

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

## **Article I. – Daniel 2:1-45**

### ***The Times Of The Gentiles. God's Desire For Israel. The Church Composed Of Jews And Gentiles***

Prophecy is history foretold in advance. One of the most important prophecies in the Bible is found in Daniel, chapter 2. Therein one is given a prophetic pre-view of an outline of world history from about B. C. 606, to the return of Jesus in power and great glory to destroy Gentile world powers at the battle of Armageddon. The period of time covered in this prophecy is called "The Times of the Gentiles," because during this period of time God has given political rule in the world to Gentile nations.

It was God's desire and will that the nation of Israel should be the leading nation in the world, with the capability of defending herself against all comers. The Lord promised the Israelites that if they would hearken diligently unto His voice, and observe and do all His commandments which He commanded them, that He would set Israel on high above all the nations of the earth. Also, He would greatly bless her in a material way, and all the people of the earth would be afraid of her. She would always be victorious in battle against her enemies, and she would be the head, and not the tail of nations. Deut. 28:1-14; Lev. 26:3-10.

So, we see the Lord made ample provision that the Israelites could have exercised political and military rule in the world. But the Israelites miserably failed God. They forfeited their position of privilege by their disobedience and idolatry. The Lord permitted the nations about them to exact tribute from them, to oppress them, and finally to take them into captivity. First, the ten tribe nation of Israel was taken into Assyrian captivity in B. C. 721, and the first stage of the captivity of the kingdom of Judah took place in B. C. 606.

What befell the Israelites was foreseen by the prophets. Isaiah, chapter fifty-four foretells Israel's rejection as the wife of Jehovah. She is termed a "woman forsaken," and a wife of youth who has been "refused." The period of her rejection is called "a small moment." But

this chapter also gives good news. Israel is yet to be restored to divine favor and blessing.

"The small moment" of Israel's rejection coincides with the period of Gentile political rule in the world as outlined in the prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Daniel, chapter 2.

"And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. Jesus clearly implies in this scripture that there will be "times," or a period of time when the Gentile nations will have political rule over Israel, or the Jewish nation. Since Jesus spoke these words, Jerusalem has never been free for any considerable period of time from Gentile rule. Even today when Israel is a sovereign nation, parts of Jerusalem and other Jewish territories are being trodden down of the Gentiles. The kingdom of Jordan, governed by King Hussein, today controls thirteen acres of ground in Old Jerusalem in the temple area.

We are well aware of the fact that some people refer to this age as the "Gentile church age," and the church is sometimes called the "Gentile church." Also "Gentile times," and the "Times of the Gentiles," are terms used by some to designate the church age. Are such expressions used in this sense scripturally justifiable? What do the scriptures say?

It is a well known fact that the Old Testament scriptures teach that Jesus would be a light to the Gentiles. Luke 2:32; Isa. 42:6, 7. But so far as the church is concerned, Old Testament scriptures are silent. Jesus predicted that He would build His church. Mat. 16:17, 18. It was left to the apostles, especially to the apostle Paul, to expound church truth. Paul tells us that the church is the body of Christ of which He is the Head. Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 3:18. He also tells us that the church is made up of Jews and Gentiles. Eph. 2:11-18. Paul's argument is that the law of commandments contained in ordinances which separated Jews and Gentiles was removed by the death of Christ. So, as a result of the death of Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles have access to God by one Spirit, and may both be reconciled to God and "made both one" . . . one body, the church. We use the terms Jew, Israelites, and the children of Israel, without distinction as Paul did in his day.

Some earnest Christians believe that on the strength of the following scriptures God withdrew His offer of salvation to the Jews: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest

be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Acts 13:45-47. Are we to infer from the foregoing scriptures that Paul did not try to reach other Jews after he left Antioch in Pisidia because God had withdrawn the offer of salvation to them? Certainly not. It continued to be Paul's practice as recorded in the book of Acts to visit the synagogues of the Jews to preach Christ to them. The very next city Paul visited after leaving Antioch in Pisidia was Iconium. There God gave a great revival in which multitudes of Jews were saved. "And it came to pass in Iconium that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks believed." Acts 14:1.

God had a purpose from the beginning of the world, which in other ages was not made known to man, but which He has made known in this age by revelation to his apostles and prophets. God's purpose for this age is that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs . . . heirs with the Jews . . . and of the same body . . . His body the church, made up of Jews and Gentiles . . . and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel. Eph. 3:1-9.

The church is not a Jewish church, nor is it a Gentile church, but a church composed of both Jews and Gentiles. It is true that because the majority of the Jews rejected Jesus, added impetus was given to the salvation of Gentiles. Rom. 11:11.

"The Times of the Gentiles" means the time of Gentile political rule in the world. Also, the time of gospel privileges to them.

When this article was published in the Report, the kingdom of Jordan controlled part of Jerusalem; this is no longer true since the war between Israel and the Arab Nations which took place in 1967. Now all of Jerusalem is under Israel's control. This is a sure sign of the soon return of Jesus. However, before the return of Jesus, Jerusalem is again to be trodden down of the Gentiles for forty and two months. Rev. 11:2.

## **Article II. – Daniel 2:31-45**

### ***Babylon Falls. The Rise Of The Ram And The He Goat***

It will be observed that in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, each of the four great world empires that were to rule the world from the time of the subjugation of the kingdom of Judah, until the return of Jesus to rule the world, were represented as being made up of metals, each inferior to the other. "Thou art this head of gold," Nebuchadnezzar was told. Gold, the most precious metal in the image, is a symbol of absolute monarchy. Absolute and total power is vested in the king, and his word is law. "And for the majesty that he gave him, all people,

nations and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down." Dan. 5:19. There was no check or restraint on his authority or the use of his power. It was absolute in the fullest meaning of the word.

Our study of the Scriptures lead us to believe that God does not believe in democracy in government. It is fair to say, however, that man is wholly unqualified morally to use autocratic power. Only Jesus Christ the Righteous will be able to use autocratic power wisely and justly when He shall rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The glory of Babylon rapidly declined after Nebuchadnezzar's death. His son, Evil-Merodach, was a very wicked and corrupt ruler, who reigned only two years and was murdered by Neriglissar, his own sister's husband. After ruling four years, Neriglissar was killed in battle. His infant son was king for less than a year when the throne was seized by Nabonidas, a usurper, who tortured the young king to death. Nabonidus is believed to have adopted Belshazzar, a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, as his own son in order to conciliate the legitimate party. Jeremiah had predicted that Babylon must come to an end with the reign of Nebuchadnezzar's son's son. Jer. 27:7.

Belshazzar in scripture is called the son of Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. 5:2, 18. The Hebrew tongue has no distinction between "father" and "grandfather." Belshazzar offered to make the one who could interpret the writing on the wall the third ruler in the kingdom. Dan. 5:7. Why third? Because Nabonidas, the first ruler, was away from Babylon waging war, and Belshazzar was second ruler. He was slain that night. Dan 5:30, 31.

World rule passed from the Babylonian empire to the Medo-Persian empire. Dan. 5:28. As silver is inferior to gold, this empire was inferior to the first. Inferior, not in military power, because the kingdom of the Medes and Persians became far stronger in a military sense than Babylon ever was. Inferior, not in size, because this empire was much larger in size than Babylon ever was. It was inferior in its form of government. The government was a limited monarchy and depended for its power upon a hereditary nobility. See Esther, chapter one.

