dark planet, with water covering its entire surface*. No longer was it teeming with life, as all plants and animals, that is, all living things (except Satan and his demons), were now dead. Earth was no longer even capable of supporting physical life and had become an empty wasteland.

Satan and his demons would now have to live in this dark watery abyss.

In due time—perhaps millions or even billions of years later—God would look down upon planet Earth and consider what to do. At that time the “Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God’s Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss” (Genesis 1:2; MSG). Or, as the GNT renders this verse, “The earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean

that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water.”

THEN GOD SAID...

## Chapter Four

# “Let there be light”

**I**T IS 3973 BC, AND THE EARTH (like the rest of the universe) has BECOME a terrible wasteland, an uninhabitable abyss, a dark, cold, dreary place—*all because of the rebellion of Satan and his demons*. But after waiting many years, God decides to change all that, when the Word declares: “*Let there be light*,” and there was light (Genesis 1:3; NIV).

### God Renews the Earth

In the six days that would follow, God would *renew* the Earth, restoring it to its original, beautiful, pristine and lush condition.

### God Creates Man

But this time God would do something much different than what He had ever done before. For after creating plants (including fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts and seeds) and animal life, God decides on the 6<sup>th</sup> day to create a physical being out of matter—out of the soil—one that would resemble Himself! That’s right—*God decides to create a living, physical being that would be created in the likeness and image of God—a human being!*

## **The Uniqueness of Man**

But this human being would be *totally different* from every other physical creature that God had ever created before (and that had gone extinct at the rebellion of Satan). For this human being would not only resemble God in appearance, but unlike all other physical creatures before (such as “cavemen,” “ape-men,” “Neanderthals,” “Cro-Magnon,” etc.), this being would also have a SPIRITUAL COMPONENT! A *spirit* that would give the human a *conscience* and a *consciousness* that would enable the physical brain of the human to be FAR SUPERIOR to that of any physical creature that God had ever created prior to this. A spirit that would enable man to think, plan, create, speak, sing, draw, paint, read, and write.

In other words, not only would the human being have a physical BRAIN, but coupled with a SPIRIT that each human would possess, it would have a MIND—an incredible, powerful, almost limitless mind—a mind that would produce *an unfathomable gulf between humans and all other physical creatures*. A mind that someday would enable man to build magnificent cities, remarkable works of art, marvelous musical compositions, automobiles, airplanes, ships, trains, rockets, spaceships, telescopes, microscopes, radios, televisions, phones, computers, and yes—even a mind that would someday be capable of producing terrible weapons of mass destruction—so terrible, that man would be able to eradicate all life from this planet!

## **Man’s Incredible Potential**

But God wasn’t through yet! For though this man would possess a spirit that would allow man to do great things, it was still only a “human” spirit, and therefore it had its limitations. So God proposed that *man be given His Spirit—that is—God’s Holy Spirit!* But in order to receive

God's Holy Spirit man would have to obey God, as He only gives His Holy Spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32)!

God's Holy Spirit in man would enable man to live in *harmony and peace* with his fellow man; empowering man to do good—to live the way of GIVE and to reject the way of GET. God's Spirit would help man to put the interests of others on an equal par with his own interests and to treat his neighbor in the same way that he himself would want to be treated.

God's Spirit in man would also allow man to have a WONDERFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS CREATOR—an absolutely profound relationship that someday *would enable man to become God's very own son*. And when completed, man would no longer be a created child of God, but a begotten son of God—BORN into God's very own Family—a *full-fledged member of the God Family!* For God's Holy Spirit would join with man's spirit to father a son (much like when a man's sperm joins with a woman's egg to father a child).

But this newly begotten son of God would just be in the beginning stages (just like the newly formed human being is moments after conception). And just as the embryo that is in his mother's womb must grow, develop and mature before he is finally born into the world, so must the newly begotten son of God. And if he does precisely that during his lifetime by producing Godly fruit (see Galatians 5:22-23), overcoming sin (see Revelation 21:7), and continuing in God's way until the end of his physical life (see Matthew 10:22), he will one day be *resurrected back to life as an immortal, glorious member of the God Family!*

Yet he will no longer have a physical body but instead will possess *a radiant, glorious, beautiful, powerful, ener-*

*getic, tireless, magnificent, perfect, immortal, holy, spiritual body!* And instead of being born into the world (as a newborn baby is today), each son of God will instead be born into the KINGDOM OF GOD—with God as His very own literal Father! Afterwards, he—and all other humans that are born as immortal, spiritual children of God—WILL BE GIVEN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE TO EXPLORE, DEVELOP, SHARE, AND ENJOY!

## **2 Trees in the Garden of Eden**

After creating man (Adam) and woman (Eve) God makes a beautiful, luscious garden (called the garden of Eden). In the garden are many trees, with TWO SPECIAL TREES: “THE TREE OF LIFE” AND “THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL” (Genesis 2:9). God then instructs man that he may eat of every tree in the garden *except* for the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” This was the only tree Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat from. And the penalty for eating of this particular tree would be *death* (Genesis 2:16-17)!

So now Adam and Eve were at a crucial point in their lives. Would they obey God and do what He said, or would they disobey Him? Would they eat of the TREE OF LIFE which they were allowed to eat of (and which represented obedience and trust in God and the receiving of His Holy Spirit—and which would lead to eternal life), or would they instead eat of the TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL (which represented disobedience to God and obedience to Satan’s selfish, greedy and rebellious way of life—and which would lead to death)?

Afterwards, God allows Satan to appear to Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent. Satan then succeeds in deceiving Eve into eating from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”—in direct opposition to God’s clear command!



Eve then gives some of the fruit to Adam and he likewise eats of it (Genesis 3:1-6).

The die is now set for all humanity, as every human being who would descend from Adam and Eve would likewise disobey God and sin. Therefore, just as Adam and Eve eventually died, all humanity would also eventually die—as all have sinned and followed the same false way that Adam and Eve chose nearly 6,000 years ago (Romans 5:12, 3:23).

As a result of Adam and Eve's sin, mankind would no longer have access to the tree of life (i.e. eternal life), as once Adam and Eve sinned—God would bar the tree of life from them (Genesis 3:22-24).

### **God's Plan to Save Mankind**

But God had a plan to save humanity from its sins, and thus make it possible for all of us to receive eternal life (Romans 6:23). But it would require the DEATH OF HUMANITY'S CREATOR—THE WORD—in order for this to be possible!

Consequently, many years later (3 BC) the Word (our Creator) divested Himself of His immense power and glory (Philippians 2:7) and was born as a human being to a young woman named Mary (who being a virgin was impregnated NOT by the sperm of a man but by the Holy Spirit of God). The Word then became known as Jesus Christ, the Son of God (while the other member of the God Family would become known as the Father).

Then in 32 AD Jesus Christ would die a very brutal, agonizing death after being terribly beaten, mocked and ridiculed by the very ones that He Himself had created! And as He was dying a most horrible death, being nailed to

a stake, He prayed these words to His heavenly Father: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).

But we are getting ahead of ourselves—as several very important things occurred between the creation of man and the life of Jesus Christ—that we haven’t yet discussed. So let’s now return back to Adam and Eve.

# From Adam To Moses

**A**FTER ADAM AND EVE sinned by obeying Satan and disobeying their Creator (and thereby rejecting God), God decided that He would allow mankind 6,000 years (or six millennial days) to go his own way; that He would for the most part take a hands-off approach to humanity. In other words: He would allow man to build his own societies, governments, educational institutions, religious systems, cultures, etc.—all apart from God. And He would only intervene under certain circumstances.

## **First Scientific Experiment**

God was in essence allowing man to conduct its first scientific experiment, an experiment that would last 6,000 years. God was in reality allowing man to learn by trial and error; to learn firsthand the consequences of rejecting God's way of life (the way of GIVE) and instead choosing Satan's way (the way of GET).

But God knew the outcome already. For He knew that the Devil's way would only lead to vanity, jealousy, greed, arrogance, hatred, corruption, dishonesty, violence, suicide, stealing, coveting, lies, deception, insincerity, anger, drunkenness, drug addiction, gangs, pollution, insanity,

psychosis, idolatry, witchcraft, sorcery, foul language, cruelty, pornography, child molestations, adultery, rape, homosexuality and other sexual perversions, injustice, bribery, torture, persecutions, prejudice, racism, discrimination, kidnapping, slavery, murder, war, chemical weapons, biological weapons, nuclear bombs, genocide, and eventually cosmocide—the extermination of all living things from this planet!

Man would have to learn the hard way. He would have to learn through the bitter pill of trial and error that Satan's way of life is NOT a way of life at all—but a way of *death*. For unless God intervenes to prevent it—that is exactly where we are headed—the death of all life from this planet—as we will eventually unleash our weapons of mass destruction in the next world war—World War III! (Matthew 24:22)

### **God's 7,000-Year Plan**

Knowing all of this in advance, God then set out to make sure that His *plan of salvation* for mankind would eventually be achieved (which would occasionally require His intervention in the affairs of mankind). In this plan God would allow man six millennial days (that's 6,000 years) to rule himself, but at the end of the six millennial days man would finally rest—as Christ will return to rule this earth during the seventh millennial day (2 Peter 3:8; Revelation 20:6).

So, just as God rested on the seventh day of creation week (Genesis 2:2-3), man will rest from sin on the seventh millennial day, as Christ will reign during this 1,000-year period (Revelation 20; 2 Peter 3:8).

Now, let's get back to our story.

## Abel and Enoch

From the time of Adam's creation (approximately 3,973 BC) until the time of Noah's flood (approximately 2,321 BC) 1,652 years had elapsed, and yet the Bible only mentions three men in all that time who obeyed God: *Abel* (Adam and Eve's second son—who was murdered by his older brother Cain), *Enoch* (who was born about 619 years after the creation of Adam and Eve (about 3,354 BC), and then *Noah*.

## Noah

During the time of Noah the Bible states: "The Lord saw that *the wickedness of man was great* in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only EVIL continually" (Genesis 6:5). Then it adds: "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth" (Genesis 6:11-12). Therefore, God says to Noah: "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will DESTROY them with the earth" (Genesis 6:13).

But Noah found grace in the eyes of God, for *Noah was a righteous and just man*; and he walked with God (Genesis 6:8-9). So God told Noah that he would spare him and his family, but that he would have to build an ark to protect his family from the GREAT FLOOD that would soon come upon the whole earth. So Noah obeyed God and built the ark.

## The Great Flood

The ark (i.e. ship) that Noah built was absolutely enormous and took 120 years to build! This gargantuan vessel was huge for a reason—as it would temporarily house at

least one male and one female animal of every species on earth in order to protect them from the flood! And just before the barrage of rain commenced, Noah and his family boarded this incredibly large vessel with all the animals. Then for forty consecutive days torrential rains fell upon the earth; and the waters flooded the earth for 150 days (Genesis 7:17, 24), killing both man and beast. The only humans to survive were those that were on the ark—Noah’s family of eight (which included Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives).

Once the water subsided and the ground became dry, Noah and his family (and the animals that were with them) disembarked from the massive ship. The human race would now start all over again with just eight people.

With these eight people who survived the great flood the *three major races* would remain intact. For Noah and his wife had three sons, and these three sons each had a wife; one wife was apparently black, one white, and the other yellow (such as Chinese). [Now some may be wondering how these three different races ever appeared in the first place—since the human race was only started with one couple —Adam and Eve. Apparently, Eve was created differently than the women of today—she must have been created (unlike those who would follow her) with the ability to have children of different races—specifically the three main races: yellow, white, and black.]

Once the flood ended the human race began to proliferate, as Noah’s three sons (*Japheth, Shem, and Ham*) begin to have children. But during this time everyone spoke the same language—and as a result mankind started to progress very rapidly.

## Nimrod

Then a man arose, a descendant of Ham, whose name was *Nimrod*. He was a mighty man and a great hunter, whose fame quickly spread throughout the land. People looked upon Nimrod at first as a hero, and then as a demi-god, as he built many cities and city-states—including BABYLON and ASSYRIA (Genesis 10:8-12).

## Babylon Mystery Religion

Nimrod then establishes the world's first empire, with himself as its first emperor. Afterwards, he and his wife (queen *Semiramis*) invent the world's first false religion—the *Babylon Mystery Religion*—as Nimrod proclaims himself to be a *god* (the sun-god) and his wife a *goddess* (the dawn goddess)! Their subjects then worship them as divine beings! As a result, many cultures would thereafter address royalty as “my Sun”!

## The Trinity

Later on Nimrod is killed, but Semiramis has a son named *Tammuz*. She then *claims* that Tammuz is actually her husband (Nimrod) reincarnated (or resurrected) back to life! Tammuz is also then worshiped as a god. Eventually the three (Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz) would be worshiped as one god—that is—they would be worshiped as three divine individuals who make up just one being—three in one and one in three. In other words *they would be worshiped as a triune god (the trinity)!*

Yes, you read that correctly! The teaching of a triune god was actually taught about 2,000 years *before* the Christian era ever began! The Roman Catholic Church then adopted this *false pagan teaching* in 325 AD at the First Council of Nicaea—about 225 years *after* the Bible was completed! God is NOT a trinity! The trinity was NEVER

taught by Christ, the Apostles, or any early Christians! And the Bible does NOT support it, nor is it ever even mentioned in the Bible! The Roman Church simply replaced the name of Tammuz with Jesus, Nimrod with God the Father, and Semiramis with the Holy Spirit.

As mentioned above, God is NOT a trinity. The God *Family* is composed of *two* distinct individuals: God the *Father* and Jesus Christ (the *Son* of God). Both have always existed. The Father and Son are ONE though. That is—they are ONE in purpose, mindset, goals, outlook, character, makeup, etc.—just as WE are to be ONE with THEM (John 17:11, 21-23)!

The Holy Spirit is NOT a member of the God Family, but is instead the power and essence of God. God—both the Father and the Son—are composed of Spirit—the Holy Spirit—and WE can be too! Those of us who attain to the first resurrection (at the return of Jesus) will no longer be made of flesh and blood. Instead, we will be composed of spirit—God’s Holy Spirit—as we will be His *literal* sons and daughters—*born into His very own Family!* (John 17:21-23; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5; Daniel 12:2-3; Philippians 3:11, 3:21; Colossians 3:4; Luke 20:34-37; Psalms 17:15, 82:6; Romans 8:16-17)

### **Mother & Child Worship**

Besides the trinity, another thing that the Roman Catholic Church adopted from the PAGAN religions of the world is the way it often portrays Jesus Christ. *This false apostate church often depicts Jesus as a baby in the arms of his mother Mary, just as Tammuz was often displayed as a baby in the arms of his mother Semiramis.* In this case the Roman Church simply calls Tammuz by the name of Jesus and Semiramis by the name of Mary. In some cases they



have even used the same ancient pagan statutes of Tammuz and Semiramis and just renamed them!

And the Catholic Church worships Mary, just as the pagans worshiped Semiramis (their mother goddess)—even though the Bible condemns such worship—not to mention the use of idols—which God strongly condemns!

### **Crosses**

Another thing that the Roman Catholic Church adopted from the *Babylon Mystery Religion* is the wearing of CROSSES—which heathens first started wearing about 4,000 years ago! The cross is simply the letter **T** (or **t**)—which is the initial for **Tammuz**. The letter **T** also stands for **Typhon** and **Teitan**—names for *Satan* in the ancient Babylonian and Greek languages (The Two Babylons, Alexander Hislop). As a side note: the Spanish conquistadors were absolutely shocked and amazed to see the *natives wearing crosses* when they first set foot on Mexican soil about 500 hundred years ago!

### **Sunday or Saturday?**

The Roman Catholic Church is just a *modern version of the Babylon Mystery Religion* (and the Protestant churches aren't much better). This false church has simply replaced the pagan names associated with the Babylon Mystery Religion with Christian sounding names to deceive the masses. Its day of worship is **SUNDAY**—the day that pagans have always worshiped the **SUN** or the **SUN-GOD** (see Ezekiel 8:15-17), and yet the Bible states over and over and over again that the seventh-day of the week (Saturday) is the day of rest, the day of worship!

As explained in Genesis 2:2-3, God rested on the seventh-day of the creation week, therefore God blessed and

made holy the seventh-day—which is *Saturday*! God never blessed or sanctified the first day of the week (Sunday)! And God expects us to keep His rest day (the seventh-day Sabbath) holy by resting and honoring him. As Exodus 20:8-11 (one of the Ten Commandments) tells us: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, *but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God*. In it you shall do no work... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the *seventh* day. THEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND HALLOWED IT.”

## **XMAS**

The Roman Catholic Church also celebrates a holiday it calls *Xmas* on December 25<sup>th</sup> as the day of Christ’s birth (when in fact Christ was born in late September or early October). Plus, the Bible NEVER tells us to celebrate His birth anyway. But according to some historians *Tammuz* (or Nimrod) was born on December 25<sup>th</sup>! (The Two Babylons, Alexander Hislop)

Xmas is NOT a Christian celebration at all, as it was first celebrated about 2,000 years BEFORE Jesus was ever born! In ancient times it was called *Saturnalia* or the *Birthday of Sol Invictus* (birthday of the invincible sun)—a holiday in honor of the sun (or the sun-god)! For about 300 years the Roman Church thoroughly CONDEMNED this ancient HEATHEN holiday! It wasn’t until at least the 4<sup>th</sup> century that the Roman Catholic Church gave in and adopted this festival as its own, and then quickly changed its name to Xmas!

## **Easter**

And *Easter* is no different! The Bible NEVER tells us to celebrate Easter or the resurrection of Christ (though it does

tell us to observe His death annually each year at the Passover or Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20-26). Like Xmas, Easter is also a *heathen festival* that dates back approximately 4,000 years. This pagan celebration was named in honor of a *pagan goddess*—*Semiramis*! The name of this pagan goddess in ancient England was Eastre or Eostre (hence, the name “Easter” today). Of course in other languages she was called by different names (such as Ostara, Austra, Austro, Aurora, Ausos, Astarte, Ashtoreth, Asherah, Ishtar, Isis, Diana, Inanna, Aphrodite, and Venus).

EASTER was considered the *goddess of dawn*, the *goddess of sex* (or fertility), and the *goddess of spring*. Her name as Ausos (in the Proto-Indo-European religion) means “SHINING ONE” (Wikipedia; article: Ausos). This is the exact same meaning of the word “Heyl” —the Hebrew word found in Isaiah 14:12 that is sometimes translated into English as *LUCIFER*! As a matter of fact some translations of the Bible (such as the YLT and BBE) translate Heyl as “*shining one*,” while others translate it as *Lucifer* (such as the KJV, NKJV, and RHE)!

Also, in Lithuanian (as “Ausrine”) she is considered the goddess of the “*morning star*” (Wikipedia; article: Ausrine), which is precisely what “*shining one*” is referring to! As a matter of fact, some translations of the Bible translate the Hebrew word “Heyl” into English as “*morning star*” (instead of “shining one” or “Lucifer”). “How you have fallen from heaven, O *morning star*, son of the dawn” (Isaiah 14:12; NIV). And some translations render this same verse as “*shining morning star*” (CSB) or “*bright morning star*” (NIRV; GNT).

But what “*star*” are they referring to (in the expression “BRIGHT MORNING STAR”)? Well, not a star at all, but a *planet*—the planet *Venus*, which was once considered a

star. Why Venus? Because (other than the sun and moon) Venus is the **BRIGHTEST** celestial body in the sky and it appears in the *eastern* sky in the **MORNING** (first appearing about an hour or so before sunrise and then disappearing once the sun rises). This is also why it's sometimes referred to as the "*light-bearer*" or "*light-bringer*" as it appears to be escorting the sun to the earth each morning.

"*Easter*" then is synonymous with *Lucifer*! That is—**SATAN the DEVIL**! In Hebrew she was known as "Ash-toreth" or "Asherah" (and is sometimes referred to as "*the queen of heaven*"). The male version of her name is As-taro-th—"the crowned prince of hell"; "a very powerful arch-demon" (Wikipedia; article: Astaroth). And in Ak-kadian (the extremely ancient Babylonian and Assyrian language) this "dawn, spring and sex goddess" was called ISHTAR—pronounced *exactly* as we pronounce "Easter" today! (The Two Babylons, Alexander Hislop)

Finally, the ancient pagans celebrated Easter in worship of Nimrod & Tammuz, as they believed that Nimrod was reincarnated (or resurrected) back to life as Tammuz. And they also worshiped Semiramis (Easter) on this day—since she was the one who gave birth to Tammuz—therefore she was considered "the mother of god," and "the mother goddess."

As a side note: Nimrod may have died on a *Friday*, as most people believe that Jesus died on a Friday—when in fact the Bible plainly shows that Jesus was crucified on a *Thursday* and NOT on a Friday (see Luke 24:1, 13, 20-21). And Tammuz very well may have been born on a *Sunday*.

### **Tower of Babel**

After discussing Nimrod, the very next thing that the Bible mentions is the *Tower of Babel*.

*Genesis 11:1-9:* Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, *“Now then, these are all one people and they speak one language; this is just the beginning of what they are going to do. Soon they will be able to do anything they want!”* COME, LET’S GO DOWN AND GIVE THEM DIFFERENT LANGUAGES. THEN THEY WON’T BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.” So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. THAT IS WHY THE CITY WAS CALLED BABEL, BECAUSE IT WAS THERE THAT THE LORD CONFUSED THE PEOPLE BY GIVING THEM MANY LANGUAGES, THUS SCATTERING THEM ACROSS THE EARTH. (NKJV; GNT; NLT).

Do you see the significance of this? Since all the people were speaking the same language it wouldn’t be long at all (perhaps just a few hundred years; probably a thousand at the most) before mankind would be able to do most anything (including building nuclear bombs and other weapons of mass destruction)! Therefore, God had to intervene by giving them many different languages in order to drastically reduce their progress. Otherwise, man would have destroyed this earth and wiped out all life from this planet (including himself) a long time ago! But God could not allow this, for God had a 6,000-year plan that required man to exist until the end of six millennium days. Therefore

God broke them up and scattered them by giving them many different languages.

Once God caused the people to speak different languages they stopped building the massive tower. They then became dispersed throughout the world, with those who spoke the same language migrating together to the same regions of the earth.

At that time the earth was one giant land mass and was NOT divided into different continents separated by vast oceans (as the Americas were at that time connected to western Europe/Africa, etc.). Therefore, it wasn't long before man was populating most of the earth. But once the different groups of people (who were separated based on a common language) were located where God wanted them, God then decided to divide the earth into the seven different continents (which in effect prevented mankind from easily travelling and associating with each other (Genesis 10:25).

But mankind did not give up the religion (the Babylon Mystery Religion) that Nimrod and Semiramis had founded. On the contrary, each group of people, no matter where they relocated, carried this corrupt and perverted religion with them. Of course now that they were speaking different languages the names of their gods were also different, and yet they were the same false gods.

As a result Nimrod became known as Osiris to the Egyptians, Cronus (or Ninus) to the Greeks, Saturn to the Romans, Marduk to the Babylonians, Zoraster to the Persians, Chemosh to the Moabites, Molech to the Ammonites, and Baal (or Bel) to the Phoenicians and Canaanites. But regardless of his name, he was still the same false god. He was still considered the sun-god; the god of fire; the god of

agriculture (along with Tammuz); the king of the universe; the father-god. {Side note: Marduk and Bel were associated (and often pictured) with a “great dragon or serpent [Satan the Devil!], which they of Babylon worshiped”! (See Wikipedia articles: “Marduk,” “Mushussu”)}.

And Semiramis became known as Astarte to the Phoenicians, Venus to the Romans, Diana to the Ephesians, Aphrodite to the Greeks, Inanna to the Sumerians, Ash-toreth or Asherah to the Israelites, Isis to the Egyptians, Ishtar to the Babylonians and Assyrians, and Eastre to the English. But regardless of the name that she was called by, she was still the goddess of dawn; the sex goddess; the spring goddess; the queen of heaven; the queen mother; the virgin MOTHER goddess; the mother of god.

And Tammuz, her SON, became known as Horus to the Egyptians, Zeus (as well as Adonis) to the Greeks, Jupiter to the Romans, Krishna to the Hindus, Deoius to those in western Asia, and Ishvara (or Iswara) to those in India.

As time went on mankind became more and more depraved, even to the point of *sacrificing their own children* to their detestable gods! Since their god was also considered the god of agriculture, they thought sacrificing human beings to him would please him, and therefore he would bless them with abundant crops. So to the fire they went, roasted alive, as drummers pounded away on their drums to silence the agonizing screams of the innocent little children; while everyone else rejoiced and sang praises to their god!

So, was their god really pleased with this sacrificial offering? *Absolutely!* Because in reality their god was NOT really Nimrod, Baal, or Saturn; or Semiramis, Ishtar, or Venus; or even Tammuz, Horus, or Jupiter; but *Satan the*

*Devil*—the god of this age—the one who deceives the whole world! (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9) And Satan *loves* when we hurt and destroy ourselves (as he is the one who *inspires* such depravity).

Finally, after the children were roasted, the priests of Baal would eat the dead children! And this is where the word “*cannibal*” comes from (canni = priest; bal = Baal; combined: “priest of Baal”).

So does Satan really have the power to bless and increase our harvests? Of course NOT! Only the true God—the Creator of the universe—Almighty God—only He can bless us with healthy and plentiful crops. And He most certainly does NOT require human sacrifices!

But Satan deceived the people back then (just as he deceives us today) with his sick, disgusting and perverted lies! And as a result, the people paid a very heavy price, with the horrible death and atrocious suffering of their precious little children.

Then, out of this perverse, corrupt world, God decided to call a man, a man who would trust and obey Him, a man whom God could use in His plan to save mankind, a man by the name of...

### **Abram**

It has now been 2,053 years since the creation of Adam and Eve (approximately 1920 BC) and about 400 years since the flood. The world has once again become extremely evil.

Then, out of this Satan-led world, God calls a man by the name of Abram, a 55 year-old man living in Ur of the



Chaldeans, a thriving, prosperous city located in Babylon, in southeastern Mesopotamia (southern Iraq today).

So one day, God (that is—the Word—Jesus Christ) appears to Abram and says to him: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3). And what was Abram’s response to this request to leave his country? The Bible simply states: “So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him...” (Genesis 12:4).

### **Abram Departs for Canaan**

So Abram departs with his wife Sarai, his father Terah, and his nephew Lot, to go to the land that God tells him to go to, the land of Canaan. But on their journey to Canaan they stop at *Haran*, an Assyrian city in Upper (northwestern) Mesopotamia (modern Turkey today) where many of their relatives are living (most notably Abraham’s brother Nahor). They wind up staying in Haran for twenty years, until Terah dies.

Abram, Sarai and Lot then depart Haran and journey to the land of *Canaan* (Genesis 11:31-32, 12:4-5), a land just west of the Jordan River. Upon arriving in the land of Canaan, God says to Abram, “To your descendants I will give this land...” (Genesis 12:7).

Several years later, after separating from his nephew Lot, God says to Abram, “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make

your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered” (Genesis 13:14-16).

### **Melchizedek**

Then sometime later an invading army attacks the land where Lot (Abram’s nephew) is staying. As a result Lot is taken captive. But Abram goes after them with 318 of his armed servants and rescues Lot and all the others who were taken captive. Abram also brings back a large amount of goods as a result of this victory. A stranger (by the name of Melchizedek) then greets Abram after his triumph. “Then *Melchizedek* King of Salem [that is—*King of Peace*] brought out bread and wine; He was the priest of God Most High. And He blessed him and said: ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand’ ” (Genesis 14:18-20). This Melchizedek, who was called King of Salem [King of Peace], was actually the Word—Jesus Christ (Hebrew 7:1-21)—who appeared to Abram as a physical human being, as the high priest of God.

Now at this time Abram and his wife Sarai were childless. So God promised Abram a SON and told him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15:1-5). “And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD declared him righteous because of his faith” (Genesis 15:6; NLT).

But God also told Abram that his descendants would live in a foreign land for many years before returning to the land of Canaan to inherit the land; and in this foreign land [the land of Egypt] they would be oppressed and even become slaves (Genesis 15:13-16). But God promises Abram that He would free them from their slavery and return them

to the land of Canaan; and they would possess the land from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates River (Genesis 15:18-20).

It is now 1890 BC (about 2,083 years after the creation of Adam and Eve) and Abram is 85 years old when God tells him these things. It has also been 30 years since God first spoke to Abram in Ur of the Chaldeans, telling him to depart from Ur and to migrate to the land of Canaan; and it has also been 10 years since he first arrived in the land of Canaan.

### **Ishmael**

A few months later Sarai (because she was barren and getting too old to have children) tells Abram to have sex with her Egyptian maid Hagar, so that she could bare a son for them. So by the time Abram is 86 years old Hagar has a son named ISHMAEL (“God has hearkened”). (*Many Arabs today trace their ancestry back to Ishmael.*)

Then thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, when Abram is 99 years old, God once again appears to Abram and confirms the promise that He had made with Abram many years before, telling him that he and Sarai will have a son named ISAAC (even though she is ninety years old and past the age of being able to bear children).

God also tells Abram that his descendants will one day become a mighty nation on the earth—but—they would NOT just become one nation but a *multitude of nations!* God also adds that some of his descendants would become *kings* and that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan forever. At this time God changes his name to ABRAHAM (meaning “the father of a multitude”). (Genesis 17:1-8, 16-17; 18:11-12)

God then tells Abraham that all males must be circumcised as a sign of the *covenant* (agreement) that God had made with Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14). And God changes Sarai's name to SARAH, meaning "princess," as she would become the mother of kings (Genesis 17:15-16).

### **Sodom & Gomorrah**

During this time Abraham's nephew Lot is living in SODOM, when two angels enter the city. Lot then invites them back to his home to spend the night. But that evening the men of Sodom come banging on Lot's door, demanding that the two men come out, so that they can have sex with them! But the two angels blind the men of the city so that they can't find the door of the house.

Later the next morning Lot and his wife and two daughters are escorted out of the city by the two angels. They then escape to a small town called Zoar as God rains down fire and brimstone on Sodom (as well as the nearby city of GOMORRAH). But Lot's wife looks back (though the two angels had strictly warned her not to look back), and as a result she becomes a pillar of salt (Genesis 19). (Eventually, the descendants of Lot's oldest daughter would become known as MOABITES and the descendants of his youngest daughter would become known as AMMONITES—Genesis 19:37-38).

### **The Descendants of Abraham**

In the meantime, Abraham and Sarah finally have a son. It is the year 1875 BC (and approximately 2,098 years have passed since the creation of Adam and Eve). Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah is 91 when their son is born. They name him ISAAC, meaning, "he laughs" (Genesis 20).

Later on, after Isaac is weaned, Sarah notices Ishmael (who is now a teenager) mocking little Isaac. So she urges Abraham to send Ishmael and his mother (Hagar) away so that Isaac would become Abraham's only heir. Abraham is reluctant to do so but God tells him to comply with Sarah's request (Genesis 21:8-21). Therefore, he sends Hagar and Ishmael away. (Eventually Ishmael would marry and have children—and as stated previously—many Arabs today trace their ancestry back to Ishmael.)

Years later, when Isaac is a young lad, God instructs Abraham to go to Mount Moriah to sacrifice Isaac there (Genesis 22:1-9)! Once they arrive at Mount Moriah Abraham ties Isaac down. Then he grabs his knife and is about to slay his son when God calls out, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

God also tells him, "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the sea-shore; and *your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies*. In your SEED [referring to the coming *Messiah, Jesus Christ*; see Galatians 3:16] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:10-18). So Abraham is tremendously blessed for his faith and obedience to God!

Years later (Genesis 24), when Isaac is forty years old (Genesis 25:20), Abraham sends one of his servants to *Haran* (Genesis 27:43)—to where his relatives are living. (This is the same place that Abraham and his family had lived for twenty years while they traveled from Ur to Ca-

naan.) Abraham instructs his servant to find a wife for Isaac among his relatives (for he did not want him to marry a Canaanite woman).

So the servant travels to Haran where he runs into REBEKAH, the granddaughter of Nahor (Abraham's brother). After talking to Rebekah and her family (her mother, her father Bethuel and her brother Laban), it is agreed that Rebekah will travel to the land of Canaan to marry Isaac. Upon leaving, a blessing is bestowed upon Rebekah, "may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and *may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them*" (Genesis 24:60).

Upon arriving in Canaan, Rebekah (who is very beautiful—Genesis 24:16) meets Isaac. She then becomes Isaac's wife, and Isaac loves her very much (Genesis 24:67).

About twenty years later (1816 BC and 2,157 years after the creation of Adam and Eve), when Isaac is 60 years old (Genesis 25:26), *Rebekah has twin sons, Esau (later called Edom), and Jacob* (Genesis 25:21-26).

When Esau and Jacob are teenagers their grandfather Abraham dies at 175 years old (Genesis 25:7-8). Afterwards, *Esau sells his birthright* (of being the firstborn) *to his brother Jacob* for a mere bowl of stew (Genesis 25:27-34).

### **The Promises Pass to Isaac**

Shortly after Abraham's death God appears to *Isaac* and tells him, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and *I will perform the oath which I swore to*

*Abraham your father.* And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your Seed [*the Messiah, Jesus Christ*] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (Genesis 26:2-5; Galatians 3:16).

So all the covenant promises that God first made to Abraham (many years before) are now passed on to *Isaac* (and NOT Ishmael). And God blesses Isaac exceedingly (Genesis 26:12-14), just as He had blessed Abraham. Later, God reaffirms His promises to Isaac: “And the Lord appeared to him... and said, ‘I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham’s sake’ ” (Genesis 26:24).

Then years later, when Isaac is old and blind, Jacob and Rebekah DECEIVE Isaac into pronouncing a blessing *upon Jacob instead of Esau* (Genesis 27:1-40). Isaac tells Jacob (in Genesis 27:28-29), “may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!”

So not only has Jacob taken away Esau’s birthright but he has taken away his blessing as well! After finding out about this Esau laments, “Is he not rightly named Jacob [supplanter]? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!” (Genesis 27:36). Esau is furious over this new turn of events and pledges to kill Jacob (Genesis 27:41)! As a result, Rebekah tells Jacob that he should flee

to her brother Laban in *Haran* (Genesis 27:42-45). She then tells Isaac that Jacob should not marry a Canaanite woman (but a woman from her family back in Haran).

“Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: ‘You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to... the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples; and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham.’ So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Laban the son of Bethuel, ...the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau” (Genesis 28:1-5).

### **The Promises Pass to Jacob**

It is now the year 1745 BC (and about 2,228 years have passed since the creation of Adam and Eve) and Jacob is 71 years old. While Jacob journeys to Haran, ESAU (who already has several wives) *marries Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael* (Genesis 26:34, 28:9).

As Jacob travels to Haran, God appears to him in a dream and says: “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your Seed [the Messiah, Jesus Christ] all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you” (Genesis 28:13-15). Therefore, all the



covenant promises that God had first made with Abraham, and that had passed down to Isaac, have now passed down to Jacob (and NOT Esau)!

Jacob then arrives in HARAN and meets Laban (Rebekah's brother) and his family. He falls madly in love with Laban's youngest daughter RACHEL, who is very beautiful. He then agrees to work for Laban for seven years in exchange for marrying Rachel. But at the end of the seven years he is tricked by Laban into marrying Leah, Laban's oldest daughter. Jacob then works another seven years for Rachel, and therefore he has two wives, Leah and Rachel (Genesis 29:1-30).

Leah eventually has four sons, *Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah* (Genesis 29:31-35), but Rachel is barren. Therefore, Rachel gives her maid Bilhah to Jacob to have children for her. Bilhah then has two sons, *Dan and Naphtali* (Genesis 30:1-8). But when Leah notices that she is no longer getting pregnant she gives her maid Zilpah to Jacob to have more children for her. Then Zilpah has two sons, *Gad and Asher* (Genesis 30:9-13). But then Leah has two more sons, *Issachar and Zebulun* (Genesis 30:17-20). Finally, Rachel gets pregnant and has a son, *Joseph* (Genesis 30:22-24).

During his stay at Haran Jacob becomes extremely wealthy, with very large flocks of sheep and goats, female and male servants, as well as herds of camels, donkeys, and cattle (Genesis 30:25-43, 32:5, 7, 13-15). He then decides to return to the land of Canaan with his family and possessions.

### **Jacob Renamed Israel**

So after spending twenty years in Haran (the same amount of time that his grandfather Abraham had also

spent in Haran), Jacob journeys back to the Promised Land, the land of Canaan (Genesis 31 & 32). On his way back, God (that is—the Word—Jesus Christ) meets him one evening and actually wrestles with him! (Genesis 32:24-32) God then tells him, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but *Israel* [“struggles with God”]; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed” (Genesis 32:28)!

*Jacob* (now called *Israel*) finally arrives in Canaan, where he is warmly welcomed back by his brother Esau (Genesis 33).

Later on, God blesses Jacob, and confirms the covenant that He had made with him many years earlier. But this time God mentions that “*a nation*” AND “*a company of nations*” [assembly of nations—CSB; community of nations—NIV] would come from him, and that some of his descendants would be KINGS.

“ ‘Your name is Jacob; your name shall NOT be called Jacob anymore, but ISRAEL shall be your name.’ So He called his name ISRAEL. Also God said to him: ‘I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; *a nation AND a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body*. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land’ ” (Genesis 35:9-12).

Sometime later Rachel dies while giving birth to another son, *Benjamin* (Genesis 35:16-20). So Jacob (that is, Israel) now has TWELVE SONS (Genesis 35:22).

Jacob eventually settles down near his father Isaac. And after some time Isaac dies at the age of 180 years old (Genesis 35:27-29). And just as Abraham’s two sons (Ish-

mael and Isaac) buried Abraham, Isaac's two sons (Esau and Jacob) bury Isaac (Genesis 25:7-10, 35:29).

After the death of Isaac, ESAU takes his family, his servants, his herds, his flocks, and all his goods, and travels some distance away. He then makes his home at Mount Seir. Eventually his descendants would become known as *Edomites*, and the nation that he founded would be called EDOM (Genesis 36).

### **Joseph Sold Into Slavery by His Brothers**

During this time, Jacob continued to prosper in the land of Canaan. But Joseph's ten older brothers hated *Joseph* because their father favored and loved Joseph more than all of them (Genesis 37:1-11).