The rise of this empire was seen by Daniel in a vision which God gave him in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar. "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high: but one was higher than the other and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. The ram

which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia." Dan. 8:3, 4, 20. It is said of the two horns of the ram that "one was higher than the other." This was true historically. The kingdom of the Medes came into being first, and later the higher horn, Persia, gained the ascendancy.

It was Darius the Median who captured the city of Babylon. Dan. 5:30, 31. But he was acting as a general and vice-roy under Cyrus, the Persian. God raised up Cyrus for Israel's sake. He was mentioned by name many years before he was born. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." Isa. 45:1-4.

"The two leaved gates" and "the gates of brass" refer to the brazen gates in the river Euphrates which flowed through the city of Babylon.

Isaiah foretold that Cyrus would be an instrument in God's hand to favor the Jews. "That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Isa. 44:28; Ez. 1:1-4.

The third kingdom of brass destroyed and succeeded the Medo-Persian empire. Daniel had a prophetic preview of the rise of the Greek kingdom of Alexander the Great. "And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and brake his two horns; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." Dan. 8:5-7, 21.

The he goat is said to come from the west because Alexander the Great came from Macedonia which is west of Babylon where Daniel was. So swift was the rate of conquest of Alexander against the Medo-Persian armies that he is represented as a goat "that touched not the ground." In eight years Alexander conquered the world and cried

because there were no more worlds to conquer. He died in B. C. 323. No one was strong enough to hold the Greek kingdom together. So about B. C. 300 the empire was divided among four of Alexander's generals. Dan. 8:8, 21, 22.

While the empire was divided about B. C. 300, Greek military power remained dominant in the world until B. C. 168, when Greek military power had to give way to superior Roman power.

As brass is inferior to silver, so the Greek kingdom in its government was inferior to Medo-Persia. The sovereignty in the Greek empire was divided among the king, the army and men of influence in the kingdom.

### ***Article III. – Daniel 2:31-45***

#### ***The Rise And Fall Of The Roman Empires***

The fourth kingdom came into being when Roman military power superseded Greek military power, B. C. 168. We are still in the period of the fourth kingdom and will continue to be so until the return of Jesus to set up His kingdom.

As prophesied in scripture, the fourth empire was destined to go through four stages of development and change. We are now in the third stage.

The first 563 years of Roman power represented a period of growth and development. During this period of time Rome, as a united kingdom, grew to the height of her power and her boundaries reached their greatest extent. However, size can sometimes be a handicap. Her territories were so vast that it was hard for the emperor to protect his country from external foes from his capital city of Rome.

So the first stage of the deterioration of the empire set in when the emperor conceived the idea of dividing his empire into two parts, to facilitate her defense. The western division of the empire had Rome for its capital city, and the eastern division of the empire had Constantinople, now Istanbul, in Turkey as its capital city. The division of the empire into two parts corresponds to the two legs of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

The Western Roman Empire was destroyed by invading barbarians from the North in 476 A.D. The Eastern Empire lasted until 1453 A.D, when Constantinople was captured by the Turks. The fall of the Eastern Empire brought to an end the first stage of deterioration of Roman power.

After the fall of the Roman empires, the second stage of the deterioration of the fourth kingdom set in. The territories that once comprised those empires were divided into many constitutional mon-

archies and republics. At the beginning of the first world war there were over twenty such nations. Since the second world war there are fewer monarchies, some dictatorships, some republics, and some principalities. France is a constitutional dictatorship.

Since the fourth kingdom has ceased to be an empire, we have been prophetically in the period of the feet of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream to the toes. "The image is supported by the two feet, and the feet introduced the partly strong, partly weak state which is continued to the toes. The prophet went on! Dan. 2:43. They shall mingle themselves (the nations) with the seed of men but they shall not cleave one to another even as iron is not mixed with miry clay. How truly has this been fulfilled. The mingling process has been going on apace for the last hundred years. Firstly, nearly all the crowned heads of Europe were related by marriage or descent. The Kaiser of Germany was the Queen of England's grandson. One of England's best loved queens . . . Alexandra, came from Denmark. The Italian throne was related to Bulgaria; that of Roumania and Greece to England, and so on, but in spite of this mingling they did not cleave one to another as was seen in 1914, when hostilities broke out and which have really continued in some form or other until today." From "The Midnight Cry."

The fourth kingdom is the kingdom of iron and clay. "His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." (Dan. 2:33) "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken." (Dan. 2:40-42). Jesus the smiting Stone will smite the kingdom upon its feet and destroy it at His return. (Dan. 2:34, 35, 45).

God does not count time as men do. "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (II Peter 3:8) "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past." (Psalms 90:4) So, according to God's reckoning of time, it has been just a little over half a day since the fall of the Roman Empire in 1453. Soon the last form of that Empire is to come into being. The Empire will be revived into ten federated nations ruled over by the Anti-Christ. (Dan. 2:42-44; Dan. 7:7; Rev. 17:12, 13).

It is interesting to note that the nations which compose the feet of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream have held the balance of military power in the world. Since the dismemberment of the Roman Empire, several ambitious rulers have sought to conquer Europe with an eye to world dominion, but all of their efforts failed. Kaiser Wilhelm of

Germany tried, but failed; Adolph Hitler at one time seemed at the point of conquering Russia and Europe, but he too was unsuccessful. Russia would like to conquer the world but is destined to fail. Why all these failures at conquest? Because, in the purpose of God, four and only four great powers were to exercise world dominion, or have the capability of so doing, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the return of Jesus.

The Revived Roman Empire will not merely have the power to rule the world, but she will exercise that power and have world wide dominion without successful opposition. Dan. 7:23, Rev. 13:4-8.

## ***Article IV. – Daniel 2:31-45***

### ***Ten Federated Nations. God Destroys Russian Power***

The next major change that one may expect in the fourth kingdom will be the revival of the empire into ten federated nations, answering to the ten toes of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the ten horns of the fourth beast. Dan. 2:40-44; Dan. 7:7, 17, 24. The ten federated nations of the revived empire will have the Beast, or Anti-Christ, as its supreme ruler. Rev. 17:12, 13.

The ten nations in the revived empire will embrace all of the territories that were once in the Eastern and Western Roman Empires. It is quite probable that nine of the ten nations are in existence today. However, changes will have to be made in some of the political boundaries, because there will be only ten nations in the empire.

The nine nations that will probably be in the empire are (1) England, (2) France, greatly enlarged and extended to the Rhine, and very likely including Belgium, Luxembourg, and Switzerland, (3) Spain with Portugal absorbed by her, (4) Italy, (5) Greece, (6) Austria, enlarged, (7) Egypt, enlarged, (8) Syria, (9) Turkey. There yet remains one more nation to be formed from territory now controlled by Russia, in the Balkan nations, which was in the Roman Empire.

There must be a war in which Russian power must be destroyed before the ten-toed kingdom can come into being as a federated kingdom. We believe the time is near for Russian power to be destroyed by the Lord Himself.

Following is a blueprint from God's Word of the destruction of Russia.

Russia and her allies invade Palestine. Ezk. Chapters 38 and 39: 1-20.

Verse 2. Gog, the chief prince.

Magog (Gen. 10). His descendants predominate in modern Russia. Tubal. Tobolsk, capital of a province in Russia. It is

believed to perpetuate the tribal name of Tubal's descendants. Meshech. Forefather of a race mentioned in connection with Tubal, Magog and other Northern nations. Broadly speaking, much of Russia.

### *Russia's Allies*

Verse 5. Persia (Iran), Ethiopia and Libya.

Verse 6. Gomer. Forefather of the Celtic family. In this case Germany. Togarmah. The ancient name of Armenia. Modern Turkey.

### *The Motive For This Invasion*

To acquire financial gain. Verse 11-13.

1. The wealth of the Dead Sea.
2. The oil wealth of the Negeb.
3. The tremendous oil wealth of the nations adjacent to, and near Palestine.

### *The Time Of This Invasion*

1. In the latter years. Verse 8.  
In the latter days. Verse 16.
2. At a time when many Israelites shall have returned to Palestine. Verse 8, 11, 12, 16.
3. Before the great tribulation.

We arrive at this conclusion for the following reasons:

1. This invasion will take place when the Israelities are dwelling safely and are at rest. Verse 8, 11, 14. This could not be said of a nation which has gone through three and one half years of the great tribulation.
2. The reason for this invasion is to plunder, and to gain wealth. There will be an altogether different reason from this for the armies of the world to gather to Jerusalem just prior to the battle of Armageddon. Then, it will be for the purpose of destroying Jerusalem and the Jewish Nation. Zech. 12:1-9; 14:1-3.
3. In this invasion no mention is made of any armies except those of Russia and her allies. At the battle of Armageddon there will be armies from every nation of the world. Rev. 16:12-16; Rev. 19:19.
4. The Anti-Christ will eventually rule the entire world. Anti-Christ kingdom shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces. Dan. 7:7, 8, 23, 24; Rev. 13:7.

Before the Anti-Christ can have power over all nations, Russian power will have to be destroyed. It will be destroyed by the Lord Himself during this invasion. Ezk. 38:18-23; 39:1-4.

5. The battle of Armageddon will be fought by the Lord Himself at the time of His return. Rev. 19:11-16; Zech. 14:1-4; Isa. 63:1-6. This battle will be fought by the Lord causing tremendous cosmic disturbances, sending pestilences, cloudbursts, hail storms, earthquakes, and electrical storms of lethal severity. The soldiers of the invading armies will fight and kill one another.
6. The destruction of Russian military power will pave the way for the rise of the ten-horn, ten-toed kingdom of the Anti-Christ. Dan. 7:7, 8, 23, 24; Dan. 2:34, 35, 40-45. Some territory now controlled by Russia was in the Roman Empire. We believe that this same territory will be in the revived Roman Empire. Russian defeat will bring about a rearrangement of political boundaries. We believe it is safe to assume that Russian defeat will take place at least a little over seven years before the battle of Armageddon.

## **Article V. – Daniel 2:31-45**

### **The False Church**

As a result of the destruction of Russian military power by the Lord Himself, one can expect political uprisings and wars by her satellites, and also among other nations. As a result of these wars, there will arise in the territory once occupied by the Roman Empire, a confederation of ten nations. These ten nations are represented in Dan. 2:40-44, as the toes of the image. This same kingdom is represented in Dan. 7:7, 8, as having ten horns. The ten horns are said to be ten kings. Dan. 7:23, 24; Rev. 13:1; Rev. 17:12-13; Rev. 17:15.

The scriptures strongly indicate that the World Federation of Churches will have a decisive voice in organizing the revived Roman Empire. This is seen in Rev. 17:3-6, where the false church is seen sitting upon a scarlet colored beast having seven heads and ten horns. The fact that "Mystery Babylon" sits upon the beast indicates that she is a state church supported by the Beast Kingdom, or that she exerts a dominating influence in the affairs of the kingdom, or both.

Notice the color of the woman's vestments. Purple and scarlet. Verse 4. Scarlet is the distinctive color of the Roman Catholic Church. The inner cloak of the Pope is scarlet, the carriage in which he rides is scarlet, the carpet that is placed for him to walk on is scarlet. The cardinal's hats, cloaks and stockings are scarlet.

Archbishops wear a purple robe.

Her riches, verse four. The Pope's vestments at enthronement are incrustated with precious stones. The Pope's miter is heavy with gold and precious stones. Some of her cathedrals are treasure houses of gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones. She possesses vast income producing properties. Madison Square Garden, in New York City, is owned by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Pope aspires to unite all churches into a world church of which he will be the head, or Chief Bishop.

We quote, "In urging a unification of all Christians, 'the pontiff said,' we lay no snares. If we are in any way to blame for the separation (of Christians) we humbly beg God's forgiveness and ask pardon, too, of our separated brethren.

"Such a universal church, 'the Pope said,' could permit a great variety of expressions of faith and forms of worship while maintaining the organic harmony of a single ecclesiastical control."

It is our belief that the wars which will follow the destruction of Russia will so exhaust and prostrate the nations of Europe, that only the voice and influence of the Pope as head of the World Federation of Churches will be able to bring order out of chaos. It seems that for a short time the Pope, and the World Church, will practically rule the world, but not for long. The ten kings will turn against her and destroy her. Rev. 17:16, 17. That will probably take place at the beginning of the reign of the Anti-Christ. Rev. 13:5.

#### The Reasons For The Formation Of This Federation:

Until Russian power is destroyed by the Lord, the greatest threat to peace in the world will be Russia. Once Russia is eliminated as a threat to peace, the ten nations that will arise in Europe will unite their strength for mutual protection, and we believe, to promote peace. Rev. 17:12, 13.

We are giving two suggested interpretations of the opening of the first seal in Rev. 6:1, 2. Bible students differ as to who the white horse rider will be. We are not sure enough in our own mind to be positive in our teaching on this subject. We give the first suggested interpretation.

Rev. 6:2. White horse. The color of peace or righteousness. "A bow." The bow is a symbol of God's word. Hab. 3:8,9. "He went forth conquering and to conquer." The expression denotes continuous action. After the rapture many people will realize what has taken place and will begin to testify about it even unto death. Verse 9. Multitudes will take a stand for the Lord. Rev. 7:9-17. Rev. 7:14 literally translated reads: "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, these are they which came out of the tribulation the great one." The Bible tells us that "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of

the world will learn righteousness." Isa. 26:9. The white horse rider with the bow symbolizes the conquest of God's word during the first part of the tribulation period.

The second suggested interpretation: Christ is the one who takes the Book and opens the seals, and when the first seal is broken by Christ, the rider goes forth. Christ cannot be the opener of the seals, and the seal itself. The rider is the personal Anti-Christ who is given a crown as the head of the ten federated kingdoms.

A horse is a symbol of war, aggression. White is a symbol of peace as well as of righteousness. The Anti-Christ will lead a vigorous peace crusade. He will wage a campaign for peace. Most positive assurance of peace will be given. The cry will be "peace and safety." Thes. 5:3. The gospel preached by the white horse rider will be peace through world federation. We know from Rev. 6:3, 4, that this campaign of the Anti-Christ will fail and that the world will be bathed in blood.

We believe that both interpretations contain elements of truth.

A second reason for this federation is to promote trade and commerce. The present common market in six of the nations of Europe is a small sample of what may be expected. Rev. 13:16, 17; Rev. 18:9-19.

## **Article VI. – Daniel 2:31-45**

### ***The Rise Of The Anti-Christ. The Beast Out Of The Bottomless Pit***

The coming Anti-Christ appears in the book of Daniel as a "little horn" with "eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." Dan. 7:8, 24-26; Dan. 8:9. He next appears as "the prince that shall come." He will arise out of a country that was once in the Roman empire. This is indicated by the fact that he will come from the people who destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Dan. 9:26, 17. This is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Roman general, in 70 A.D.