So one day, when Joseph was seventeen years old, his brothers conspired to kill him! But Reuben, who was the oldest, convinced them not to murder him. So instead, *they sell Joseph as a slave* to a group of Ishmaelites (descendants of Ishmael; also called Midianites) who were headed to Egypt.

Joseph's brothers then return home and tell their father that a wild beast has killed Joseph. Israel (i.e. Jacob) takes this news very badly and becomes extremely distraught. In the meantime, the Ishmaelites sell Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt (Genesis 37).

### **Joseph Becomes Prime Minister of Egypt**

While in Egypt, God blesses Joseph, so that eventually he becomes *prime minister*, with only Pharaoh above him in power and authority! It is now 1696 BC (and 2,277 years have passed since the creation of Adam and Eve) and Joseph is now thirty years old (Genesis 41).

During this time God reveals to Joseph that there would be seven years of extreme *prosperity* in Egypt, followed by seven years of severe *famine*. So Joseph has an enormous amount of food stored during these seven plentiful years, as he collects twenty percent of all the food produced in Egypt during these seven richly abundant years (Genesis 41).

Finally, the seven bountiful years have come to an end and the *famine* has started. The famine though is not confined to just Egypt, but is everywhere, including the land of Canaan. So people from all over come to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph (Genesis 41:57). *Eventually even Israel (Jacob) tells his sons to go down to Egypt to buy grain, before they all die of starvation* (Genesis 42:1-2). So off to Egypt the sons of Israel go, all of them except Benjamin (the very youngest).

### **Joseph's Brothers Go To Egypt**

When the ten sons of Israel arrive in Egypt they buy grain from Joseph, but they do not realize that it is Joseph (though Joseph recognizes them). But instead of revealing himself to them he keeps his identity a secret. Afterwards, they travel back to their father Israel with the grain that they had purchased in Egypt (Genesis 42).

In due time, the grain that the sons of Israel had purchased in Egypt, runs out. So they return to Egypt to buy more grain. But this time Benjamin goes with them (Genesis 43:1-15). Finally, Joseph reveals himself to them, telling them that he is their brother—Joseph! (Genesis 45:1-15). They are shocked and overwhelmed with emotion. “Then Joseph fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him” (Genesis 43:14-15).

Joseph's eleven brothers then return to their father and tell him the good news: "Joseph is alive and prime minister of Egypt!" Israel is dumbfounded and can hardly believe his ears. Finally he cries out, "Joseph, my son Joseph is alive!" (Genesis 45:16-28).

They all then pack up everything they own, including all their livestock and goods. Israel then travels to Egypt with all his sons and daughters (along with their mates), and all his grandchildren. There are sixty-six descendants of Israel (besides his children's mates) who journey with him to Egypt (Genesis 46:26).

Once they arrive in Egypt they are directed to go to Goshen, where Joseph will meet them. "So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said to Joseph, 'Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive' " (Genesis 46:29-30). Israel is 130 years old when he arrives in Egypt (Genesis 47:8-9) but he would not die until many years later.

### **Ephraim and Manasseh**

It is now the year 1669 BC (and 2,304 years have passed since the creation of Adam and Eve), and Israel is now 147 years old and very close to dying (Genesis 47:28). So Joseph goes to him, with his two sons, *Ephraim and Manasseh* (Genesis 48:1).

Israel then puts his hands on Joseph's two sons and blesses them: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, *bless the lads; let my name [Israel] be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let*

them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Genesis 48:15-16). Furthermore he tells them that MANASSEH “will certainly become a NATION and a GREAT one; but... his [brother’s] seed [that is, the descendants of EPHRAIM] will become a GREAT FAMILY OF NATIONS” (Genesis 48:19; BBE).

Something very interesting has just occurred with the blessing that Israel has just bestowed upon Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh! The blessing that God had given to Israel earlier (Genesis 35:9-12), telling him that his descendants would become a great nation AND a great company of nations has now been passed down to *Joseph*. But now the promise of a great nation AND a great community of nations has been *divided* between Manasseh and Ephraim, with MANASSEH prophesied to become the GREAT NATION, and *Ephraim* prophesied to become the *great family of nations*!

But something very big is left out! No mention is made of the KINGS (Genesis 35:11) that were promised to descend from Israel. And no mention is made of the “SEED” (*the Messiah*) that would also descend from Israel—of which the whole world would be blessed! (Genesis 28:14). What happened to these promises?

“Then Jacob [Israel] called his [twelve] sons to him. He said, ‘Come here to me, and I will tell you what will happen to you in the future’ ” (Genesis 49:1; NCV). Jacob then tells each of his twelve sons what would befall each of their descendants in the future. And notice what he says about *Judah* (NOT Joseph): “*Kings* will come from *Judah’s* family; someone from Judah will always be on the throne. Judah will rule until SHILOH [the promised SEED in whom the whole earth would be blessed; *the Messiah—Jesus*

*Christ*] comes, and the nations will obey Him (Genesis 49:10; NCV; see also Galatians 3:16).

Please take note of what just happened—for this is *very important* in properly understanding the history of the world and what is to occur in the very near future!

*All* the covenant promises that were made to Abraham were passed down from Abraham to Isaac intact (some did NOT go to Isaac while others went to his brother Ishmael; instead they *all* went to Isaac).

Next, *all* the promises were passed down from Isaac to Jacob (once again intact; some did NOT go to Jacob while others went to his brother Esau; instead they *all* went to Jacob).

But at this point the promises no longer stay together but become SEPARATED! The promises of a *great nation* AND a *great assembly of nations* are passed down from Jacob (Israel) to *Joseph* (one of Jacob's twelve sons). But the promises of KINGS and the SEED that would bless the world (THE ULTIMATE KING, THE MESSIAH—JESUS CHRIST) are passed down from Jacob (Israel) to JUDAH (another one of Jacob's twelve sons)!

And finally, the promises made to Joseph of a *great nation* AND a *great family of nations* are DIVIDED among Joseph's two sons (Manasseh and Ephraim), with *Manasseh* prophesied to become *the great nation* and EPHRAIM prophesied to become THE GREAT COMPANY OF NATIONS.

From this point on the covenant promises would stay put among the different tribes of Israel forever. The promise of a great nation would be *Manasseh's* ultimate destiny; the promise of a great community of nations would remain

*Ephraim's* ultimate destiny; and the promise of kings (culminating in the KING of kings—the MESSIAH—JESUS CHRIST) would remain with the tribe of *Judah*.

After *Israel* made these pronouncements to his twelve sons, “he lay back in the bed, breathed his last, and *died*” (Genesis 49:33; NLT).

After the death of *Israel*, *Joseph* and his brothers continued to live in the land of Egypt, until 53 years later, at the age of 110, *Joseph also dies* (Genesis 50:22-26). It is now the year 1616 BC and about 2,357 years have elapsed since the creation of Adam and Eve.



# From Moses To Jesus Christ

**A**FTER THE DEATH OF JOSEPH “the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, ‘Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.’

“Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor” (Exodus 1:7-14).

Regardless of what the Egyptians did, the Israelites continued to grow and multiply. Therefore, Pharaoh ordered that all male children born to Israelite women be thrown into the Nile River to die! (Exodus 1:22).

### **The Birth of Moses**

It was at this time that an Israelite woman from the tribe of Levi (one of the twelve sons of Israel) bore a *son*. But instead of throwing him into the river, she instead puts him in a basket and places it among the reeds along the edge of the river (Exodus 2:1-3).

“And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. Then *the daughter of Pharaoh* came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the river-side; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, ‘This is one of the Hebrews’ children.’

“Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, ‘shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?’ And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Go.’

“So the maiden went and called the child’s mother. Then Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.’

“So the woman took the child and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name *Moses*, saying, ‘Because I drew him out of the water’ ” (Exodus 2:4-10).

## **Moses Flees From Egypt**

After being raised in the household of Pharaoh (and being trained and educated accordingly) Moses would grow up into a fine young man. But one day, at the age of forty, Moses (knowing that he was an Israelite and not an Egyptian) decided to visit his fellow Israelites. Seeing their heavy burdens, Moses was not pleased. Then he noticed an Egyptian beating an Israelite. So he struck the Egyptian and killed him. Then he fled for his life, escaping into the land of Midian (Exodus 2:11-15).

For the next forty years Moses would live in the land of Midian, where he would become a shepherd, marry, and raise a family (Exodus 2:16-22, 7:7).

“Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them” (Exodus 2:23-25).

## **God Appears to Moses**

So one day, while Moses was shepherding his flock, *God appeared to him in a burning bush*, and told him to return to the land of Egypt, that he would free the Israelites from slavery and lead them to the PROMISED LAND, a land flowing with milk and honey, the land of Canaan (Exodus 3).

So Moses returned to Egypt, and with his older brother Aaron, he explained to the leading men of Israel that God was about to free them and take them to the Promised Land (Exodus 4:27-31).

## **God Punishes Egypt**

Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and told him that God wanted the Israelites to leave Egypt. But the king of Egypt refuses to let them go (Exodus 5). So God turns the Nile River into blood. But Pharaoh still refuses to let the Israelites go (Exodus 7:14-24).

God next plagues the land with frogs, millions and millions of frogs, but the king of Egypt still stubbornly refuses to let the Israelites go (Exodus 8:1-15). God then plagues the land with gnats, then flies, but Pharaoh still refuses to let the Israelites go (Exodus 8:16-32).

Next, God kills all the livestock belonging to the Egyptians, and He plagues the Egyptians with boils, hail, locusts, and darkness, but Pharaoh still refuses to let the Israelites go (Exodus 9 and 10).

## **God Passes Over Israel**

Finally, God tells Moses, that on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of that month (which God tells him is the first month of the year) that He will kill all the firstborn in Egypt. But God says He will *pass over* the Israelite homes and not destroy their firstborn as long as they kill a lamb and put some of its blood on the outside of their door—and then when God sees the blood on their door He will *pass over* that particular home (Exodus 11 and 12).

So the Israelites do exactly as God instructed them to do: They kill a year-old male lamb (that has no defects or blemishes) at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month (just after sunset). Then they roast it over a fire. After it is cooked they eat it with unleavened bread (bread made without yeast) and bitter herbs. Then at midnight God kills all the firstborn of Egypt (all except those Israelites

who followed God's command, as God *passes over* their homes and does not kill them).

Finally, in the morning—as they weren't allowed to leave their homes until morning (Exodus 12:22)—the Israelites (million of them!) pack all their things together and prepare to leave Egypt. “All the Egyptians [then] urged the people of Israel to *get out of the land* as quickly as possible, for they thought, ‘We will all die!’

### **The Israelites Leave Egypt**

“The Israelites took with them their bread dough made without yeast. They wrapped their kneading bowls in their spare clothing and carried them on their shoulders. And the people of Israel did as Moses had instructed and asked the Egyptians for clothing and articles of silver and gold. The LORD caused the Egyptians to look favorably on the Israelites, and they gave the Israelites whatever they asked for. So, like a victorious army, they plundered the Egyptians!

“That *night* [the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month] the people of Israel left Rameses and started for Succoth. There were about 600,000 men, plus all the women and children. And they were all traveling on foot. Many people who were not Israelites went with them, along with the many flocks and herds. Whenever they stopped to eat, they baked bread from the yeastless dough they had brought from Egypt. It was made without yeast because the people were rushed out of Egypt and had no time to wait for bread to rise” (Exodus 12:33-39; NLT).

### **Passover & Festival of Unleavened Bread**

God then tells the Israelites that they are to observe these days as a *memorial* each year: That every year on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month\* they are to kill, roast and eat a

*Passover* lamb—recalling each year, that on this day, God killed the firstborn of Egypt, but *passed over* the homes of the Israelites, thus sparing them from death. (Also, they were not to break any of its bones, and no uncircumcised males could eat of the Passover; Exodus 12:43-49.) Furthermore, for seven consecutive days (until the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the first month) they are only allowed to eat *unleavened bread* with their meals. \*[The first day of the first month (the New Year!) occurs each year in the spring—at the first new moon after the spring equinox.]

God then tells them, “You must remember this day *forever*. Each year you will celebrate it as a special FESTIVAL to the LORD. *For seven days, you may eat only bread made without yeast*. On the very first day you must remove every trace of yeast from your homes.... On the FIRST DAY of the festival [15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month], and again on the SEVENTH DAY [21<sup>st</sup> day of the first month], all the people must gather for a time of SPECIAL WORSHIP. No work of any kind may be done on these days [on the first day and on the seventh day of this festival] except in the preparation of food. *Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread*, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. This festival will be a permanent regulation for you, to be kept from generation to generation” (Exodus 12:14-17; NLT; see also Exodus 13:1-16).

So God initiates the very first *annual* religious festivities that He wants His people to observe: On the 14<sup>th</sup> day (of the first month) the PASSOVER celebration, and then the FESTIVAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD for the seven days that follow (the 15<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup>); with the first day of Unleavened Bread (the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month) and the seventh day of Unleavened Bread (the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month) set apart as special holy days to honor and worship God (similar to

the 7<sup>th</sup> day weekly Sabbath day that God made holy during creation week (Genesis 2:3).

It is now the year 1490 BC and about 2.483 years have passed since the creation of Adam and Eve. (It has also been 430 years since God first made the promises to Abraham while he was living in Ur of the Chaldeans in south-eastern Mesopotamia; 400 years since God confirmed the promises to Abraham while he was living in Canaan; and 195 years since Israel and his whole family moved to Egypt during the seven years of famine.) *And the Israelites are on their way to the Promised Land!*

### **Crossing the Red Sea**

But as the Israelites cross the desert and approach the Red Sea, they look back and notice that the Egyptian army is pursuing them! But Moses tells them not to fear, that God will protect them. So God parts the sea, clearing a dry path in the middle of the sea for the Israelites to walk through. But as they make it over to the other side they notice that the Egyptian army is still in hot pursuit, following them in the middle of the sea! But once all of the Israelites are safely on the other side, God has the water rush back into its usual place, drowning the Egyptian army (Exodus 14).

“When the people of Israel saw the mighty power that the LORD had displayed against the Egyptians, they feared the LORD and put their faith in Him and His servant Moses” (Exodus 14:31; NLT).

As the Israelites journey to the land of milk and honey, God promises them, “If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His eyes, if you pay attention to His commands and keep all His decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the

Egyptians, *for I am the LORD, who heals you*" (Exodus 15:26; NIV).

### **Manna, Quail, & the Sabbath**

But as the Israelites travel to the land of Canaan they become hungry, so God rains down food for them: bread (which they call manna) and meat (quail). But God only provides food for them for the first six days of the week. God uses this to instruct them about the SEVENTH-DAY WEEKLY SABBATH, as He provides *twice* as much food as they need on the *sixth* day of the week (half of which they were to keep for the seventh day of the week).

"Then Moses said to them, 'No one is to keep any of it [the food that God provided on the first five days of the week] until morning.' However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.

"Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. *On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much*—two omers for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. He said to them, 'This is what the LORD commanded: 'Tomorrow [the seventh day of the week] is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.' "

"So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did NOT stink or get maggots in it. 'Eat it today,' Moses said, 'because today is a Sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today. Six days you are to gather it, but on *the seventh day, the Sabbath*, there will not be any.' Nevertheless, some of the people went out on



the seventh day to gather it, but they found none” (Exodus 16:19-27; NIV).

The Israelites then travel to the Sinai Desert and camp there in front of a mountain (Exodus 19:1-2). A few days later God speaks to the Israelites from the mountain (Mount Sinai) while the people listen to Him near the base of the mountain (Exodus 19:10-11, 25, 20:18-22). God (that is—the Word—Jesus Christ) then proclaims His 10 Commandments to them (Exodus 20:1-17):

### **The Ten Commandments**

[1] “You shall have *no other gods* before Me.”

[2] “You shall *not make for yourself a carved image*, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” [So we are NOT to have any idols, statues, or images.]

[3] “You shall *not take the name of the Lord your God in vain*, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

[4] “*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.* In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, THE SEA, AND

ALL THAT IS IN THEM, AND RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY. THEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND HALLOWED IT.” [The 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week is *Saturday* and NOT Sunday. But since God starts each day at sunset, the Sabbath actually starts at sunset on Friday evening, and ends at sunset on Saturday evening.]

[5] “*Honor your father and your mother*, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”

[6] “You shall *not murder*.”

[7] “You shall *not commit adultery*.”

[8] “You shall *not steal*.”

[9] “You shall *not bear false witness* against your neighbor.”

[10] “You shall *not covet* your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Later on God would write the 10 Commandments on two tablets of stone with His own fingers (Exodus 32:15-16, 19; 34:1-4). Plus, He would give the Israelites *several more annual festivals* besides the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread.

### **Annual Observances**

As I mentioned earlier, the *New Year* occurs each year in the SPRING. It takes place at the *first new moon after the spring equinox*—when the very first NEW (very small yet

visible) crescent moon appears in the western sky shortly after sunset.

Then on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of this first month of the year is the *Passover* (Leviticus 23:5), followed by the *Festival of Unleavened Bread*. This feast takes place from the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month through the 21<sup>st</sup>, with both the 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> designated as annual holy days or ANNUAL Sabbath days (Leviticus 23:6-8).

Next, we have the *Festival of Weeks* (Leviticus 23:15-21). This feast is determined by first counting off seven full WEEKS from the first Sunday that occurs after the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month. And then on the next day after the seven weeks are completed is when this festival takes place (the 50<sup>th</sup> day). This day always occurs on a Sunday since it always occurs on the day after the seventh weekly Sabbath day. This day is the *third ANNUAL holy day* of the year. This observance is also called the Festival of Harvest because this is when the first produce (called the firstfruits) of the wheat is harvested each year (Exodus 23:16; 34:22). Another name for this ANNUAL Sabbath day is *Pentecost* (meaning “*fiftieth day*”)—Acts 2:1.

The next ANNUAL HOLY DAY that occurs each year is the *Day of Trumpets*. This day takes place on the seventh new moon of the year—that is—the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:23-25). This is the *fourth ANNUAL Sabbath day* of the year.

Next, we come to the *Day of Atonement*. This ANNUAL HOLY DAY occurs on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month and represents the *fifth ANNUAL Sabbath day* of the year (Leviticus 23:26-32).

Finally, we come to the *Festival of Tabernacles* (Leviticus 23:33-43). This celebration begins on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month and lasts for seven days (from the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>). The 15<sup>th</sup> day marks the SIXTH ANNUAL HOLY DAY of the year. But then one more day (an eighth day) is added to this joyous seven-day celebration (Leviticus 23:39). This eighth day (which occurs on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of the seventh month) is sometimes called “the last Great Day” (John 7:37) and is the *seventh and final ANNUAL Sabbath day* of the year. Another name for the Festival of Tabernacles is the Festival of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16) because this feast occurs at the end of the growing season, when all the crops from the field are gathered in.

These annual observances, when properly understood, *outline God’s plan of salvation* for all mankind. They show not only what God has done in the past but also what He plans to do in the future. And when truly understood, they reveal an absolutely astonishing plan! Things that almost no one understands. I will be discussing these incredible eye-opening truths later in this book!

### **Animal Sacrifices**

Another thing that God would institute at this time would be *animal sacrifices*. These sacrificial offerings were to be made twice *every day*—in the morning and in the evening: “The one lamb you shall offer in the *morning*, the other lamb you shall offer in the *evening*” (Numbers 28:4).

These animal sacrifices would remind the Israelites on a daily basis the severity of sin—that the penalty of sin is death (Romans 6:23)—as these lambs had to be killed because of their sins. They would also be reminded that the only way for our sins to be forgiven would be through the shedding of blood.

Of course these animal sacrifices were incapable of ever cleansing them from their sins, therefore they foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—the true Lamb of God—who would one day take away the sins of the world through *His* shed blood (John 1:29; Revelation 7:17).

God then appointed the *Levites* (that is—men from the tribe of Levi) to serve as priests and to administer and handle all religious matters (including all the work related to the Tabernacle, Ark of the Covenant, the Temple, Offerings, Sacrifices, etc.). No one from any other tribe was allowed to perform any of these religious responsibilities. This was to be a fulltime and permanent position for the sons of Levi. And in exchange for their service to God they were to receive tithes, firstfruits, offerings, etc. from all the other tribes in order to help support them (Numbers 18).

### **Blessings for Obedience**

Now after God gave Israel His commandments, statutes, and judgments, He told them that He would *bless (i.e. reward) them exceedingly*, unlike any other nation on the face of the earth! But they would have to obey Him and keep His decrees (Leviticus 26:1-13; Deuteronomy 26:16-19, 28:1-14).

“If you fully obey the LORD your God by keeping all the commands I am giving you today, the LORD your God will exalt you above all the nations of the world. You will experience all these blessings if you obey the LORD your God: You will be blessed in your towns and in the country. You will be blessed with many children and productive fields. You will be blessed with fertile herds and flocks. You will be blessed with baskets overflowing with fruit, and with kneading bowls filled with bread. You will be blessed wherever you go, both in coming and in going.

“The LORD will conquer your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter from you in seven!

“The LORD will bless everything you do and will fill your storehouses with grain. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

“If you obey the commands of the LORD your God and walk in His ways, the LORD will establish you as His holy people as He solemnly promised to do. *Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the LORD, and they will stand in awe of you.*

“The LORD will give you an abundance of good things in the land he swore to give your ancestors—many children, numerous livestock, and abundant crops. The LORD will send rain at the proper time from his rich treasury in the heavens to bless all the work you do.

“You will lend to many nations, but you will never need to borrow from them. If you listen to these commands of the LORD your God and carefully obey them, the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always have the upper hand. You must not turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today to follow after other gods and worship them” (Deuteronomy 28:1-14; NLT).

### **The Wickedness of the Canaanites**

But why was God going to give the land of Canaan to the Israelites? What did the Canaanites ever do to deserve to be removed from their land? “After the LORD your God has done this for you, don't say to yourselves, ‘The LORD has given us this land because we are so righteous!’ No, it

is because of the *wickedness* of the other nations that he is doing it. It is not at all because you are such righteous, upright people that you are about to occupy their land. The LORD your God will drive these nations out ahead of you only because of their *wickedness*, and to fulfill the oath he had sworn to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Deuteronomy 9:4-5; NLT).

The Canaanites were so evil that they even *sacrificed their own children to their gods!* “The LORD your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same.’ You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. *They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods*” (Deuteronomy 12:29-31; NIV; see also Deuteronomy 18:9-12).

Of course the people of Canaan were also worshipping the sun and the sun-god (Nimrod/Tammuz) whom they often referred to as Baal or Molech. And they were worshipping Asherah/Ashtoreth (Semiramis/Easter) as well.

### **Punishment for Disobedience**

But God also *warned* the Israelites that if they disobeyed Him and did not walk according to His laws, but instead followed the ways of the pagan nations around them (Deuteronomy 18:9; Jeremiah 10:1-16), that He would punish them accordingly (Leviticus 26:14-46). And if they continued to live evil, wicked lives, and if they refused to repent—that they eventually would be invaded and

exiled as *slaves* to a foreign country (Deuteronomy 28:15-68).

“See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

“But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. *Now choose life, so that you and your children may live* and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him. For the LORD is your life, and He will give you many years in the land He swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Deuteronomy 30:15-20; NIV).

### **Forty Years in the Wilderness**

But instead of taking mere months to reach the Promised Land, it would take the Israelites forty years, as they would sin over and over again. Therefore, God punishes them and delays their arrival to the land of milk and honey (Numbers 13 and 14). But eventually the forty years would end and they would arrive at their destination. But Moses would not be able to enter the Promised Land with them.



“Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land... Then the Lord said to him, ‘This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.’

“So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab... Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended.

“Now *Joshua* the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel” (Deuteronomy 34:1-12).

### **Joshua Leads the Israelites**

It is now 1450 BC and 2,523 years have gone by since God first created Adam and Eve. With the death of Moses, it would now be left to Joshua to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land.

“After the death of Moses the LORD’s servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ assistant. He said, ‘Now that my servant Moses is dead, you must lead my people across the Jordan River into the land I am giving

them. I promise you what I promised Moses: ‘Everywhere you go, you will be on land I have given you—from the Negev Desert in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and all the land of the Hittites.’

“No one will be able to stand their ground against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. Be strong and courageous, for you will lead my people to possess all the land I swore to give their ancestors.

“Be strong and very courageous. Obey all the laws Moses gave you. Do not turn away from them, and you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of the Law [the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy] continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed.

“I command you—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go’ ” (Joshua 1:1-9; NLT).

So Joshua leads the people across the Jordan River into the Promised Land (Joshua 3). With the help of God, Joshua would spend the rest of his life conquering the land of Canaan and expelling its inhabitants (Joshua 4-13).

### **The Land is Divided Up**

Once the Israelites had control of the land it was then *divided up* among the twelve tribes of Israel, with the tribe of Joseph getting a DOUBLE portion: one for the descendants of *Ephraim* (Joseph’s son) and one for the descendants of *Manasseh* (Joseph’s other son) (Joshua 13-21).

With Ephraim and Manasseh getting their own separate inheritance equal to that of the other tribes, there were now really *thirteen* separate tribes of Israel (instead of just twelve): Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. [But remember, the *extraordinary promises* that God had made to Israel were destined to be fulfilled in just THREE of these tribes: the tribe of JUDAH (the promise of *kings* and the ultimate King—Jesus Christ), the tribe of MANASSEH (the promise of becoming a *great, magnificent nation*), and the tribe of EPHRAIM (the promise of becoming a *great community of nations*)].

As the years rolled by “the LORD had given the people of Israel rest from all their enemies. Joshua, who was now very old, called together all the elders, leaders, judges, and officers of Israel.

### **Joshua’s Farewell Speech**

“He said to them, ‘I am an old man now. You have seen everything the LORD your God has done for you during my lifetime. The LORD your God has fought for you against your enemies. I have allotted to you as an inheritance all the land of the nations yet unconquered, as well as the land of those we have already conquered—from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. This land will be yours, for the LORD your God will drive out all the people living there now. You will live there instead of them, just as the LORD your God promised you.

“So be strong! Be very careful to follow all the instructions written in the Book of the Law of Moses. Do not deviate from them in any way. Make sure you do not associate with the other people still remaining in the land. Do not even mention the names of their gods, much less swear by them or worship them. But be faithful to the LORD your

God as you have done until now. For the LORD has driven out great and powerful nations for you, and no one has yet been able to defeat you. Each one of you will put to flight a thousand of the enemy, for the LORD your God fights for you, just as he has promised. So be very careful to love the LORD your God.

### **Joshua's Final Warning**

“But if you turn away from him and intermarry with the survivors of these nations remaining among you, then know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive them out from your land. Instead, they will be a snare and a trap to you, a pain in your side and a thorn in your eyes, and you will be wiped out from this good land the LORD your God has given you.

“Soon I will die, going the way of all the earth. Deep in your hearts you know that every promise of the LORD your God has come true. Not a single one has failed! But as surely as the LORD your God has given you the good things He promised, He will also bring disaster on you if you disobey Him. He will completely wipe you out from this good land He has given you. If you break the covenant of the LORD your God by worshiping and serving other gods, His anger will burn against you, and you will quickly be wiped out from the good land He has given you’ ” (Joshua 23; NLT).

“Then Joshua sent the people away, each to his own inheritance. Soon after this, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, *died* at the age of 110. They buried him in the land he had inherited... in the hill country of Ephraim” (Joshua 24:28-30; NLT).

## Israel Turns From God

Once Joshua dies, it wouldn't be long before the Israelites would disobey God and do wicked things—even worshipping pagan deities! (Judges 2:1-3, 3:5-6) “The Israelites did what was *evil* in the LORD's sight. They forgot about the LORD their God, and they worshiped the images of Baal and the Asherah poles” (Judges 3:7; NLT).

These “poles” may very well have been *obelisks*. But what are obelisks and what were they used for? Let's let Ralph Woodrow explain: “Diodorus spoke of an ancient obelisk 130 feet high that was ERECTED BY QUEEN SEMIRAMIS IN BABYLON.... But it was in Egypt (an early stronghold of the *Babylon mystery religion*) that the use of the obelisk was best known....

“Originally, the obelisk was associated with *sun-worship*, a symbol of “*Baal*” (which was a title of Nimrod). The ancients—having rejected the knowledge of the true Creator—seeing that the sun gave life to plants and to man, looked upon the sun as a god, the great life giver.

“To them, the obelisk also had a *sexual* significance. Realizing that through sexual union life was produced, the phallus (the male organ of reproduction) was considered (along with the sun) a symbol of life.... In order for the obelisk to carry out their intended symbolism, they were placed upright—erect. Thus they pointed up—toward the sun. As a *symbol of the phallus [erect penis]*, the erect position also had an obvious significance” (Babylon Mystery Religion, Woodrow, 1986, pages 39-40).

Today, interesting enough, ROME is considered “the obelisk capital of the world” (Wikipedia; article: obelisk). There is even a 320-ton obelisk *at the entrance of St. Peter's in Rome*. But obelisks are not just confined to Rome—

they are all over the world, including London and New York City. But the tallest (and perhaps the most famous obelisk) is located in Washington DC—the *Washington Monument*!

But regardless if these “poles” were really obelisks or not—the fact remains that the Israelites had gotten into idolatry and were worshiping pagan gods! Therefore God punishes them, and as a result they fall subject to foreigners (Judges 3:8).

### **Cycle of Obedience & Disobedience**

Several years later they repent though, therefore God blesses the nation of Israel and gives them peace (Judges 3:9-11). But before long they are once again doing evil, therefore God punishes them again (Judges 3:12-14). Then after several more years they once again repent of their wickedness, therefore God delivers them from their enemies (Judges 3:15-30).

This CYCLE of doing evil and being punished by God, followed by repenting of their sins and being blessed by God, *would repeat itself over and over again* (Judges 3-21).

During this time God would continually send *judges* to ancient Israel, pleading with them to live justly, so that things would go well with them. And sometimes they would heed God’s warnings (and be blessed) and sometimes they would not (and be punished). And some Israelites (most notably those from the tribe of BENJAMIN) became so disgustingly *pervverted* that they even engaged in the repugnant act of HOMOSEXUALITY (Judges 19:22-24), something that God vehemently *condemns* (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-28; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; Jude 1:7; 2 Peter 2:6; Revelation 22:14-15; Revelation 21:8).

Of course, this is why God totally destroyed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* many years previously (Genesis 19). God says, “If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an *abomination*. They shall surely be put to DEATH. Their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:13).

As a result of their hideous sexual perversions the whole tribe of Benjamin is almost completely wiped out, as only 600 (out of tens of thousands) survive the punishment (Judges 19:22-30, 20:1-48, 21:1-25).

### Samuel

Then one day, many years later, a boy is born named *Samuel*. “The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and He let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a *prophet* of the LORD. The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there He revealed Himself to Samuel through His word” (1 Samuel 3:19-21).

It was at this time, when Samuel was a young man, that “all Israel mourned because it seemed that the LORD had abandoned them [as the Philistines—a neighboring nation—had made life very difficult for them]. Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, ‘If you are really serious about wanting to return to the LORD, get rid of your foreign *gods* and your *images of Ashtoreth*. Determine to obey only the LORD; then He will rescue you from the Philistines.’”

“So the Israelites destroyed their *images of Baal* [Nimrod] and *Ashtoreth* [Semiramis/Easter] and worshiped only the LORD” (1 Samuel 7:2-4; NLT). As a result, God subdued the Philistines, and Israel was once again freed from oppression (1 Samuel 7).

## **The Israelites Demand a King**

Then one day, “all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, ‘You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a KING to lead us, such *as all the other nations have.*’

“But when they said, ‘Give us a KING to lead us,’ this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: ‘Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but THEY HAVE REJECTED ME AS THEIR KING. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, *forsaking Me and serving other gods*, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but WARN them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.’

“Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king.... But the people refused to listen to Samuel. ‘No!’ they said. ‘We want a king over us. *Then we will be like all the other nations*, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.’

“When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. The LORD answered, ‘Listen to them and give them a king’ ” (1 Samuel 8:4-21; NIV).

## **Saul Becomes King**

“Then Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah, and said to the children of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.’ But you have today *rejected your God*, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, ‘No, set a king over us!’



“...And Saul the son of Kish was chosen.... So all the people shouted and said, ‘*Long live the king!*’ ” (1 Samuel 10:17-24)

Later on “the people all said to Samuel, ‘Pray to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.’ ‘Do not be afraid,’ Samuel replied. ‘You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. Do not turn away after useless *idols*. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. For the sake of His great name the LORD will not reject His people, because the LORD was pleased to make you His own. As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you *the way that is good and right*. But be sure to fear the LORD and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you. Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away’ ” (1 Samuel 12:19-25; NIV).

### **David and Goliath**

As the years go by, the Philistines would once again oppress Israel. And a GIANT (who stood over nine feet tall!) by the name of *Goliath*, began to TAUNT Israel. This went on day after day—until everyone in Israel was terrified.

But then a teenager named *David*, from the tribe of *Judah*, confronted this arrogant giant. Then Goliath “walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. ‘Am I a dog,’ he roared at David, ‘that you come at me with a stick?’ And he cursed David by the names of his gods. ‘Come over here, and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!’ Goliath yelled.

“David shouted in reply, ‘You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD Almighty—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the LORD will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! And everyone will know that the LORD does not need weapons to rescue His people. It is His battle, not ours. The LORD will give you to us!’

“As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him. Reaching into his shepherd’s bag and taking out a stone, he hurled it from his sling and hit the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank in, and Goliath stumbled and fell face downward to the ground. So David triumphed over the Philistine giant with only a stone and sling. And since he had no sword, he ran over and pulled Goliath’s sword from its sheath. David used it to kill the giant and cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they turned and ran” (1Samuel 17:41-51; NLT).

## **Jerusalem**

A few years later Saul would die, and *David* (at the age of 30) would become the next *king* of Israel (1 Samuel 31; 2 Samuel 5). And one of the very first things that David would do is conquer JERUSALEM from the Jebusites and make it the CAPITAL of Israel (2 Samuel 5:6-12).

## **Solomon Becomes King**

David would rule RIGHTEOUSLY (though not perfectly) for forty years over Israel, and then at the age of seventy he would die, and *Solomon* (one of David’s sons) would become the next *king* of Israel.

It is now the year 1013 BC and 2,960 years have passed since the creation of Adam and Eve. *Solomon* is now the newly appointed KING of Israel, and he (like his father David) is from the tribe of *Judah*.

Then one evening “the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream... and God said, ‘Ask! What shall I give you?’ And Solomon said: ‘You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because *he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You*; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an UNDERSTANDING heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?’

### **Solomon Given Great Wisdom**

“The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then God said to him: ‘Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself UNDERSTANDING to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, *I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you*. And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days” (1 Kings 3:5-14).

A short time later “two women who were harlots came to the king, and stood before him. And one woman said, ‘O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she was in the house. Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. And we were together; no one was with us in the house, except the two of us in the house. And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne.

“Then the other woman said, ‘No! But the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son.’ And the first woman said, ‘No! But the dead one is your son, and the living one is my son.’ Thus they spoke before the king.

“And the king said, ‘The one says, ‘This is my son, who lives, and your son is the dead one’; and the other says, ‘No! But your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.’ ” Then the king said, ‘Bring me a sword.’ So they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, ‘Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other.’

“Then the woman whose son was living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, ‘O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!’ But the other said, ‘Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him.’

“So the king answered and said, ‘Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she is his mother.’

“And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the *wisdom of God* was in him to administer justice” (1 Kings 3:16-28).

### **Israel Becomes Mighty**

At this time the people of Israel “were as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They were *very contented*, with plenty to eat and drink. King Solomon ruled all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines, as far south as the border of Egypt. The conquered peoples of those lands sent tribute money to Solomon and continued to serve him throughout his lifetime....

“Solomon's dominion extended over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphseh to Gaza. And there was *peace* throughout the entire land. Throughout the lifetime of Solomon, all of... ISRAEL LIVED IN PEACE AND SAFETY. And from Dan to Beersheba, *each family had its own home and garden*.... God gave Solomon GREAT WISDOM and understanding, and knowledge too vast to be measured. In fact, his wisdom exceeded that of all the wise men of the East and the wise men of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite and Heman, Calcol, and Darda—the sons of Mahol.

“His fame spread throughout all the surrounding nations. He composed some 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs. He could speak with authority about all kinds of plants, from the great cedar of Lebanon to the tiny hyssop that grows from cracks in a wall. He could also speak about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. And kings from every na-

tion sent their ambassadors to listen to the wisdom of Solomon” (1 Kings 4:20-34; NLT).

### **The Temple is Built**

In the fourth year of Solomon’s reign he begins to build the TEMPLE of the LORD (1 Kings 6:1). And after seven years the building of the temple is completed (1 Kings 6:38). And it is absolutely MAGNIFICENT (1 Kings 6-8)! The *Ark of the Covenant* (a wooden box containing the 10 Commandments, as well as other things) is then placed in the Temple (1 Kings 8:1-6). Then at the dedication of the temple the people rejoice for fourteen consecutive days. Afterwards they all return home, “joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the LORD had done for His servant David and His people Israel” (1 Kings 8:62-66; NIV).

### **Solomon Encouraged & Warned**

And it came to pass, “when Solomon had finished building the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had achieved all he had desired to do, the LORD appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. The LORD said to him: ‘I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before Me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting My Name there forever. My eyes and My heart will always be there. As for you, if you walk before Me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’

“ *‘But if you or your sons turn away from Me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will re-*

ject this temple I have consecrated for My Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, ‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ People will answer, ‘*Because they have forsaken the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why the LORD brought all this disaster on them*’ ” (1 Kings 9:1-9; NIV).

### **Solomon Turns From God**

“But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.’ Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth [Semiramis/Easter] the *goddess* of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

“Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech [the sun-god Nimrod] the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

“So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded. Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, ‘Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, *I will surely tear the kingdom away from you* and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. *However I will not tear away the whole kingdom;* ...for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen’ ” (1 Kings 11:1-13).