The coming Prince, or future Anti-Christ, will "make a firm covenant with many for one week." Revised Version. He will make this covenant with the nation of Israel for a period of seven years. This week of years coincides with the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. It seems that this treaty will give the Jews religious freedom and military protection from their enemies. It is a well known fact that the Arab nations would like to destroy the nation of Israel.

For some reason unknown to us the Anti-Christ will break his covenant with Israel after three and one half years. At that time the Jews will be forbidden to continue to offer their sacrifices. We believe at this time that the Anti-Christ will receive a deadly wound inflicted, perhaps by a fanatically patriotic Jew, out of resentment for the breaking of the covenant. Rev. 13:3, 12, 14.

One of the heads of the beast empire will receive a deadly wound, and this political head of the ten-toed, ten-horn kingdom who will receive the deadly wound, and yet survive, will be none other than the Beast Emperor himself . . . the Anti-Christ. There is something about the recovery of the beast after he receives the deadly wound which will arouse the wonder and amazement of the world. The deadly wound from which he will recover is mentioned three times in the chapter referred to above. There is an element of the supernatural in this incident.

The Beast will in one sense be a supernatural personage. He will ascend from the bottomless pit. Rev. 11:7; Rev. 17:8. We are told that the Beast "was," and at the time that John on the Isle of Patmos received the revelation, he had ceased to be (and is not), but that he was yet to come. Rev. 17:8. Weymouth's translation. In other words at one time the Beast had lived here on earth, then he ceased to be here, but he will return and when he does, he will come from the bottomless pit. Can we find a person who at one time lived on earth who can throw light on this scripture? We believe so. Judas Iscariot was said by Jesus to be a devil. Jno. 6:70; Jno. 13:27. Jesus also called him "the son of perdition." Jno. 17:12. It is also said in scripture that Judas went to "his own place." Acts 1:25. Since Judas was a devil, the son of perdition, is it not likely that the demon who took possession of him went to the bottomless pit when he died? And in the midst of the week when the Beast receives a deadly wound, and is either dead or at the point of death, the Satanic spirit from the bottomless pit will enter into him, and from that time he will be Satanically energized.

The dragon (the devil, Rev. 12:9) is the one who will give power to both the beast empire and the beast emperor. Rev. 13:1-4. II Thes. 2:9. In Rev. 12:13-17 the dragon is represented as seeking the destruction of the woman. He will do this by working through the Anti-Christ, or the Beast emperor, in whom he will be incarnated.

At first it seems that the Beast emperor will be a benevolent dictator. This is indicated by the fact that he will give the Jews religious freedom. But after he receives his deadly wound, his character will be changed. He will be an oppressor and a persecutor of anyone who worships God. Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:7. He will claim to be God, and will demand human worship. II Thes. 2:3-9; Rev. 13:11-15.

The method of reckoning time will be changed by the Anti-Christ at the end of this age. Daniel 7:25. The last seven years of this age will naturally fall into two divisions of twelve hundred and sixty days each, or forty-two months of thirty days each. The first forty-two months will begin from the time Anti-Christ will make his covenant with Israel, and will end in the midst of the week when he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. The last forty-two months will begin in the

midst of the week, and will end at the return of Jesus in power and great glory.

The forty-two months reign of Anti-Christ will correspond with the time of the prophesying of God's two witnesses. Rev. 13:5; Rev. 11:1-12. Also, the duration of the reign of the Anti-Christ will correspond with the duration of the time the "woman" will be protected and fed in the wilderness. Rev. 12:3-6; 13:16; Dan. 7:25.

The reign of the Anti-Christ will represent the most distressing time this world has ever known. Mt. 24:15. God's people who have not made the rapture will be persecuted, starved and killed in various ways. The time of the great tribulation will be a time of great famines, wars, pestilences, civil strife and the judgments of God as shown in the book of Revelation. The judgments of God will be poured out without mixture on a God and a Christ rejecting world in a manner never before experienced in God's dealing with man. "God has a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh. The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jer. 25:30-33.

## **Article VII. – Daniel 2:31-45**

### ***The False Prophet. The Kings Of The North And The Kings Of The South***

The Anti-Christ will be aided in his evil work by another beast who is represented as coming up out of the earth. Rev. 13:11-16. This beast is elsewhere called the "false prophet," Rev. 19:20, and he will surely be the head of the World Federation of Churches as seen in Rev. 17:1-7.

The false prophet will work miracles through Satanic power. Rev. 13:13-15. That is perhaps the reason he is said to come out of the earth. His inspiration and power will come from the underworld rather than from heaven.

"And he had two horns like a lamb and he spake as a dragon." Horns are a symbol of power. Deut. 33:17. In his case ecclesiastical and temporal power. For a short time the false prophet, as head of the harlot church, will exercise more power than any other man on earth. This is seen by the fact that the church he heads is represented as sitting upon a scarlet colored beast having seven heads and ten horns. Rev. 17:1-3. The false prophet, in addition to this religious power, will also share temporal power with the Anti-Christ. Rev. 13:12.

After the Anti-Christ shall claim to be God at the beginning of his forty-two month reign, the ten kings associated with him will destroy the false church. II Thess. 2:2-4; Rev. 17:15-17. After the

destruction of the harlot church which he heads, the false prophet will continue to be the right hand man of the Anti-Christ, and will do everything he can to cause people to worship him. Rev. 13:12; Rev. 19:20.

### **The Kings Of The North And The Kings Of The South**

In the eleventh chapter of Daniel much is said about these kings. It is vital to the correct interpretation of prophecy that one understands who these kings represent.

For a period of about 175 years, history has a record of twelve kings of Syria who ruled from B. C. 301, to B. C. 125. In the eleventh chapter of Daniel they are called Kings of the North, because Syria is north of Palestine.

Russia is said to come from her place out of the north parts. Ezk. 38:15, but her ruler is not called The King of the North. For a period of about 200 years from B. C. 323, to B. C. 117, history has a record of nine kings who ruled Egypt. In Daniel, the eleventh chapter, they are called Kings of the South because Egypt is south of Palestine. There is yet to appear on the world political scene a King of the North and a King of the South. They will not be engaged in combat against one another but will both fight against the Anti-Christ, who is represented as "exalting himself, and magnifying himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods." This no doubt has reference to the assumption of deity on the part of the Anti-Christ, when he, as God, will sit in the temple of God, claiming to be God. II Thes. 2:3, 4. Dan. 11:36-45. The last King of the South and King of the North will be the political heads of Egypt and Syria, respectively. Dan. 11:40. Both Syria and Egypt will be part of the ten federated nations in the kingdom presided over by the Anti-Christ. Why then this rebellion on their part, and their attack on him? It will be remembered that sometime after the ten nation federation is formed, a "little horn," who will be the Anti-Christ, will subdue three of them. Dan. 7:7, 8. What nations are subdued, and why? The Bible is silent on this point so we cannot speak with authority. But it is a well-known fact that the Arab nations are of the Moslem faith, and hate the Jews. It is also a well-known fact that when the Anti-Christ first comes to power, he will greatly favor the Jews. Dan. 9:27. He is sure to grant them political security and religious freedom for a period of three and one half years. This will greatly enrage the Arab nations. Syria and Egypt will consider that they have sufficient provocation for war against Anti-Christ, and in concert, will fight against him, but they both will be defeated.

Near the end of the great tribulation when the Anti-Christ, who is completely controlled by Satan, is in Egypt, he hears something that greatly troubles and infuriates him. Dan. 11:44. "Out of the east and

out of the north." This is the Bible way of saying northeast. Our understanding of this statement is that something happens at Jerusalem which is northeast of where the Anti-Christ is, which so enrages him that he decides to call for the armies of the world to come to Jerusalem and to Palestine to wipe out the nation of Israel. Rev. 16:13-16. Armageddon is located on the southern rim of the plain of Esdraelon, or the Valley of Jezreel, which was a great battlefield in Old Testament times. The northernmost point of this battle line is Armageddon. The southernmost point is Bozrah, in Edom. Isa. 63:1-6. Jerusalem lies between these two points. Zech. 14:1-3. The battle line will be about 160 miles long. Rev. 14:20. Some scholars say 200 miles.

Let us make no mistake about it, the armies of the world will come to Palestine to fight against Jerusalem and against the nation of Israel to destroy them. Zech. 12:1-9; Zech. 14:1-3.

When the Anti-Christ and the armies of the world are gathered to Palestine to exterminate the nation of Israel, they will see the sign of the return of Christ. They will seek to make war against Him, but will be utterly destroyed. Rev. 19:19-21; Rev. 17:14.

## ***Article VIII. – Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45***

### ***The Smiting Stone. The Davidic Monarchy***

It cannot have escaped the attention of reverent Bible students that the stone which smites the image upon its feet will play a major role in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. No Christian doubts that the "stone cut out without hands" is typical of Christ Himself, or of His kingdom. Some Bible expositors explain the stone as representing Christ at His first coming, to establish a spiritual kingdom in the midst of earthly kingdoms. These expositors overlook the fact that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah, the Roman empire was not yet divided, and was at the zenith of her power. Before the smiting stone destroys the image, Rome must be divided into two empires, and then, at the end time, formed into ten federated kingdoms presided over by the Anti-Christ. Another thing these expositors overlook is that the kingdom that "the God of heaven" will set up will not co-exist with earthly kingdoms, but will completely destroy Gentile world powers, and after they are destroyed, will supplant them.

The image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream represents the Gentile dominion of the world from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, until the end of this age, when Christ shall return to set up His kingdom upon the earth. Further, it represents this dominion as divided into four world empires: the Babylonian, symbolized by the head of gold; the Medo-Persian, by the breast and arms of silver; the Grecian, by the belly and sides of brass; and the Roman, by the legs of iron and the feet, part of iron and part of clay.

Still further, the fourth kingdom, or Roman empire, in its final form shall be constituted into ten federated kingdoms, having in them the strength of the iron and the brittleness of the clay. And at the time when the Roman Empire is thus divided, Christ, represented by the "stone cut out of the mountain without hands," shall come to set up His kingdom.

The age will end in catastrophe. The stone will smite the image upon its feet. The destruction of Gentile world powers will be overwhelming and complete. Daniel gives us a vivid description of this event. "Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, and no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Dan. 2:34, 35. Then, and only then, will Jesus set up His kingdom upon this earth.

We are quite sure our reading audience knows that the smiting stone which smote the image upon its feet represents Jesus fighting the battle of Armageddon, and that a mountain in scriptural symbolism is a kingdom. Dan. 2:34, 35; Isa. 2:2; Jer. 51:25.

The return of Jesus to fight the battle of Armageddon will mark the end of the "Times of the Gentiles," and will introduce a new period of God's dealing with Israel and Judah in mercy. The long period of chastisement for their idolatry and their other sins will come to an end. The promised blessings of Dan. 9:24 will be fulfilled.

It seems that after the battle of Armageddon, the first order of business will be the judgment of the living nations. Mt. 25:31-46. This judgment must not be confused with the Great White Throne judgment, which will take place a thousand years later, after the Millennial reign of Christ. Rev. 20:11-15.

As a result of the war waged against the Jews by the Anti-Christ and his armies, two thirds of those in the land will perish. The other third will survive and accept Jesus as their Messiah. Zech 13:8, 9. But in addition to the Jews in Palestine, there will be a considerable number of them scattered among the nations at Christ's return. Jesus will send His angels to gather them to the wilderness of the people, and there He will judge them. Mt. 24:31; Ezk. 20:33-44. Those among them who have the mark of the beast, and other rebels, will be rejected, but the rest will accept Jesus as their Messiah. The Scriptures teach a restored and converted Israel following the return of Jesus. Rom. 11:25-27; Isa. 59:20; Zech. 13:8, 9; Ezk. 20:40-44; Ezk. 36:24-29; Jer. 31:33, 34.

The "elect," that the angels will gather together from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, no doubt will include the Israelites scattered among the nations. Isa. 45:4. But we believe that in addition to them, the elect will include the sheep whom Jesus said will inherit the kingdom. Mt. 25:31-34.

The Davidic monarchy will be restored. Acts 15:13-18; Amos. 9:11, 12. The kingdom of Israel will become the leading nation in the world during the Millennial reign of Christ. Isa. 2:1-5; Micah 4:1-8. Jesus is the only living heir today to the throne of David. Luke 1:30-33. When He returns He will sit upon that throne. Mt. 25:31. Be it remembered, however, that Jesus will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Rev. 19:16.

Jesus in scripture is called the Son of David. Some Bible students believe that the following scriptures apply to Jesus. Ezk. 37:24, 25. We believe they teach that David will be resurrected and be king under Jesus.

During the Millennium the twelve tribes will be assigned new territories in Palestine. Ezk. 48:1-29.

It seems from the words of Jesus that we have a right to believe that the twelve tribes will become a federation of twelve nations under Jesus, as King of Kings, and with David as King, under Jesus. Each tribe, or nation, will have one of the apostles as its individual king. Mt. 19:27, 28. Thus will be fulfilled the promise God made to Jacob. Gen. 35:10-12.

So we see how the stone that will smite the image upon its feet will become a great mountain that will fill the whole earth. Dan. 2:34, 35.

## **Article IX. – Daniel 2:34, 35**

### **Christ The Stone. How God Will Destroy Russia**

In the scriptures referred to above the "stone" represents Christ in two aspects: first, as the smiting stone of destruction that will destroy the Gentile world powers at His return, and secondly, as a great "mountain," or kingdom, that will fill the whole earth.

Christ as the "Stone" is revealed in a threefold way in the Bible:

1. To Israel, Christ is revealed as a stumbling stone and rock of offense. Isa. 8:14, 15; Rom. 9:32, 33; I Cor. 1:23; I Pet. 2:8.
2. To the church, He is revealed as the foundation stone and head of the corner. I Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20-22; I Pet. 2:4, 5; Isa. 28:16.
3. To the Gentile world powers, He will be the smiting stone that will completely destroy them at His return. Dan. 2:34, 35.

A mountain in scriptural symbolism means a kingdom. David speaking of his experience as the king of Israel, says: "Lord by Thy favor, Thou didst make my mountain to stand strong"—meaning his kingdom and dominion. Psa. 30:7. The Lord in His threat against the power of Babylon said: "I am against thee, O destroying mountain, which destroyeth all the earth. And I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and will roll thee down from the rocks and will make thee a burnt mountain." Jer. 51:25. So the kingdom of Messiah is likened to a "stone which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Dan. 2:35; Isa. 2:2.