### **Israel Becomes Divided Into Two Nations**

After reigning over Israel forty years king Solomon dies and Rehoboam his *son* succeeds him as king (1 Kings 11:42-43). But the people rebel against king Rehoboam, and as a result *eleven* of the thirteen tribes of Israel secede and make someone else their king (Jeroboam). The only tribes to remain under Rehoboam’s authority are the two southern tribes of *Judah and Benjamin*. These two tribes are then called the KINGDOM OF JUDAH while the northern eleven tribes are called the KINGDOM OF ISRAEL (1 Kings 12:1-24).

### **Israel & Judah**

So now the Israelites are divided into two separate and competing nations: the southern *Kingdom of Judah* (composed of only two tribes—Judah and Benjamin), and the northern *Kingdom of Israel* (composed of the other eleven tribes).



But before long, the Kingdom of Israel would become involved in rank paganism as king Jeroboam of Israel sets up two *golden calves* for the people to worship, saying: “Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt” (1 Kings 12:29)!

### **Samaria & Jerusalem**

Eventually, most of the people from the *tribe of Levi* would leave the Kingdom of Israel in the north and join with the Kingdom of Judah in the south. As a result, the Kingdom of Israel is now composed of ten tribes while the Kingdom of Judah is composed of three tribes (Levi, Benjamin, and Judah). And they will remain this way indefinitely. Also, the Kingdom of Judah would retain *Jerusalem* as its capital, while the Kingdom of Israel would make *Samaria* its new capital.

### **Israelites & Jews War Against Each Other**

For the next few hundred years the Kingdom of *Israel* (whose inhabitants are called *Israelites*) and the Kingdom of *Judah* (whose inhabitants are called *Jews*) would fluctuate between good and evil. When they had a good king the people would generally do what was right, but when they had a wicked king they would usually do what was evil. And unfortunately these two nations would even go to WAR against each other—*Israelites against Jews*—maiming and killing one another!

### **Someone From the Tribe of Judah Would Always Reign**

During all of these years the *kings* of Israel would come from many of the different tribes of Israel. But *every king of Judah would only come from the tribe of Judah*, as God had prophesied hundreds of years before: “KINGS will come from JUDAH’S family; someone from Judah will al-

ways be on the throne; Judah will rule until Shiloh [the Messiah—Jesus Christ] comes, and the nations will obey Him” (Genesis 49:10; NCV).

### **Prophets of God**

Also, during this time, God would raise up PROPHETS who would WARN the people to turn from their wicked ways—men like *Elijah*, *Elisha*, *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*. These men of God would warn the people over and over again that unless they repented and did what was right—they would be destroyed—and taken as slaves to a foreign land. Occasionally the people would heed and repent of their abominations, but it usually wouldn’t last very long.

Then one day *Ahab* son of Omri became king of Israel. And he “did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat [who set up the two golden calves for Israel to worship], but he also married *Jezebel* daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal [i.e. Nimrod] and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah [i.e. Semiramis/Easter] pole [obelisk?] and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him” (1 Kings 16:30-33; NIV)!

Also, Ahab’s wicked wife Jezebel KILLED many of God’s *prophets* (1 Kings 18:4).

At this rate it wouldn’t be long before God’s stark warnings would become reality!

## **Elijah the Prophet**

*Elijah*, a prophet of God, also lived during this time period. He would warn Israel (including king Ahab and queen Jezebel) night and day, and exhort them to repent. God backed up Elijah's preaching with *many incredible miracles*. Some of these miracles included bringing a dead boy back to life and stopping the rain for 3½ years (1 Kings 17-18; James 5:17). But perhaps the greatest miracle of all occurred when he confronted Ahab and the prophets of Baal:

“ ‘So it's you, is it—Israel's troublemaker?’ Ahab asked when he saw him. ‘I have made no trouble for Israel,’ Elijah replied. ‘You and your family [especially queen Jezebel] are the troublemakers, for you have refused to obey the commands of the LORD and have worshiped the images of Baal [the sun-god Nimrod, *the god of FIRE*] instead. Now bring all the people of Israel to Mount Carmel, with all 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah [the goddess of sex—Semiramis/Easter], who are supported by Jezebel.’

### **Elijah Challenges Baal**

“So Ahab summoned all the people and the prophets to Mount Carmel. Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, ‘How long are you going to waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!’ But the people were completely silent.

“Then Elijah said to them, ‘I am the only prophet of the LORD who is left, but Baal has 450 prophets. Now bring two bulls. The prophets of Baal may choose whichever one they wish and cut it into pieces and lay it on the wood of their altar, but without setting fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood on the altar, but not set fire to it. Then call on the name of your god, and I

will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by setting FIRE to the wood is the *true* God!’ And all the people agreed.

“Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, ‘You go first, for there are many of you. Choose one of the bulls and prepare it and call on the name of your god. But do not set fire to the wood.’ So they prepared one of the bulls and placed it on the altar. Then they called on the name of Baal all morning, shouting, ‘O Baal, answer us!’ But there was no reply of any kind. Then they danced wildly around the altar they had made.

### **Elijah Mocks Baal**

“About noontime Elijah began mocking them. ‘You’ll have to shout louder,’ he scoffed, ‘for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or he is relieving himself. Or maybe he is away on a trip, or he is asleep and needs to be awakened!’

“So they shouted louder, and following their normal custom, they cut themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out. They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice, but still there was no reply, no voice, no answer.

“Then Elijah called to the people, ‘Come over here!’ They all crowded around him as he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been torn down. He took twelve stones, one to represent each of the tribes of Israel, and he used the stones to rebuild the LORD’s altar. Then he dug a trench around the altar large enough to hold about three gallons. He piled wood on the altar, cut the bull into pieces, and laid the pieces on the wood. Then he said, ‘Fill four large jars with water, and pour the water over the offering and the wood.’ After they had done this, he said, ‘Do the same

thing again!’ And when they were finished, he said, ‘Now do it a third time!’

“So they did as he said, and the water ran around the altar and even overflowed the trench. At the customary time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, ‘O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God and that You have brought them back to Yourself’ ” (1 Kings 18:17-37; NLT).

### **God Sends Fire From Heaven**

“Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the ditch! And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces and cried out, ‘The LORD is God! The LORD is God!’

“Then Elijah commanded, ‘Seize all the prophets of Baal. Don't let a single one escape!’ So the people seized them all, and Elijah took them down to the Kishon Valley and killed them there. Then Elijah said to Ahab, ‘Go and enjoy a good meal! For I hear a mighty *rainstorm* coming [for at Elijah's command it hadn't rained for 3½ years!].’

### **Elijah Prays for Rain & It Rains!**

“So Ahab prepared a feast. But Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel and fell to the ground and *prayed*. Then he said to his servant, ‘Go and look out toward the sea.’ The servant went and looked, but he returned to Elijah and said, ‘I didn't see anything.’ Seven times Elijah told him to go and look, and seven times he went. Finally the

seventh time, his servant told him, ‘I saw a little cloud about the size of a hand rising from the sea.’

“Then Elijah shouted, ‘Hurry to Ahab and tell him, ‘Climb into your chariot and go back home. If you don’t hurry, the *rain* will stop you!’ ’ And sure enough, the sky was soon black with clouds. A heavy wind brought a terrific *rainstorm*, and Ahab left quickly for Jezreel” (1 Kings 18:38-45; NLT; see also James 5:17-18).

### **Israel (not Judah) Exiled to Assyria**

As the years pass by Israel would continue to worship Nimrod (Baal) and Semiramis/Easter (Asherah), as well as the two golden calves that king Jeroboam had set up in Dan and Bethel for the people to worship (1 Kings 12:28-29). As a result of this rank idolatry (as well as all the other vile acts the people committed) it wouldn’t be long before the dire consequences that God had continually warned Israel about would come to pass!

“Then Hoshea son of Elah became king of ISRAEL in Samaria, and he reigned nine years. He did *evil* in the eyes of the LORD... Shalmaneser king of ASSYRIA came up to attack Hoshea... Therefore Shalmaneser seized him and put him in prison. *The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria.* He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes” (2 Kings 17:1-6; NIV).

“All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods and followed the practices of

the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced.

### **Israel Commits Atrocious Sins**

“The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places [for worshiping heathen gods] in all their towns. They set up sacred stones and *Asherah poles* on every high hill and under every spreading tree. At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that provoked the LORD to anger. They worshiped IDOLS, though the LORD had said, ‘You shall not do this.’

“The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets and seers: ‘Turn from your evil ways. Observe My commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through My servants the prophets.’

“But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God. They rejected His decrees and the covenant He had made with their fathers and the warnings He had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They *imitated the nations around them* although the LORD had ordered them, ‘Do not do as they do,’ and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do. They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two IDOLS cast in the shape of CALVES, and an *Asherah pole*.

## **Israel Sacrifice's Their Own Children In the Fire of Baal!**

“They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped BAAL. *They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire.* They practiced DIVINATION and SORCERY and sold themselves to do *evil* in the eyes of the LORD, provoking Him to anger.

“So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His presence. *Only the tribe [or Kingdom] of Judah was left,* and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; He afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until He thrust them from His presence.

“When He tore Israel away from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam enticed Israel away from following the LORD and caused them to commit a great sin. The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them until the LORD removed them from His presence, as He had warned through all His servants the prophets. *So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria...*” (2 Kings 17:7-23; NIV).

## **Only the Kingdom of Judah Remains**

It is now 722 BC and 3,251 years have passed since the creation of Adam and Eve. And as mentioned, after the death of king Solomon (many years before) Israel was divided into two nations: the northern Kingdom of ISRAEL (consisting of ten tribes of Israel) and the southern Kingdom of JUDAH (consisting of the remaining three tribes of Israel—Judah, Benjamin, and Levi). But now the northern ten tribes of Israel have been taken captive to a foreign



land—as slaves of the Assyrians. And only the nation of Judah remains.

### **The “Lost” Ten Tribes of Israel**

But what would become of the *ten tribes of Israel*? Would they someday return to the Promised Land? Or would they become *lost* in the pages of history (as most historians allege)? And what would become of the promises that God had made to the two sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh)? Would MANASSEH ever become the *great magnificent nation* that God had promised? And would EPHRAIM ever fulfill her destiny as “*a great company of nations*”? For now, we must return to the Kingdom of Judah and finish telling her story, but afterwards we will return to answer these fascinating questions.

### **Judah Exiled to Babylon**

For 120 years after the departure of Israel from the Promised Land, many prophets of God plead with the people of Judah to REPENT from their wicked ways and turn to God. They are continually warned that if they don’t obey God they will wind up just like their brother (Israel) and be taken captive to a foreign land. But Judah, just like Israel before her, refuses to heed the warnings, even worshiping TAMMUZ as well as the SUN!

God speaking to the prophet Ezekiel in a vision, tells him: “ ‘Come, and I will show you greater sins than these!’ He brought me to the north gate of the LORD’s Temple, and some women were sitting there, weeping for the *god Tammuz*. ‘Have you seen this?’ He asked. ‘But I will show you even greater sins than these!’ Then He brought me into the inner courtyard of the LORD’s Temple. At the entrance, between the foyer and the bronze altar, about twenty-five men were standing with their backs to the

LORD's Temple. They were facing eastward, *worshipping the sun!* 'Have you seen this, son of man?' he asked. 'Is it nothing to the people of JUDAH that they commit these TERRIBLE SINS, leading the whole nation into violence, thumbing their noses at me, and rousing my fury against them? Therefore, I will deal with them in fury. I will neither pity nor spare them. And though they scream for mercy, I will not listen.' " (Ezekiel 8:13-18; NLT).

It is now 602 BC (approximately 3,371 years after the creation of Adam and Eve) and Nebuchadnezzar king of *Babylon conquers the Kingdom of Judah*. The people of JUDAH are then deported as SLAVES to *Babylon*—just as God had foretold (2 Kings 24:8-17).

### **Daniel & His 3 Friends**

Among the many Jews taken to Babylon is a young man named *Daniel* and his three friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. These four young men are very talented—therefore they are selected to serve in the king's palace (Daniel 1:1-6).

“God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for learning the literature and science of the time. And God gave Daniel special ability in understanding the meanings of visions and dreams. When the three-year training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief official brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with each of them, and none of them impressed him as much as *Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah*. So they were appointed to his regular staff of ADVISERS. In all matters requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, the king found the advice of these young men to be ten times better than that of all the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom” (Daniel 1:17-20; NLT).

## Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Great Statue

During this time king Nebuchadnezzar has a dream, and he wants the wise men of Babylon to interpret the dream for him. But he also wants them to tell him *what* he has dreamed! And if they aren't able to do so, he declares that every single one of them will *die*!

Fortunately, God reveals the dream and its meaning to Daniel. Daniel then explains the dream and its meaning to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel tells the king that in his dream he saw an ENORMOUS STATUE: the head of the statue was made of *gold*, its chest & arms of *silver*, its belly & thighs of *bronze*, its lower legs of *iron* and its feet partly of *iron & partly of clay*. Then a rock struck the statue on its FEET, which caused the whole statue to crumble. A huge wind then came and swept the pieces away without leaving a trace. The rock then became a huge mountain and filled the entire earth (Daniel 2:1-35).

### Daniel Interprets The Dream

Daniel then interprets the dream for Nebuchadnezzar. He tells the king that the *head of gold* represents him (and his *Babylonian Empire*); the CHEST & ARMS OF SILVER represent the next empire that would follow his (the MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE); the *belly & thighs of bronze* represent the third kingdom (the *Greco-Macedonian Empire*); the LOWER LEGS OF IRON represent the fourth kingdom (the ROMAN EMPIRE); and the *feet of iron & clay* represent the last kingdom (a *resurrected Roman Empire* in the days just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ). (Daniel 2:36-43)

Daniel then goes on to explain to Nebuchadnezzar that the Rock that destroyed the statue represents God and His Kingdom; that the Rock (Jesus Christ) would return to

earth at the time of this last empire (a *revived “Holy Roman Empire”* consisting of TEN European nations) to destroy it and all other kingdoms; then Christ would set up the KINGDOM OF GOD on earth—which will last forever! (Daniel 2:44-47; Revelation 17:12-14, 5:10)

### **Daniel & His 3 Friends Are Promoted**

“Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, ‘Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.’ Then the king placed DANIEL in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him *ruler over the entire province of Babylon* [similar to what happened to Joseph in Egypt!] and placed him in charge of all its wise men. Moreover, at Daniel’s request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego [i.e. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah] *administrators* over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court” (Daniel 2:46-49).

### **Nebuchadnezzar’s Golden Image**

Sometime later king Nebuchadnezzar makes an enormous *statue* of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide. He requires everyone to bow down before the *image* and worship it. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (i.e. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) refuse.

Nebuchadnezzar then tells them “ ‘if you do not worship [the golden statue], you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?’ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up' ” (Daniel 3:15-18).

### **The Burning Fiery Furnace**

“Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king’s command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

### **Hananiah, Mishael, & Azariah Are Protected**

“Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, ‘Did we not cast *three* men bound into the midst of the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘True, O king.’ ‘Look!’ he answered, ‘I see *four* men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the SON OF GOD.’

“Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, ‘Shadrach, Me-

shach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here.’ Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

### **King Nebuchadnezzar Praises God**

“Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.’ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon” (Daniel 3:19-30).

### **Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of a Great Tree**

Later on “King Nebuchadnezzar sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: ‘Peace and prosperity to you! I want you all to know about the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God has performed for me. How great are His signs, how powerful His wonders! His KINGDOM will last *forever*, His rule through all generations.’

“ ‘I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living in my palace in comfort and prosperity. But one night I had a dream that greatly frightened me; I saw visions that terrified me as I lay in my

bed. So I issued an order calling in all the wise men of Babylon, so they could tell me what my dream meant. When all the magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and fortune-tellers came in, I told them the dream, but they could NOT tell me what it meant. At last *Daniel* came in before me, and I told him the dream’....

### **Nebuchadnezzar Recounts the Dream**

“ ‘While I was lying in my bed, this is what I dreamed. I saw a *large tree* in the middle of the earth. The tree grew very tall and strong, reaching high into the heavens for all the world to see. It had fresh green leaves, and it was loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. All the world was fed from this tree.’

“ ‘Then as I lay there dreaming, I saw a Messenger, a Holy One, coming down from heaven. The Messenger shouted, ‘Cut down the tree; lop off its branches! Shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit! Chase the animals from its shade and the birds from its branches. But leave the stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and bronze and surrounded by tender grass. Now let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live like an animal among the plants of the fields. For seven periods of time [seven years], let him have the mind of an animal instead of a human. For this has been decreed by the Messengers; it is commanded by the Holy Ones. The purpose of this decree is that the whole world may understand that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone He chooses—even to the lowliest of humans.’

“ ‘O Belteshazzar [i.e. Daniel], that was the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now tell me what it means, for no one else can help me. All the wisest men of my

kingdom have failed me. But you can tell me because the spirit of the Holy Gods is in you.'

### **Daniel Interprets the Dream**

"Upon hearing this, *Daniel* (also known as Belteshazzar) was overcome for a time, aghast at the meaning of the dream. Finally, the king said to him, 'Belteshazzar, don't be alarmed by the dream and what it means.' Belteshazzar replied, 'Oh, how I wish the events foreshadowed in this dream would happen to your enemies, my lord, and not to you! ...This is what the dream means, ...and what the Most High has declared will happen to *you*.'

" 'You will be driven from human society, and you will live in the fields with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow, and you will be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time [*seven years*] will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone He chooses. But the stump and the roots were left in the ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again when you have learned that heaven rules.'

" 'O King Nebuchadnezzar, please listen to me. *Stop sinning and do what is right*. Break from your wicked past by being merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper.'

### **The Dream is Fulfilled**

"But all these things did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, he was taking a walk on the flat roof of the royal palace in Babylon. As he looked out across the city, he said, 'Just look at this great city of Babylon! *I, by my own mighty power, have built this beautiful*



*city* as my royal residence and as an expression of my royal splendor.’

“While he was still speaking these words, a voice called down from heaven, ‘O King Nebuchadnezzar, this message is for you! You are no longer ruler of this kingdom. You will be driven from human society. You will live in the fields with the wild animals, and you will eat grass like a cow. Seven periods of time [SEVEN YEARS] will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone He chooses.’

“That very same hour the prophecy was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar was driven from human society. *He ate grass like a cow*, and he was drenched with the dew of heaven. He lived this way until his hair was as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails were like birds’ claws.

### **Nebuchadnezzar Praises God Again**

“ ‘After this time [SEVEN YEARS] had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. *My sanity returned*, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the One who lives forever. His rule is everlasting, and His KINGDOM is eternal. All the people of the earth are nothing compared to Him. He has the power to do as He pleases among the angels of heaven and with those who live on earth. No one can stop Him or challenge Him, saying, ‘What do you mean by doing these things?’

“ ‘When my sanity returned to me, so did my honor and glory and kingdom. My advisers and officers sought me out, and I was reestablished as head of my kingdom, with even greater honor than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, PRAISE AND GLORIFY AND HONOR THE KING OF HEAVEN.

ALL HIS ACTS ARE JUST AND TRUE, and *He is able to humble those who are proud*’” (Daniel 4:1-37; NLT).

### **Daniel’s Dream of Four Imposing Beasts**

In due time, *Belshazzar* (Nebuchadnezzar’s *son*) becomes king of Babylon. It’s during Belshazzar’s first year of reign that *Daniel* has a dream—an extraordinary dream!

In Daniel’s dream *four great beasts* come up out of the sea. The first beast is like a LION; the second beast resembles a BEAR; the third beast looks like a LEOPARD; and the fourth beast “terrifying, dreadful, and very strong. It devoured and crushed its victims with HUGE IRON TEETH and trampled what was left beneath its feet. It was different from any of the other beasts, and it had *ten horns*” (Daniel 7:7; NLT).

“I was considering the [ten] horns, and there was *another horn, a little one*, coming up among them, before whom THREE OF THE FIRST HORNS were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and *a mouth speaking pompous words*” (Daniel 7:8).

### **The Interpretation of the Four Beasts**

The meaning of this dream (involving four frightful beasts) is *similar* (though it does differ a little) to the dream that king Nebuchadnezzar had many years earlier (when he dreamed of a *huge statue*: head of *gold*, chest and arms of *silver*, belly and thighs of *bronze*, lower legs of *iron*, and toes of iron and clay).

In this dream, the *lion* represents the *Babylonian Empire* (just like the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar’s statue); the BEAR represents the kingdom that would replace Babylon—the MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE (thus corresponding to the

chest and arms of silver of Nebuchadnezzar's statue); the *leopard* represents the third kingdom—the *Greco-Macedonian Empire* (just like the belly and thighs of bronze); and the fourth beast with the HUGE IRON TEETH represents the fourth kingdom—the ROMAN EMPIRE (thus corresponding to the lower legs of iron).

But here is where the dreams are DIFFERENT: the *ten horns* do NOT represent the last kingdom—a *revived “Holy Roman Empire” composed of TEN contemporary European nations in the last days just prior to Christ’s return*—as the TEN TOES of iron and clay in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream do.

In this dream of the four beasts, the ten horns represent something entirely DIFFERENT than the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. In this dream the *ten HORNS* represent *ten* SUCCESSIVE (NOT concurrent) kings (or kingdoms) that would *come out of* the fourth beast (i.e. the Roman Empire).

“The forth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth [the Roman Empire].... The ten horns are ten kings [or kingdoms] who shall arise *from this* kingdom...” (Daniel 7:23-24). In other words, the ten horns represent ten *succeeding* kingdoms that would grow OUT of the Roman Empire. Or put another way, the ten horns symbolize the ten stages of government continuing *out* of the Roman Empire after its fall in 476 AD. [I will speak more on these ten horns (i.e. kingdoms) later in this book.]

### **The Little Horn Speaks Boastful Words**

But something else is *added* to Daniel’s dream that wasn’t in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream: A LITTLE HORN SPEAKING POMPOUS WORDS—AND WHO UPROOTS THE FIRST THREE HORNS! (Daniel 7:8.) [I will speak more on the role that this

little horn plays in uprooting the first three horns as well as the meaning of all ten horns later in this book.]

Daniel continues: “Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the... *other horn* that came up, before which THREE OF THEM FELL—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and A MOUTH THAT SPOKE BOASTFULLY. As I watched, *this horn was waging war against the saints* [God’s people; *true* Christians] and defeating them” (Daniel 7:19-21; NIV).

### **The Little Horn Persecutes God’s People & Tries to Change God’s Law**

Continuing: “He [the little horn] shall speak POMPOUS WORDS AGAINST THE MOST HIGH, shall *persecute the saints of the Most High*, and shall intend to CHANGE TIMES AND LAW. Then the saints [*true* Christians] shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25).

### **Who is the Pompous Little Horn?**

This boastful, arrogant individual (i.e. the little horn) would think to change times and laws, or as the NLT puts it: “He would try to *change* God’s sacred festivals and laws.” Yes, he most certainly would! Replacing God’s festivals and Holy Days (Passover, Pentecost, Feast of Tabernacles, etc.) with *pagan* celebrations (Xmas, Easter, All Saints Day, etc.), and eliminating the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment (the keeping holy of the *seventh-day Sabbath*) as well as the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment (the prohibition against *statues, images, and other idols*). This he has done and much more! Including the persecuting, torturing and killing of millions of *true* Christians throughout the centuries! Who has done this? The leader of the Roman Catholic Church—the *pope*!

## **The Demise of the Arrogant Horn**

But the pompous horn (i.e. the pope) and his false religious system will be destroyed at Christ's return: "But the court will sit, and *his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever*" (Daniel 7:26; NIV).

Daniel adds: "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the ANCIENT OF DAYS [God the Father] was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:9-10).

"I watched then because of the sound of *the pompous words which the horn was speaking*; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.... I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the SON OF MAN [Jesus Christ], coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the ANCIENT OF DAYS, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a Kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His KINGDOM the one which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:11-14).

## **True Christians to Inherit God's Kingdom**

"And a judgment was made in favor of the saints [TRUE Christians] of the Most High, and the time came [at Christ's return] for the saints to possess the KINGDOM" (Daniel 7:22). "Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His KING-

DOM is an *everlasting* KINGDOM, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Daniel 7:27).

Yes, Christ’s KINGDOM, the KINGDOM OF GOD, shall finally arrive—at the *return of Jesus!* And what a fantastic world it will be! More wonderful than we could ever imagine! It will be an absolutely marvelous, breathtaking, sensational, joyful, phenomenal world! I will talk more on this topic later, but for now, let’s get back to Daniel and his amazing prophecies.

### **Daniel’s Vision of a Ram and a Goat**

In is now the third year of Belshazzar’s reign and Daniel has an extraordinary vision (Daniel 8:1-2). In this vision a *ram* appears from the *east* and grows very great (Daniel 8:3-4). But then a *GOAT* from the *WEST* attacks the ram and destroys him; the goat then becomes exceedingly great (Daniel 8:5-8).

The *ram* in Daniel’s vision represents the *Medo-Persian Empire* (the kingdom that would succeed the present Babylonian Empire), while the *GOAT* represents the *GRECO-MACEDONIAN EMPIRE* (the kingdom that would conquer the Medo-Persian Empire in 330 BC).

### **The Writing on the Wall**

Several years later, “Belshazzar the king [of Babylon] made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought the gold vessels that had been *taken from the Temple of the house of God which*

*had been in Jerusalem;* and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. They drank wine, and PRAISED THE GODS OF GOLD AND SILVER, BRONZE AND IRON, WOOD AND STONE.

“In the same hour the *fingers of a man’s hand appeared and wrote* opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king’s countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, ‘Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.’

“Now all the king’s wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation. Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished. The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, ‘O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. There is a man in your kingdom IN WHOM IS THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLY GOD. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this *Daniel*, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.’

“Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, ‘Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? I have heard of you, that *the Spirit of God is in you*, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you....’

### **Daniel Interprets the Writing**

“Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, ‘...O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down.

“ ‘But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in PRIDE, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.

“ ‘But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, ALTHOUGH YOU KNEW ALL THIS. And *you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven*. They have brought THE VESSELS OF HIS HOUSE before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And *you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone*, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His HAND and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.



“ ‘Then the fingers of the HAND were sent from Him, and this writing was written. ‘And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of each word. Mene: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; Tekel: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; Peres: *Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.*’

“Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was *slain*. And DARIUS THE MEDE received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old” (Daniel 5:1-31).

### **Daniel in the Lions Den**

It is now 532 BC (and about 3,441 years have elapsed since the creation of Adam and Eve), and the Jews have been slaves in Babylon for seventy years (Jeremiah 25:12-13). But just as God foretold, the Medes and Persians have conquered the Babylonians, and Darius the Mede is king.

One day, during the reign of Darius, the “governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: ‘King Darius, live forever! All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the *den of lions*. Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.’ Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees *three times* that day, and *prayed* and gave thanks before his God, as was his CUSTOM since early days.

“Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king’s decree: ‘Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?’ The king answered and said, ‘The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.

“So they answered and said before the king, ‘That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.’ And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

“Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, ‘Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.’ So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘*Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.*’ Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

## Daniel Protected From the Lions

“Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, *‘Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?’* Then Daniel said to the king, ‘O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.’

“Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God. And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

“Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the LIVING GOD, and steadfast forever; His KINGDOM is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian” (Daniel 6:6-28).

## Seventy-Weeks Prophecy

During the reign of Darius the Mede, Daniel is given a stunning prophecy. God reveals to Daniel that the prophesied Messiah would eventually be *killed*! But then God takes it one step further by telling Daniel precisely *when* this event would occur! This is revealed to Daniel in this way: Daniel is first told that a decree allowing Jerusalem to be rebuilt would someday be issued—and that once this proclamation is made the Messiah would be killed *exactly* 483 years later! (Daniel 9:24-27; see appendix.)

The decree to rebuild Jerusalem (remember it had been destroyed by king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon many years earlier) would eventually be issued by king Artaxerxes of Persia in 452 BC (Nehemiah 1 & 2). Therefore, according to Daniel's prophecy, the Messiah would be killed in 32 AD!

This 70-WEEKS PROPHECY (as it is often called) also describes events that will take place during *the last seven years* prior to Christ's return. It reveals how the coming ANTICHRIST will make an agreement with the Jews, allowing *animal sacrifices* to once again be implemented in Jerusalem. But then in the middle of this agreement (or after 3½ years) he will suddenly stop the sacrifices. He will then place a statue of himself in the Temple and force everyone to worship it! (More on this later!)

## The Jews Return to the Promised Land

Returning to our story, once Babylon is conquered by the Medes and Persians it's only a matter of time before the Jews are allowed to return to their homeland. So starting in 532 BC the people of Judah begin to trickle back to the Promised Land. But it wouldn't be until 452 BC that the Jews would be given official permission to rebuild *Jerusa-*

lem. Eventually they would rebuild the city and the TEMPLE (though it wouldn't be as lavish as the one that Solomon had built). And they would also reinstitute *animal sacrifices* (Ezra 6).

During this time another astonishing prophecy is revealed to Daniel (*Daniel 11*). First, he is told that Persia would eventually go to war against *Greece* (which happened about 200 years later), and that a mighty king would arise (*Alexander the Great!*). Then at the height of his power his kingdom would be divided into four sections (Alexander died in 323 BC at the age of 32 and his empire was divided among his four generals).

Then this prophecy goes on to describe some of the battles that would ensue between two of these divisions (the "KING OF THE NORTH" and the "KING OF THE SOUTH") for the next 150 years or so. (The only reason that these two divisions are talked about and not the other two divisions is because only these two divisions would come in contact with and fight over Jerusalem and the rest of Judah/Israel. And since one of the king's reigned north of *Jerusalem*, he is referred to as the king of the north; and since the other king reigned south of *Jerusalem*, he is referred to as the king of the south).

This prophecy then goes on to describe a *despicable man* (Daniel 11:21-35) who would become king of the north (this is referring to *Antiochus IV Epiphanes* who ruled from 175 BC until 164 BC). It describes how he would become king by FLATTERY AND INTRIGUE. And how he would invade the *king of the south (Egypt)* and then return home with great riches. Later, he would invade Egypt again, but this time warships from western coastlands (*Rome!*) would scare him off, so he turns around and heads back to his homeland. But he stops off at Jerusalem where

he does horrible things. He kills thousands of people and sells thousands more into slavery. He also takes over the Temple of God and *stops the daily sacrifices* (just as the ANTICHRIST will do in the end time). Then he sets up a sacrilegious object (*a statue of Zeus—Tammuz!*) that desecrates the Temple (the Antichrist will also set up a statue in the Temple—but his will be a statue of himself!). He also pollutes and defiles the Temple by sacrificing swine in the Temple (the Bible condemns the eating and sacrificing of pigs; Deuteronomy 14:8; Isaiah 66:3).

Then, all of a sudden, this prophecy *leaps forward* more than 2,175 years in the future—to the time just ahead of us now! (Daniel 11:35-45, 12:1-13) But, I'll have to save the rest of this prophecy for later, as we first need to discuss...

### **The Prophet Malachi**

As soon as the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon the Jews were granted permission to return to their homeland. But the Jews did not return in one big exodus. Instead they migrated back to the Holy Land in waves. Eventually more and more Jews (that is—those from either the tribe of Judah, Levi, or Benjamin) would settle back in the Promised Land. But the Jews would never regain their independence and become a sovereign nation again (*not until 1948 that is*), but would remain subject to foreign powers. First it was the Medes and Persians, then the Greeks and Macedonians, then the Romans.

Then, one of the last prophets to appear before the close of the Old Testament\* comes on the scene—the prophet Malachi (“My messenger”). Most of his preaching is centered around admonishing the people to obey God wholeheartedly and to repent of their sins. He especially corrects the *priests* for their unfaithfulness: “For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the LAW

from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But you have departed from *the way*; you have caused many to stumble at the LAW.... says the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 2:7-8).

But those who were obeying God were also encouraged: “Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so *a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name.* ‘They shall be Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’ Then you shall again *discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him*” (Malachi 3:16-18).

### **Elijah the Prophet**

Then, an important prophecy is given to the prophet Malachi: “Behold, I send My messenger, and HE WILL PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME” (Malachi 3:1). This prophecy is referring to *John the Baptist*, who would prepare the way before Christ’s FIRST COMING (which occurred in the first century AD; Matthew 11:10).

Then a little later God adds: “Behold, I will send you *Elijah the prophet* before the coming of the great and dreadful DAY OF THE LORD” (Malachi 4:5). This prophecy is also referring to John the Baptist, as the New Testament states that John came in the “spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:16-17). And Jesus Christ confirms this when He states that John the Baptist did in deed fulfill this prophecy (Matthew 17:12-13).

But these two prophecies ALSO apply to Christ’s SECOND coming as well! Notice that it says that Elijah (“Yahweh is my God”) will come right before the “*dreadful day*

*of the Lord.*” But this “dreadful day of the Lord” (which is described in many places in the Bible and which I will be discussing later in this book) has NOT occurred yet—and will not occur UNTIL immediately preceding Christ’s *second* coming! Therefore, *another* person will also come in the spirit and power of Elijah—this time JUST BEFORE THE RETURN OF JESUS! And this end-time Elijah is prophesied to “*restore all things*” (Matthew 17:11). (More on this later.)

[\*The Holy Bible is divided into TWO sections: the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. The Old Testament begins with the renewing of the earth and the creation of mankind (Adam & Eve) and ends with the prophet Malachi—about 420 BC. Then the New Testament begins with the birth of both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ in 3 BC, and ends with the writing of the book of Revelation by the apostle John in 96 AD.]

So the Old Testament has come to an end and the New Testament is about to begin. But first, before we get to the events in the New Testament, we need to get caught up with the house of Israel—the so-called...

### **“Lost” Ten Tribes of Israel**

So whatever happened to the *northern ten tribes of Israel*? Remember, they were taken captive to a foreign land—as slaves of the *Assyrians* in 722 BC. (And then 120 years later the Babylonians took the remaining southern three tribes of Judah away to Babylon. But the Jews—that is—the descendants from the three tribes of Benjamin, Levi, and Judah—returned to the Promised Land—starting in 532 BC.) But where did the ten tribes of Israel eventually wander off to—the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, and Ephraim. Did they, like the Jews, also return to the Promised Land? NO, they did not! They never returned to their



homeland, the land of Israel. So where did they go? What-ever happened to them? Did they just fall by the wayside? Or did they continue to survive as a people? And if so, where are they TODAY?

*And let's not forget the amazing promises that God had made to Joseph's two sons (the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim). Manasseh was prophesied to become a GREAT POWERFUL NATION, while Ephraim was prophesied to become a GREAT COMMUNITY OF NATIONS. Whatever happened to these promises? Did God not keep His word? Is God unreliable? Absolutely NOT! God has indeed kept His word. And these promises have most definitely been fulfilled! Here's how...*

### **Migration of the Israelites & Assyrians**

After remaining captive to the Assyrians for 100 years or so, the people of Israel (as well as the Assyrians themselves) began to migrate *north* of Assyria. Both the Israelites and the Assyrians then settled in the *Caucasus*—a mountainous region at the border of Europe and Asia that lies between the two great seas: the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

Though the Israelites would live in the CAUCASUS with the Assyrians for *hundreds of years*, they would remain a separate and distinct people. (By the way, this is why white people—especially fair-skinned white people—are called CAUCASIANS. For the people who lived in the Caucasus for many years were white—Israelites and Assyrians! Today, this area is occupied by Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and southeastern Russia. But, back then it was called “SCYTHIA” or the land of the “Saka” (also spelled Sakai or Sacae; see Wikipedia article: Saka). In Colossians 3:11 (one of the books of the New Testament) the wandering Israelites are indirectly referred to as *Scythians*!

However, the Israelites (and Assyrians) wouldn't remain in the Caucasus forever. Eventually many would migrate northwest, to the northern shore of the Black Sea (then called Sarmatia; today Ukraine), and then into Moldavia. But others would travel west along the southern shore of the Black Sea (northern and central Asia Minor (today Turkey)).

### **Northwest Europe**

As the years passed by the Israelites (and Assyrians) would continue to migrate NORTHWEST, until one day they would settle in *northwest Europe*. At this time most of the Israelites occupied northern Germany, while the Assyrians inhabited southern Germany. At this point the Assyrians (who in history had a reputation for being an aggressive, domineering, WAR-LOVING people) took up permanent residence in their new homeland, calling it Deutschland (the "fatherland"), while the rest of the world calls it *Germany*. So the ASSYRIANS today are no longer known to the world by their ancient Assyrian name, but are instead known as GERMANS! (By the way, "German" means "WARman"!)

But what about the ISRAELITES—what happened to them? Once the Israelites settled in northern Germany, the various tribes would eventually migrate separately into such countries as: Denmark (which means the "mark of Dan," while "Danish" or "Danes" means the "people of Dan"—this is where many descendants of the TRIBE OF DAN would settle—though many would also settle in Ireland); Belgium & Luxembourg (perhaps the tribe of ASHER); Netherlands (ZEBULUN?); Sweden (probably NAPHTALI); Norway (SIMEON?); Finland (ISSACHAR?); Switzerland (GAD?); northern France (perhaps REUBEN); and the British Isles (including England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland).

Though many of the Israelites would make their permanent home in the areas of northwest Europe, some (hundreds of years later) would continue to migrate even further, finally stopping at Iceland, Greenland, North America (USA and Canada), New Zealand, and Australia! Therefore, the *Anglo-Saxon-Celtic* people of the world ARE *Israelites*—descendants of the so-called “lost ten tribes of Israel”!

### **Ephraim & Manasseh**

But what happened to *Ephraim* (who was to become a *Great Company of Nations*) and MANASSEH (who was to become a GREAT POWERFUL SINGLE NATION)? Well, by now, it’s probably pretty obvious where they winded up. Let’s start with Ephraim. What people of today could rightfully be labeled a *Great Community of Nations*? Well, only one—GREAT BRITAIN (England, Wales, and Scotland) and those nations that descended from her: Canada, New Zealand, and Australia—as well as some of the other nations that became part of the BRITISH COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS!

At the height of its power the *British Empire* was the greatest empire the world has ever known! FAR GREATER than some of the great empires in world history (such as the Babylonian Empire, Medo-Persian Empire, Greco-Macedonian Empire, and the Roman Empire). It ruled over more people and territories, owned far more of the world’s wealth, and had far greater power than any empire before or since!