It is certain that nothing of this came to pass at the first coming of Jesus. We give some reasons why we believe this event will not occur until the return of Jesus:

1. At His first coming Jesus came not as a smiting stone of destruction, but as the Lamb of God to give His life a ransom for many. Mt. 20:28. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Lk. 19:10; Lk. 9:56. He came as a suffering and dying Messiah to save people from their sins. Mt. 1:21; Isa. 53:4-7; Jno. 3:16.
2. The stone smote the image upon its feet, not upon its waist. At the time of His first coming, the Roman empire was not yet divided. It was at the zenith of its power. It had not yet undergone deterioration and division. Jesus was born about four hundred years before the empire was divided into the Eastern and the Western empires. As yet there were no feet for the stone to fall upon.
3. Some Bible students teach that the stone represents Jesus and the spiritual kingdom He made possible by His atoning death. We freely admit that there is a spiritual kingdom. It co-exists with the earthly kingdoms. But the kingdom that the God of heaven will set up will not co-exist with earthly kingdoms. The smiting stone will smite the image upon its feet and break the earthly kingdoms to pieces. They will be broken to pieces together and become like chaff, and the wind will blow them away. Then, and not until then, will the stone that smote the image become a great mountain, or kingdom, and fill the whole earth. Dan. 2:34, 35.
4. The stone will smite the image upon its feet; upon the last stage of development of the fourth kingdom; upon the revived Roman empire composed of ten federated nations under the rule of the Anti-Christ. This federated kingdom of ten nations is represented by the toes of the feet of the image. Dan 2:42-44. All signs seem to point to the soon coming into being of this federation of ten nations.

First, Russia and her allies will invade Palestine. Ezk. 38:1-17. God will be furious at Russia for this invasion and will fight against her. First, He will send a great earthquake. Ezk. 38:19, 20. Then the Lord will cause a spirit of confusion to come upon the invading soldiers and they will fight against one another. Ezk. 38:21. God will also send pestilence, and an "overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone." He will destroy the Russian invading army, leaving only a sixth part of it. Ezk. 39:1-3. God will do this Himself without help from any of the nations.

As a result of the destruction of Russian military power it seems there will be a short war in Europe. National boundaries will be changed. In a short while the ten-toed, ten-horn kingdom will be established. Dan. 2:42, 44; Dan. 7:8, 24.

After the Anti-Christ has reigned over the federation of ten nations for forty-two months, Jesus will return as the Smiting Stone, fighting the battle of Armageddon. The age will end in catastrophe. The end of Gentile world powers will be sudden, destructive, and overwhelming. After this Jesus will establish His millennial kingdom. Thus the "Stone" which will smite the image upon its feet will become a great mountain, or kingdom, that will fill the whole earth.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ***The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel's Prophecy***

***Daniel 9:24-27***

#### ***Article I***

#### ***God Shows Daniel His Purpose Concerning Israel***

"Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and his end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolator." Dan. 9:24-27, Revised Version 1881 - 1884.

We suggest that the Revised text given above be diligently compared with the text of our Authorized Version in the course of these studies.

This is one of the greatest and most comprehensive prophecies in the Bible, with the exception of that which covers the entire book of Revelation, and Dan, chapter 2.

Daniel understood by reading the prophecies of Jeremiah that the seventy years of the desolations of Jerusalem would soon be fulfilled. Jer. 25:11; Jer. 29:10. Daniel also knew that many of the prophets

predicted a glorious future for the nation of Israel. So he set himself to fasting and praying. He confessed his own sins and the sins of Judah and of all Israel. He asked God to turn away His anger and His fury from Jerusalem and to cause His face to shine upon His sanctuary. Dan. 9:1-19.

In order to have a good understanding of this prophecy one needs to remember that Jerusalem was left in complete ruins by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. The temple, the king's palace and all the houses of well-to-do people were burnt with fire. The walls of the city were completely broken down. II Kings 25:8-10.

Gabriel told Daniel that before the full measure of promised blessings would come to Jerusalem and to the Jews, a period of seventy weeks of years, or a period of four hundred and ninety years must elapse. This period of time was to begin from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.

In this article we shall make some statements relative to this prophecy without giving our scriptural reasons for these statements. In subsequent articles we hope to back up these statements with scriptures.

1. These seventy weeks (Hebrew - seventy sevens) are seventy weeks of years. The years are years of 360 days each.
2. This prophecy pertains to Daniel's people, the Jews and to Jerusalem. Gentiles are not primarily in view here. Dan. 9:24.
3. The seventy weeks are divided into three periods of time: 7 weeks of years, or 49 years, 62 weeks of years, or 434 years, and 1 week of years, or 7 years. Dan. 9:25, 27.
4. Two princes are in view in this prophecy. Messiah the Prince, and the prince that shall come. It is important not to confuse these two princes. Messiah the Prince was cut off for Israel's sins and for the sins of the World. The Prince that shall come has not come on the scene yet. He will be the Anti-Christ.
5. Seven weeks, or 49 years plus 62 weeks, or 434 years of this prophecy have already been fulfilled. That is, 483 years of this prophecy were fulfilled shortly before Jesus was crucified. Dan. 9:26.
6. The command to restore and build Jerusalem is found in Neh. 2:1-9. One looks in vain in the book of Ezra for such a command. This command was given March 14, B. C. 445.
7. From March 14th, B. C. 445, to the day that Jesus rode on a mule into Jerusalem as the Prince of Israel was exactly 69 weeks of years, or 483 years. Mt. 21:1-9. Messiah was cut off a few days after this.

8. One week or seven years of this prophecy, remains to be fulfilled. From the end of the 69th week, until the beginning of the 70th week, there is a gap, or interruption, in the fulfillment of this prophecy. God's prophetic clock stops in His dealing with Israel when they are in divine disfavor AS A NATION. They murdered their Messiah. God temporarily abandoned them, not as individuals, but as a nation. As individuals, Jews may accept Jesus as their Savior. Full divine blessing to Israel as a nation as promised in Dan. 9:24, will not come until the end of the 70th week.

Bible precedent for God not counting time with respect to Israel as a nation, when she is in divine disfavor, will be given in a subsequent article.

9. The 70th week of this prophecy will commence when the Prince that shall come will make a firm covenant with Israel for one week of years, or for a period of seven years. He apparently guarantees them religious freedom and military protection. Dan. 9:27.

10. After three and one-half years, the Prince, who will be the Anti-Christ, will break his covenant with Israel. Then will begin the terrible reign of 42 months to the end of the 70th week. Dan. 9:27; Dan. 7:24, 25; Rev. 13:5-8.

11. Jesus will come in power and great glory at the end of the 70th week, destroy the Anti-Christ and Gentile world powers and fulfill the promises to ISRAEL AS A NATION.

## ***The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel's Prophecy***

### ***Daniel 9:24-27***

#### ***Article II***

#### ***Cyrus Permits Jews to Return To Palestine***

The commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem was not given until many years after the second temple had been built in Jerusalem.

In A. D. 538, Cyrus, King of Persia, in the first year of his reign made a decree giving the Jews in his kingdom permission to return to Palestine and to build "the house of the Lord God of Israel" in Jerusalem. Despite the fact that at that time the city of Jerusalem was in ruins positively nothing was said in the decree of Cyrus about rebuilding the walls of the city. II Chron. 36:22, 23, Ezra. 1:1-4.

Pursuant to the decree of Cyrus, nearly 50,000 people returned to Palestine. Ezra 2:64, 65. Before the foundation of the temple was laid, an altar was erected for the offering of sacrifices to God. Ezra 3:1-6.

The foundation of the temple was laid in the second year of Cyrus

(Ezra 3:8-11), but the work was hindered and suspended because of the opposition of enemies. Ezra, chapter four.

About seventeen years after the decree of Cyrus, the Jews at Jerusalem were still without a temple. But at that time the Spirit of God moved upon the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, to urge the people to build the temple. Ezra 5:1, 2; Haggai, chapter one. In the second year of Darius the foundation of the temple was again laid. Hag. 2:10, 15, 18. This temple was finished four and one-half years later. Ezra 6:15. It will be remembered that the temple was finished about twenty-two years after the Israelites returned to Jerusalem.

This second effort to build the temple met with opposition from the governor of the king of Persia for that area. He wrote to the King and told him what the Jews were doing and asked him what his pleasure was concerning this matter. Ezra 5:3-17.

In answer to the governor's letter, King Darius made a decree reaffirming the decree of Cyrus for the building of the temple. He also told the governor to help expedite the work by giving the Jews tax money and needed supplies for this project. Ezra 6:1-13.

The decree of Darius said nothing about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Like the decree of Cyrus its contents dealt only with the building of a temple. So we must search elsewhere for the decree that gives us the beginning of the period of the seventy weeks.

In the seventh year of the reign of King Artaxerxes, which was about 80 years after the decree of Cyrus allowing the Jews to build their temple, and 58 years after the temple was actually built, Ezra the scribe came on the scene. Ezra 7:6-10.

The king and his seven counselors made generous offerings of silver and gold, also the Jews in the province of Babylon gave generously for the house of God. Ezra 7:14-18. The sum of the free will offerings in silver and gold amounted to well over four million dollars. Ezra 8:24-28. A vast fortune in gold and silver vessels, and vessels of fine copper were also entrusted to Ezra for the house of God.

Some of the gold and silver that was given was no doubt used to buy animals and supplies for the daily sacrifice, but I am sure that we are justified in believing that a large part of the offering was used TO BEAUTIFY THE HOUSE OF THE LORD. Ezra. 7:27; 8:36.

Please read the decree of Artaxerxes in Ezra's behalf. Ezra 7:11-26. In addition to teaching the law of God and to oversee the beautifying of the house of God, he seems to have served as governor for a while. Ezra 7:25, 26. Absolutely nothing is said in this decree about restoring and building Jerusalem and its wall. Dan. 9:25. One looks in vain in the book of Ezra for a commandment that would signalize the beginning of the seventy weeks of years decreed upon the Jews and Jerusalem, before they are restored to divine favor as a nation.

## ***The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel's Prophecy***

***Daniel 9:24-27***

### ***Article III***

#### ***The Decree Given To Build The Walls Of Jerusalem. Nehemiah Builds The Walls***

About ninety-three years after the decree of Cyrus allowing the Jews in his kingdom to return to Palestine and to build a temple, and about seventy-one years after the temple was finished, and thirteen years after the scribe Ezra came to Palestine to teach the law of God, and to beautify the house of God, Nehemiah, cupbearer to the king of Persia, heard some distressing news about the Jews who were in Palestine. Neh. 1:1-4. The news about the sad state of the Jews in Palestine set Nehemiah to praying. Neh. 1:5-11.

One day when Nehemiah was before the king his countenance expressed such deep sorrow that the king inquired, "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, and said unto the king, let the king live forever: why should not my countenance be sad, WHEN THE CITY, THE PLACE OF MY FATHERS' SEPULCHRES, LIETH WASTE, AND THE GATES THEREOF ARE CONSUMED WITH FIRE? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God in heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, THAT THOU Wouldest SEND ME UNTO JUDAH, UNTO THE CITY OF MY FATHER'S SEPULCHRES, THAT I MAY BUILD IT. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time." Neh. 2:1-8.

The authority that the king gave Nehemiah to build Jerusalem, together with the letters he wrote to the Persian governors west of the Euphrates river, and to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, all furnished ample proof that he had received a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem. Dan. 9:25. The book of Nehemiah is the only place in Scripture where a commandment to build Jerusalem may be found.

"This last is the only decree which we find recorded in Scripture which relates to the restoring and building of the city. It must be borne in mind that the very existence of a place as a city depended upon such a decree; for before that, any who returned from the land of captivity went only in the condition of sojourners; it was the decree that gave them a recognized and distinct political existence." Tregelles.

When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem he rested for three days, then by night went to view the ruins of the city. At first he did not confide in any one the purpose of his mission. He did not tell the rulers, the religious leaders, nor the working people, "the rest that did the work," (Neh. 2:11-16) why he had come. But after he had inspected the ruins of the city he urged the people to build up the walls of Jerusalem. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." Neh. 2:17, 18. Up until this time any feeble attempts that may have been made to build the walls of Jerusalem were unsuccessful and without royal sanction.

When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem the temple had been built for about seventy-one years. Thirteen years before he came, Ezra came with a large sum of money and beautified the house of the Lord. Ezra 7:27; 8:24-26, 36. There it stood, a beautiful temple in the midst of a ruined city. But this condition was not to continue much longer. Nehemiah was a great organizer, and assigned different parts of the work to different groups. It was a great task. The people were few in number, and the opposition was strong. God was with them, and because "the people had a mind to work," they finished the building of the wall in fifty-two days. Neh. 6:15.

The commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem was given in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, in the month Nisan. Neh. 2:1. The fact that no day of the month is given indicates that it was the first day of Nisan. The Jews frequently did not give the day on which an event occurred if it fell on the first day of the month. According to secular historians the first day of Nisan of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes was March 14th, B. C. 445. **THIS DATE MARKS THE BEGINNING OF THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS.** Dan. 9:25.

A period of seven weeks of years, or forty-nine years, was spent in building the city of Jerusalem, its streets and walls. We have seen that the walls were built in a period of fifty-two days, but there was much additional work to do in building the city and street. According to the version given in our first article, a moat was dug which would require much additional work.

Following the first period of forty-nine years there was another period of sixty-two weeks of years, or four hundred thirty-four years, which began at the end of the first period and continued unto "Messiah the Prince."

We are told that Messiah was to be cut off after the three-score and two weeks. Since the three-score and two weeks followed a period of seven weeks, we know Messiah was to be crucified after sixty-nine weeks of years, or four hundred and eighty-three years after the commandment was given to restore and build Jerusalem.

Now it is an interesting fact that shortly before His crucifixion

Jesus was manifested as Messiah the Prince when He rode into Jerusalem on a mule. Mt. 21:1-9. He rode into Jerusalem on Sunday April 6th, A. D. 32. This date marks the end of the sixty-ninth week. A few days after this event Messiah was cut off, or in plain words Jesus was crucified. From the time that the commandment was given on March 14th, B. C. 445 to April 6th, A. D. 32, is exactly sixty-nine weeks, or sixty-nine times seven prophetic years of three hundred sixty days, which amounts to 483 years.

According to the Julian calendar there were 476 years and 24 days in this period of time. Add for leap years, 116 days. It is also well to bear in mind that in reckoning years from B. C. to A. D., one year must always be omitted.

476 Years X 365	173,740 days
Add (14 March to 6th April inclusive)	24 days
Add for leap years	116 days
	<hr/>
	173,880 days
69 weeks of prophetic years of 360 days	
$69 \times 7 \times 360$	= 173,880 days

The information in the last two paragraphs of this article was garnered from "The Coming Prince," by Sir Robert Anderson.