“At its height, it [the British Empire] was the largest empire in history and, for over a century, was the foremost global power. By 1922 the British Empire held sway over 458 million people, *one-fifth of the world’s population* at the time, and covered more than 13 million square miles,

almost *a quarter of the Earth's total land area*. As a result, ITS POLITICAL, LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL LEGACY IS WIDE-SPREAD. At the peak of its power, it was often said that “the sun never sets on the British Empire” because its span across the globe ensured that the sun was always shining on at least one of its NUMEROUS TERRITORIES” (Wikipedia; article: British Empire).

So God's promises concerning Ephraim have been fulfilled—exactly as prophesied! But, what of *Manasseh*? Did God ever fulfill His promises concerning Joseph's other son, Manasseh? Did Manasseh ever fulfill its destiny by becoming the GREATEST SINGLE NATION THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN? Absolutely! Of course God kept His promise—for the *United States of America is Manasseh*!

That's right—the USA is where most of the descendants of Manasseh finally settled. Of course people from other ethnic groups also migrated to the USA, but the vast overwhelming majority of people who first settled this country were *Israelites—the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people of the world*! People from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, northern France, northern Germany, etc. (Remember: northern Germany is where the Israelites first migrated to in western Europe, while the Assyrians migrated to southern Germany. Today, Germany is almost wholly composed of Assyrians, as the Israelites from the “lost ten tribes of Israel” left Germany many years ago.)

So all the promises that God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and Joseph have been fulfilled; with the kingly line (as well as the promise of the Messiah) being fulfilled in the tribe of Judah (the Jews), the great community of nations being fulfilled in Ephraim (Great Britain), and the great powerful single nation being fulfilled in Ma-

nasseh (the USA). But God doesn't stop there! He also tells us what will happen to these same nations in the very near future! Things that are absolutely mind-boggling! But we will have to save that discussion for later, as we must now return to the Bible and pick up our story where we left off—to the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

# From Jesus Christ To Today

**W**HEN WE LAST LEFT OUR STORY, the Jews (the descendants of the tribes of Benjamin, Levi, and Judah) were back in the Promised Land. They had rebuilt Jerusalem and the Temple and had reinstituted animal sacrifices. But though they were back in the land that God had given them, they were NOT a self-governing independent nation. Instead they were under the yoke of the Medes and Persians. But then in 330 BC Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persian Empire, and as a result the Greeks and Macedonians then ruled over the Jews. But then the Greeks and Macedonians fell to the Romans in the first century BC, resulting in the Jews becoming subjugated to Rome.

Officially, the Roman Empire began in 27 BC with Octavian Augustus becoming its first emperor on January 16<sup>th</sup>. He would rule until his death on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 14 AD. And it's during his reign in 4 BC that we pick up our story.

## **The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold**

“In the time of Herod king of Judea [the land of Judah was now being called Judea] there was a priest named *Zechariah*, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah;

his wife *Elizabeth* was also a descendant of Aaron [both Zechariah and Elizabeth were of the tribe of LEVI]. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.

“Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the Temple of the Lord and burn incense.... Then an angel of the Lord [the angel GABRIEL] appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name *John* [“God is gracious”]. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. *He... will be filled with the Holy Spirit* even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, *in the spirit and power of Elijah*, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—TO MAKE READY A PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THE LORD’ ” (Luke 1:5-17; NIV).

“When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ‘The Lord has done this for me,’ she said. ‘In these days He has shown His favor and taken away my disgrace among the people’ ” (Luke 1:23-25; NIV).

## **The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

“In the sixth month, God sent the angel *Gabriel* to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named *Joseph*, a descendant of [king] David [from the tribe of JUDAH]. The virgin’s name was *Mary*. The angel went to her and said, ‘Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.’

“Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a SON, and you are to give him the name *Jesus* [“GOD SAVES”]. He will be great and will be called the *Son of the Most High*. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father [i.e. ancestor] David [i.e. king David of Israel], and he will reign over the house of Jacob [Israel] forever; His KINGDOM will never end.’

“ ‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’ The angel answered, ‘The *HOLY SPIRIT* will come upon you, and the *POWER* of the Most High will overshadow you. So the HOLY ONE to be born will be called the *Son of God*. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.’ ‘I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May it be to me as you have said.’ Then the angel left her’ ” (Luke 1:26-38; NIV).

## **Birth of John the Baptist**

So in the early spring of 3 BC, John (the Baptist) is born. “Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy: ‘And you, my little son, will be called the PROPHET of the Most High, because you will



*prepare the way for the Lord.* You will tell His people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. Because of God's tender mercy, the light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace' ” (Luke 1:67, 76-79; NLT).

### **Birth of Jesus Christ**

Then about six months after the birth of John (on the first day of the seventh month—that is—on the DAY OF TRUMPETS) Jesus Christ [*the Messiah*; the “ANOINTED ONE”] is born. He is called Jesus [Savior] “because He will SAVE His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Jesus would also be called “Immanuel, which is translated, ‘*God with us*’ ” (Matthew 1:23) since He was GOD IN THE FLESH (the One who created us and all things). “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was [also] God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. And *the Word became flesh* and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He was in the world, and THE WORLD WAS MADE THROUGH HIM, and the world did not know Him. *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God...*” (John 1:1-3, 14, 10, 12).

### **John the Baptist Prepares the Way**

Years later, when John the Baptist was a young man, he “came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘REPENT, for the KINGDOM of heaven is at hand!’ For this is he who was spoken of by... the Prophets [Malachi and Isaiah]: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You [Malachi 3:1].’

‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight [Isaiah 40:3].’ ’

“John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a *baptism of repentance* for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized [“immersed”] by him in the Jordan River, *confessing their sins* [they were ALL adults!].

“Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, ‘There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He [Jesus Christ] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit’ ” (Matthew 3:1-3; Mark 1:2-8).

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John [the Baptist] at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*’ ” (Matthew 3:13-17).

### **Jesus the Lamb of God**

“The next day John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The *Lamb of God* [the Passover Lamb who would be sacrificed for the sins of mankind]

who takes away the sin of the world! ...And I have seen and testified that this is the SON OF GOD.'

### **Jesus Calls His First Disciples**

"Again, the next day, John [the Baptist] stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the LAMB OF GOD [as Jesus would become the Passover Lamb—sacrificed for the sins of mankind]!' The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, 'What do you seek?' They said to Him, 'Rabbi' (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), 'where are You staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day... One of the two who heard John [the Baptist] speak, and followed Him, was *Andrew*, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ) [literally: the "Anointed One"]. And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are *Simon* the son of Jonah. You shall be called *Cephas*' [i.e. *Peter*] (which is translated, a stone).

"The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found *Philip* and said to him, 'Follow Me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found *Nathanael* and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' And Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!' Nathanael said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' Nathanael answered and said to Him, 'Rabbi, *You are*

*the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!*’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’ And He said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon [Me] the Son of Man” (John 1:29-51).

### **Jesus Preaches the KINGDOM OF GOD, Heals the Sick, & Casts Out Demons**

From that time “Jesus [at the age of 30] went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and *healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people*. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were DEMON-POSSESSED, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. *Great multitudes followed Him*—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan” (Matthew 4:23-25; Luke 3:23).

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and *healing every sickness and every disease among the people*. While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘MY DAUGHTER HAS JUST DIED, but *come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.*’ So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples. And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for *twelve years* came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said to herself, ‘If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.’ But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, ‘Be of good cheer, daughter; *your faith has made you well.*’ AND THE WOMAN WAS MADE WELL FROM THAT HOUR.

“When Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, He said to them, ‘Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.’ And they ridiculed Him. But when the crowd was put outside, *He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.* And the report of this went out into all that land.

“When Jesus departed from there, TWO BLIND MEN followed Him, crying out and saying, ‘Son of David, have mercy on us!’ And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you BELIEVE that I am able to do this?’ They said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord.’ Then He touched their eyes, saying, ‘*According to your faith let it be to you.*’ And THEIR EYES WERE OPENED” (Matthew 9:35, 18-30)!

### **The Apostles also Preach the Kingdom of God, Heal the Sick, & Cast Out Demons**

“Now it came to pass in those days that He [Jesus] went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and *from them He chose TWELVE whom He also named APOSTLES:* Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor” (Luke 6:12-16).

Later Jesus “called His twelve disciples [i.e. apostles] together and gave them *power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.* He sent them to PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD and to heal the sick.... So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere” (Luke 9:1-6).

## Jesus Casts Out Demons

After the apostles returned, they and Jesus “sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had DEMONS for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!’ For He had commanded the UNCLEAN SPIRIT to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the DEMON into the wilderness.

“Jesus asked him, saying, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Legion,’ because MANY DEMONS had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

“Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the DEMONS went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the DEMONS had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid....

“Now the man from whom the DEMONS had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, ‘Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.’ And he went his way

and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him” (Luke 8:26-39).

### Jesus’ Family

At this time Jesus had THOUSANDS of followers (Matthew 14:13-21). And yet there were still many (despite all the many miracles He did) who did NOT believe in Him. And “even His *brothers* did NOT believe in Him” (John 7:5)! That’s right—Jesus had brothers! And *sisters* too!

Now most people today don’t seem to realize that Jesus had *sisters* and *brothers*. As a matter of fact the Bible even tells us the names of His brothers. “Where did this Man [Jesus] get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the Carpenter, the Son of Mary, and BROTHER OF JAMES, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not *His sisters* here with us?” (Mark 6:2-3).

So Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters. Of course they were only half brothers and half sisters—since they had the same mother (Mary) but different fathers. Jesus’ father was God (the Father), while their father was a man named Joseph.

One of the reasons for this misconception (regarding Jesus’ brothers and sisters) is because of the ridiculous teaching (of the Roman Catholic Church and others) that teaches that Mary (the mother of Jesus) remained a virgin her whole life. This false belief originated with the *Babylon Mystery Religion*, which taught that the goddess Semiramis (i.e. Easter) was a perpetual virgin (even though she had a son Tammuz). The Catholic Church (as well as several other so-called Christian churches) just replaced her name

with that of Mary. Not only that, but these reprobate churches even assign to Mary some of the exact same titles that Semiramis possessed, such as: Queen Mother, Mother of God, Virgin Mother, and Queen of Heaven. And they worship her just like the PAGANS and the IDOLATROUS ISRAELITES worshiped Semiramis—the so-called “Queen of Heaven” (see Jeremiah 7:17-18, 44:15-29).

If Mary were alive today she would be utterly APPALLED and sick to her stomach upon witnessing the BLASPHEMOUS way she is revered and worshiped among the Catholics and others. And not content with this HERESY, then they go even one step further by making *idols* (statues, paintings, and other images) of her. And sometimes these idols are the *exact same statues* that the heathens had originally made to honor their repulsive goddess! The Catholics just took these same exact pagan statues of Semiramis (i.e. Easter; Astarte; Ashtoreth; Inana; Venus; Diana; Isis; Ish-tar, etc) and renamed the vile goddess “Mary.” And yet still not satisfied, they then took statues of Semiramis with her son *Tammuz* in her arms, and exclaimed, “Look, Mary and Jesus!” (See Ezekiel 8:13-14.) But someday they will have to answer to God and the *real* Jesus Christ (and NOT the *counterfeit* one that Satan has palmed off on a gullible humanity) for their profane perversions!

### **The Ten Commandments**

Another *misconception* that many people have is the blasphemous teaching that Jesus did away with the Ten Commandments—when in fact—nothing could be further from the truth! Not only did Jesus NOT do away with the Ten Commandments, but He made them more binding. For example, the seventh commandment forbids us from committing adultery, and yet Jesus said that not only was it wrong to commit ADULTERY—but that even if a man looks upon a married woman LUSTFULLY that he was *guilty of*



*committing adultery with her in his heart!* (Matthew 5:27-28.) And the same could be said of the sixth commandment prohibiting MURDER. Jesus said that not only was it wrong to commit murder, but even getting angry with someone and calling them names was likewise a very serious offense (Matthew 5:21-22). In other words, if we have angry, hateful thoughts about someone—then we are *guilty of committing murder in our heart!*

### **The Letter & the Spirit of the Law**

So Jesus made the TEN COMMANDMENTS even more binding—as we *not only* have to obey the LETTER of the law—but we *also* have to keep the SPIRIT of the law *as well*. For example, we not only have to keep the letter of the sixth commandment by not murdering, but we must ALSO keep the spirit of this commandment by not even hating others (which is often what leads to murder in the first place). And adultery is very similar. The physical act of adultery would be a violation of the letter of the law (the seventh commandment), while sexually lusting after someone would be a violation of the spirit of this commandment (since adultery is almost always precipitated by sexually lust).

Therefore, Christ not only did NOT do away with the Ten Commandments—but on the contrary—He MAGNIFIED the law in fulfillment of prophecy: “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He [Jesus Christ] will *magnify the law AND make it honorable*” (Isaiah 42:21; KJV, TMB).

Another example showing that the New Testament (in many ways) is STRICTER (and NOT more liberal) concerning the laws in the Old Testament would be that of divorce. Notice what Christ said to those who asked Him if it was okay for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason

(which was very common in the Old Testament among the Israelites): “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, WHOEVER DIVORCES HIS WIFE, **EXCEPT FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY** [marital unfaithfulness; NIV], AND MARRIES ANOTHER, COMMITS ADULTERY; *and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery*” (Matthew 19:8-9). So Jesus most certainly did NOT abolish the commandments of God (as many people would have you believe)—instead He magnified the law of God and made it even more honorable and binding by explaining its full intent.

### **Like Jesus, *True* Christians Obey God & Keep His Commandments**

And of course Jesus kept ALL of the Ten Commandments, and we should do likewise (including the second commandment against idolatry, and the fourth commandment concerning the SEVENTH-DAY Sabbath). And of course all of God’s people—the *true* saints of God—will be doing exactly that! (1 Corinthians 7:19; Revelation 14:12, 12:17, 22:14; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Daniel 9:4; Psalms 119; Isaiah 8:20; John 14:15, 21-24; Matthew 24:12, 7:23, 5:17-19; Romans 2:13, 3:31; 2 John 1:6; 1 John 2:4, 3, 3:24, 5:2, 3; Jude 1:4; Proverbs 28:9; Nehemiah 1:5)

You may have noticed that I listed quite a number of Scriptures showing that we must keep God’s commandments. And yet these Scriptures are just a small fraction of all the Scriptures that show that genuine Christians must keep God’s commandments. The reason I listed so many Scriptures on this topic is because no matter how many times God declares that *we must obey Him and keep His commandments*—there will always be those who say the exact opposite! But these false teachers will someday have to answer to God for their rebellion against His Word.

Please allow me to quote a few of these Scriptures that unquestionably prove that true followers of Christ must indeed obey God and keep His commandments.

**Revelation 14:12** — Here is the patience [steadfastness, perseverance] of the SAINTS; here are those who *keep the commandments of God* and the faith of Jesus. [In this prophecy for the days just ahead of us now, it shows that TRUE Christians will still be keeping the commandments of God!]

**Revelation 22:14** — Blessed are those who *do His commandments*, that they may have the right to the TREE OF LIFE. [This Scripture is clearly showing that those who keep God's commandments will partake of the tree of *life*—that is—they will be granted *eternal life*!]

**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** — Let us hear THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER: Fear God and *keep His commandments*, for this is the whole duty of man. [So when it's all said and done—what should we be doing? We should be keeping God's commandments!]

**Daniel 9:4** — And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and MERCY with those who love Him, and with those who *keep His commandments*. [This Scripture is showing that God is merciful and keeps His covenant (the promise of eternal life) with those who keep His commandments!]

**Isaiah 8:20** — To the LAW and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is NO LIGHT IN THEM. [According to this Scripture—all those who teach that the law is done away—have no light in them—in other words *they are full of darkness*!]

**John 14:15** — “If you love Me, *keep My commandments.*” [So how do you show your love for God? By keeping His commandments!]

**Matthew 5:17** —NLT— “Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did NOT come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to fulfill them.” [And yet this is precisely what many people would have you believe—that Christ did away with the commandments of God!]

**Romans 2:13** — For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but *the doers of the law will be justified.* [Those who keep God’s commandments will be justified—they will receive eternal life.]

**Romans 3:31** — Do we then make void the law through faith? CERTAINLY NOT! *On the contrary, we establish the law.* [Faith by no means abolishes God’s commandments—on the contrary—it establishes them.]

**1 John 2:4** — He who says, “I know Him,” and does NOT *keep His commandments*, is a LIAR, and the truth is not in him. [Unless you keep God’s commandments you CANNOT know God and the *truth* is NOT in you—and if you say otherwise you are a liar!]

**1 John 5:2** — By this we know that we LOVE the children of God, when we love God and *keep His commandments.* [So how do we show our LOVE for others? By keeping God’s commandments!]

**1 John 5:3** — For this is the LOVE of God, that we *keep His commandments.* And His commandments are NOT burdensome. [We demonstrate our love for God by keeping His commandments.]

**1 Corinthians 7:19** — Keeping the commandments of God is what matters.

**Proverbs 28:9** — One who turns away his ear from hearing the LAW, *even his prayer shall be an abomination.* [Wow! Obeying God's commandments is not a trivial matter!]

**Nehemiah 1:5** — And I said: "I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and MERCY with those who love You and *observe Your commandments.*"

## LOVE

So hopefully by now you realize the importance of obeying God and keeping His commandments. That is—IF we want to someday enter GOD'S KINGDOM and be granted *eternal life*. Of course the greatest commandment of all is to LOVE GOD with all our being. And the second greatest commandment is to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34). But how do we show our love for God? By doing what He says (especially by keeping the first four commandments (in *both* the letter and spirit of the law). And how do we demonstrate our love for our fellowman? Once again, by doing what God says (especially by keeping the last six commandments (in *both* the letter and spirit of the law). By keeping the first four commandments we are putting into action our *love* for God, and by keeping the last six commandments we are putting into action our *love* for our fellow human beings.

## Jesus Keeps God's Holy Days

Of course, Jesus kept ALL the commandments of God, including the *seventh-day Sabbath*, as well as the *annual holy days and festivals* as outlined in the Old Testament

(see Luke 2:41-43, 22:7-20; John 7). As a matter of fact, the very last thing Christ did (before being arrested and then crucified) was He kept the PASSOVER with His disciples (Luke 22). And of course, He had to keep the Sabbath as well as all God's Holy Days—otherwise He would have sinned (since sin is the breaking of God's law—1 John 3:4).

### God's Plan of Salvation

But fortunately for us Christ did NOT sin; otherwise we would NOT have a Savior. But because He lived a perfect, sinless life, and then died for us, we do indeed have a *Savior*. And since HE PAID THE PENALTY FOR OUR SINS—by dying for us—we now have the opportunity to receive eternal life. But it requires that we REPENT of disobeying God and breaking His laws! Then, *after* repenting of our sins (which only *adults* are capable of doing), the Bible instructs us to become BAPTIZED (Acts 2:38). [Once again, baptism is *only* for *adults*—and only after *repenting* of our sins!] At this point God promises to FORGIVE us of our past sins and to give us His HOLY SPIRIT (which will guide, assist, and enable us to live a life pleasing to Him).

And then as long as we continue to obey God and develop His character (i.e. fruits of the Spirit—Galatians 5:22) and remain faithful to Him until the end of our lives (Matthew 10:22; 2 Timothy 2:12), then we will one day (at the return of Jesus) become part of God's very own Family, as we will become His *literal* sons and daughters! On that day we will no longer have a physical fleshly body. Instead (as discussed previously in this book) we will possess a magnificent, powerful, immortal, glorious, spiritual body! One just like God's! (1 Corinthians 15:35-55; Romans 8:18; Daniel 12:2-3; Philippians 3:11, 21; Colossians 3:4; Psalms 17:15; Romans 6:3-5.)

## **Jesus Predicts His Death & Resurrection**

During the last days of Jesus' life on this earth, He told His disciples that He would be killed. But He also told them that He would NOT remain dead—but that He would be RESURRECTED back to life *on the third day after His death!* (Matthew 20:17-19; Matthew 16:21-27; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-33.)

“They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again He took the twelve [apostles] aside and told them what was going to happen to Him. ‘We are going up to Jerusalem,’ He said, ‘and the Son of Man [Jesus Christ referring to Himself] will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles, who will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and KILL Him. *Three days later he will rise*’ ” (Mark 10:32-34; NIV).

## **The Last Supper/Passover (Wednesday Night)**

It is now the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of God's calendar, a *Wednesday* evening in the early spring of 32 AD. This would be the last night that Jesus Christ would spend on this earth as a human being. He would spend this evening with His twelve disciples, observing the *Passover* with them (Luke 22:7-20).

Many people refer to this momentous evening as “the last supper” or as “the Lord's supper” (1 Corinthians 11:20). But what most people seem to overlook is the fact that Jesus and the twelve apostles were actually celebrating the *Passover* (as prescribed in the Old Testament).

“Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the PASSOVER [lamb] must be killed. And He [Jesus] sent Peter and John, saying, ‘*Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.*’ So they said to Him, ‘Where do You want us to prepare?’ And He said to them, ‘Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, ‘Where is the guest room where I may *eat the Passover* with My disciples?’ ’ Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.’ So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and *they prepared the Passover.*

“When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, ‘With fervent desire *I have desired to eat this Passover* with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the KINGDOM OF GOD’ ” (Luke 22:7-16).

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is [or represents] My body.’ Then He took the cup [of red wine], and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is [or represents] My blood of the new covenant, which is *shed for many for the remission of sins.* But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s KINGDOM’ ” (Matthew 26:26-29).

Something remarkable has just occurred at this Passover celebration! Jesus tells the apostles that the bread at this supper represents His body. And just as it was broken, so would His body be broken for us (in just a few short hours). He also tells them that the wine represents His blood,



which was about to be shed for us—for the sins of mankind.

In other words, Jesus was telling His disciples that He would become the Passover Lamb! (John 1:29, 36; Revelation 5:6, 7:17.) As you may recall the very first Passover took place while the Israelites were still slaves in Egypt. And every Israelite family had to kill a lamb, and then put some of its blood on their doors. Then that night every firstborn in Egypt was killed by the death angel except for those who had followed God's instruction and put the blood of a lamb on the outside of their door. The death angel then passed over their homes and spared them from death.

Now, Christ was telling His followers, that *His blood* would be shed just like the Passover lamb had been shed many years before. But He tells them that His shed blood would not just be for the firstborn of Israel, but for *all mankind!* That all those who would ever live, if they would just except His sacrifice on their behalf, and then repent of their sins and obey God, that they would someday be granted eternal life (and be spared the death penalty for their sins)—that their *sins would be forgiven!* And that they would NOT have to die for all eternity! But instead, at Christ's return, that they would be resurrected back to life (just as Christ was going to be resurrected back to life three days after being killed).

### **Passover/Lord's Supper Kept Each Year**

What MAGNIFICENT NEWS this was for mankind—that our sins could be forgiven—that we could receive eternal life! We are then instructed (by the apostle Paul several years later) to observe the Passover each year with these new symbols of the bread and wine in remembrance of Christ's death: "For I received from the Lord that which I

also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; *do this in remembrance of Me.*’ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. *This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.*’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, YOU PROCLAIM THE LORD’S DEATH TILL HE COMES” (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

So each year Christians are to do exactly that—keeping the Passover/Lord’s Supper on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month—with these new symbols of bread and wine—which represents Christ’s broken body and shed blood. By doing this, we are remembering the incredible sacrifice that God went through just for us, and thereby we proclaim His death until He returns.

### **Jesus is Betrayed by Judas & Arrested**

Later that night, while Jesus is with His disciples at Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, He is ARRESTED by the leading religious leaders of His day, as *He is betrayed by one of His own disciples—Judas* (Mark 14:26, 32, 43-49). All of His disciples then abandon Him (Mark 14:50-52).

Then “they took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together.... The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against Him, but their statements did not agree.... Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, ‘Are You not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against You?’ But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked

Him, ‘Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?’ ‘I am,’ said Jesus. ‘And you will see the Son of Man [referring to Himself] sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ The high priest tore his clothes. ‘Why do we need any more witnesses?’ he asked. ‘You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?’ They all condemned Him as worthy of death. *Then some began to spit at Him; they blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists, and said, ‘Prophecy!’ And the guards took Him and beat Him”* (Mark 14:53-65; NIV).

### **Jesus Brought Before Pilate Early Thursday Morning**

Very early THURSDAY morning [see Luke 24:1, 13, 20-21] “the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound Jesus, led Him away and handed Him over to Pilate [the Roman governor]. ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ asked Pilate. ‘Yes, it is as you say,’ Jesus replied. The chief priests accused Him of many things. So again Pilate asked Him, ‘Aren’t You going to answer? See how many things they are accusing You of.’ But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed” (Mark 15:1-5; NIV).

“Now it was the governor’s custom to release one prisoner each year at PASSOVER time—anyone the people requested. One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, convicted along with others for murder during an insurrection. The mob began to crowd in toward Pilate, asking him to release a prisoner as usual. ‘Should I give you the King of the Jews?’ Pilate asked. (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of ENVY.) But at this point the leading priests stirred up the mob to demand the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. ‘But if I release Barabbas,’ Pilate asked them, ‘what should I do with this Man you call the King of the Jews?’ They shouted back, ‘CRU-

CIFY HIM!’ ‘Why?’ Pilate demanded. ‘What crime has He committed?’ But the crowd only roared the louder, ‘CRUCIFY HIM!’ So Pilate, anxious to please the crowd, released Barabbas to them. *He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip*, then turned Him over to the Roman soldiers to CRUCIFY Him (Mark 15:6-15; NLT).

### **Jesus Horribly Beaten & Ridiculed**

After being BRUTALLY SCOURGED WITH A LEAD-TIPPED WHIP, “the soldiers took Him into their headquarters and called out the entire battalion. *They dressed Him in a purple robe and made a crown of long, sharp thorns and put it on His head*. Then they saluted, yelling, ‘Hail! King of the Jews!’ AND THEY BEAT HIM ON THE HEAD WITH A STICK, SPIT ON HIM, AND DROPPED TO THEIR KNEES IN MOCK WORSHIP. When they were finally tired of mocking Him, they took off the purple robe and put His own clothes on Him again. *Then they led Him away to be crucified*” (Mark 15:16-20; NLT).

### **Jesus Crucified (& Mocked Again)**

“A man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the country just then, and they forced him to *carry Jesus’ cross*. (Simon is the father of Alexander and Rufus.) And they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means Skull Hill). They offered Him wine drugged with myrrh, but He refused it. *Then they nailed Him to the cross*. THEY GAMBLED FOR HIS CLOTHES, THROWING DICE TO DECIDE WHO WOULD GET THEM.

“It was nine o’clock in the morning [on that Thursday in 32 AD] when the crucifixion took place. A signboard was fastened to the cross above Jesus’ head, announcing the charge against Him. It read: ‘The King of the Jews.’ Two criminals were crucified with Him, their crosses on

either side of Him. *And the people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery.* ‘Ha! Look at You now!’ they yelled at Him. ‘You can destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, can You? Well then, save Yourself and come down from the cross!’

“The leading priests and teachers of religious law also MOCKED JESUS. ‘He saved others,’ they scoffed, ‘but He can’t save Himself! Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe Him!’ Even the two criminals who were being crucified with Jesus RIDICULED HIM” (Mark 15:21-32; NLT).

### **Jesus Dies Thursday Afternoon (3:00 PM)**

“AT NOON, DARKNESS FELL ACROSS THE WHOLE LAND UNTIL THREE O’CLOCK. At about three o’clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice... And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. *At that moment the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.* They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, ‘SURELY HE WAS THE SON OF GOD!’ (Matthew 27:45-46; NLT; 27:50-54; NIV.)

“When the people who had gathered there to watch the spectacle saw what happened, they all went back home, *beating their breasts in SORROW.* All those who knew Jesus personally, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance to watch” (Luke 23:48-49; GNT).

“Now it was the day of Preparation [the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month], and the next day [the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month] was to be a *special* Sabbath [it was a *special* Sabbath because it was the First Day of Unleavened Bread—an *annual* Sabbath]. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath [i.e. First Day of Unleavened Bread—an *annual* Sabbath], they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.... These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: ‘*Not one of His bones will be broken,*’ [Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalms 34:20] and, as another Scripture says, ‘*They will look on the One they have pierced*’ [Psalms 22:16-17; Zechariah 12:10, 13:6] (John 19:31-37; NIV).

### **Christ’s Crucifixion Prophesied Centuries Before**

Of course all of this was *prophesied in the Old Testament hundreds of years before!* “They gape at Me with their mouths, like a raging and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. *They pierced My hands and My feet;* I can count all My bones. THEY LOOK AND STARE AT ME. *They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots*” (Psalms 22:13-18).

Furthermore it was prophesied: “HE [GOD] PROTECTS ALL HIS [CHRIST’S] BONES, NOT ONE OF THEM WILL BE BRO-

KEN” (Psalm 34:20; NIV). And: “They will look on Me whom they have *pierced* and mourn for Him as for an only Son. They will GRIEVE bitterly for Him as for a *firstborn Son who has died*” (Zechariah 12:10; NLT).

Finally, this amazing prophecy by Isaiah was also given many centuries before: “The people reply, ‘Who would have believed what we now report? Who could have seen the Lord’s hand in this? It was the will of the Lord that His Servant grow like a plant taking root in dry ground. He had no dignity or beauty to make us take notice of Him. There was nothing attractive about Him, nothing that would draw us to Him. We despised Him and rejected Him; He endured suffering and pain. No one would even look at Him—we ignored Him as if He were nothing.

“ ‘But He endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. All the while we thought that His suffering was punishment sent by God. But because of our sins He was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment He suffered, made whole by the blows He received. All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way. But the Lord made the punishment fall on Him, the punishment all of us deserved.

“ ‘He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly; He never said a word. Like a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be sheared, He never said a word. He was arrested and sentenced and led off to die, and no one cared about His fate. He was put to death for the sins of our people. He was placed in a grave with those who are evil, He was buried with the rich, even though He had never committed a crime or ever told a lie.’

“The Lord says, ‘It was My will that He should suffer; His death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so He will see His descendants; He will live a long life, and through Him My purpose will succeed. After a life of suffering, He will again have joy; He will know that He did not suffer in vain. My devoted Servant, with whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for His sake I will forgive them. And so I will give Him a place of honor, a place among the great and powerful. He willingly gave His life and shared the fate of evil men. He took the place of many sinners and prayed that they might be forgiven’ ” (Isaiah 53:1-12; GNT).

And don’t forget: *The exact year of Christ’s crucifixion was also prophesied!* As explained earlier in this book, God told the prophet Daniel that the Messiah would be killed 483 years after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued (Daniel 9:24-27). This decree was proclaimed in 452 BC (Nehemiah 1 & 2). Therefore, the Messiah would be killed in 32 AD. And like clockwork, He was!

### **Jesus’ Burial (Thursday Afternoon)**

“Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had NOT consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the KINGDOM OF GOD. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down [at about four o’clock THURSDAY afternoon], wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. [Then He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away; Matthew 27:60.]

“That day was the Preparation [that is—the day before a Sabbath], and the [annual] Sabbath drew near. And the



women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.

“Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils [about five o’clock THURSDAY afternoon]. And they RESTED on the [annual] Sabbath according to the *commandment*” (Luke 23:50-56).

Notice that the Scripture says that the women rested according to the commandment. But what commandment is this Scripture referring to? Why, the commandment that God gave Moses concerning the FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD; the first *annual* Sabbath day of the year; the Sabbath that occurs each year on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month; THE DAY THAT FOLLOWS THE PASSOVER EACH YEAR! Remember, Jesus and His disciples observed the Passover the previous night—on the fourteenth day of the first month according to the commandment: “On the *fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover* of the Lord. And on the FIFTEENTH DAY OF THIS MONTH IS THE FEAST [THE FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD]... YOU SHALL HAVE A HOLY CONVOCATION. YOU SHALL DO NO CUSTOMARY WORK” (Numbers 28:16-18).

### **Jesus Was Crucified On A THURSDAY—Really?**

So Jesus was crucified on a *Thursday* (and NOT on a Friday as many people believe). How can I be so sure of this? Well, because the Bible says so! The Bible plainly states that Jesus was resurrected early Sunday morning (Mark 16:9). Then it states that *He was condemned and crucified three days before that particular Sunday* (Luke 24:1, 13, 20-21). One day before that Sunday would be Saturday; two days before that Sunday would be Friday; and three days before that Sunday would be THURSDAY!

Plus, there are many other Scriptures (about thirty!) that state that Jesus would be resurrected back to life *three days after His death!* (Matthew 20:17-19, 16:21; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-33.) Here is one such Scripture: “Once again Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and spoke of the things that were going to happen to Him. ‘Listen,’ He told them, ‘we are going up to Jerusalem where the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the teachers of the Law. They will condemn Him to death and then hand Him over to the Gentiles, who will make fun of Him, spit on Him, whip Him, and kill Him; but *THREE days later He will rise to life*” (Mark 10:32-34; GNT).

If Christ was resurrected back to life early Sunday morning (as Mark 16:9 emphatically states) then He had to be crucified on a THURSDAY. Because one day after Thursday would be Friday; two days after Thursday would be Saturday; and three days after Thursday would be Sunday! So once again—Jesus Christ was crucified on a THURSDAY!

Now some of you may be thinking, “Well, I thought the Bible said that Jesus was killed on the day just before the Sabbath?” Yes, He most certainly was killed the day before the Sabbath. That is, the day before the *annual* Sabbath—the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month—the first day of Unleavened Bread—the day after Passover! There were *two* Sabbaths that particular week: Friday was the *annual* Sabbath (the First Day of Unleavened Bread), and Saturday was the *weekly* Sabbath. So after the women went home and prepared spices and perfumes late Thursday afternoon (as we are told in Luke 23:55-56), they then rested on the *annual* Sabbath on Friday (the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month as commanded by God in Numbers 28:16-18), as well as the *weekly* Sabbath on Saturday (as commanded by God in Exodus 20:8-11).

## **The Tomb is Sealed & Guarded**

The next day [FRIDAY], which was a Sabbath [THE FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD], the chief priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate and said, ‘Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive He said, *‘I will be raised to life THREE days later.’* Give orders, then, for His tomb to be carefully guarded until the THIRD day, so that His disciples will not be able to go and steal the body, and then tell the people that He was raised from death. This last lie would be even worse than the first one.’ ‘Take a guard,’ Pilate told them; ‘go and make the tomb as secure as you can.’ So they left and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and leaving the guard on watch” (Matthew 27:62-66; GNT).

## **Jesus Resurrected Early Sunday Morning**

Jesus is resurrected back to life! When? “Jesus rose from death early on SUNDAY” (Mark 16:9; GNT). And then also “early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices they had prepared” (Luke 24:1; GNT). “Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men” (Matthew 28:2-4; GNT).

Then the angel said to the women, “ ‘Why are you looking among the dead for one who is ALIVE? He is not here; He has been RAISED. Remember what He said to you while He was in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, *be crucified, and three days later rise to life.*’ ’ Then the women remembered His words, returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven disciples and all the rest. The women were Mary Magdalene,

Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; they and the other women with them told these things to the apostles” (Luke 24:5-10; GNT).

“So Peter and the other disciple [John] started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) (John 20:3-9; NIV.)

### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying [she apparently did NOT believe what the angel had told her earlier that morning]. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, ‘Woman, why are you crying?’ ‘They have taken my Lord away,’ she said, ‘and I don’t know where they have put Him.’

“At this, *she turned around and saw Jesus standing there*, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ‘Woman,’ HE said, ‘why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?’ Thinking He was the gardener, she said, ‘Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him.’

“Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.’ She turned toward Him and cried out in Aramaic, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means Teacher).

Jesus said, ‘Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’ ’

“Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: ‘I have seen the Lord!’ And she told them that He had said these things to her” (John 20:10-18; NIV).

### **The Guards’ Report**

In the meantime, “some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, ‘You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.’ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day” (Matthew 28:11-15; NIV).

### **Jesus Appears to the Disciples**

“On the evening of that first day of the week [Sunday evening], when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, *Jesus came and stood among them* and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ (John 20:19.) They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself! Touch Me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet.

“And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, He asked them, ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He took it and ate it in their presence. He said to them, ‘This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms [i.e. the Old Testament].’

*“Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS OF SINS will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised [the Holy Spirit]; but stay in the city [Jerusalem] until you have been clothed with power from on high’ ”* (Luke 24:37-49; NIV).

### **Jesus Appears for Forty Days**

“After His suffering, Jesus showed Himself to these men [and over 500 others—1 Corinthians 15:6] and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of *forty days* and SPOKE ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD. On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift [of the Holy Spirit] My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized [immersed] with water, but *in a few days you will be baptized [immersed] with the Holy Spirit.*’

“So when they met together, they asked Him, ‘Lord, are You at this time going to restore the KINGDOM to Israel?’ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and

you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:3-8; NIV).

### **Disciples Commissioned to Preach the Gospel, Cast Out Demons & Heal the Sick**

Jesus also told them, ‘Go throughout the whole world and *preach the gospel* [THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD] to all people. Whoever *believes and is baptized* will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. Believers will be given the power to perform MIRACLES: they will DRIVE OUT DEMONS in My name; they will speak in strange tongues [different languages]; if they pick up snakes or drink any poison, they will NOT be harmed; *they will place their hands on sick people, and these will get well*’ ” (Mark 16:15-18; GNT). [Later on, “the disciples went and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and proved that their preaching was true by the MIRACLES that were performed.”] (Mark 16:20; GNT.)

### **Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven**

“After saying this, Jesus was taken up to heaven as they watched Him, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They still had their eyes fixed on the sky as He went away, when two men [angels] dressed in white suddenly stood beside them and said, ‘Galileans, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, *will come back in the same way that you saw Him go to heaven*’ ” (Acts 1:9-11; GNT).

### **The Apostles Return to Jerusalem**

The apostles then return to Jerusalem and *Matthias* is chosen to replace Judas Iscariot (the apostle who had betrayed Jesus and then later committed suicide; Matthew 27:3-5). So once again there are twelve apostles (Acts 1:12-

26). But, believe it or not, even after all the amazing miracles that were performed by Jesus, there are only 120 followers (i.e. disciples) of Christ (Acts 1:15).

### **Disciples Keep God's Holy Days**

Then FIFTY days after Jesus was resurrected back to life (and only ten days after He ascended into heaven), the disciples of Christ assemble together to celebrate PENTECOST (also called the FEAST OF WEEKS; the third *annual* Sabbath of the year; Leviticus 23:15-21; Deuteronomy 16:9-10).

### **Disciples Receive God's Holy Spirit!**

“When the day of PENTECOST came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there. They were all filled with the *Holy Spirit* and began to talk in OTHER LANGUAGES, as the Spirit enabled them to speak. There were Jews living in Jerusalem, religious people who had come from every country in the world. When they heard this noise, a large crowd gathered. They were all excited, because *all of them heard the believers talking in their own languages*.

“In amazement and wonder they exclaimed, ‘These people who are talking like this are Galileans! How is it, then, that *all of us hear them speaking in our own native languages?* We are from Parthia, Media, and Elam; from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia; from Pontus and Asia, from Phrygia and Pamphylia, from Egypt and the regions of Libya near Cyrene. Some of us are from Rome, both Jews and Gentiles converted to Judaism, and some of us are from Crete and Arabia—yet *all of us hear them*



*speaking in our own languages about the great things that God has done!*

### **Peter Addresses the Crowd**

“Amazed and confused, they kept asking each other, ‘What does this mean?’ ...Then PETER stood up with the other eleven apostles and in a loud voice began to speak to the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me and let me tell you what this means.... This is what the prophet Joel spoke about [when God declared]: ‘This is what I will do... I will pour out MY SPIRIT on everyone. Your sons and daughters will proclaim My message; your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams. Yes, even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out MY SPIRIT in those days, and they will proclaim My message.... And then, whoever calls out to the Lord for help will be saved.’

“ ‘Listen to these words, fellow Israelites! Jesus of Nazareth was a Man whose divine authority was clearly proven to you by all the miracles and wonders which God performed through Him. You yourselves know this, for it happened here among you. In accordance with His own plan God had already decided that Jesus would be handed over to you; and you killed Him by letting sinful men crucify Him. But God raised Him from death, setting Him free from its power, because it was impossible that death should hold Him prisoner.

“ ‘FOR [KING] DAVID SAID ABOUT HIM, ‘I saw the Lord before me at all times; He is near me, and I will not be troubled. And so I am filled with gladness, and my words are full of joy. And I, mortal though I am, will rest assured in hope, because You will not abandon me in the world of the dead; *You will not allow Your Faithful Servant [Your Holy One; NKJ] to rot in the grave.* You have shown me

the paths that lead to life, and your presence will fill me with joy.’

“ ‘My friends, I must speak to you plainly about our famous ancestor King David. He died and was buried, and his grave is here with us to this very day. He was a PROPHET, and he knew what God had promised him: God had made a vow that He would [raise up the Christ to sit on his throne; NKJ].... David saw what God was going to do in the future, and so *he spoke about the resurrection of the Messiah* when he said, ‘He was not abandoned in the world of the dead; His body did NOT rot in the grave.’ [Psalms 16:10.]

“ ‘God has raised this very Jesus from death, and we are all witnesses to this fact. He has been raised to the right side of God, His Father, and has received from Him the HOLY SPIRIT, as He had promised. What you now see and hear is His gift that He has *poured out on us*. For it was not David who went up into heaven; rather he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit here at My right side until I put Your enemies as a footstool under Your feet.’ ’ All the people of Israel, then, are to know for sure that this Jesus, whom you crucified, is the One that God has made Lord and Messiah!’

### **What Should We Do?**

“When the people heard this, they were deeply troubled and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘What shall we do, brothers?’

### **Repent & Be Baptized!**

“Peter said to them, ‘Each one of you must *turn away from your sins* AND BE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, so that your sins will be forgiven; *and you will receive God’s gift, the Holy Spirit*. For God’s promise was

made to you and your children, and to all who are far away—all whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.’

### **3.000 Added to the Church**

“Peter made his appeal to them and with many other words he urged them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from the punishment coming on this wicked people!’ Many of them BELIEVED his message and were BAPTIZED, and about *three thousand people were added to the group that day*. [Please note: all those baptized were ADULTS! There is NOT a single instance in the entire Bible when a child is baptized!]

### **The Fellowship of the Believers**

[From that time on:] “They spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and the prayers. *Many miracles and wonders were being done* through the apostles, and everyone was filled with awe. All the believers continued together in CLOSE FELLOWSHIP and shared their belongings with one another. They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed. Day after day they met as a group in the Temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts, praising God, and enjoying the good will of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved” (Acts 2:1-47; GNT).

### **Great Unity, Growth & Miracles**

Before long the fledgling Church of God would grow to 5,000, as the apostles taught REPENTANCE and that *salvation is found in only one name—that of Jesus Christ* (Acts 4:4, 3:19, 3:26, 4:12).

And “all the believers were ONE in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With GREAT POWER the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need” (Acts 4:32-35; NIV).

“Meanwhile, the apostles were performing MANY MIRACULOUS SIGNS AND WONDERS among the people.... And more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women” (Acts 5:12-14; NLT). Incredible miracles were taking place, so that “sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that *Peter’s shadow* might fall across some of them as he went by. Crowds came in from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and THEY WERE ALL HEALED” Acts 5:14-16; NLT).

“And daily in the Temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ,” and explaining that the Holy Spirit is only given to those who OBEY God (Acts 5:42, 32). And their prayers were so powerful at times that the building that they were assembled in shook! (Acts 4:23-31.) So the word of God spread and the number of disciples increased rapidly (Acts 6:7).

### **The Apostles are Persecuted**

But persecution came early, as Jesus had forewarned: “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). But Jesus also said, “*Blessed* are you when men hate you... and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake” (Luke 6:22). And again, “*Blessed* are you

when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake” (Matthew 5:11).

But why does the world hate TRUE followers of Christ? Because we testify that its works are EVIL! (John 7:7.)

So the council (the religious leaders of that day—those who had also condemned Christ) called in the apostles and “had them whipped, and ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus” (Acts 5:40: GNT). But the apostles told them that they MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN (Acts 4:19, 5:29). Then “they departed from the presence of the council, *rejoicing* that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41).

### **Stephen: The First Martyr for Christ**

“Now *Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power*, DID GREAT WONDERS AND MIRACULOUS SIGNS among the people” (Acts 6:8). But the council soon arrested him. When questioned by them, Stephen told them that they did NOT obey God’s law, and that they were responsible for murdering the Messiah (Acts 7:51-53).

But “when they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, *full of the Holy Spirit*, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’”

“At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him.

“Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named *Saul*. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do NOT hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep” [that is, he died] (Acts 7:54-60; NIV).

Stephen would be the first of many to die for Christ. For Satan the Devil, the ruler of this age, deceives the world into hating those who obey God and who preach the *truth* (Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 12:9).

### **The Church Persecuted & Scattered**

“And *Saul* was there, giving approval to Stephen’s death. On that day a GREAT PERSECUTION broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were SCATTERED throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But *Saul* began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison” (Acts 8:1-4; NIV).

### **Many Converted Through Philip’s Preaching**

But “*those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went*. PHILIP went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the MIRACULOUS SIGNS he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, *evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed*. So there was GREAT JOY in that city” (Acts 8:4-8; NIV).

“When they believed Philip as *he preached the good news of the Kingdom of God AND the name of Jesus*

*Christ, THEY WERE BAPTIZED, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN”*  
(Acts 8:12; NIV).

### **Adults Baptized & Kingdom of God Preached**

Please note: *only* MEN and WOMEN were *baptized*—NO children!

Further note: Philip (just like John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and ALL the apostles) preached the good news of the KINGDOM OF GOD *and* Jesus Christ. Most so-called Christians today *ONLY* preach *about* Jesus Christ and say nothing about the KINGDOM OF GOD. And for good reason, for they do NOT even *understand* what the Kingdom of God is! Why? Because they are NOT truly converted! In order to become a *genuine* Christian you have to receive God’s Holy Spirit. But God only gives His Spirit to those who OBEY HIM! (Acts 5:32.) Plus the Bible says that “a good *understanding* have all those who DO His commandments” (Psalms 111:10). And since they do NOT obey God’s commandments they simply do NOT understand what the Kingdom of God really is! Nor do they *understand* the REAL Jesus Christ of the Bible!

Do today’s so-called Christians OBEY God by keeping His *weekly* Sabbath day holy (the seventh-day of the week)? NO! Instead they keep the day that pagans have always gathered together to worship the sun—Sunday! Do they OBEY God by keeping His *annual* Sabbath days holy (Passover, Pentecost, etc)? NO! Instead they keep pagan holidays that the heathens have celebrated for thousands of years in worship of Nimrod, Semiramis and Tammuz—Xmas and Easter!

How about baptism? Do today’s so-called Christian leaders baptize ADULTS after they have *truly repented* of their sins (of breaking God’s laws)? NO! Instead they bap-

tize children and teach that God's commandments have been done away! I could go on and on and on, but I think you get the point. Today's so-called Christians do NOT obey Christ! Therefore, God has NOT given them His Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32). As a result, they are NOT *true* Christians (Romans 8:9-14). On the contrary, they are COUNTERFEIT Christians! And they preach a COUNTERFEIT Jesus and NOT the genuine Jesus Christ of the Bible! (Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 11:4.) For the Jesus Christ of the Bible kept His Father's commandments and taught others to do likewise! (Isaiah 42:21; Matthew 5:17-19; Malachi 2:7-9; Acts 24:14; Matthew 7:21-23; Romans 3:31, 2:13; 7:12; Hebrews 8:10; Isaiah 8:20; Proverbs 28:9.)

Jesus also preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God and taught others to do likewise! (Luke 4:43, 8:1, 9:11; Acts 1:1-3; Luke 9:2, 9:60; Acts 20:25; Luke 16:16.) And the preaching of the gospel (i.e. good news) of the Kingdom of God is so important that Christ will NOT return until it is "preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). That's how important the *true* gospel message is! Now, back to our story...

### **The Samaritans Receive God's Holy Spirit**

Though Philip baptized the Samaritans properly, he forgot one thing. He neglected to put his hands on those he had baptized and pray that they would receive God's Holy Spirit. As a result, none of them received God's Spirit! So when the apostles Peter and John arrive in Samaria they place their hands on the baptized Samaritans and pray for them, and as a result they finally receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-19).



## Saul Becomes Converted!

“Meanwhile, *Saul* [who had persecuted many of God’s people and had thrown them in prison] was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the WAY [THAT IS—THE WAY OF GOD], whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

“As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Saul asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ He replied. ‘Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’

“The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

“In Damascus there was a disciple named *Ananias*. The Lord called to him in a vision, ‘Ananias!’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he answered. The Lord told him, ‘Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.’ ‘Lord,’ Ananias answered, ‘I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your *saints* [i.e. converted Christians] in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on Your name.’ But the Lord said to Ananias, ‘Go! *This man is My chosen instrument to carry My name*

*before the GENTILES and their kings and before the people of Israel....’*

“Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and *be filled with the Holy Spirit.*’ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was BAPTIZED” (Acts 9:1-18; NIV).

### **Saul Preaches God’s Truth**

After several days, *Saul* began to PREACH in the synagogues. And “all those who heard him were astonished and asked, ‘Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?’ Yet *Saul grew more and more powerful* and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by PROVING that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 9:21-22; NIV). Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord” (Acts 9:31; NIV).

### **Peter Heals a Paralytic & Brings a Dead Woman Back to Life!**

At this time the apostle *Peter* was traveling around the country, preaching God’s Word and healing the sick. After healing a PARALYTIC who had been bedridden for eight years (Acts 9:32-35), he then brings a DEAD woman back to LIFE! Here’s how it happened:

“In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and

DIED, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, ‘Please come at once!’ Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the DEAD WOMAN, he said, *‘Tabitha, get up.’* *She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.* He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them ALIVE. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord” (Acts 9:36-42; NIV).

### **Churches Raised Up Throughout Known World**

For the next SEVERAL DECADES, the apostles as well as other disciples would travel around Asia, Africa and Europe, raising up churches for Christ. Since they were told by Jesus to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), they would bring the gospel message to “the lost ten tribes of Israel.” This would be especially true since Jesus had specifically told them to go “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:6; see also Matthew 15:24 and Acts 26:7).

As a result, the disciples of Christ would eventually travel with the gospel message to all the various places where the “lost ten tribes of Israel” had migrated. And Peter even addresses one of his letters “to God’s chosen people who are living as foreigners in the lands of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1; NLT). The NKJV translates this same Scripture: “to the pilgrims of the Dispersion...” Almost surely Peter was referring to the lost tribes of Israel who were dispersed

and living as foreigners at various locations. And James addresses his letter “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (James 1:1).

Churches of God were even established as far west as Rome, France, Spain, Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales.

But as far as preaching the gospel, no one worked harder than SAUL (*who was now called Paul*). PAUL traveled extensively, raising up churches everywhere he went, as he preached *every Sabbath* about the KINGDOM OF GOD and proving from the Scriptures (of the Old Testament) that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 18:4-5, 19:8, 20:21, 25).

And “God did EXTRAORDINARY MIRACLES through Paul, so that even *handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him* were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were CURED and the evil spirits left them” (Acts 19:11-12; NIV). And like Peter, Paul also raised a DEAD man back to LIFE (Acts 20:9-12)! And his influence was so great he was accused of “turning the world upside down” (Acts 17:6)! And Paul did not hesitate to preach both publicly and from house to house, teaching REPENTANCE from sin and FAITH in Jesus Christ (Acts 20:20-21, 26:20).

Paul would even travel to *ROME* and stay there for two whole years. And what do you suppose he taught while there? “He preached the KINGDOM OF GOD and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:31; NIV). And again: “From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the KINGDOM OF GOD and tried to convince them about Jesus” (Acts 28:23; NIV). And of course he continued to *heal the sick* in every place that he journeyed (Acts 28:8-9).

## False Church *Leaders* Prophesied!

But Paul also WARNED the church, time and time again, about *false church LEADERS* who would eventually rise up IN THE CHURCH, *perverting the truth of God!* Here is what he said to the leaders (i.e. elders; ministers; overseers; bishops) of the church in Ephesus in his farewell address to them: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you OVERSEERS. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. *I know that after I leave, savage WOLVES will come in among you and will not spare the flock.* EVEN FROM YOUR OWN NUMBER MEN WILL ARISE AND DISTORT THE TRUTH... *So be on your guard!* Remember that for THREE YEARS I never stopped WARNING each of you night and day with tears” (Acts 20:28-31; NIV)!

So [as prophesied by the apostle Paul] it wouldn’t be long before FALSE TEACHERS would *infiltrate* the Church of God and rise to PROMINENT POSITIONS as elders, ministers and bishops *within* the Christian church! And what would be their main objective? To “distort the truth” by “speaking perverse things” (Acts 20:30: NIV & NKJV)! Things like Sunday worship, Xmas, Easter, idols (pictures, statues, etc.), crosses, crucifixes, indulgences (*selling* pardons for sin!), baptizing infants, the teaching of the trinity, forbidding marriage (among priests and nuns), teaching “the commandments have been nailed to the cross” and “we are saved by faith ALONE” (see James 2:24).

These and many other perverted teachings would eventually be taught by *deceitful* teachers who would worm their way into the church of God. And then once inside the church they would make their way to the TOP. And then once in leading positions of authority *within* the true church of God they would slowly but surely teach their *poisonous and deadly doctrines*. Teachings that lead to sin and NOT

forgiveness of sin! Teachings that lead to death and NOT eternal life!

Eventually these CORRUPT CHURCH LEADERS would even *torture and savagely murder millions of innocent people*—many of whom were genuine, humble Christians! That's right—millions of innocent people (men, women and children) would be brutally TORTURED and MURDERED by these ferocious *wolves*! Monsters that had made their way into the church and then taken over the true church of God! Even Jesus Christ Himself had warned His followers many years before: “Beware of FALSE prophets [teachers, preachers, ministers, priests, etc.] who come to you in sheep's clothing [they *appear* as gentle lambs!], but inwardly they are RAVENOUS WOLVES” (Matthew 7:15). I will talk more about these deceiving, vicious animals later. For now, let's get back to our story.

### **The Apostles Are Martyred**

After establishing churches throughout Asia and Europe, each of the original twelve apostles would be *martyred* (except for Judas Iscariot who hung himself after betraying Jesus, and John who would die at an old age of natural causes). The apostle James (the brother of John) was the first one to be killed (he was beheaded in 44 AD by king Herod—Acts 12:1-2). Most of the original twelve apostles, as well as others (such as the apostle Paul and Matthias who replaced Judas), were beheaded, stoned, or crucified. After the GREAT FIRE OF ROME in 64 AD (that destroyed much of Rome), the crazed emperor Nero went berserk, killing great numbers of Christians. Among those who would die at the insane persecution of Nero were the apostles Peter (by crucifixion) and Paul (beheaded). Neither one would live to witness the destruction of Jerusalem (and the Temple) just a short time later.

## **Jerusalem Sacked & the Temple Destroyed**

It is now 70 AD, and the Jews living in Judea (Judah) have been in rebellion against Roman rule since 66 AD. But Titus (who would become emperor of Rome in 79 AD) leads a campaign that finally crushes the Jewish uprising. The city of Jerusalem is sacked and the Temple totally demolished. Hundreds of thousands of Jews are killed, many are sold into slavery, and the rest are deported or escape into foreign lands.

[Many years later, 132-136 AD, many Jews (led by Simon bar Kokhba) would again revolt against Roman rule and return to the Promised Land, trying to reestablish an independent state of Judah (or Israel). But the Romans would stamp out the Jewish uprising. Once again (just like in 70 AD), thousands of Jews would be massacred and enslaved. Afterwards, the Roman Emperor Hadrian would rename the area Syria Palaestina or Philistina (PALESTINE) “in an attempt to suppress Jewish connection to the land” (Wikipedia; article: “Syria Palaestina”). He also bars Jews from ever reentering the area.]

## ***False Leaders Begin to Take Over the Church!***

About thirty years after the apostles Peter and Paul were martyred, JOHN is still *alive*. He is the last surviving apostle of the original twelve. But (as prophesied by Jesus, Paul, and many others), FALSE TEACHERS have begun to creep *into* the Church of God. In John’s letter to Gaius he mentions a leading minister by the name of Diotrephes who was veering away from the truth. John writes: “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, *will have nothing to do with us*. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, GOSSIPING MALICIOUSLY ABOUT US. Not satisfied with that, *he refuses to welcome the brothers*. He

also stops those who want to do so and PUTS THEM OUT OF THE CHURCH”! (3 John 1:9-10; NIV.)

*Incredible! Can you believe this?* Here is a leading minister in the church who WANTS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE APOSTLE JOHN! And he is speaking viciously against John! And not content with that—he refuses to welcome visiting Christians into the area! But still not content—he excommunicates (or disfellowships) those who do so—throwing them out on the street! This would have been outrageous if it occurred to any of the original apostles. But for this to happen to John is almost unfathomable. For it was the apostle John who was so loved and respected by Jesus, that while He was dying on the cross, he asked John to care for his own mother Mary! (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 21:20-24.)

### **A Counterfeit Gospel Begins to Emerge**

And then there were others (even while Peter and Paul were still alive) who were beginning to preach a COUNTERFEIT GOSPEL and a COUNTERFEIT CHRIST!

“I am *surprised* at you! In no time at all you are *deserting* the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are accepting ANOTHER GOSPEL. Actually, there is NO ‘*other gospel*,’ but I say this because there are some people who are upsetting you and *trying to change the gospel of Christ*” Galatians 1:6-7; GNT). Or as the NLT puts it: “I am *shocked* that you are *turning away* so soon from God, who in his love and mercy called you to share the eternal life he gives through Christ. You are ALREADY following a DIFFERENT WAY that *pretends* to be the Good News [i.e. Gospel] but is NOT the Good News at all. You are being FOOLED by those who *twist and change the truth* concerning Christ.” And finally, here is how the NKJV renders these same verses: “I *marvel* that you are *turning away* so



soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a DIFFERENT GOSPEL, which is NOT ANOTHER; but there are some who trouble you and want to *pervert the gospel of Christ*.”

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach ANY OTHER GOSPEL to you than what *WE* have preached to you, let him be *accursed*. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches ANY OTHER GOSPEL to you than what you have received, let him be *accursed*” (Galatians 1:8-9)!

So the *real* gospel was already being *distorted*! And ANOTHER GOSPEL—a *fake gospel*—was starting to prevail! And yet things would only get worse—much worse—especially since John was now the only apostle left holding back the tide of corruption—and yet he was about to pass away!

### **A Lawless “Gospel” Begins to Take Form**

“Dearly loved friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to DEFEND THE TRUTH of the Good News. *God gave this UN-CHANGING TRUTH once for all time* to his holy people. I say this because SOME GODLESS PEOPLE HAVE WORMED THEIR WAY IN AMONG YOU, *saying that God’s forgiveness allows us to live immoral lives* [they cry out, “the commandments have been nailed to the cross!” and “we are saved by faith ALONE! Therefore we don’t have to obey God—just believe in God!” Yet even the demons believe in God! –James 2:19]. The fate of such people was determined long ago, for they have *turned* against our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:3-4; NLT).

John also warned: “I am writing this to you about *those who are trying to deceive you*” (1 John 2:26; GNT). And later he declared: “Do not believe every spirit, but put the spirits to the TEST to see whether they are from God; for *MANY false teachers* [preachers, ministers, bishops, priests, etc.] have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1; WNT). And as Paul proclaimed earlier: “The mystery of *lawlessness* [“the law has been done away” they exclaim] is already at work” (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

### ***False Christians Prophesied to Deceive MANY***

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, ‘Take heed that no man DECEIVE you. For MANY shall come in My name [so-called CHRISTians], saying [that] I am Christ; and [yet] *shall deceive many*” (Matthew 24:4-5; KJV).

“Then MANY *false* prophets [ministers, preachers, bishops, priests, etc.] will rise up and DECEIVE *many*” [the vast overwhelming majority!] (Matthew 24:11; NKJV.)

“But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent [Satan] DECEIVED Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches ANOTHER JESUS whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a DIFFERENT GOSPEL which you have not accepted—*you may well put up with it!*” (2 Corinthians 11:3-4.)

“For such men are FALSE apostles, DECEITFUL workmen, MASQUERADING as apostles [preachers, ministers, bishops, priests, etc.] of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself MASQUERADES as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants MASQUERADE as servants of righteousness....” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15; NIV).

And Peter forewarned: “*There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES... And MANY [the vast overwhelming majority!] will follow their destructive ways, because of whom THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words...*” (2 Peter 2:1-3.)

### **The Apostle John’s Final Years**

It is now 95 AD and the apostle JOHN has been banished by the Roman authorities (during the persecutions of the Roman emperor Domitian) to the Aegean island of Patmos “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:9).

While on the island (which is just off the coast of southwest Asia Minor—today Turkey), John receives an astonishing revelation from Jesus Christ. In a series of visions, John is carried forward into the future—to the last 3½ years of man’s reign on this earth—to the time just ahead of us now! It’s a time that will see God supernaturally intervene in world affairs, sending plagues upon the wicked and sinning nations of this world. And it’s a time that will climax in the glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

The visions John receives are absolutely shocking! Images of multi-headed beasts, of gargantuan armies, of strange new weapons, of devastating wars, horrible famines and terrible diseases! John then records it all in what would become the last book of the Bible—the BOOK OF REVELATION.

Soon thereafter, John is released from his exile. He then travels to EPHESUS (in southwest Asia Minor) where he will remain for the rest of his life.

## **The Baton is Passed to Polycarp**

Before dying, John is able to train a trusted and *faithful servant of God*—a man by the name of POLYCARP. Polycarp would receive the torch of TRUTH from John and then pass it on to the next generation. “When John was aged, he trained POLYCARP who later became BISHOP OF SMYRNA. This was important because *Polycarp was able to carry John’s message to future generations*” (Wikipedia; article: “John the Apostle”).

Then at the age of about 94 (in the year 100 AD), the apostle John dies. It would now be left to POLYCARP to carry on the work of God. He would be called on to preach the Word of God—undiluted—just as the apostle John had faithfully done for 68 years.

## **The Apostasy Begins**

It is now 119 AD and the leading minister (overseer/bishop) of the Church of God in ROME is a man named SIXTUS (or Xystus). Almost immediately Sixtus starts making CHANGES to what the apostles of Christ had faithfully taught. (Of course this is all in fulfillment of the many prophecies given by Jesus and the apostles decades before).

Jesus Christ, as well as Peter, Paul, Jude, John and others had repeatedly warned of FALSE leaders who would someday INFILTRATE the true Church of God—*teaching damnable heresies!* Well that someday had finally arrived! For instead of keeping PASSOVER (or the Lord’s Supper; see Luke 22:7-20 & 1 Corinthians 11:20-26) as commanded by Jesus Christ (which is an annual reminder of the DEATH of Christ and which had been kept faithfully every year since the inception of the church in 32 AD)—Sixtus instead teaches that the Church should celebrate the RESURRECTION of Jesus. Therefore, he replaces the annual ob-

servance of the death of Jesus (Passover) with a totally *new* celebration—*Easter!*

Of course this “new” festival wasn’t really a new celebration at all—as Easter was a PAGAN festival that had been observed by the heathens since about 2000 BC. About the only thing new about this pagan observance were the names involved—as the name of Nimrod/Tammuz (a heathen deity) was replaced with that of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, it was the same old blasphemous celebration of the Babylon Mystery Religion. And just as prophesied—MANY would embrace this rank heresy!

### **Church Was Forewarned of Impending Heresy**

“There will be FALSE teachers among you... And MANY [the vast overwhelming majority!] will follow their *destructive* ways” the apostle Peter proclaimed (2 Peter 2:1-2).

“For such men are FALSE apostles [i.e. ministers], DECEITFUL workmen, MASQUERADING as apostles [i.e. ministers] of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants MASQUERADE as servants of righteousness” the apostle Paul declared (2 Corinthians 11:13-15; NIV).

“For *you gladly tolerate* anyone who comes to you and preaches a DIFFERENT Jesus, NOT the one we preached; and you accept a spirit and a gospel completely DIFFERENT from the Spirit and the gospel you received from us! (2 Corinthians 11:4; GNT).

“Then many FALSE prophets [i.e. ministers] will rise up and *deceive many* [the vast overwhelming majority!]” Jesus explained (Matthew 24:11).

“But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to DEFEND THE TRUTH... [For] *God gave this UNCHANGING truth once for all time* to his holy people” Jude exclaimed (Jude 1:3; NLT).

“For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have *secretly slipped in among you*. They are GODLESS MEN, who CHANGE the grace of our God into a license for immorality” (Jude 1:4; NIV).

“I am surprised at you! *In no time at all* you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are accepting ANOTHER gospel. Actually, there is no ‘other gospel,’ but I say this because there are some people who are... trying to CHANGE the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6-7; GNT).

“BEWARE of false prophets [i.e. ministers], who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous WOLVES” (Matthew 7:15).

“I know that... SAVAGE WOLVES WILL COME IN AMONG YOU and will not spare the flock. *Even from your own number men will arise and DISTORT the truth...* So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears” (Acts 20:29-31; NIV).

### **Church at ROME Succumbs to Heresy**

Unfortunately, the church at Rome did NOT heed the warnings that God had given the church. Instead they accept the blasphemous heresy of Sixtus with open arms. For many in Rome this new celebration makes a lot of sense. Why observe the death of Christ [even if it is commanded by God; see Luke 22:7-20 and 1 Corinthians 11:20-26), they reason, when they can celebrate His resurrection in-

stead. Not only that—but by keeping Easter instead of Passover—they feel they can finally distance themselves from the Jews.

The only problem with this line of reasoning is it involves HUMAN reasoning and goes completely CONTRARY to the Bible and commands of Christ! It also goes totally against what the faithful apostles of Jesus taught. Nevertheless, many Christians in Rome accept this CHANGE and start keeping Easter and discontinue keeping Passover. Of course this would only be the first of many CHANGES to come.

Unfortunately for those who keep EASTER, the Bible NEVER tells us to do any such thing (or to ever celebrate the *resurrection* of Jesus)! On the contrary, the Bible commands us to commemorate the *death* of Christ each year at the Passover (or Lord's Supper) on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month!

### **Christians in the East Remain Faithful**

But meanwhile, as those in ROME and the surrounding areas apostatize, Christians in the East remain loyal to the Word of God (as Polycarp faithfully teaches the truth that was entrusted to him by the apostle John).

### **Polycarp Travels to Rome**

It is now 154 AD. The bishop of Asia Minor—POLYCARP (the successor of the apostle John and leader of the church in Asia Minor ever since the death of John 54 years ago)—travels to ROME to discuss with the current bishop of Rome (Anicetus) the keeping of EASTER.

### **Polycarp Debates With Anicetus About Easter**

Upon arriving in Rome, Polycarp explains to Anicetus

that Christians are NOT to keep Easter, but are instead to observe the PASSOVER. But Anicetus tells Polycarp that the previous four bishops of Rome (Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Sixtus) all kept Easter, and appealing to “tradition,” he says that he will continue to do the same.

Polycarp then tells Anicetus that *he received his teaching FIRSTHAND from the apostle John—and that John received it directly from Jesus Christ Himself!* But Anicetus (like the church leader Diotrephes mentioned in 3 John 1:9-10) is apparently unmoved with what the apostle John taught and pledges to continue in his wayward ways.

This dispute between Polycarp and Anicetus would become known in history as the *Quartodeciman Controversy*—as Polycarp insisted that Christians are to keep the Passover every year on the 14<sup>th</sup> (quartodeciman) day of the first month (of the Biblical calendar).

Polycarp then returns to Asia Minor, where the Christians there continue to keep Passover, while the Christians in and around Rome keep Easter.

### **Polycarp Compiles the New Testament**

Polycarp is probably the one responsible for assembling and arranging the New Testament together—deciding what should be included (as well as excluded) in the sacred Scriptures. Wikipedia (article: Polycrates) states the following: “He may have been THE ONE WHO COMPILED, EDITED, AND PUBLISHED THE NEW TESTAMENT.... Polycarp lived in an age after the deaths of the apostles, when a variety of interpretations of the sayings of Jesus were being preached. *His role was to authenticate orthodox [apostolic] teachings* through his reputed connection with the APOSTLE JOHN: ‘a high value was attached to the witness Polycarp could give to the GENUINE TRADITION OF OLD APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE.’ ”



(Henry Wace, *Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature to the End of the Sixth Century A.D., with an Account of the Principal Sects and Heresies*, s.v. “Polycarpus, bishop of Smyrna.”)

## 666

Polycarp is also credited with *solving* the meaning of the number 666 (which I will be discussing later in this book).

### **Polycarp Passes the Baton to Polycrates**

Polycarp would die in Smyrna, not long after returning to Asia Minor. But before dying, Polycarp was able to train a loyal and humble servant of God to succeed him—a man by the name of Polycrates. Polycrates would receive the torch of truth from Polycarp (just as Polycarp had received it previously from the apostle John). It would now be left to Polycrates to carry on the work of God. He would be called on to preach the pure Word of God, just as Polycarp had faithfully done for 55 years.

### **Polycrates Confronts Victor About Easter**

Several decades later (196 AD) history repeats itself when Polycrates (the disciple of Polycarp and the bishop and leader of Asia Minor since Polycarp’s death 41 years earlier) writes a letter to the new bishop of Rome (Victor) in hopes of persuading him to give up the heresies he acquired from the previous bishops of Rome. But just like Polycarp before him, Polycrates is unable to convince the bishop of Rome to repent of his false doctrines. Victor not only defends his unbiblical teachings, but he even threatens to excommunicate Polycrates, as if he had the power and authority to do such a thing. But Polycrates is unimpressed with such petty and ridiculous threats.

## **Biblical Truth (Passover) OR Human Reasoning (Easter)**

The following is from “*Polycrates: Unity or Truth*” by Ivor C. Fletcher & Peter Nathan: “The fact that the early Church, based in *Jerusalem*, strove to adhere to the teachings of JESUS CHRIST may seem self-evident. Also obvious, perhaps, is that the original APOSTLES were considered an AUTHORITATIVE source of those teachings. But that didn’t remain the case for very long as the Church spread beyond its earliest geographical confines.

“When *Jerusalem* fell to the Romans in 70 C.E., the Church turned its focus to *Asia Minor*. Not only had the apostle PAUL been active in this area, his assistants there had continued to minister to the followers of Jesus. The apostle JOHN reportedly settled in Ephesus, the principal Roman city of the area, and the APOCALYPSE [the book of Revelation] written by him contains letters to seven of the churches in Asia Minor.

“This is where we find the Church leader POLYCRATES as the second century comes to a close. He was the successor of POLYCARP, a disciple of JOHN, and his family had been a part of the early community of believers. They had faithfully preserved the *apostolic teachings* from the first century. By his time, however, church groups in other parts of the world had accepted doctrines that were *contrary* to apostolic teachings.

“Around 190, Polycrates found himself under pressure from *Victor, bishop of Rome*, to COMPROMISE his beliefs about the New Testament PASSOVER and to accept new practices. The new ideas would later become the basis of EASTER celebrations. Polycrates faced a choice: Would he compromise on a point of truth that had been handed down from the apostle John or accept Victor’s nonbiblical teach-

ings?” (Ivor C. Fletcher & Peter Nathan; *Polycrates: Unity or Truth*).

### **Church Council Convenes in Asia Minor**

Wikipedia (article: Polycrates) then states the following: “Roberts and Donaldson noted that Polycrates... ‘seems to have *presided* over a SYNOD OF ASIATIC BISHOPS (A.D. 196) which came together to consider this matter of the Paschal [Passover] feast. It is *surely noteworthy* that NOBODY DOUBTED THAT IT WAS KEPT BY A CHRISTIAN AND APOSTOLIC ORDINANCE” (translated by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1885).

### **ALL of the Churches in Asia Keep Passover Not Easter!**

The article then continues: “The Byzantine historian EUSEBIUS [264 AD – 340 AD] wrote: ‘A question of no small importance arose at that time. For the parishes of ALL ASIA, as from an older tradition [of the apostles], held that the FOURTEENTH day of the moon, on which day the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the lamb, *should be observed as the feast of the Savior’s Passover*... But it was not the custom of the churches in [all of] the rest of the world [such as Rome and Alexandria, Egypt]... But the bishops of ASIA, led by Polycrates, decided to hold to the old custom [of Jesus Christ] handed down to them [since 32 AD]. He himself, in a letter which he addressed to Victor and the church of Rome, set forth in the following words the tradition which had come down to him’ ” (Eusebius, *Church History*, Book V, Chapter 23-24).

### **Polycrates’ Letter to Victor & Church of Rome**

“Here is what Eusebius records that Polycrates wrote:

“ ‘We observe the *exact day*; neither adding, nor taking away [see Deuteronomy 12:32 and Revelation 22:18]. For in Asia also great lights [followers of Christ] have fallen asleep [died], which shall rise again on the day of the Lord’s coming, when He shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hierapolis; and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter, who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and, moreover, John [the apostle], who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord [see John 13:23].... He fell asleep at Ephesus. And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr; and Thraseas, bishop and martyr from Eumeneia, who fell asleep in Smyrna. Why need I mention the bishop and martyr Sagaris who fell asleep in Laodicea, or the blessed Papius, or Melito the Eunuch who lived altogether in the Holy Spirit, and who lies in Sardis, awaiting the episcopate from heaven, when he shall rise from the dead? *All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the gospel, deviating in no respect*, but following the rule of faith.

“ ‘And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, do according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I have closely followed. *For seven of my relatives were BISHOPS; and I am the eighth.* And my relatives ALWAYS observed the day [Passover] when the people put away the leaven. I, therefore, brethren, who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord, and have MET WITH THE BRETHREN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, *and have gone through every Holy Scripture*, am not affrighted by terrifying words. For those greater than I have said ‘WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MAN’ [see Acts 5:29].... I could mention the *bishops* who were present, whom I summoned at your desire; whose names, should I write them, would constitute *a great multitude*.

And they, beholding my littleness, gave their consent to the letter, knowing that I did not bear my gray hairs in vain, but had ALWAYS GOVERNED MY LIFE BY THE LORD JESUS' ” (Eusebius, *Church History*, Book V, Chapter 24).

### **Roman Church Refuses to Repent**

Polycrates' letter to Victor unfortunately does no good, as the church in Rome *refuses to obey Christ* by keeping the Passover each year (as we are instructed to do in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Instead, the “Christians” in Rome continue to keep the ancient pagan festival of Easter.

Eventually, Polycrates would die. But after his death, the heresy would only get worse. Much worse.

### **God's True Sabbath Rejected For Sunday**

Following in the wake of Easter would come ANOTHER ANCIENT HEATHEN DOCTRINE—SUNDAY worship. The church in Rome would replace the *true* Sabbath Day (Saturday, the seventh day of the week) with the *pagan* day of worshipping the Sun—SUNDAY—the first day of the week. As Easter was considered the *annual* celebration of the resurrection of Christ, Sunday would become known as the *weekly* Easter—that is—the weekly celebration of the resurrection of Christ.

But unfortunately for those who keep SUNDAY (as well as Easter), the Bible NEVER tells us to do any such thing (or to ever celebrate the resurrection of Jesus)! On the contrary, the Bible commands us to observe the seventh-day Sabbath (which is the 4<sup>th</sup> of the 10 commandments—see Ex. 20:8-11) as well as commemorate the *death* of Christ (Passover)!

## **False Teachings Multiply**

But the church in ROME would NOT stop there. Eventually they would *apostatize* even more. Much more! Things like: Xmas, idols (pictures, statues, etc.), relic worship, crosses, crucifixes, obelisks, Mary worship, mother and child worship, saint worship, selling indulgences (i.e. *selling* pardons for sin!), baptizing infants, the trinity doctrine, purgatory, a false heaven doctrine, a false hell doctrine, forbidding marriage (among priests as well as nuns), confessionals, Lent, Ash Wednesday, transubstantiation, the inquisition, torture, murder, etc.

Priests would eventually even call themselves “FATHER,” something reserved for God Himself! (Matthew 23:9; see also Jeremiah 2:27). When someone addresses a priest as “father,” they are in affect calling that priest “God”! And not content with that, some are even addressed as “*most* holy father.” If they are the *most* holy father, where does that leave God? Jesus Christ clearly stated: “Don’t address anyone [other than your physical dad] here on earth as ‘Father,’ for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father” (Matthew 23:9: NLT). But of course they refuse to obey Jesus Christ in this matter, just as they do in just about everything else.

## **Roman Church Evolves Into BABYLON MYSTERY RELIGION**

All of these *false* doctrines (and *many* others) would eventually creep their way into the *false* apostate church in ROME. But these CHANGES didn’t just happen overnight. They were *adopted* from the pagan religions of the world over many centuries. It was a long, slow, gradual process of becoming the *modern* BABYLON MYSTERY RELIGION of today.

The Church of God in ROME would even change its name from the *Church of God* (as God's true church is called many times in the Bible) to the Catholic (Universal) Church of God, then eventually to the Roman Catholic Church of God, and then finally to the Roman Catholic Church. Of course dropping "God" from their name was apropos, considering the fact they were no longer God's church anyway, but had become the church of Satan! No longer were they even remotely a genuine Christian church, but had warped into a modern version of the ancient *Babylon Mystery Religion* of Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz. Or, as she is called in the book of Revelation, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"! (Revelation 17:5.)

### **Constantine Becomes a "Christian"**

It is now 313 AD, and the current bishop of Rome is Miltiades. The emperor of Rome at this time is CONSTANTINE. Instead of persecuting Christians like the Roman government has done for almost 300 years, Constantine decides to make peace with the "Christians," and even becomes a "Christian" himself. He then issues the Edict of Milan, granting Christians full freedom to practice their religion. Though pagan worship is still tolerated until the end of the century, Constantine exhorts all his subjects to follow his example and become "Christians."

Constantine donates to the bishop of Rome the luxurious Lateran Palace. When Silvester is named bishop of Rome upon Miltiades' death in 314, he is *crowned—clad in imperial raiment—as an earthly prince!* The emperor fills MANY CHIEF GOVERNMENT OFFICES with "Christians" and provides assistance in building churches.

*Wow, have things changed!*

## **“Christianity” UNITES With the Roman Empire**

For centuries persecuted by the Empire, the Christian Church has now become *allied* with it! “Christianity” assumes an INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP with the secular power. It quickly grows to a position of *great influence* over the affairs of the Empire. “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot [the Roman Catholic Church] who sits on many waters [over many nations], with whom the kings of the earth committed [spiritual] fornication [uniting together], and the inhabitants of the earth were made [spiritually] drunk with the wine [false doctrines] of her fornication” (Revelation 17:1-2).

Christians of various persuasions see many prophecies of persecution in the Scriptures. But NOWHERE do Jesus or the apostles foretell a popular growth and universal acceptance of the Church. No prophecy says that the Church of God will become great and powerful in *this* world. On the contrary, ALL PROPHECIES show that the Church would *remain a small flock, hated and persecuted by the world*.

Yet look what has happened! How is it to be understood?

After centuries of believing that the KINGDOM was “not of this world”—that the world and the Church would be *at odds* until Jesus’ return—professing Christians now search for an explanation to the new state of affairs. And yet the answer to this puzzle is actually quite simple. For this was no longer God’s church but the church of Satan! Listen to what Jesus prophesied about His *small* flock—the *true* Church of God: “I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are [spiritually] rich! I know the slander of those who say they are [spiritual] Jews [Christians] and are not, but are a synagogue [church] of Satan” (Revelation 2:9; NIV). (See also Romans 2:28-29.) The Church of



Rome had now become Satan's church! A COUNTERFEIT "Christian" Church *posing* as the *genuine* Church of God!

"Listen! As for that group that belongs to Satan [*false* Christians], those *liars* who claim that they are Jews [*true* Christians] but are NOT, I will make them come and bow down at your feet. They will all know that I love you" (Revelation 3:9; GNT).

Or as the MSG puts it: "And watch as I take those who *call themselves true believers* but are NOTHING OF THE KIND, *pretenders* whose true membership is in the club of SATAN—watch as I strip off their pretensions and they're forced to acknowledge it's you that I've loved."

### **First Sunday (Blue) Law**

In 321, Constantine issues an edict *forbidding work on "the venerable day of the SUN" (Sunday)*, the pagan day of worship that had come to be substituted for the seventh-day Sabbath in some areas of the world. *Christians in general had until now held Saturday as sacred* (and the day to restrain from work), though in Rome and in Alexandria, Egypt, "Christians" had ceased doing so.

### **"Christianity" Becomes the State Religion**

In 324, the emperor formally establishes "Christianity" as the OFFICIAL religion of the Empire. Thus "Christianity" is now *the established religion throughout the civilized Western world!*

### **First Council of Nicaea**

In an effort to further promote UNITY and UNIFORMITY within Christianity, Constantine calls a conclave of bishops from all parts of the Empire in 325. The council—intended to settle doctrinal disputes among Christians—is held at

*Nicaea*, in Bithynia.

### **The Arian Controversy**

The COUNCIL OF NICAEA confronts *two* major issues. It deals firstly with a dispute over the relationship of Christ to God the Father. The dispute is called the *Arian controversy*. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, has been teaching that Christ was CREATED, not eternal and divine like the Father. The Council *condemns* him and his doctrine and exiles Arian teachers. (The movement, however, continues strong in many areas. When Gothic and Germanic invaders are converted to “Christianity,” it is frequently to the Arian form.)

### **Passover Versus Easter**

The other major issue at the COUNCIL OF NICAEA is the *keeping of Passover versus the keeping of Easter*. Many Christians—especially those in Asia Minor—still commemorate Jesus’ *death* in the early spring every year on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the Biblical calendar—the day the “Jewish” PASSOVER lambs had been slain. In contrast, Rome, Alexandria, and many of the Western churches emphasize the *resurrection*, rather than the death of Jesus. They celebrate an annual EASTER feast instead—held on a Sunday.

### **Death Penalty for Keeping Passover!**

The Council rules that the ancient *Christian Passover* commemorating the *death* of Jesus must NO longer be kept—ON PAIN OF DEATH! Instead, the Roman custom of celebrating the *resurrection* of Jesus (*Easter*) is to be observed throughout the Empire (later to be officiated designated the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox).

So everyone was now required to celebrate Easter. And

anyone caught keeping Passover was to be put to DEATH! *This is what happens when a COUNTERFEIT Christianity becomes the state religion!* And it would only get worse! Much worse!

### **Letter to the Church in Alexandria**

Here is a letter written to the Church of *Alexandria* explaining the decision of the council: “We also send you the good news [?] of the settlement concerning the holy paschal [Passover], namely that in answer to your prayers this question also has been resolved. All the brethren in the East who have hitherto followed the Jewish practice [of keeping PASSOVER] will henceforth observe the custom of the Romans and of yourselves [Alexandrians] and of all of us who from ancient times have kept EASTER together with you” (Wikipedia; article: “*First Council of Nicaea*”). The writer of this letter neglects to mention the fact that the “brethren in the East” would be *forced* to keep Easter—otherwise they would be KILLED! But significantly, this letter does show that up until that time (325 AD) many people in the East were indeed keeping Passover, while those from Rome and Alexandria had apostatized a long time ago—and were now keeping Easter.

### **God’s *True* Church FLEES to Remote Areas!**

MOST Christians accept this decree. They constitute MAINSTREAM “Christianity” and the world accepts them as such. But some refuse, and FLEE into the valleys and mountains of Europe and Asia TO ESCAPE PERSECUTION AND DEATH (see Revelation 12:6; Matthew 10:23, 24:16). They continue *away* from the world’s view, as the *true* Church of God, *lost* in the pages of history, *hiding* in the remote and isolated places of the world—while a *false* Christianity takes center stage!

## **Sabbath Keepers Declared Anathema!**

It is now 364, and the *Council of Laodicea* will PROHIBIT the keeping of the SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH by Christians—even though this is the same day that Jesus, the Apostles, and ALL Christians kept holy in the first century—and the same day that God commanded to be kept holy *forever* (the 4<sup>th</sup> of the 10 Commandments—Exodus 20:8-11)! And anyone caught resting and worshiping on the seventh-day Sabbath is *declared “anathema”—a virtual death sentence!*

So now—not only are Christians FORBIDDEN to keep the annual PASSOVER—but they are also FORBIDDEN to keep the SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH. *And anyone caught keeping either one will incur the death penalty!*

Then in 394, under Emperor Theodosius, the ancient heathen gods are formally outlawed in the Empire. Conversion to “Christianity” becomes *compulsory*. Now *everyone* is compelled to keep both EASTER and SUNDAY (and no one is allowed to keep Passover or the seventh-day Sabbath)!

## **Roman Empire Divided Between East & West**

Theodosius is the *last* ruler of a truly *united* Roman Empire. At his death (in 395) the Empire is divided into two halves: EAST (with its capital at CONSTANTINOPLE) and WEST (with its capital at ROME). Though in theory only a division for administrative purposes, *the separation proves to be permanent*. The two sections (the Eastern Roman Empire and the Western Roman Empire) grow steadily apart, and are never again truly united. Each goes its own way towards a separate destiny.

## **Rome Falls**

It is 476. Zeno rules the Eastern Empire at Constantin-

ople (also known as the Byzantine Empire), while *Romulus Augustus* rules the Western Empire at Rome. By curious coincidence, Romulus bears the names of both the founder of Rome (Romulus) and of the Empire (Augustus)—both of which are about to fall.

On September 4, 476, Odoacer, a HERULI chieftain, overthrows the young emperor. The Western Empire has received a *deadly wound*. Rome has fallen! A “barbarian” now sits on the throne in Rome. The greatest power the world has ever known is trampled in the dust. The Empire that had conquered the world is herself conquered! The ancient world is at an end. The Middle Ages have begun.

### **The Heruli, Goths & Lombards Reign**

For the next several hundred years “barbarian” invaders will rule the Western Empire: the *Heruli*, *Ostrogoths*, and *Lombards*. These groups are “Christian,” but most are NOT “Catholic Christians.” Instead, they are ARIAN CHRISTIANS, who often persecute Catholics (and vice versa).

### **Catholicism Versus Arianism**

The main difference between Arians and Catholics is their concept of God. Catholics believe in the *Trinity*—the idea that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three Persons in one God—and that all three are equal and eternal. But the Arians reject the Trinity, believing that Christ was a *created* being. Both teachings however are wrong.

As I’ve explained elsewhere in this book, God is NOT a trinity. Nor was Christ created (John 1:1-18; Philippians 2:6-8). The God *Family* is composed of *two* distinct individuals: God the *Father* and Jesus Christ (the *Son* of God). *Both have always existed*. The Father and Son are ONE though. That is—they are ONE in purpose, mindset, goals,

outlook, character, makeup, etc.—just as WE are to be ONE with THEM (John 17:11, 21-23)!

The Holy Spirit is NOT a member of the God Family, but is instead the power and essence of God. God—both the Father and the Son—are composed of Spirit—the Holy Spirit—and WE can be too! Those of us who attain to the first resurrection (at the return of Jesus) will no longer be made of flesh and blood. Instead, we will be composed of spirit—God’s Holy Spirit—as we will be His *literal* sons and daughters—*born into His very own Family!* (John 17:21-23; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5; Daniel 12:2-3; Philippians 3:11, 3:21; Colossians 3:4; Luke 20:34-37; Psalms 17:15, 82:6; Romans 8:16-17.)

Therefore, *both* beliefs (both the Catholic and the Arian) are *false*. For God is NOT a trinity—nor was Christ created.

Let’s return now to our story.

Since the days of Constantine, the Roman Catholic Church has had the wholehearted support of the civil power—but not now. Therefore, something will have to be done about these hated Arian “heretics.”

Which brings us back to...

### **The Four Beasts of Daniel 7**

Earlier in this book we discussed Daniel’s dream of four great beasts (Daniel 7). I explained at that time that the first beast (the lion) represented the Babylonian Empire, the second beast (the bear) stood for the Medo-Persian Empire, the third beast (the leopard) depicted the Greco-Macedonian Empire, and the fourth beast (with its huge iron teeth) portrayed the Roman Empire.

With the fall of Rome, all four of these empires have now come to an end. But, we still have the *ten horns* (i.e. dynasties) that were prophesied to come *out* of the fourth empire—the Roman Empire.

### **Ten Horns To Reign One By One**

“Then in my vision that night, I saw a fourth beast, terrifying, dreadful, and very strong. It devoured and crushed its victims with huge iron teeth and trampled what was left beneath its feet. It was different from any of the other beasts, and it had TEN HORNS” (Daniel 7:7; NLT).

“The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom [the Roman Empire] that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. *The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom*” (Daniel 7:23-24; NIV).

As explained previously, the *ten HORNS* represent *ten* SUCCESSIVE kings (or dynasties) that would come *out* of the fourth beast (the Roman Empire). Or put another way, the ten horns symbolize the ten stages of government continuing *out* of the Roman Empire after its fall in 476 AD.

### **The Little Horn Uproots the First 3 Horns**

But something else is *added* to Daniel’s dream: a little pompous horn!

“I was considering the [ten] horns, and there was *another horn, a little one*, coming up among them, before whom THREE OF THE FIRST HORNS were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and *a mouth speaking pompous words*” (Daniel 7:8).

“He [the little horn] shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law” (Daniel 7:25). And “he will *subdue three kings*” (Daniel 7:24; NIV).

### **First 3 Horns: Heruli, Goths, & Lombards**

As I explained previously in this book, this boastful, defiant little horn represents the leader of the Roman Catholic Church—the pope. But what I didn’t mention then was that this little horn (i.e. the pope) would be responsible for the removal of the first three horns (governments) that would succeed the Roman Empire (after its fall in 476). And that is precisely what happened, as the popes (during this time) were instrumental in the overthrow of all *three* of these barbarian invaders (the HERULI, OSTROGOTHS, & LOMBARDS).

“Unlike the first three of the ten horns, the last seven horns or Roman revivals would all involve the blessing of the Roman *pope*—just as in the Late Roman Empire itself. He would be an intimate player in the various continuations of the empire of ancient Rome in the West” (John Ogwyn, *The Beast of Revelation*).

### **God’s *True* Church Flees into the Wilderness**

But what happened to God’s *true* Church during all these years, when the false church (the Catholic Church) dominated the Roman Empire? What became of the remnant of those who continued faithful in the East? As decades rolled by, as persecution raged, they gradually melted away. Some apostatized, some were martyred. But many migrated—going to the farthest bounds of the Roman Empire in the north and east, while other true Christians found places to hide far to the west.



God's true Church fled into the *wilderness* (that is, away from main centers of civilization) in a desperate attempt to escape the *persecution* of the great false church (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 12:6). They were at first contemptuously called by their enemies Nazarenes, then Ebionites, Paulicians, and Bogomils. Later (after the 10<sup>th</sup> century), they were disparagingly called Anabaptists, Athingani, Petrobrusians (after their leader Peter of Bruys), then Henricians (after a man named Henry); next it was "poor men of Lyons" and Waldenses, then Passagini, Arnoldists (after Arnold Hot), Picards, and Lollards. ("Walter the Lollard" and his brother Raymond would bring God's truth to England from Holland in 1315.)

During all of these years, God's people were detested, scorned, hunted down and persecuted by the servants of Satan. Hundreds of thousands (even millions) would be tortured and executed (often by fire). But God's truth would not die out. Instead it continued to be preached even during these dark days of religious oppression.

### **Peter Waldo & the Waldenses**

A good example of God's truth being propagated during the Middle Ages would be the work of *Peter Waldo*. Following on the heels of Peter of Bruys and Henry, Peter Waldo, a wealthy merchant in LYONS (located in southeastern France), begins to preach in 1161. The sudden death of a friend at Waldo's side shocked him into serious consideration of the meaning of life. He diligently began to study God's Word. As he preached, others united themselves and their efforts to his and became known as *co-workers*.

This little group became known as the "Poor Men of Lyons" (also *Waldenses* and Passagini), but they called themselves the Church of God, or simply Christians. They spread the gospel to northern France, the Netherlands,

Germany, Poland, and especially Bohemia (located in central Europe, just north of Austria, south of Poland and east of Germany; the modern-day Czech Republic). Later on Waldo crossed the Alps, thus a second branch of Waldenses was established in Italy.

### **A College Established**

The Work of God now grew rapidly. Soon a college was set up to train qualified laborers. The college and the town of La Torre, located where the Angrogna Valley meets the Lucerna (“the valley of LIGHT”), became the new headquarters of the Work and the growing Church of God. At the college, articles and small booklets were written and multiple copies were produced by hand (there were no printing presses back then). Literature was given free to those who were interested. Offerings paid the cost. As the Work expanded into different languages, the Bible was translated into various languages. These people took the Bible literally.

### **Trained Ministers Proclaim God’s Word**

At the college, mature men of about 25 were chosen for students. Elders (presbyters) as well as deacons were ordained. Some elders served as pastors (overseers/bishops) of churches, and some as evangelists, carrying the true gospel into foreign countries. They always traveled in pairs (Mark 6:7).

Every trained minister (“servant”) had to memorize a large portion of the Bible, besides being able to explain it. Each also learned a trade, to be able if necessary to earn his own living (Acts 18:3). Many were specially trained in matters of physical health, for the world’s ways, then as now, were diametrically opposite to God’s ways, including the dietary laws He set in motion. They understood that *our*

*healing is made possible by Christ's broken body*, for which they took the unleavened bread in their yearly Passover.

### **God's Way of Life Taught & Practiced**

The early Waldenses practiced overcoming and education in every walk of life. They were obedient, clean, and honest. Even their enemies acknowledged they could find no fault with their lives! They acted and dressed modestly. They were chaste, temperate in all things, and in control of their emotions. Their enemies marveled!

The Waldenses recognized that they were the true successors of the apostolic church. They kept the *seventh-day Sabbath*, yearly *Passover* (and probably the *Feast of Tabernacles* and perhaps other Biblical festivals).

*Arnold Hot* (a Waldensian minister) became pastor at Albi (in southern France, where Henry had previously preached). From him were nicknamed the *Arnoldists*. Arnold Hot taught that the Roman Church was ANTI-CHRIST, and that Christ did NOT establish the Mass. Arnold was burned at the stake not many years later.

On the Waldensian emblem or seal were seven stars (Revelation 1:20). Directly below and pointing at the fourth star was a lighted lamp (or candle). Around the rim was the Latin motto "*a light shines in darkness*" (Matthew 5:14-16). One of their oldest surviving books, the *Book of Anti-christ*, equates the Roman papacy and priests with Babylon (Isaiah 47), the little horn (Daniel 7), the great harlot that rides the Beast (Revelation 17 & 18), the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2), false teachers with corrupt doctrines (2 Peter 2), spirit of error (1 John 4), etc.!

## Compromise Followed by Division

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century it is said there were as many as 800,000 Waldenses in Europe. But many would begin to COMPROMISE as the persecution of the Catholics raged on. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century many of the Waldenses settled in Bohemia, trying to escape persecution. Eventually the Bohemian brethren DIVIDED. The much larger group apostatized, adopting a greatly modified, easier religion, *more acceptable to the world*. The smaller, more religious group soon disappeared from public view.

## Same Old Cycle

The experiences of the Waldenses were very TYPICAL of the PATTERN that often developed during the history of God's true Church. As was so OFTEN the case, the Waldenses started off with great zeal and wholehearted adherence to God's Word. But as persecution set in and as time wore on, slowly but surely many began to compromise—until *the vast overwhelming majority would apostatize*. Then a DIVISION occurs, with VERY FEW still remaining FAITHFUL to the Word of God. This small group of true Christians then disappears from the pages of history, as they scatter to other parts of the world trying to avoid persecution. Then the larger group (that had broken off from the smaller group) *would sometimes even join in the persecution of their former brethren!* (Matthew 10:16-23.)

When you really think about it though, this is precisely what happened at the beginning of Christianity, when in the second century the Church of God at Rome began to *compromise* with the world by replacing God's Passover with the ancient pagan celebration of Easter. They then continued to compromise even more, until one day they would split off from the much smaller group of true believers.

Then one day they would even *persecute* their former brethren (the true Church of God).

This same cyclical pattern then just repeats itself over and over again throughout the centuries. It happened with the Waldenses and it happened with just about every other group of true Christians over the years (such as the “Nazarenes,” “Ebionites,” “Paulicians,” “Bogomils,” “Anabaptists,” “Athingani,” and the “Lollards”). It has even occurred today—in our time—which I will be discussing later in this book. But for now, let’s return to the Roman Empire.

### **Heruli, Goths, & Lombards**

As a result of the pope’s scheming, the Heruli fall at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and the Ostrogoths in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. But by the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century the pope is still unable to rid himself of the last “barbarian heretics,” the Lombards. But that is about to change.

### **Pepin the Short**

Northwest of Italy, a powerful kingdom is on the rise—the kingdom of the Franks. The Frankish tribes are ruled by a royal family of kings known as the Merovingians. The Franks are CATHOLIC (and are of GERMAN descent). The current king is Childeric III, but most of the power of the kingdom lies in the hands of the king’s chief minister or viceroy, *Pepin the Short*.

Pepin is ambitious. He covets the office of king itself. He asks Pope Zacharias for an opinion on the legitimacy of his bid. The pope replies that “it is better that the man who has the real power should have the title of king instead of the man who has the mere title but no power.”

In November 751, Archbishop Boniface, the papal legate, anoints Pepin king of the Franks at a gathering of Frankish nobles in the Merovingian capital of Soissons. Pepin is now “God’s anointed” and the Merovingian king Childeric III is deposed and imprisoned.

The Merovingians have reigned by right of conquest. But Pepin has now assumed the sovereignty *in the name of God*. He believes it is God’s will that his family rule the Franks.

Pepin accordingly styles himself *rex gratia Dei* (“king by the grace of God”), a title retained by his successors.

Pepin’s new dynasty will be known as the CAROLINGIANS. The name derives from Pepin’s father, Charles (Carolus) Martel (a.k.a. “the Hammer”), who had been viceroy before him.

### **Lombards Overthrown**

It is November 753. Pope Stephen II crosses the stormy Alps and reaches Pepin’s winter camp. The pope asks Pepin to come to Italy to help him overthrow the Lombards. At the same time, Pope Stephen personally anoints and crowns Pepin, and blesses Pepin’s sons and heirs.

The Franks answer the call. Pepin invades Italy and defeats the Lombards. *He then gives all of the conquered Lombard territory to the pope!* This gift of conquered lands is called the “DONATION OF PEPIN.” It cements the alliance between the Carolingians and the Catholic Church.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Horn: Franks

The first three horns (kingdoms) have now been uprooted (though the Lombards would continually try and reassert themselves in the area). But unlike the first three of the ten horns, the final seven horns (or Roman revivals) would all involve the blessing of the Roman pope, as he would be an *intimate* player in the various continuations of the empire of ancient Rome.

Pepin dies in 768. His sons Charles (Karl) and Carloman jointly succeed to the Frankish throne.

In 771, Carloman dies suddenly, and Charles becomes sole king of the Franks.

#### Urgent Plea

Pepin had delivered a crushing defeat to the Lombards, but he had not totally subdued them. The Church is now threatened once more. Rome needs a champion!

In 772, Charles receives an urgent plea for aid from Pope Adrian I, whose territories have been invaded by Desiderius, king of the Lombards.

Charles crosses the Alps from Geneva with two armies. In 774 he decisively overthrows the kingdom of the Lombards, deposes Desiderius and proclaims himself sovereign of the Lombards.

Charles is now master of Italy!

Charles takes the title *Rex Francorum et Longobardorum atque Patricius Romanorum* ("King of the Franks and Lombards and Patrician of the Romans"). The famous "IRON CROWN" of the Lombards—which will become one

of the great historic symbols of Europe—is placed upon Charles’ head. *It will be used in subsequent centuries by Otto the Great, Napoleon and other sovereigns of Europe.*

Charles *confirms and expands* the DONATION made to the Papacy by his father. This territory will later be known as the states of the Church. [In the years ahead, the pope would even *add* to these lands, eventually even possessing territories in southern Italy as well as southern France (including the French city of Avignon). These territories (owned, controlled, and ruled by the Catholic Church) would eventually become known as the “PAPAL STATES.”]

Italy is again united for the first time in centuries. Charles is heralded as defender of the Church and guardian of the “Christian” faith. The Frankish monarchy and the Papacy stand in partnership against the enemies of civilization!

Charles is now the most conspicuous ruler in Europe. History will know him as Charlemagne—“Charles the Great.”

### **Central Event**

In December of 800 AD, Charlemagne travels to Rome. On Xmas Day, the king of the Franks attends a service in St. Peter’s Basilica on Vatican Hill.

The stage is now set for one of the great scenes of all history.

Charlemagne kneels before the altar in worship. There is a dramatic hush in the church. As the great king rises, Pope Leo, without warning, suddenly turns around and places a golden crown on the monarch’s head!



Immediately the assembled people cry in unison: “Long life and victory to CHARLES AUGUSTUS, crowned by God, great and peace-giving Emperor of the Romans!”

The Pope has crowned Charlemagne as *Imperator Romanorum*—“EMPEROR OF THE ROMANS”!

Something profound has occurred. The West once more has an EMPEROR!

Historians will look back on this as the *central event* of the entire Middle Ages.

### **“Christian” Caesar**

The coronation of Charlemagne marks the restoration of the Western Roman Empire. Charlemagne is now officially a successor of the Roman emperors. The tradition of the Roman Caesars is revived. In Charlemagne, Western Europe now has a “Christian” Caesar—a Roman emperor born of *German* race!

The act also demonstrates that the memory of the once great Roman Empire still lives as a vital tradition in the hearts of Europeans.

### **“Holy” Roman Empire**

Historians will view Charlemagne’s coronation as the *beginning of what will be known as the HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE*! The political foundation of the Middle Ages has been laid!

Charlemagne is ruler of nearly all the territories that had once constituted the Western Roman Empire. He has more than doubled the territory he had inherited from his father and brother. All France, nearly all of Germany and

Austria, and all of Italy except the kingdom of Naples are his!

Under Charlemagne's scepter Western Europe for the first time in centuries has something approaching unity. A new Roman Empire—a *new Europe*—has been born!

In 803, Charlemagne will stamp on his seal the words *Renovatio Romani Imperii*—"RENEWAL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE."

### Papal "Coups"

There is yet another significance to the events of December 25, 800 AD.

CHARLEMAGNE (*a German Frank of the Carolingian family*) has received the imperial crown at the hands of the Pope! The people see it as having come from God!

The message is clear to all: The imperial crown is a *papal gift*. The kingdoms of this earth belong to the bishop of Rome: they are his to give—and to take away!

Charlemagne has been taken unawares! He is reported to have grumbled that he would not have gone to church on that day if he had known the Pope's intentions.

The emperor is not unhappy about being emperor. His misgivings are over the *manner* of the coronation. He has won his empire on the battlefield through military genius; he does not owe it to a pope. Yet Leo has made it appear so!

Whatever his doubts, Charlemagne makes no protest. He quietly accepts the imperial crown from Leo.

The pope has cleverly executed a “coup.” In the eyes of all, the Papacy has been symbolically exalted above the authority of the secular power. A great legal precedent has been set.

### **“Marriage” of Church & State**

Charlemagne holds no grudge. Pope and emperor have too many interests in common to permit ill feeling to exist. There has been a “MARRIAGE” formally linking the spiritual power of the pope with the temporal power of the emperor. The two are joint sovereigns on earth. *The “Holy” Roman Empire has begun!*

The EMPIRE will now be regarded as God’s chosen *political* organization over Western Christendom. The church at Rome is viewed as God’s chosen instrument in *religious* matters. POPE and EMPEROR are regarded as God’s appointed vice-regents on earth.

This *intimate alliance* of church and state serves the needs of both institutions. The empire exercises its political and military powers to defend the Roman Catholic Church and *enforce* religious uniformity. The church, in turn, acts as a “glue” for Europe, holding together the differing nationalities and cultures within the Empire by the tie of common religion.

Historian Will Durant writes, “Out of this *intimate* co-operation of Church and state came one of the most brilliant ideas in the history of statesmanship; the transformation of Charlemagne’s realm into a HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE that should have behind it all the prestige, sanctity, and stability of both Imperial and papal Rome” (Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 4, pp. 468); Ogwyn).

Of course there was nothing at all holy about this union. For both the empire and the church were (and are) Satanic, as was this marriage! See Revelation 17!

### **“King Father of Europe”**

Years later, on January 28, 814, Charlemagne dies. He is buried in the church he built at *Aachen, Germany*. His mammoth achievements will be lauded in popular legend and poetry for centuries to come.

Charlemagne has not ended an age; he has begun one. He will be called *rex pater Europae*—“King father of Europe.” He has shown Europeans an ideal. He has bequeathed to them a common cultural and political tradition. Even in the distant 20<sup>th</sup> century, men will point to his model as a blueprint for European unity.

Charlemagne has left his mark on European history as no other man. He has, in large measure, determined the political fate of Western Europe.

### **Catastrophe and Revival**

Charlemagne’s empire survives him by only one generation. This *cyclical pattern of revival and disintegration* will be often repeated in centuries to come.

By 843, the Carolingian Empire of Charlemagne disappears. The political unity of Catholic Europe becomes a thing of the past.

In its weakness, Western Europe falls victim to invasions by Northmen, Saracens and Magyars. The Continent is again a political shambles.

## Chaos in Rome

The Papacy is also in trouble. The Holy See is increasingly torn apart by factionalism. Intrigue becomes rampant. *The papal office is bought and sold*—and occasionally OBTAINED BY MURDER! The corruption and immorality of the Papacy during this period will prompt later historians to call it a “PORNOCRACY”!

The infamous “Cadaver Synod” serves as a bizarre illustration of the turmoil in Rome.

The body of former Pope Formosus (891-896) is exhumed by newly elected Pope Stephen VI in 896 and put on trial, charged with treason! The corpse is dressed in papal regalia, assaulted with questions and accusations, then dragged through the streets of Rome with a mob cheering on!

The next year, Pope Stephen is himself overthrown, imprisoned and strangled.

Sergius III, pope from 904 to 911, attains the office after ordering the *murder* of his predecessor. His life of open sin with the noted *prostitute* Marozia brings widespread disrepute upon the Papacy. Sergius fathers a number of sons by Marozia, among them the future Pope John XI (931-935). Sergius’ reign begins a period known as “THE RULE OF THE HARLOTS.” Under Pope John XII (955-964), *the Lateran palace becomes a literal brothel.*

## New Champion Needed to Revive Empire

Chaos reigns in Rome—and throughout Europe.

The situation is grave. It becomes clear to many that the disunity and weakness in Europe is tied closely to the dis-

unity and weakness of the Catholic Church—and vice versa.

Perceptive churchmen realize that they must call in a strong prince to again unite Europe. Western civilization must be saved!

With the Frankish realm in eclipse, Rome must look elsewhere for a champion to restore the tradition of imperial unity.

When the next great emperor appears in Western Europe in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, he will not be a Frank (like Charlemagne) but a *Saxon German*. As medieval Germany rises to a predominant position in the West, the dignity of the title of Roman Emperor will become permanently connected with that of the *king of Germany*.

The FIRST GERMAN REICH is about to appear on the scene!

### **5<sup>th</sup> Horn: Saxons**

Rome, and all Italy, are in chaos. Pope John XII appeals to OTTO (king of the Germans) to restore order to the peninsula and to assist him against his adversaries. In 961 Otto sweeps into Italy and defeats the enemies of the pope.

Pope John recognizes Otto's position in Europe by crowning him HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR on February 2, 962. Not since that historic Xmas Day in 800 AD, when the Western Roman Empire was restored by the coronation of Charlemagne, has an event of such magnitude occurred.

Western Europe again has an Emperor! Charlemagne's Empire is REVIVED in an *alliance between Emperor and Church*. With the support of the Catholic Church, Otto

reigns supreme throughout Western Christendom over the German *Reich*, or Empire.

The year 962 marks the *restoration* of the imperial tradition. Later historians will view it as the beginning of what would later be officially styled the *Sacrum Romanum Imperium Nationis Germanicae*—the “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.”

Throughout the Middle Ages, the imperial title and GERMAN kingship will remain indissolubly united. It will be the kings of the *Germans*, crowned by the Pope, who will henceforth be named Holy Roman Emperors. GERMAN is the heart and core—*the power center*—of the Empire.

The octagonal Imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire is made especially for the coronation of Otto in 962. For centuries to come, it will be the very *symbol* of the concept of European unity.

Otto “the Great” dies on May 7, 973. After him, his son (Otto II) reigns, followed by his son (Otto III).

During the reign of Otto III, Pope Gregory V dies. Gerbert of Aurillac becomes pope, with the name Sylvester II.

### **Pope Sylvester II Denounces Previous Popes As “Monsters” & “Antichrist”**

Both Sylvester and Otto dream of an empire in which emperor and pope would serve as joint heads of a unified entity. Pope Sylvester II strives to raise the reputation of the papacy throughout Europe. He denounces some of his unworthy predecessors as “*monsters* of more than human iniquity,” and as “*Antichrist*, sitting in the temple of God and playing the part of God”!

## 6<sup>TH</sup> HORN: Franconians

Henry II (1002-1024) is *the last of the Saxon rulers of Germany*. At his death, Conrad II, duke of Franconia, receives the imperial crown.

CONRAD II (1024-1039) is *the first Franconian or Salian German Emperor*. His reign begins what later historians will call the great period of the Holy Roman Empire. The reign of Conrad's son Henry III (1039-1056) marks the ZENITH of German imperial power.

## The Great Schism of 1054

It is during the reign of Henry III as Holy Roman Emperor that the final *great schism between the Western (Roman) and Eastern (Orthodox) churches takes place*. The break had existed for centuries and had grown progressively wider. In 1054 it becomes formal and complete when the *Pope at Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicate each other*.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Horn: Hohenstaufens

With the death of Henry V in 1125, Germany and the Empire are beset by civil strife and chaos. Many fear the Empire will fall completely to pieces.

Two rival dynasties of German nobles scramble to gain the imperial throne—the Welfs (or Guelphs) and the Hohenstaufens. The Hohenstaufens are descended from Henry IV in the female line.

Finally, in 1138, CONRAD III comes to the German throne. Conrad—a grandson of Henry IV and nephew of Henry V—is *the first king of the Hohenstaufen family*. The Hohenstaufens will preside over the Empire until about the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.



## 8<sup>th</sup> Horn: Habsburgs

Frederick II dies in 1250. He is the last of the great Hohenstaufens. With his death, the empire crumbles.

The Great Interregnum (1254-1273), as this period will be known to history, is a stormy and confused period. It is the *kaiserlose, schreckliche Zeit*—"the terrible time without an emperor."

Western Europe is now about to enter a new phase.

The Great Interregnum comes to an end in 1273. In that year, the imperial crown is revived and given to the *Austrian Count Rudolf of Habsburg*. The Empire now has an Austrian head.

Rudolf is the first Habsburg to ascend the imperial throne. He will succeed in establishing some degree of order within the Empire.

The House of Habsburg will play a leading role in European affairs for *centuries* to come (though they wouldn't reign continuously, as they would be broken up by the Nassau and Luxembourg dynasties). The ideal of universal rule—unity under a single authority—is by no means dead.

## 9<sup>th</sup> Horn: House of Nassau

Rudolf of Habsburg dies in July 1291. The German Imperial Electors—German princes who take part in choosing the Emperor—are concerned over the rapid rise of the Habsburgs. They therefore refuse to recognize the claims of Rudolf's son, and instead recognize Adolf of NASSAU as king of Germany.

A century and a half will pass before the next Habsburg sits on the imperial throne.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Horn: House of Luxembourg**

Meanwhile, in 1355, Charles IV of LUXEMBOURG (now the German king and king of Bohemia) receives the crown of the Holy Roman Empire in Rome. In an effort to check growing political disorder, he issues the following year an imperial edict known as the “GOLDEN BULL.”

This document spells out a precise procedure for the election and coronation of a German king. Seven German nobles—including the duke of Saxony, the margrave of Brandenburg and the archbishop of Trier—will henceforth determine who is to be king of the Germans. Election is to be by majority vote.

The Golden Bull becomes the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire, and *will remain its fundamental law for 4½ centuries, until 1806.*

### **The Habsburgs Return**

Having been held by members of the House of Luxembourg until 1437, the German imperial crown now comes again into the possession of the HABSBURGS. In 1438, the Habsburg Albert II of Austria is made king of Germany and he is recognized as Holy Roman Emperor.

Henceforth, the imperial title will be hereditary in the Habsburg family. The house of Habsburg is on its way to becoming the most potent political force in Europe.

### **The Fall of the Eastern Roman Empire**

During the reign of the Habsburg Frederick III, the

Eastern Roman Empire (a.k.a. the Byzantine Empire) is in eclipse. On May 29, 1453, the Ottoman Turks under Mohammed the Conqueror capture Byzantium (Constantinople; today Istanbul), ending the Eastern Roman Empire. After centuries of decline, the last vestige of the Roman Empire in the East is gone. Many historians will later regard 1453 as the ending date for the Middle Ages and the beginning of Modern History.

### **Ninety-five Theses**

Then in 1511, a German monk and educator named *Martin Luther* makes a pilgrimage to Rome. He is appalled at the corruption and vice he finds so openly practiced there. He has often heard the popular proverb, “If there is a hell, Rome is built over it.” Now he believes it!

After his return to Germany, Luther is further disturbed by the practice of *selling* Papal indulgences, or pardons for sin. The profitable selling of indulgences has become big business in many parts of Europe.

On October 31, 1517, Luther nails a document to the door of the court church at Wittenberg, Germany. On it are his “Ninety-five Theses” in criticism of selling Papal indulgences.

The documents are forwarded to Rome. In June 1520, Pope Leo X issues a Papal bull criticizing Luther’s teachings.

On December 10, 1520, Luther publicly burns the Papal bull. An ecclesiastical revolution to be known as the *Protestant Reformation* is now in full swing! It will spread like wildfire over Germany and beyond.

Luther is excommunicated in January 1521. Soon af-

terward, he is summoned by Emperor Charles V, a devout Catholic, to appear for a hearing before the Diet (assembly) of Worms, a German city on the Rhine.

But it is already too late to arrest the movement. The assembly settles nothing. Luther refuses to recant—and Charles declares war on the protestors.

### **Religious Unity Destroyed**

German Protestantism gains rapid headway. Many German states sever themselves from the Roman Catholic Church. In 1531, the Lutheran princes within Charles' Empire establish a defensive alliance known as the Schmalkaldic League. A threatened invasion by the Turks prevents Charles from taking immediate action against these "heretic" Lutherans.

By 1540, all North Germany is Lutheran.

Luther has demolished the old order. The religious unity of Europe is destroyed! Nations begin to go their separate ways.

The Reformation destroys the meaning of the office of Holy Roman Emperor. The Emperor now becomes the head of one party, the Catholics. Though the outward form of the Holy Roman Empire will continue for some centuries, it is never the same again.

The political as well as the spiritual muscle of the Papacy is eroded. To counteract the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church organizes the "Counter-Reformation." The Council of Trent (1545-63) decrees a thorough reform of the Church and clarifies Catholic doctrine. These efforts eliminate many of the abuses that had triggered the Protestant Reformation, and revitalize the

Church in many parts of Europe.

But the Church has plummeted far from the zenith of its power, when Papal authority was felt and feared in every country in Europe. “The wars of religion and the collapse of church unity marked the end of theology as the decisive force in Western civilization,” a West German political figure, Franz Josef Strauss, will observe centuries later.

### **Charles V**

In the meantime, Charles V is elected king of Germany in 1519. He is crowned at AACHEN in October 1520.

In the person of Charles the Spanish dominions are united with the Habsburg possessions in the Netherlands, Austria and elsewhere in Europe. Never had any monarch so many possessions!

Charles has more than 60 royal and princely titles, including king of Germany, archduke of Austria, duke of Burgundy, king of Castile and Aragon, king of Hungary—to name just a few.

Spain is, in itself, an empire—a *global* empire, with colonial territories even in the New World. The Empire of Charles V stretches from Vienna to Peru!

In February 1530, Pope Clement crowns Charles Holy Roman Emperor. *This is the last time that a Holy Roman Emperor will be crowned by a Pope.*

### **Historical Inspiration for Today**

Disappointed in his ambitions and ill of health, Charles V abdicates and retires to a monastery in August 1556. He turns over the rule of Spain, the Netherlands and Italian

holdings to his son Philip II. To his brother Ferdinand goes the imperial office and Habsburg lands in central Europe.

In August 1556, and after 35 years' rule, Charles—the last universal Emperor of the West—steps aside. Historians will consider him to have been the greatest monarch to bear the imperial crown since Charlemagne. He dies September 21, 1558.

Charles V was the last Emperor to actively attempt to realize the medieval ideal of a unified Empire embracing the entire Christian world. Inspired by the concept of a spiritually and politically united Christian realm, he had fought vigorously for a united Church.

More than four centuries after the death of Charles, a 20th century descendant—Otto von Habsburg—will write a biography of his illustrious ancestor. Dr. Habsburg will observe that “he [Charles V] was attempting not to conquer or to dominate, but to establish the nations in a free community of equal partners. His ultimate aim was to create an alliance of peoples who, while retaining their own individual characteristics and laws, would be linked together by a united Church and a common desire to defend the west.”

Dr. Habsburg will also note: “The ideas coming to the surface in this, the second half of the twentieth century, are surprisingly allied to those problems and concepts which preoccupied Charles.... Together with ECUMENICITY [the movement promoting Christian unity], European unity has become the major issue of our time.... The notion of a UNITED EUROPE is taking hold again. People are once again beginning to appreciate that religion and politics are indeed interdependent....”

In assessing the role of Charles V, Dr. Habsburg will

observe: “Thus Charles V, once regarded as the last fighter in a rearguard action, is suddenly seen to have been a forerunner.... Our generation will find its historical inspiration in the concepts last embodied in the person, mind and political views of Charles V....

“Inasmuch as he represents an eternal ideal, the Emperor [Charles V], after more than five centuries, is still living among us—not only as our European ancestor, but as *a guide towards the centuries to come.*”

### **Napoleon Defeats Last Holy Roman Emperor**

In the late 1790’s Napoleon Bonaparte quickly rises to power in France. In May 1804 he is declared Emperor of France by the French government. Then on December 2, 1805, at the battle of Austerlitz, he defeats the Russo-Austrian army commanded by Tsar Alexander I and Holy Roman Emperor Francis II.

### **“Holy” Roman Empire Goes Into the Abyss**

On August 6, 1806, Holy Roman Emperor Francis II (of the House of Habsburg) formally *resigns* his titles and divests himself of the imperial crown. He will be recognized in history as “THE LAST HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR” (Wikipedia; article: “Francis II, Holy Roman Emperor”). *As a result, the “Holy” Roman Empire comes to an end!*

### **One Final Revival Yet to Come**

Though the “Holy” Roman Empire ended in 1806, it is not completely dead, for it will be resuscitated one last time! For the Bible clearly states—that in the end-time, just prior to Christ’s return, it will be resurrected back to life! And when it appears it will wreak havoc on an unsuspect-

ing world! More on this last revival later, for now let's return to the church in the wilderness.

### **End of 1,260 Years**

God prophesied through Daniel that the "little horn" (the Papacy) would wear out the saints (Daniel 7:21, 25; KJV), and indeed the Waldenses were completely "worn out." When Luther appeared, only a few scattered Sabbath keepers remained.

Most of the later Waldenses were NOT converted. These people merely sympathized with the truth. When the going got rough, they dropped away from what truth they had received. By the end of the Middle Ages the number of *true* Christians was reduced to almost the vanishing point.

Many found *Rome was not the only persecutor* however. More people were martyred after the success of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin than ever before. Worst of all in their persecution of Anabaptists were the *Calvinists*. The 16<sup>th</sup> century was a time of great intolerance and cruelty. One did not have to be right, but only to differ, to be martyred.

Daniel said it would take 1,260 years to wear out the saints (Daniel 7:25; see appendix). And in Revelation 12:6 we are told that the true Church was to exist in the "wilderness" (that is, away from main centers of civilization) for 1,260 years (see appendix). The true Church, which Jesus built, was reduced until it was practically nonexistent, all but dead, at the end of this 1,260-year period of persecution. But it could NEVER die, for Christ had said, "the gates of hell [the grave] shall NOT prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

From Constantine's decree in 325 AD and the conse-



quent initiation of persecution on non-Catholics—1,260 years brings us to the time immediately following 1585.

By this time the Church had almost died out, but starting in 1586 the Church slowly started to grow once again. In 1586-1587 the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, removed for the last time the threat to Protestant Britain of the renewal of Catholic domination by way of the throne. And then with the defeat of the Spanish Armada, by a miraculous storm at sea, Europe's strongest Catholic power was lowered to second-rate. Israelite Britain was now supreme, and in the political and moral climate of a freedom loving, Protestant Britain, God's Work could again develop!

### **God's Church Comes out of the Wilderness**

Meanwhile, Christ called to His service a rich Hungarian noble, *Andreas Eossi*. In the year 1588 he began to lead a group who formerly listened to Francis David. Under his direction they began to live by EVERY word of God and put into practice the WHOLE Bible (both the Old Testament and the New Testament).

They kept the seventh-day Sabbath and recognized in it a type of the future state of "spiritual marriage" when the Church would be married to Christ. They rejoiced each Sabbath adorning themselves for it in their best attire. They knew the seventh day typified that great time of rejoicing in which they could be a part of the "bride of Christ," ruling with Him in the seventh thousand years (the seventh millennium).

They also kept ALL the annual Sabbaths or Holy Days. They kept the true PASSOVER with unleavened bread, understanding it was the continuation of the Old Testament Passover, but now in remembrance of the Redeemer who

died for the sins of all mankind.

They declared *Xmas*, *Easter*, etc. were the inventions of popes, and they even made a distinction between CLEAN and UNCLEAN MEATS. But most important of all, they inculcated the moral conduct emphasized by Jesus Christ—love for God and man, moderation in all things, respect for authority, honor to those in civil offices, etc.

About the year 1600 they compiled and printed a *hymn book of 110 paraphrases of Psalms* and other poetic books of the Bible. Of the 110 songs, 44 relate to the Sabbath, 5 to the new moon, 11 to Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread, 6 to Pentecost, 3 to the Day of Trumpets, 1 to the Day of Atonement, and 6 to the Feast of Tabernacles.

### **Sabbath Books Published in England**

In the 1600's Christian Sabbath keepers commonly came into historical view, and several books were published urging the keeping of the seventh day.

Theophilus Brabourne was one such man; he published books in 1628 and 1632 advocating the true Sabbath. Of him, Cox says (Cox's Literature of the Sabbath Question), "He may be regarded as the founder in England of the sect at first known as Sabbatarians, but now calling themselves Seventh Day Baptists." In actuality they then called themselves the "Church of God!" It wasn't until later that the MAJORITY split off, calling themselves Seventh Day Baptists, while *a small minority continued as the Church of God*.

Another book in defense of the Sabbath was written by James Ockford, and published about 1642. His enemies called him an Anabaptist. At this time, those who called themselves the Church of God were commonly and falsely

called Anabaptists by those outside the Church.

### **The Church of God in England**

By 1668, there were in England, “nine or ten congregations besides numerous scattered believers in other places.” So wrote the famous seventh day minister, Edward Stennett, to *Rhode Island members* not yet organized into a local church. Stennett addressed the Rhode Island members as “the remnant in Rhode Island who *keep the commandments of God* and the testimonies of Jesus” (see Rev. 12:17). The famous Stennett family provided ministers for the Church of God in England for four generations.

Another family that Jesus Christ worked through were the Bampfield brothers—Francis and Thomas. Both of them wrote and published books on the Sabbath, creation, the law of God, etc. And in Francis Bampfield’s book (pages 28, 58, 59, and 60) the name of the Church is “The Church of God” (Dugger and Dodd, *A History of the True Church*, page 241).

Following the 1662 Act of Conformity Francis Bampfield spent much of his remaining life in various jails. He raised up a small Sabbath-keeping congregation within the walls of Dorchester jail. When released, he began to hold meetings in London in his own hired house (much like the apostle Paul in Acts 28:30-31), and he then organized a congregation that continued over a hundred years. When seized again, he soon died in prison. Edward Stennett then became the pastor of this Church.

### **The Church of God in America**

In the final years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Church of God in England began to wane. And “with the 18<sup>th</sup> century, their zeal vanished” (Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, p. 733).

In the meantime, a Church of God congregation is established in America.

In 1664 or 1665, Stephen Mumford was sent from the “Bell Lane” Church of God in London, England, to *Newport, Rhode Island*. For a while he associated with the members of a Sunday Baptist church, and persuaded several of them to embrace his views. After seven years, a seventh day congregation of seven members was raised up from these people. They identified it as (a part of) the “Church of God” (*Seventh-day Baptist Memorial*, page 36, vol. 1).

The Church in Rhode Island became the mother church in the United States. In the very early 1700’s another congregation was added—the *Westerly* (or *Hopkinton*) congregation. This new location became the headquarters church and retained the original records.

Around the same time a number of other congregations were formed (mostly of new converts and immigrants from England), in such places as New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. One of the most important local congregations was founded in *Piscataway, New Jersey*, in 1705. The record of its founding uses the name “the Church of God.”

The connection of this church with the Rhode Island headquarters is clearly demonstrated by the fact that its minister was sent to *Westerly* for ordination (*Seventh-day Baptist Memorial*, vol. 2, number 3, page 121).

At *Shrewsbury, New Jersey*, also, the record plainly speaks of “the Church of God dwelling at Shrewsbury.” Outsiders sometimes spoke of the “Sabbatarian” church of such and such a place. But none of these was the official name. It was simply called “the Church of God.”

## **False Teachers Infiltrate God's Church**

But in the 1700's many of these church members, led by a FALSE TEACHER named *William Davis*, started to adopt many of the false teachings of the Protestant churches around them; such false teachings as the trinity, immortality of the soul, and participating in warfare. Eventually the *vast majority* (like always!) accepted these and many other false Protestant doctrines. Afterwards they changed their name to "*Seventh Day Baptists*." But (like always!) a *few* refused to accept these false teachings and continued as a separate organization, under their organization's original name: "The Church of God."

In the 1800's, God's true Church had spread further west. But once again, FALSE TEACHERS rose up among the brethren. This time the main culprit was a woman, a false prophetess by the name of *Ellen G. White*. By 1860 the VAST MAJORITY (like always!) accepted her distorted teachings and rejected the name "The Church of God," officially adopting the name of *Seventh Day Adventists*. As usual, a FEW faithful members—but only the FEW—of the Church of God did NOT go along!

## **A Remnant Remains Faithful**

When the Adventists organized themselves as a denomination in 1860, the few who did not go along with the *false teachings of Ellen G. White* were mostly from the states of Ohio, Iowa and Missouri. Through the remainder of the century their numbers remained relatively few.

Certain strong families provided the CHURCH OF GOD a tenuous continuity. These came to be located mainly in Missouri, Oklahoma, and Oregon. Some of them even retained a knowledge of God's Holy Days and the identity of modern Israel (recognizing that the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic

people of the world were descendants of the “lost ten tribes of Israel”). Years later they would change their name from the CHURCH OF GOD to the “*Church of God (Seventh-Day)*.”

### **Herbert Armstrong**

In 1927, a man by the name of *Herbert Armstrong* began to associate with one of the Church of God (Seventh-Day) congregations located in Eugene, Oregon. And by 1928 he was writing articles for their newsletter—*The Bible Advocate*. Then in the early 1930’s Armstrong began a RADIO PROGRAM on a small 100-watt radio station in Eugene, Oregon—KORE. The program became known as the *Radio Church of God*. Shortly thereafter, Armstrong began the publication of his own church bulletin, which he called—*The Plain Truth*. Before the decade was out he would separate from the Oregon Church of God and start up his own church group.

By 1942 Armstrong’s RADIO broadcast began to be aired *nationwide* from WHO, a 50,000-watt superstation from Des Moines, Iowa.

In 1946, Armstrong moved his headquarters from Eugene to Pasadena, California. Then the following year he started up his own COLLEGE—*Ambassador College*. In 1953, his radio program, now called *The World Tomorrow*, began to air on Radio Luxembourg, broadcasting throughout much of EUROPE. A few years later he began to broadcast a TELEVISION version of *The World Tomorrow*. “The program would eventually expand to 382 US television stations, and 36 television outlets internationally, dwarfing televangelists Jerry Falwell, Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, and Jim Bakker” (Wikipedia article: Herbert W. Armstrong).

In 1968, the Radio Church of God was renamed the *Worldwide Church of God*. And THE PLAIN TRUTH was now a full-fledged color MAGAZINE, reaching over one million people each month.

Armstrong would go on to publish many books and booklets (not to mention scores of articles) before dying in 1986. At the time of his death, *The Plain Truth* magazine was being published in seven different languages, with a press run of 8 million copies per month.

### **Other Church of God Organizations**

After the death of Herbert Armstrong (please see appendix), the new leaders of the Worldwide Church of God (WWCG) EXCHANGED most of their Bible-based doctrines for the *false* doctrines of mainstream Christianity. And (like always!) the MAJORITY accepted these wholesale *changes* to the truth of God. Of course Christ knew this would occur and WARNED His Church ahead of time: “Some people will abandon the faith in later times; they will obey *lying* spirits and follow the teachings of *demons*” (1 Timothy 4:1; GNT).

But (like always!) a FEW refused to *compromise* with God’s Word. They obeyed the admonition to “fight on for the faith [the “*unchanging* truth,” NLT] which *once and for all* God has given to His people” (Jude 1:3; GNT).

But the Worldwide Church of God wasn’t the only organization to ABANDON the *truth* of God during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Church of God Seventh-Day (in many respects) also “exchanged the *truth* of God for a LIE” (Romans 1:25; NIV).

As a result of God’s truth being trampled upon and discarded (among the Church of God Seventh-Day and the

Worldwide Church of God organizations) many split-off groups developed. Unfortunately, many of these splinter groups ALSO adopted *false* teachings.

But even in the churches of God that have not accepted the false doctrines of mainstream Christianity, serious problems persist. Perhaps the greatest problem of all is *a terrible lack of real zeal and genuine love for the truth of God*.

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are LUKEWARM, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

“Because you say, ‘I am [spiritually] rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do NOT know that you are [spiritually] wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see....

“Therefore be ZEALOUS and REPENT” (Revelation 3:15-18)!

But another serious problem with God’s people today is that many are spiritually DEAD!

“I know your works, that *you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead*. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

“Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and REPENT. Therefore if you will not



watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you” (Revelation 3:1-3).

With that said, we are now up-to-date with the true Church of God, so let’s now return to...

## **Europe**

Napoleon’s reign comes to an end in 1814-15. Afterwards, the Congress of Vienna convenes to redraw the map of Europe and bring stability to the war-exhausted Continent.

## **Papal States**

Italy at this time is divided into numerous INDEPENDENT STATES—and a great deal of the peninsula is dominated by AUSTRIA. But *most of central Italy (including Rome) is under the sovereign rule of the papacy* (called the Papal States)—and has been under the reign of the Catholic Church for some time.

As you may recall, it first started in 754, when Pepin (the father of Charlemagne) gave the pope territory in central Italy (called the “donation of Pepin”)—land that he had captured from the Lombards (a Germanic tribe that controlled the area at that time). As the years passed by the papacy added to these lands, even possessing territories in southern Italy as well as southern France (including the French city of Avignon).

But now things are about to change!

## **Unification of Italy**

Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) leads an army in 1860-1861 that conquers most of Italy. Now, the Papal States (or States of the Church) are seized and annexed to Italy. The

Church's temporal power is shattered! Only ROME remains under Papal sovereignty.

Then in 1870 ROME is also conquered by Italian troops and becomes part of the Kingdom of Italy. Rome officially becomes the CAPITAL of a united Italy on July 2, 1871. *After 1,500 years, Rome is again the capital of Italy!*

But what of the Papacy?

The pope, Pius IX (1846-1878), has been stripped of his temporal power by troops of the Kingdom of Italy. He EX-COMMUNICATES the invaders, declares himself a prisoner in the Vatican and refuses to recognize the new kingdom. His successors, too, will become voluntary prisoners in their own palace. It will be six decades before reconciliation is effected.

### **Iron Chancellor**

During this same time, much of Germany is under the control of Austria. But in the autumn of 1862, Otto von Bismarck becomes prime minister of Prussia.

At the very outset of his premiership, Bismarck stuns the world by declaring to the Ways and Means Committee of the Prussian Diet: *"The great questions of our day cannot be solved by speeches and majority votes, but by BLOOD and IRON."* He is thereafter popularly known as the IRON CHANCELLOR.

### **Second Reich**

In 1866, Prussia goes to war with Austria, thus beginning the Seven Weeks' War. It's an overwhelming Prussian victory. The northern German states are now united under Prussian leadership. BERLIN becomes the capital of this

new Confederation. Four large southern German states though remain independent.

In 1871, the four southern German states decide to unite with the North German Confederation. This new German Empire is called the *Second Reich*. (As you may recall, the First Reich began in 962 AD with the crowning of Otto the Great as Holy Roman Emperor by Pope John XII.) This Second Reich, born in 1871, will live 47 years (until 1918).

### **Triple Alliance**

In 1882, Italy joins a military pact with Germany and Austria-Hungary, forming the *Triple Alliance*. It will remain in force until Italy's defection in 1915.

The ancient ties of Italy and Germany, extending back to the days of Charlemagne and Otto the Great, are re-forged. It is the prelude to an era that will arise more than a half century later under Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini.

### **World War I**

On June 28, 1914, a Serbian in the Balkan town of Sarajevo assassinates Archduke Francis Ferdinand—heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. The great powers are caught in the webs of their alliances. The bloody event triggers World War I. It pits the Central Powers (the German Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria) against the Allied (Entente) Powers (France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, USA, Romania, Japan, Serbia, Belgium, and Greece).

When the guns finally fall silent on November 11, 1918, a staggering 10 million lie dead. And the German Empire (the Second Reich) lies vanquished. Four major *imperial* powers—the German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian

and Ottoman empires—no longer exist. The successor states of the former two lose a great amount of territory, while the latter two are dismantled entirely (Wikipedia article: World War I).

The four brutal, bloody years of conflict leave Europe devastated. Voices around the world proclaim this was “the war to end all wars.” It is a joyous day for the victors.

But for the vanquished, it is a dark and painful time. The victorious Allied nations dictate a peace treaty they will live to regret.

Germany is formally given all blame for the war. She is stripped of all her overseas colonies, demilitarized, and strapped with near impossible restitution payments.

The harsh terms of surrender imposed on defeated Germany will prove to be the seeds of a greater, more horrible war to come.

The abdication of the Kaiser (William II) is announced. Defeated Germany becomes a republic. A new German constitution is adopted at the city of Weimar.

Many German war veterans are embittered by defeat and the humiliations imposed on Germany by the treaty of Versailles. Among them is a young *Gefreiter* (lance corporal) by the name of ADOLF HITLER.

## **II Duce**

Though a victor in the war, Italy gains little from the Treaty of Versailles. Italians complain that they have been robbed of their share of the spoils. A sense of injury and frustration grips the country.

Among the discontented is BENITO MUSSOLINI. Son of a poor blacksmith, Mussolini was born in 1883. An aggressive and ambitious child, he once declared to his startled mother, “One day I shall make the whole earth tremble!”

After the war, Mussolini launches a movement that becomes, in 1921, the Fascist party. Mussolini is *il Duce*—“the Leader”—of the ultranationalist, anti-Communist organization. His followers are mostly jobless, disgruntled war veterans. They adopt the black shirt as their uniform.

The following year Mussolini becomes prime minister of Italy. By degrees, he tightens his grip on the country and transforms his government into a DICTATORSHIP.

### **Mein Kampf**

Meanwhile, in defeated Germany, the son of an obscure Austrian customs official becomes president of one of Germany’s many small parties—the National Socialist German Workers’ Party. He is a frustrated artist named ADOLF HITLER.

Hitler plots to seize power in a coup. In November 1923, he stages the Beer Hall *Putsch* at Munich, an attempt that fails to overthrow the Bavarian government. He is arrested and imprisoned for nine months at Landsberg, where he authors an ignored volume titled *Mein Kampf* (“My Struggle”). It will later become the bible of the NAZI movement.

### **Lateran Treaty**

Back in Italy, on February 11, 1929, the *Lateran Treaty* is signed. It gives the pope full sovereignty and temporal power over the 110-acre VATICAN CITY, now the newest and smallest sovereign country in the world. A separate fi-

nancial agreement compensates the Vatican for its surrender of claims to the old Papal States.

A concordat defines the position of the Church in the Fascist state. It establishes Catholicism as the official religion of Italy.

### **The Third Reich**

It's 1933 and Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

The Weimar Republic is finished. A modern-day interregnum (a “time without an emperor”) has only lasted 14 years.

The Third Reich has begun!

Hitler asks the Reichstag to pass an enabling bill, giving his government FULL DICTATORIAL POWERS for four years. The parliament passes the sweeping legislation, and the *Nazis assume complete control of Germany*. In 1934, the offices of Chancellor and President are merged. Hitler assumes the title of *Fuehrer und Reichskanzler*.

In short order, the German dictator reinvigorates a demoralized country. He strengthens the shattered economy, reduces unemployment and raises the standard of living.

But Hitler's aims far transcend his own country's borders. He is convinced he has a great mission to perform. He feels destined to become ruler of a great Germanic Empire. He holds an unshakable conviction that the Reich will one day rule all of EUROPE—and from there seize the leadership of the entire WORLD! A new order will emerge in the world, with the German “master race” at its head!

Hitler compares himself with Charlemagne, Otto the

Great and Napoleon. From his mountain fortress in Obersalzberg, overlooking Berchtesgaden, the Fuehrer has a panoramic view of the Untersberg. It is in this mountain, as legend has it, that Charlemagne still sleeps, and will one day arise to restore the past glory of the German Empire. "You see the Untersberg over there," Hitler tells visitors in a mystical tone. "It is no accident that I have my residence opposite it."

### **German-Italian Axis**

In 1935, Mussolini invades and conquers ETHIOPIA as the League of Nations weakly stands by.

Next, the Italian dictator turns to Hitler as an ally. In October 1936, the "Berlin-Rome Axis" is formed. Hitler and Il Duce forge an agreement to coordinate their foreign policies. As in the days of Otto the Great, Germany ties its destiny to Italy!

In March 1938, Germany occupies Austria, which is quickly incorporated into the Greater German Reich. In September, Hitler demands and receives the cession of the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia ("my last territorial claim in Europe," he says).

Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain of Britain foolishly and naively yields to Hitler's demands, hoping against hope that concessions to the mad dictator will promote "peace in our time."

In August 1939, Germany and Soviet Russia sign a nonaggression pact, guaranteeing Soviet nonintervention in Hitler's ventures in the West. Hitler's eastern flank is now secure. The stage is set. A catastrophe is about to engulf the world!

## **World War II**

On September 1, 1939, Germany invades Poland. In response, Britain and France declare war on Germany. World War II has begun!

“From late 1939 to early 1941, in a series of campaigns and treaties, Germany conquers or subdues much of continental Europe.... Britain and the [British] Commonwealth remain the only major force continuing the fight against the Axis [Germany, Italy, and Japan]” (Wikipedia article: World War II).

## **The Holocaust**

In the meantime, Hitler’s “final solution” to the “Jewish problem” is in full swing. Hitler’s goal: Exterminate all Jews! Millions of Jews are rounded up and shipped off to concentration camps. Six million (including women and children) will be slaughtered in the Holocaust. Years later, many German soldiers (when questioned about their participation in the brutal massacre) will grumble, “We were just following orders.”

## **Shattered Empires**

At the outset of war, Germany seems invincible. Hitler subjects a whole continent, directly or indirectly, to his power. Not since the days when the Roman Empire was at its height has one man ruled such vast expanses in Europe.

But Hitler’s is a fleeting empire. In 1941, the German dictator makes Napoleon’s disastrous mistake of invading Russia. Operation Barbarossa is a fatal blunder. Then Japan doesn’t act much wiser when it attacks Pearl Harbor, bringing the United States into the conflict. The tide of the war begins to turn.



In the end, the *Fuehrer* and the *Duce* die within days of each other, their dreams of conquest and empire shattered.

Italian partisans execute Mussolini on April 28, 1945. His megalomaniac attempt to restore the Roman Empire ends in ruin. Hitler, it is declared, has committed suicide in his Berlin bunker on April 30, as his “Thousand-year Reich” crashes around him.

The war in Europe is over.

Italy is devastated. Germany lies in ruins. Some observers declare Germany will never rise again. Others say it will take at least 50, maybe even 100 years or more. *Privately, some Germans are thinking that no defeat is final.*

As the victors and vanquished alike pick up the pieces of their shattered and now-divided continent, a centuries-old concept again takes its rise in the minds of Europeans—the ideal of a UNITED STATES OF EUROPE. *Europe slowly sets out on the path toward its final—and most crucial—revival!*

### **Revival, Disaster, Revival, Disaster...**

Europe has hit rock bottom. It has been the pattern of European history: catastrophe, followed by revival, followed by catastrophe.

The war-ravaged Continent slowly begins to pick up the pieces. The suffering and destruction of World War II prompt many to ask how such a catastrophe might be avoided in the future. Many wonder: Is Europe *doomed* to oscillate between order and chaos, between power and ignominy? Or might a new path toward peace and stability be found?

## Age-old Ideal

In a celebrated speech at Zurich, Switzerland, in September 1946, Winston Churchill suggests a possible solution: “We must build a kind of *United States of Europe*. ”

Once again, an age-old ideal resurfaces.

The devastation of two world wars has made the limitations of national sovereignty painfully evident. If Europe’s individual nationalisms could be submerged within the context of European *supra* nationalism, many feel that future continental conflagrations could be averted. If Europe could become *one family* of nations, historic enmities could be put to rest.

The plan has highly significant overtones. For centuries, statesmen have advocated the union of European nations. Now, a fresh movement toward unity arises from the ashes of World War II.

But how to begin?

It is Churchill, among others, who again suggests a course: “The first step in the re-creation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany.”

The reconciliation of these two age-old enemies is widely viewed as the essential cornerstone of peace in postwar Europe. In essence—*the re-creation of the Empire of Charlemagne!*

How, specifically, might this be achieved?

## **First Steps Toward Final Revival**

A scheme is devised to unite France and Germany within a common venture designed to bind their economic destinies so tightly together that another intra-European war could not occur. The result is the *European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)*, created by the Treaty of Paris in April 1951.

The ECSC is an initial step toward European integration. It creates a common transnational authority to pool French and West German iron, coal and steel resources. The project is extended to include Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. It is “declared to be ‘a first step in the *federation* of Europe’ ” (Wikipedia article: European Union).

The signing of the Treaty of Rome on March 25, 1957, creates the *European Economic Community (EEC)*, or Common Market. Its six charter members are the same countries associated in the ECSC.

The EEC’s initial goal is to remove trade and economic barriers between its members and unify their economic policies. *But the ultimate hope is that the organization will be able to bring about the eventual political unification of Europe.* Many hail the EEC as the nucleus of a future “UNITED STATES OF EUROPE”!

## **Mutual Need of Church & State**

Again, Europe has set out on the road to UNITY. Previous pages in this book have shown that the Roman dream of a UNITED EUROPE has permeated the history of the Continent.

Along with the time-honored system of Roman-inspired

government, another pattern has stood out in the panorama of European history: the *intimate relationship of the spiritual with the secular power*.

Throughout the Middle Ages, leaders considered the Church at Rome to be God's chosen instrument in *spiritual* matters. The Holy Roman Empire was regarded as God's chosen *political* organization over Western Christendom. POPE and EMPEROR were regarded as God's vice-regents on earth.

This INTIMATE ALLIANCE of Church and State served the needs of both institutions. The Empire exercised its political and military powers to defend religion and *enforce internal submission* through religious uniformity. The Roman Church, in turn, acted as a glue for Europe, holding together the differing nationalities by the tie of common religion.

Throughout the centuries, the PAPACY and EMPIRE remained closely associated, their need for each other overriding disagreements of lesser importance. The future European Federation (a resurrected "Holy" Roman Empire) will be NO different.

### **The European Union**

In 1993, the EEC or EC (European Community) became the *European Union* (or EU). Today (2012) it is composed of 27 member states, with 17 sharing a common currency (the Euro). Since its inception in 1951, as the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community), it has evolved from a purely economic union to a *political union* as well.

## United States of *Europe* Inevitable

What is transpiring on the Continent today is the refashioning of Europe into a new, yet old, alignment.

As George Bailey, in his perceptive book *Germans*, suggests: “Can we be sure that history has written FINIS to what was perhaps the grandest design ever conceived by man: the HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE?”

A UNITED STATES OF EUROPE is *inevitable*.

But unity is not a condition that nations achieve by some natural and unavoidable tendency. Unity is created or imposed by vigorous human action, by effort and will. *Europe therefore awaits a modern Charlemagne*, another Otto the Great—a champion to RESURRECT the tradition of imperial unity!

The coming *Renovatio imperii Romanorum*—restoration of the Empire of the Romans—will ASTOUND the world! Europe—and the Church of Rome—will again be powers to reckon with.

# Tomorrow & Beyond

**I**N THE YEARS just ahead, several nations of Europe will indeed unite to form a powerful confederation. They will unite economically, politically, and MILITARILY. Today's European Union (EU) almost surely is that prophesied end-time Empire in its embryo stage. "A first step in the *federation* of Europe." But unlike today's union, this final alliance will NOT consist of twenty-seven nations. For the Bible clearly shows that this final configuration will be a coalition of just TEN leaders (governing TEN nations or regions). These TEN rulers will ultimately give up their power and authority to just one man—the ANTICHRIST!

## The Antichrist

In Revelation 13:1 a BEAST is described as having seven heads. But what are these seven heads? "The seven heads of the beast... represent seven kings [or kingdoms]. Five kings have already fallen, *the sixth now reigns* [the Roman Empire—since this was written around 95 A.D.], and the seventh is yet to come, but his reign will be brief" (Rev. 17:9–10 NLT).

So the seven heads of this BEAST depict seven kings or kingdoms. The sixth head portrays the Roman Empire, while the first five heads represent empires that preceded the Roman Empire (the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and the Greco-Macedonian Empires)—which we discussed earlier in this book.

But what about the seventh head—the one that is “yet to come”—what does it depict? This seventh head represents the LEADER of a revived end-time Roman Empire—that is—it represents the ANTICHRIST! And “all who dwell on the earth will worship him...” (Rev. 13:8).

### **Ten Rulers of the “Holy” Roman Empire**

This BEAST of Revelation 13 is also described as having *ten* horns. But what are these ten horns? “The ten horns [of the *end-time* BEAST] which you saw are TEN kings who have received no kingdom as *yet*, but they receive authority for one hour [a brief period of time; just a few years] as kings *with* the BEAST [an end-time political leader]. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the BEAST [i.e. the Antichrist!]” (Revelation 17:12-13).

So the ten horns of the END-TIME BEAST represent *ten political leaders who will eventually turn over their power and authority to the Antichrist*. These ten leaders will rule over ten European nations (or regions). This then will be a FINAL REVIVAL OF THE “HOLY” ROMAN EMPIRE!

### **The Beast & the 7-Year Treaty**

At first the BEAST (i.e. the Antichrist) will appear wonderful. He will promote peace and the world will prosper at his hands (Revelation 18). He will even broker a 7-YEAR DEAL with Israel (and others) that will allow the Jews to

once again *sacrifice animals* at their Temple (Daniel 9:24-27; appendix). This treaty (almost surely) will also result in bringing PEACE to the Middle East.

But the BEAST will be extremely sly, cunning, treacherous, and deceitful (Daniel 8:23-25). He will dupe many with his flattery (Daniel 11:32). And he shall be empowered by *Satan!* (Revelation 13:2-4.) He shall also have a great miracle-working spiritual partner—"the FALSE PROPHET"—working with him side-by-side (Revelation 13:11-15, 16:13). Both shall be greatly influenced by DEMONS—if not even completely *possessed* by demons or the DEVIL! (Revelation 18:2, 16:13-14, 13:4.)

### **The Great Betrayal**

In the middle of the 7-year agreement that the Antichrist makes with Israel he will double-cross the Jews. He will suddenly dispatch his army to put an end to the animal sacrifices. He will then proceed to *annihilate* the Jews. And those who are not savagely butchered will be shipped off as *slaves!* The HOLOCAUST will have returned! (Daniel 9:24-27; Luke 21:20-24; appendix.)

*It should all go something like this...*

### **Europe's New Leader**

It is 2020, and the UNITED STATES OF EUROPE (a political alliance of TEN European nations) is the most powerful nation on earth. Recently, the rulers of these ten nations/regions turned over all of their power and authority to just one man—ROMAN Augustus. Europe's new leader has been given *absolute power* to rule as he sees fit. He is an incredibly brilliant man—an absolute genius! He has virtually single-handedly restored the world's economies after its collapse and meltdown just a few years ago.



As a result of Roman's innovative solutions to Europe's (and the world's) financial woes, Europe is now the economic king of the world! But Europe is not the only one to benefit from his ingenuity, as just about every nation on earth is now prospering and is no longer in financial ruin (Revelation 18:3).

The entire world is mesmerized by Roman's brilliance, charm, and charisma. Some have even begun to think of him as some sort of demigod (Daniel 11:36-37.)

### **Seven-Year Pact**

It is now September 2020. Caesar Roman Augustus, Europe's miracle-working leader, has just brokered a deal with Israel and the nations of the Middle East. It's a SEVEN-YEAR TREATY that finally brings peace to the war-weary region. All nations are ecstatic. It's almost too good to be true. But it is true!

Roman is revered and idolized. Some are beginning to wonder if he is the long-awaited Messiah of Judaism, or the Mahdi of Islam, or even the Christ of Christianity. Many ask, "Could he possibly be the Savior of the world that we have been waiting for?"

### **Animal Sacrifices Restored**

An integral part of the seven-year treaty that Roman orchestrates allows the Jews in Israel to reinstitute *animal sacrifices* at their newly built Temple—something that hasn't been done since 70 AD! (Daniel 9:27; appendix.)

### **Amazing Miracles**

Not too long afterwards, the Emperor stuns the world by doing all kinds of "miracles, signs and wonders!" (2 Thessalonians 2:9; NIV.) But he's not the only one! Ro-

man's closest partner and chief ally—Pope Sixtus VI, the recently appointed bishop of Rome, is also doing astonishing miracles! “He performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven!” (Revelation 13:13; NIV.)

Pope Sixtus next has a statue made of the great Emperor. And to everyone's amazement the statue is able to talk! (Revelation 13:15.)

### **Mysterious Event**

[It is Monday, February 5, 2024. Something dramatic occurs on this day (Daniel 12:12). But what exactly that event is—is not clear at this time. Perhaps it has something to do with God's true Church escaping from persecution (Revelation 12:14-16). I will be discussing this particular event in more detail later.]

### **Animal Sacrifices Stopped**

It is Thursday, March 21, 2024. The animal sacrifices have been going on in Jerusalem for 3½ years now. But suddenly, Caesar Roman Augustus orders his army to march into Jerusalem, go to the Temple, and stop the sacrifices! (Daniel 12:11.)

### **Abomination of Desolation**

At the same time that the sacrifices are halted, the statue of Roman (that the pope had commissioned) is then set up in the Temple—for everyone to admire and worship! (Daniel 12:11.) And to everyone's astonishment “the statue commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die” (Revelation 13:15; NLT)!

## New World Order

Meanwhile, the Emperor's new world order, which involves an innovative worldwide trading system—is going exceedingly well. And just about every merchant in the world is quickly becoming rich! (Revelation 18:3.)

### Mark of the Beast: 666 & Roman

It is Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024. Pope Sixtus is about to go on the Catholic International Television Station VIVIVI—where the whole world is eagerly awaiting his message. He then stuns the world in the middle of the live broadcast by declaring: “Our most holy Leader, Caesar Roman Augustus *is* the long-anticipated Messiah (of the Jews), the Mahdi (of the Muslims), and the Christ (of the Christians)! That is—he’s the long-awaited SAVIOR of *all* religions, creeds, and faiths. He is the King of kings! And he is God!” Then he exclaims, “Bow down and worship him!”

The pope then goes on to proclaim: “Everyone is now required to MARK their body—either on their right hand or forehead—with the NAME of our beloved Leader. Or if you like, you can have tattooed on your body ‘666’ instead!” Then he adds: “And any *heretic* who refuses to comply with this directive will no longer be able to buy or sell!” (See Revelation 13:16-18 & appendix.)

But there is one “small” catch to this new regulation. When someone receives the mark of “Roman” or “666” on their body, they are in essence pledging their allegiance to the Emperor and all that he stands for. That is, they are worshiping Roman and his (spiritual) father—Satan (the god of this world)! And they are also worshiping the high priest of Satan’s church—Pope Sixtus VI! (2 Corinthians 4:4; John 8:44; Revelation 17)

Just like the *false* trinity doctrine, everyone now has three gods to worship: the god of this world—Satan; the son of Satan (or the son of “god”)—Roman; and the high priest of Satan (or the high priest of “god”)—Sixtus!

### **Severe Penalty For All Who Worship The Beast & His Image, Or Accept His Mark**

But what does the *real* GOD of the universe have to say about these arrogant *counterfeits*? “Then a third angel followed them, shouting, ‘Anyone who worships the BEAST and his STATUE or who *accepts* his MARK on the forehead or the hand must drink the wine of God’s wrath. It is poured out undiluted into God’s cup of wrath. And they will be TORMENTED with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the BEAST and his STATUE and have *accepted* the MARK of his NAME!’ ” (Revelation 14:9-11; NLT.)

### **The Deadly Wound**

It is Good Friday, March 29, 2024. Caesar Roman Augustus is sitting in the Temple of God in Jerusalem, proclaiming that he is God! (2 Thessalonians 2:4.) Suddenly a shot rings out, and before anyone can react, Roman is lying on the ground in a puddle of blood! He is rushed to the hospital but it’s too late. He is dead on arrival!

The whole world is in shock! How could this happen! Who is responsible? What can be done?

### **Stranger Than Fiction**

It is Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024—just minutes before sunrise. Less than two days have passed since the assassination of Roman Augustus. The entire world is in

mourning. His dead body has been placed in an open coffin. Thousands have paid their last respects.

Then as the sun begins to rise over the horizon, something unbelievable occurs. Roman Augustus comes back to life! Everyone is stunned! It is quickly announced over radio and television as well as every other news outlet throughout the globe. Upon hearing the staggering news, millions take to the streets, chanting: “The Emperor is alive! He is God! The Emperor is alive! He is God!” (Revelation 13:3, 13:14, 17:8; Acts 19:28 & 34; especially NLT.)

The resurrection of Roman is utterly mind-boggling! The world is in awe! No one can believe it! But how has it happened? Many exclaim, “He *must be* God!”

“The *fatal* wound has been healed! All the world marvels at this miracle and follows the BEAST in awe. They worship the DRAGON [*Satan!*] for giving the BEAST such power, and they worship the BEAST. ‘Is there anyone as great as the BEAST?’ they exclaim. ‘Who is able to fight against him?’ ” (Revelation 13:3-4; NLT; see also Revelation 17:8.)

“And he [the BEAST—the ANTICHRIST—ROMAN] was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have NOT been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb” (Revelation 13:5-8).

## Protection

Though much of the world is duped, those who are wholeheartedly obeying the *real* God are NOT deceived. These are the *true* Christians of the world who passionately keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12). As a result, God allows them to *escape* to a place of safety, a place where they are protected from the Devil and his cohorts. But as they flee, Satan sends an army (“flood”) after them—but to no avail—for the earth opens up and swallows them alive! (Revelation 3:10, 12:14-16; Matthew 24:20-21.)

About 12,000 Christians (though perhaps as many as 144,000) are “counted worthy to escape” (Luke 21:36; Revelation 7:3-8).

## Persecution

However, many Christians do NOT escape. Because they are NOT zealously following God they have to suffer in the Great Tribulation. The Devil then pursues and persecutes them through the hands of the BEAST and the FALSE PROPHET! (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 3:14-22, 12:17, 6:9-11, 7:9-14, 13:7, 13:10; Daniel 7:25)

## King of the South & King of the North

Around this same time, the king of the south (a confederacy led by EGYPT) attacks the king of the north (the European Union). But EUROPE (*led by Germany*) strikes back with a devastating blow. Many countries fall—including Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia! Judah (modern-day “Israel”) is also attacked and conquered! Their wealth is plundered (Daniel 11:40-43). Jerusalem is destroyed. Homes and business are ransacked. Women are raped. Jews are rounded up and annihilated. And those who survive the onslaught are shipped off to foreign nations as *slaves* (Luke

21:20-24; Daniel 9:26-27; Zechariah 14:2; appendix).

But the BEAST doesn't stop there! He then goes on a blitzkrieg campaign conquering many other nations as well—including US!

### **“Israel” AND Judah Suffer Terribly**

“This is the message the LORD gave concerning *Israel* AND *Judah*: ‘This is what the LORD says: I have heard the people crying; there is only fear and trembling. Now let Me ask you a question: Do men give birth to babies? Then why do they stand there, ashen-faced, hands pressed against their sides like women about to give birth? In all history THERE HAS NEVER BEEN SUCH A TIME OF TERROR. It will be *a time of trouble for my people Israel*’ ” (Jeremiah 30:4-7; NLT).

As the prophet Jeremiah makes clear, it is a time of horrible suffering for “Israel.” This includes **BOTH** *Judah* (the small nation in the Middle East that calls itself “Israel” today—i.e. the Jews) **AS WELL AS** the modern descendants of *Israel*—the USA, England, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada! It also includes the *other* modern descendants of Israel (such as Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Denmark, Iceland, etc.) as pointed out elsewhere in this book.

### **Germany Leads the Attack**

But, who would dare to attack America? GERMANY! Germany *leads* a military invasion (with its European allies)—obliterating America and England! Other descendants of ancient Israel are also conquered! (Remember, as explained previously in this book, the ASSYRIANS migrated into Europe from Asia many centuries ago—they are the GERMAN people of today!)

“ASSYRIAN, the rod of My anger, in whose hand is the club of My wrath! (Isaiah 10:5; NIV.) Or as the GNT renders this verse: The Lord said, “ASSYRIA! I use *Assyria* [modern-day *Germany*!] like a club to punish those with whom I am angry.” And God is plenty angry with US!

### **Appalling Sins of America & England**

God uses the modern-day descendants of Assyria (Germany!) to punish America and England for our countless and atrocious sins! We condone and arrogantly boast of our “tolerance” and “acceptance” of such appalling evils as homosexuality, abortion, evolution, etc. We brashly assume we can do whatever we like without any fear of retribution from God! We defiantly think we can decide for ourselves what is right and what is wrong—and what is good and what is evil (the whole time thumbing our noses at God)!

We don’t seem to realize that *only* our CREATOR has the WISDOM, LOVE, and the AUTHORITY to determine what is right and what is wrong. He allows us to *choose* between *doing* good or evil, but He has NOT given us the authority to determine what constitutes good and evil. Only He has that prerogative.

For example, take homosexuality. Many people today think that homosexuality is perfectly fine—that it’s just an alternative life style. And yet the One who *created sex* clearly condemns it as a disgusting, vile perversion (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:24-28; Jude 1:7; 2 Peter 2:6; Revelation 21:8). But we don’t want to listen to our Creator, to the One who created sex. We think that we know better than Him—that we can figure it out on our own. We arrogantly assume that if we think homosexuality is okay—that it *must* be okay—that our Creator must be wrong—that He doesn’t know what He is talking about!



We aren't much different than Adam and Eve. They rejected what their Creator had told them and decided to determine on their own what they felt was right and wrong, and what was good and evil. Therefore they took of the forbidden fruit—defiantly disobeying their Creator—the whole time listening to Satan and doing what he told them to do. From that moment on, the human race was headed down the wrong track—racing down the path leading to misery, suffering, anguish, frustration, pain, and ultimately death.

And we are no different today. Satan is our god, just as he was for Adam and Eve. And until we realize this and wholeheartedly and thoroughly repent of our wrong thoughts, words, and actions, and repent of following Satan (the one who hates and despises us and only wants to see us suffer and die), and then start obeying and loving the One who created us, the One who loves us, the One who only wants what is best for us—then and only then will we truly have the things we want: peace, happiness, and love—and ultimately eternal life.

### **Millions of “Israelites” Perish**

Therefore, God chastises us for all of our awful sins—our lies, deceptions, dishonesty, insincerity, selfishness, greed, lust, adulteries, sexual perversions, pornography, vanity, arrogance, haughtiness, drunkenness, drugs, astrology, racism, hatred, cruelty, violence, rapes, robberies, murders, etc.

We are also corrected for our idolatry, and the worship of Satan and his demons in our pagan religious observances, rituals, and traditions!

As a result, a *third* of our inhabitants die by DISEASE and FAMINE! Another third of our people are SLAUGHTERED

by the sword! And the final third are sent away into SLAVERY (with many of these also perishing)! (Ezekiel 5:12; Luke 21:24.) Hundreds of *millions* of our people wiped out!

### **Great Tribulation**

“For then there will be GREAT TRIBULATION. For the trouble at that time will be *far more terrible than any there has ever been*, from the beginning of the world to this very day. Nor will there ever be anything like it again. But God has already reduced the number of days; had He not done so, NOBODY WOULD SURVIVE. For the sake of His chosen people, however, God will reduce the days” (Matthew 24:21; NKJV; Matthew 24:21-22; GNT; see also Daniel 12:1).

As Matthew points out, things will eventually get so bad that if God doesn’t quickly intervene (by returning Jesus Christ) to put an end to the carnage, no human being would survive! Every man, woman and child on planet Earth would ultimately be exterminated in the bloodbath (including you and me)!

### **Two Witnesses Prophecy 1,260 Days**

During this time there are two servants of God (called the two witnesses and the two prophets) whom God raises up to warn and prophesy to the earth’s inhabitants, and to punish mankind for their sins (Revelation 11:3-6). They begin their mission about four weeks after the sacrifices are halted and the statue of the BEAST is set up at the temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 12:11; Revelation 11:3).

These two servants of God are *hated* by the world. Why? Because they tell earth’s inhabitants that their ways are evil. And the world *despises* those who testify against it. That’s why Christ was hated. Jesus said, “The world...

HATES Me, because I keep telling it how WICKED its ways are.” And Jesus also stated, “You will be hated by all for My name’s sake” (John 7:7–CJB; Mark 13:13–NKJV).

God’s two prophets are then given tremendous power! “And I will give POWER to My two witnesses, and they will prophesy 1,260 days.... And if anyone wants to harm them, *fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies*. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

“These have POWER to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have POWER over waters to turn them to blood, and to *strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire*” (Revelation 11:3-6).

### **End-Time Elijah**

Also during the end-time, a servant of God appears who comes in the power and spirit of the Old Testament prophet ELIJAH—just as John the Baptist did before Christ’s first coming. And just as John prepared the way before Jesus’ first appearance on this earth, this *end-time Elijah* prepares the way before Jesus’ second coming. This prophet of God also “restores all things.”

“And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, *Elijah is coming first and will restore all things*’ ” (Matthew 17:10-11; NKJV). (See also: Malachi 3:1-3, 4:5-6; Isaiah 40:3-5; Mark 9:11-12; Luke 1:11-17; 1 Kings 18:36-37.)

Is this end-time Elijah then one of the two witnesses? Almost surely!

## Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

In the sixth chapter of Revelation four horsemen are described. These four horses and their dreadful riders are often referred to as “the four horsemen of the apocalypse.” One horse is white (representing religious deception), another horse is red (portraying war), the third horse is black (depicting famine), and the last horse is pale green (symbolizing disease). These four riders NOW have the opportunity to ravage the earth. And once they finish their ride *one fourth of humanity lies dead*—about 2 BILLION people erased from the planet! (Revelation 6:8.)

## A Great Multitude Martyred

During this time a “GREAT MULTITUDE that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language” *repents* and turns to God. But unfortunately they die as martyrs for the Word of God (Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17).

But in the end God will comfort them, and they will be rewarded with eternal life for their faithfulness! At that time “they shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb [Jesus] who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters [eternal life]. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:16-17; NKJV).

## Heavenly Signs

Then “there was a *great earthquake*. The SUN became as dark as BLACK cloth, and the MOON became as red as BLOOD. Then the STARS of the sky FELL to the earth like green figs falling from trees shaken by mighty winds. And the sky was rolled up like a scroll and taken away. And all of the mountains and all of the islands disappeared. Then the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the wealthy

people, the people with great power, and every slave and every free person—all hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne and from *the wrath of the Lamb*. For the great day of THEIR wrath has come, and who will be able to survive?’ ” (Revelation 6:12-17; NLT.)

These *heavenly signs* announce the end of Satan’s persecution upon mankind and the beginning of *God’s wrath* on an unrepentant and rebellious world! This period of time is referred to in the Bible as the “Day of the Lord.”

### **Day of Trumpets = Day of the Lord**

It is Tuesday, October 13, 2026. Today is the “DAY OF TRUMPETS,” the fourth *annual holy day* in God’s master plan. This holy day depicts the DAY OF THE LORD, the day when God intervenes in human affairs to punish mankind for its appalling sins.

As mentioned earlier in this book, ALL of God’s holy days have *important meaning and detail God’s plan of salvation for mankind*. There are three annual celebrations that take place each year *prior to* this fourth holy day (the Day of Trumpets). They are: Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost. Let’s quickly review their meaning.

### **Passover & Days of Unleavened Bread**

As discussed previously, the *first* annual observance every year is PASSOVER (or Lord’s Supper). This day is a *memorial of the death of Jesus*, the Lamb of God, who was sacrificed for the SINS of mankind.

Immediately following Passover are the DAYS OF UN-

LEAVENED BREAD. This celebration picture's the *removal of sin* from one's life (as leaven depicts sin during the seven days of unleavened bread).

### **Pentecost**

Next in God's master plan is PENTECOST. On this day in 32 AD, Christ first gave His Holy Spirit to His followers. Therefore, this day represents the *receiving of God's Holy Spirit* so that a Christian can understand God's truth and be empowered to obey that truth. This day also represents those called in this age (prior to Christ's return) as a kind of *firstfruits* to God (James 1:18; Revelation 14:4; Romans 8:23; Leviticus 23:17, 20).

So how does someone *receive* God's Holy Spirit? A person receives God's Holy Spirit when they accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, truly repent of their sins, and then are properly baptized. At this point their past sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38). And if they endure until the end of their life, overcoming sin and being led by God's Spirit, they will be resurrected at the return of Jesus, at which time they will be given a wonderful, glorious, eternal body, and be part of God's very own Family as a *literal* son or daughter of GOD! (Matthew 24:13; Revelation 21:7; Acts 8:14; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58.)

### **Day of Trumpets *Pictures* Day of the Lord**

As noted above, the fourth annual observance every year is the DAY OF TRUMPETS. This day represents the *future* time period when God intervenes in the affairs of mankind (called the DAY OF THE LORD). Each year this annual holy day is kept in anticipation of that future time when God intervenes in world affairs. But that future time has NOW arrived—for *today* BEGINS the Day of the Lord!

This “Day” of the Lord actually lasts ONE YEAR—“for it is the *day* of the Lord’s vengeance; the *year* of recompense for the cause of Zion” (Isaiah 34:8). And it is portrayed by SEVEN TRUMPETS—hence its name—the Day of *Trumpets*.

“The great *day of the Lord* is near.... That day is a *day [or year] of wrath*, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation.... A day of TRUMPET and alarm against the fortified cities... I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have SINNED against the Lord. Their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse” (Zephaniah 1:14-17).

### **144,000 Protected**

But first, before God exacts His punishment upon a defiant, arrogant, and rebellious humanity, He first MARKS those on earth who have repented of their sins and are keeping His commandments. These are those who “sigh and cry over all the abominations” that occur on this planet (Ezekiel 9:4-6). And even though thousands may be killed all around them, no harm shall befall them! (Psalm 91:7, 10.)

All together 144,000 people are *marked* or SEALED by God so that they can be PROTECTED from His punishment. These individuals who are protected and spared from the *Day of the Lord* are “servants of God”—converted, faithful, genuine Christians who have NOT worshiped the BEAST, his image, or received his mark (Revelation 7:1-4, 9:3-4, 14:1-5).

Immediately after sealing the 144,000, the Day of the Lord begins!

## **Day of the Lord = Seven Trumpets**

“When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence throughout heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the SEVEN ANGELS who stand before God, and they were given *seven trumpets*” (Revelation 8:1-2; NLT).

“Then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow their mighty blasts” (Revelation 8:6; NLT).

### **First Trumpet**

All green grass is burned up and one third of all trees incinerated (Revelation 8:7).

### **Second Trumpet**

One third of the sea turns to blood, one third of the fish die, and one third of the ships destroyed (Revelation 8:8-9).

### **Third Trumpet**

One third of the rivers and springs become poisonous (Revelation 8:10-11).

### **Fourth Trumpet**

One third of the sun, moon, and stars become very dark—so dark that a third of the day and night is without light (Revelation 8:12).

### **Fifth Trumpet**

Smoke, like the smoke of a great furnace, comes upon the earth, resulting in the sun and the air becoming darkened. And out of the smoke locusts come upon the earth. These locusts have power as scorpions and they harm those people who do NOT have the seal of God on their forehead (Rev. 9:1-4).



All humanity is then tormented—except for the 144,000—who are supernaturally protected. These locusts do NOT kill mankind but only inflict great suffering (like the pain of a scorpion) for *five months*. The agony will be so bad that men will long to die! (Revelation 9:5-6.)

“And the shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle... and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle”—perhaps modern-day war planes and helicopters (Revelation 9:7-10).

### Sixth Trumpet

Now (with the sixth trumpet) we return to the “Holy” Roman Empire.

After destroying many nations, the European BEAST power is frightened, for news from the *east* and the *north* alarm’s him (Daniel 11:44). Yes, terrifying news! For an *enormous army* from NORTHERN & EASTERN ASIA (Russia, China, India, Japan, etc.) is gathering together—preparing to attack! Upon hearing the news the BEAST becomes furious! And he goes “out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many” (Daniel 11:44; NIV).

TWO HUNDRED MILLION SOLDIERS then go to war! As a result of this battle *one third* of mankind is killed—roughly 2 billion people slaughtered! (Revelation 9:13-18.)

*“But the rest of mankind, who were not killed... did NOT repent of their works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk, and they did NOT repent of their murders or their sorceries [margin: drugs] or their sexual immorality or their thefts”* (Revelation 9:20-21).

Six trumpets have now been blown. One remains. But before it sounds, let's check up on...

### **The Two Witnesses**

The two witnesses have been proclaiming the word of God to the world for about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  *years* now, and they have just finished their testimony. But suddenly, the BEAST attacks them, overcomes them, and kills them! (Revelation 11:7.)

“Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations see their dead bodies for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  *days*, but do not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth rejoice over them, *make merry, and send gifts to one another*, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth” (Revelation 11:9-10).

But after lying dead for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  days God brings the two witnesses BACK TO LIFE! Then *great fear* enters those watching!

The two witnesses then stand on their feet and ascend to heaven in a cloud. Afterwards, there is a tremendous earthquake—resulting in the death of seven thousand people (Revelation 11:11-13).

### **Seventh Trumpet**

It is now Saturday, October 2, 2027. Many people have been killed since the first trumpet sounded one year ago. Once again it is the Day of Trumpets (God's fourth annual holy day). And *the seventh and final trumpet is about to be blown!*

TODAY is the day that ALL of God's people throughout the ages have *long waited for*, including: Abel, Enoch,

Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Moses, David, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; as well as the rest of God's people from the Old Testament; also John the Baptist, Mary (Jesus' mother), Mary Magdalena, Martha, Peter, John, Paul, James, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Jude, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Timothy, Titus, Polycarp, Polycrates, and all true Christians (including those alive today). All of these have *deeply yearned for this day!* For this last and final trumpet pictures THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAINTS!!

### **The Return of Jesus Christ! & The Resurrection of the Saints!**

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall... all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trumpet*. For the trumpet will sound, and the DEAD WILL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on IMMORTALITY” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53; NKJV).

“For the *LORD Himself will descend* from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the [last] TRUMPET of God. And *the dead in Christ will rise first*. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the LORD in the air.... “ (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; NKJV).

“Then the *seventh* angel [with the seventh trumpet] sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST, and *He shall reign forever and ever!*’” (Revelation 11:15; NKJV).

“And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded

for their testimony about Jesus, for proclaiming the word of God. And I saw the souls of those who had not worshiped the BEAST or his STATUE, nor accepted his MARK on their forehead or their hands. *They came to life again, and they reigned with Christ*" (Revelation 20:4; NLT).

After meeting Christ in the air, God's sons and daughters then descend with Jesus upon the Mount of Olives (a mountain ridge just east of Jerusalem)—Zechariah 14:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

### **Near Annihilation**

As Jesus and the resurrected saints descend upon the Mount of Olives, the European and Asian powers are engaged in a monstrous battle. As they fight for world supremacy, the world lies on the *brink* of utter destruction—the complete and total obliteration of the human race!

If the enormous power of the world's armies were actually unleashed, Satan's goal of erasing all life from this planet would become reality! But Christ steps in to put an end to the barrage of destruction that is occurring on earth—just before mankind is exterminated and blown into total oblivion! (Matthew 24:22.)

But are we thankful to God and do we receive Christ with open arms of appreciation, and REPENT of our foolish behavior? On the contrary! We do just the opposite! The military forces of the world stop fighting each other and instead *join in unison to war against Jesus Christ!* (Rev. 19:11-19.)

### **Final Seven Plagues**

At this time Jesus unleashes His final seven plagues upon a corrupt and evil world.

### **First Plague**

Foul and loathsome SORES come upon all those who have the MARK of the BEAST and those who worship his IMAGE (Revelation 16:2).

### **Second Plague**

The SEA turns to BLOOD and all sea creatures die (Revelation 16:3).

### **Third Plague**

*Rivers, streams, and springs turn to blood* (Revelation 16:4). Why would God do this? “You are righteous O Lord... because you have judged these things. For they have shed the BLOOD of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due” (Revelation 16:5-6).

### **Fourth Plague**

The sun scorches man with INTENSE HEAT. But *man still refuses to repent!* Instead he blasphemes the name of God (Revelation 16:8-9).

### **Fifth Plague**

The BEAST’S kingdom becomes full of DARKNESS, and humanity suffers FIERCE PAIN, *yet they still refuse to repent* of their wicked deeds! (Revelation 16:10-11.)

### **Sixth Plague**

The Euphrates River dries up to allow the armies of the world to gather together for *the battle of that great day of God Almighty* (Revelation 16:12-14). “And they [demons] gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, ARMAGEDDON” (Revelation 16:16).

## **Seventh Plague**

A mammoth earthquake occurs, cities fall, islands and mountains vanish, and huge HAILSTONES (weighing about 100 pounds each) fall to the earth! (Revelation 16:18-21.)

### **Battle of that Great Day of God Almighty**

Demons then gather the armies of the world together at ARMAGEDDON, as they prepare to attack Jesus Christ! (Revelation 16:14, 16.)

“Armageddon” literally means Mount Megiddo, a place about fifty miles north of Jerusalem. But no battle will be fought there. It will just be the place to get organized, to muster the troops together. From this staging area then they march south towards Jerusalem to *confront* the Son of God!

The troops of the world’s armies then stop in the valley of JEHOSHAPHAT (Joel 3:9-14). This deep valley or ravine borders Jerusalem on the east, between the city and the Mount of Olives. Today it is more commonly known as the KIDRON VALLEY.

Jehoshaphat means “judgment of the Eternal.” God will judge the rebellious and unrepentant nations of the world there for their disobedience and wicked ways!

The world’s armies then attack! But to NO AVAIL— for they are instantly liquidated—and the birds of the earth then feast on their corpses! (Revelation 19:17-21.)

“Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths”! (Zechariah 14:12; NKJV.)

Their shed blood then stretches for two hundred miles and is about five feet deep! (Revelation 14:20.)

### **Beast & False Prophet Punished**

Jesus then captures ROMAN AUGUSTUS (i.e. the *Beast*—the *Antichrist*) and POPE SIXTUS VI (i.e. the *false prophet*) and throws them both into the lake of fire! (Revelation 19:20.)

### **Satan Bound for 1,000 Years**

It is Monday, October 11, 2027. Today is the DAY OF ATONEMENT, the *fifth annual holy day* of the year. This holy day PICTURES the Devil being put away, where he can no longer influence and deceive mankind (Leviticus 16:10).

The meaning of this day is about to be fulfilled!

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the DRAGON, that SERPENT of old, who is the DEVIL and SATAN, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (Revelation 20:1-3; NKJV).

### **The Wedding Feast**

It is Tuesday, October 12, 2027. The marriage of Christ with His bride—the true saints of God—is about to begin!

“Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a huge crowd, or the roar of mighty ocean waves, or the crash of loud thunder: ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice and honor

Him. For the time has come for *the wedding feast of the Lamb*, and His bride has prepared herself. She is permitted to wear the finest white linen.’ (Fine linen represents the good deeds done by the people of God.) And the angel said, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.’ And he added, ‘These are true words that come from God’ ” (Revelation 19:6-9; NLT).

The wedding feast then continues in heaven for four days.

### **Millennial Reign of Christ Begins**

It is now Saturday, October 16, 2027. Jesus and the immortal children of God (the bride of Christ) have just returned to Earth. Today marks the *sixth annual holy day* of the year, the FEAST OF TABERNACLES. For the next EIGHT DAYS Jesus and the resurrected saints will celebrate this joyous festival (as well as the *Last Great Day—the seventh and final holy day*) with the inhabitants of the earth.

But what is the meaning of the *Feast of Tabernacles*? It pictures (just like the seventh-day Sabbath day) the seventh millennium, the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ—which has just begun!

But what does the *Last Great Day* (the seventh & final holy day) depict? It represents the Great White Throne Judgment, an event that takes place AFTER the millennial reign of Christ. (More on this holy day later.)

*For now, let’s quickly recap the extraordinary events that have occurred during these last few weeks.*

### **Remarkable Events of the Last 3 Weeks**

Jesus returned on the *Day of Trumpets*—the 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF



THE SEVENTH MONTH of the Biblical calendar—and the saints were resurrected back to life. The last seven plagues of Christ then began on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of this month and ended nine days later. Jesus defeated the armies of the world during this time, and the beast and false prophet were thrown into the lake of fire.

Then on the 10<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH—on the *Day of Atonement*—Satan the Devil was cast into the bottomless pit (where he will remain for 1,000 years).

Then from the 11<sup>th</sup> day until the 15<sup>th</sup> day, the wedding feast of Jesus (with His bride) took place in heaven.

Next, Christ and the saints returned to earth on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month. Then for the next eight days THEY celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day with the inhabitants of the earth.

The millennial reign of Jesus Christ has officially begun!

### **1,000-Year Reign of Jesus**

For the next 1,000 years Jesus Christ will reign on *earth* as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16, 20:4). And ruling with Him on earth as kings and priests during this 1,000-year period will be the saints of God (Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 20:4-6).

As explained previously, the true saints of God who are resurrected at the return of Jesus are no longer mortal, flesh and blood human beings. Instead they are immortal, incorruptible spirit beings—born into God’s very own Family—as His *literal* sons and daughters! (1 Corinthians 15:50-54; Daniel 7:22; John 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 8:16-19, 21:7; John 1:12-13.)

God's immortal and glorified children then help Jesus in ruling over all those mortal, flesh and blood human beings who have survived the terrible events of the last few years (Revelation 2:26-27, 3:21).

And during the millennial reign of Christ, Satan will no longer be around to deceive and influence mankind (Revelation 20:1-3). Also, all of the modern-day descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel who have survived their captivity (as slaves in foreign countries) will be led back to the Promised Land! (Jeremiah 23:3-8, 50:4-5; Ezekiel 20:34-43, 36:24-28.)

With Satan removed and with Jesus ruling all nations in righteousness, the world quickly bursts into a haven of joy, peace, and prosperity! (Isa. 11:1-5.) The nations then turn their military weapons into farming equipment, for they will no longer have any use for such destructive instruments (Isa. 2:4). God even changes the behavior of wild beasts from fierce meat-eaters to gentle eaters of straw (Isa. 11:6-9).

It's a magnificent utopia—for God's laws and way of life are taught, administered, and upheld! (Isa. 2:2-3, 30:21). All nations are now celebrating the true Sabbath day as well as God's annual holy days (Zech. 14:16-19). This is all made possible because *God has given mankind a new Spirit—His Holy Spirit—that enables men and women everywhere to finally obey God, and to live in peace and harmony with their fellowman!*

### **New Heart & New Spirit**

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness [see Gal. 5:19-22] and from all your idols. I will give you a NEW HEART and put a NEW SPIRIT within you; I will take the

heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. *I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them*" (Ezek. 36:25- 27).

"Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; HE WILL TEACH US HIS WAYS, AND WE SHALL WALK IN HIS PATHS.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall rebuke many people; *they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore*" (Isaiah 2:2-4).

### **Ferocious Animals No Longer Dangerous**

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb. The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the fatling together; and *a little child shall lead them*. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea*. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse [Jesus Christ], who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:6-10).

### **Everyone & Everything Healed**

"The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing... Then the eyes of the *blind* shall be opened, and

the ears of the *deaf* shall be unstopped. Then the *lame* shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the *dumb* sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, there shall be grass with reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.... And the ransomed of the Lord [the twelve tribes of Israel] shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness. And sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah 35:1-10).

### **Prosperity for All**

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine. And all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them,” says the Lord your God” (Amos 9:13-15).

*“But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.... ‘In that day,’ says the Lord, ‘I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so THE LORD WILL REIGN OVER THEM IN MOUNT ZION FROM NOW ON, EVEN FOREVER’ ”* (Micah 4:4).

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his

staff in his hand because of great age. *The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.*’ Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, will it also be marvelous in My eyes?’ Says the Lord of hosts. Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. *They shall be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness*’” (Zechariah 8:4-8).

### **Satan Released From Prison**

It is now 3027, and the wonderful 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ has just ended. The world is joyful, prosperous, and at peace. But things are about to change! For Satan has just been released from his prison!

Upon being released from the Abyss, Satan immediately goes to work, deceiving millions! He then gathers an army together and they march together towards Jerusalem, eventually surrounding God’s beloved city. But fire comes down from heaven and devours them! Then the devil is cast into the lake of fire where he will remain for all eternity, never to harm or delude anyone, ever again! (Revelation 20:7-10.)

How sad it is, that even after the tremendously joyful, peaceful, and wonderful 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ, that some would still rebel against Him.

### **Great White Throne Judgment**

After this final rebellion is crushed we come to the “great white throne judgment” (Revelation 20:11-15). This time period is represented by the *seventh and final annual holy day*—“the Last Great Day.”

This is the time period when *everyone who has ever lived (since the creation of Adam and Eve) is now resurrected back to life*—EXCEPT FOR THE VERY FEW true servants of God who were resurrected 1,000 years previously (Revelation 20:4-6).

As a result, this *second resurrection* will include the vast, overwhelming majority of humans who have ever lived. Most of these men and women will now get their very first REAL opportunity for salvation—of being born into the very family of God and receiving eternal life.

### **Family & Friends Reunited**

This will be a *very exciting time*—for we will now get the chance to be reunited with our former friends and loved ones! For our friends, parents, grandparents, great grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc. will now be resurrected back to life! And just think of all the people we will see and have the opportunity to meet and get to know. Such people as: Elvis Presley, Abraham Lincoln, Babe Ruth, Booker T. Washington, Jack Johnson, Martin Luther King Jr., Mary Elizabeth Bowser, Harriet Tubman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Isadora Duncan, Cleopatra, Annie Oakley, Marie Antoinette, Anne Frank, Helen Keller, Thomas Edison, Anwar Sadat, Benjamin Franklin, Napoleon Bonaparte, Genghis Khan, Leonardo da Vinci, William Shakespeare, Ludwig van Beethoven, Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Julius Caesar, Attila the Hun, Jessie James, Bonnie and Clyde, Esau, Ishmael, Samson, Delilah, plus millions more!

Most of those resurrected in this *second resurrection* will apparently live for one hundred years, to see if they are willing to accept the sacrifice of Jesus for their sins, and to prove it by living a life of obedience to God (Isaiah 65:20; Ezekiel 37; Matthew 11:20-24, 12:42-42; Revelation 20:4-

6, 11-15).

[But those who committed an “unpardonable sin” during their first life will NOT live for a hundred years, but will instead be condemned and thrown into the lake of fire—where they will die instantly—this is called the *SECOND death* (Hebrews 10:26-29; Matthew 3:28-20; Hebrews 6:4-6; Revelation 20:14-15)].

### **Eternal Life for the Obedient**

Then after living a hundred years, all will be “judged according to their WORKS, by the things which were written in the books [of the Bible]”—Revelation 20:12. All of those who repented and overcame the pulls of the flesh (with the help of God’s Holy Spirit) will now be born as God’s *literal* sons and daughters, and shall live for all eternity (Revelation 21:7). These are those who *keep* the commandments of God, and their name is written in the Book of Life (Revelation 14:12, 22:14).

### **Second Death for the Wicked**

“But anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15). This includes all unrepentant sinners, those who refuse to look to God and turn from their evil ways. This is the *SECOND DEATH*. These individuals will cease to live ever again (Revelation 21:8, 21:27, 22:15).

### **New Heaven & New Earth**

At this time there will be no more human beings. For all humans who have ever lived will have become immortal, glorious spirit beings—the *literal* children of God! [Except for those unrepentant individuals who had refused to live according to God’s way of life—the way of give (the way of kindness, goodness, cooperation, mercy and compas-

sion)—but instead had chosen to live according to Satan’s way of get (the way of greed, lust, hatred and selfishness). These people were put to *death* in the lake of fire—the *second death* (Revelation 20:14-15)].

## Kingdom of God

But everyone else (hopefully the vast, overwhelming majority!) will now be members of God’s Family and will live forever. At this time God will create a *new heaven and a new earth* (Revelation 21:1). Then God Himself (that is—God the Father!) will for the very first time come down from heaven and dwell with us!! ***The Kingdom of God will have begun!***

“Behold, the tabernacle [home] of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear away from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:3-4).

“He who overcomes shall inherit ALL things [the *entire* UNIVERSE!], and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:7).

Those born into God’s Family will now share the WHOLE UNIVERSE with God the Father and Jesus Christ—for all eternity!

Now we come to...

THE BEGINNING...



## APPENDIX

### Time & Times & Half A Time

What does “time and times and half a time” mean? “Time” stands for 1 year, “times” stands for 2 years, and “half a time” stands for  $\frac{1}{2}$  a year. Therefore, “time and times and half a time” is equivalent to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years. And in Bible prophecy a year is equal to 360 days. As a result,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years *sometimes* equals 1,260 days (360 days times  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years). Also, in *some* Bible prophecies there is a “day for a year principle,” where one day is equivalent to one year (see Numbers 14:34 & Ezekiel 4:5-6). Therefore, *sometimes* 1,260 DAYS represents 1,260 YEARS. But not always!

### Herbert Armstrong

Herbert Armstrong wasn't perfect by any stretch of the imagination. He wasn't perfect in the way he governed the WWCG; he wasn't perfect in his personal life; and his teachings most definitely weren't perfect. Armstrong (just like the rest of us) made plenty of mistakes. But, he also did many things that were very good, and most of his teachings were indeed biblically sound.

As a result of the many good things that Herbert Armstrong accomplished, some people think that he was the “Elijah to come”—the end-time prophet of God who would “restore all things” (Matthew 17:11). But this idea is *incorrect*. Herbert Armstrong was NOT the end-time Elijah! The end-time prophet of God (the “Elijah to come”), who is prophesied to restore all things, will be someone else—someone almost definitely living today. So who is the end-time Elijah? We probably won't know for sure until the two end-time witnesses are made known, since one of them will

almost surely be the end-time Elijah (Revelation 11:3-13). And we probably won't know for certain who the "two witnesses" are until we see them doing great miracles—and fire coming out of their mouths! (Revelation 11:5-6.)

## 666

In the book of Revelation we are told that in the end-time a FALSE PROPHET (i.e. pope) will arise who will force everyone to have either the *name* of the BEAST (i.e. Antichrist) or his *number* (666) marked on their body in order to buy or sell (Revelation 13:16-18, 19:20).

But why 666? Because the letters in the BEAST'S name will add up to 666. For instance, take the name "ROMAN." This name can be translated into *Greek* as LATEINOS. (We use the Greek language because Greek is the original language of the book of Revelation.) And in the Greek language: L=30, A=1, T=300, E=5, I=10, N=50, O=70, & S=200. Add them up and what do you get? 666! So "Roman" could very well be the name of the end-time BEAST (i.e. Antichrist)! Of course there are probably other names that also add up to 666. But since Roman also is the name of the great false church (i.e. *Roman* Catholic Church) as well as the name of the great false empire (i.e. *Roman* Empire), can anyone think of a name more fitting than Roman?

## Freemasonry, Nimrod, & RCC

"NIMROD figures in some very early versions of the history of FREEMASONRY, where he was said to have been one of the fraternity's FOUNDERS. *According to the Encyclopedia of Freemasonry: The legend of the Craft in the Old Constitutions refers to Nimrod as one of the founders of Masonry*" (Wikipedia; article: Nimrod). What makes this comment especially interesting is the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has been infiltrated and taken over by the

Masons (according to the late Malachi Martin—the Jesuit priest, writer, and professor at the Vatican’s Pontifical Biblical Institute—in an interview he gave on Art Bell’s radio program, Coast to Coast AM in the 1990’s).

### **Seventy-Weeks Prophecy**

For a detailed explanation of the 70-Weeks Prophecy—please read the article that I have on my website concerning this subject at: [www.TheBibleComesAlive.com](http://www.TheBibleComesAlive.com)

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