## ***The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel's Prophecy***

***Daniel 9:24-27***

### ***Article IV***

#### ***Six Promised Blessings To Israel To Be Fulfilled Following The Return Of Christ***

The decree of Cyrus permitting the Jews in his kingdom to return to Jerusalem to "build the house of the Lord God of Israel," is said to have been issued in the first year of his reign. Ezra. 1:1-4. According to Bishop Ussher's chronology which appears at the top of the page of some of our Bibles, the date was B. C. 536. However, most historians believe that the Babylonian Empire fell in B. C. 538 when Darius took the kingdom. Dan. 5:31. Darius is believed to have been a nephew and a vice-roy of king Cyrus. We have accepted B. C. 538 as the most probable date of the issuing of this decree.

"The first year of Cyrus, king of Persia" (Ezra 1:1) has reference to the first year he began to reign over the region where the nations of Israel and Judah had been placed as captives. Cyrus the Great, became king of Anashan, a small nation just west of Persia, about

559 B. C. He commenced a long series of military conquests by conquering Media. In B. C. 538 he added Babylon to his empire. Eventually he controlled an empire from the Aegean Sea to India.

In a previous article we expressed the belief that the seventieth week of the seventy weeks of Daniel's prophecy awaits fulfillment in the future. Many Bible expositors take the position that the entire seventy weeks have already been fulfilled. They contend that the cross of Christ was the fulfillment of the promised blessings of Dan. 9:24. Let us carefully study the Angel's words and see what was actually promised concerning Jerusalem and Israel.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most Holy." Dan. 9:24. Let us bear in mind that these promised blessings were given to Daniel's people Israel, and to Daniel's holy city, Jerusalem. We believe that a careful study of the Angel's words will show that not so much as one of them has yet been fulfilled.

The six things which were to be accomplished after the seventy weeks of years, or 490 years that were decreed upon Daniel's people Israel, and his holy city, Jerusalem were:

1. "To finish the transgression." The transgression of Daniel's people, Israel. The rejection of Christ, as their Messiah, was peculiarly Israel's transgression. The majority of Israelites are still rejecting Him as their Messiah. They are blind to the fact that Jesus is their Messiah, and with few exceptions, Israel will continue in blindness until the end of the church age. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Rom. 11:25.

The transgression of Israel will be finished when Christ returns in glory, and the remnant of post tribulation Jews accept Him as their Messiah and king. Zech. 13:8, 9; Isa. 59:20 with Rom. 11:26.

2. "To make an end of sins." The sins are the sins of Israel and Jerusalem, for only Daniel's people and Jerusalem are in view in Dan. 9:24. Sin is the committing of that which one knows to be wrong. Israel awaits the glorious prospect of being set free from her sins as a nation. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins." Rom. 11:26, 27.

In order to have a true appreciation of the meaning of the Scriptures quoted above one needs to bear in mind that in the eleventh chapter of Romans, Paul says that in this church age only a remnant of the

Jews are being saved. Rom. 11:1-7. He declares that they cut themselves off from the blessings of the gospel by unbelief. Rom. 11:20. Judicial blindness has come upon them because of their rejection of Christ as their Messiah. Rom. 11:7, 25. This blindness will be lifted at the return of Christ, "And so all Israel shall be saved." Rom. 11:26. It does not say that every Israelite will be saved but "them that turn from transgression in Jacob." Isa. 59:20.

3. "To make reconciliation for iniquity." It is never said in scripture that God is reconciled to man, but man must be reconciled to God. II Cor. 5:18-20. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Calvary cannot be said to be God making reconciliation for iniquity. The Cross represents God's provision for reconciliation. The expiation for Israel's sins and for the sins of the world was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. True repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, leading to a definite experience, brings about a reconciliation. But the Jews as a whole have been rebellious and hateful against Christ for nearly two thousand years. But all this will be changed at the return of Jesus. Zech. 13:1. God will give Israel a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone, and they will be saved from all their uncleannesses. Ezk. 36:24-29.

4. "To bring in everlasting righteousness." This points to the national restoration and conversion of Israel. Ezk. 20:33-40. Notice that the scriptures referred to above find their fulfillment here on earth in the land of Israel. It is said that all the house of Israel in the land will serve God. Also, Ezk. 36:24-29; Ezk. 37:22, 23.

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they break, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer. 31:31-34. It cannot be said by any stretch of the imagination that these scriptures have already been fulfilled to Israel as a nation here on earth. Jer. 31:35-37.

5. "To seal up the vision and prophecy." It certainly is not true that vision and prophecy were sealed up shortly after the death of Christ. The greatest of all visions (The book of Revelation) was yet to be given and some of the words of the prophets are to this day yet to

be fulfilled. Vision and prophecy will be sealed after Jesus returns. This will be at the close of the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy.

6. "To anoint the Most Holy." "The expression does not in a single case apply to any person." Dr. Tregelles.

"This expression is never applied to a person throughout the Bible, but invariably denotes part of the temple, the holy of holies." Dr. Herman Adler.

This expression is sure to refer to the anointing of the Holy of Holies in the Millennial Temple described by Ezekiel.

We know positively that four hundred and eighty-three years of this prophecy were fulfilled a few days before the atoning death of Christ. Dan. 9:25-26.

Dan. 9:24 contains six promised blessings to Israel from the Lord, which were to be fulfilled within the scope of the seventy weeks prophecy. In this article we have shown that not one of these promised blessings has yet been fulfilled. We believe this shows conclusively that the seventieth week, or last seven years of this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. At the end of the seventieth week Jesus will return to earth and fulfill the unparalleled blessings promised to Israel.

## ***The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel's Prophecy***

### ***Daniel 9:24-27***

#### ***Article V***

#### ***The Last Seven Years Of This Age***

In our study of this prophecy we have thus far brought out the following facts:

1. The full measure of God's blessing to Jerusalem and to Israel as expressed in Dan. 9:24, was to be deferred until the expiration of a period of seventy weeks of years, or 490 years.

2. This period of 490 years was to begin with the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem. Dan. 9:25.

3. The commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem was given in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, in the month Nisan. Neh. 2:1-9. The date of the issuing of this commandment has been established by secular historians to be March 14, B. C. 445.

4. From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince was to be 69 weeks of years. Dan. 9:25. According to the Julian calendar Jesus was acclaimed as

the Prince of Israel by a very great multitude on Sunday, April 6th, 32 A. D. Mt. 21:1-9.

What then was the length of time intervening between the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, between March 14, B. C. 445 and April 6th, 32 A. D.? THE INTERVAL CONTAINED EXACTLY AND TO THE VERY DAY 69 WEEKS OF YEARS, OR 483 YEARS OF 360 DAYS EACH.

5. After the threescore and two weeks following the first seven weeks, Messiah was to be cut off or crucified. Dan. 9:25, 26. We know that Jesus was crucified a few days after His manifestation as Messiah the Prince.

6. Up to this point there remains one week, or 7 years of this prophecy to be accounted for. In article IV of this series of Bible studies, we have shown that the last week of years of this prophecy cannot have been fulfilled in the past. We arrived at this conclusion because God's promises to Israel given in Dan. 9:24, which come within the scope of this prophecy have not yet been fulfilled.

We have no less an authority than Jesus Himself to the fact that the last seven years of this prophecy will be fulfilled just prior to His coming in power and great glory.

In His Olivet discourse with His disciples Jesus predicted two periods of great distress for Jerusalem. The first period refers to the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, in 70 A. D. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people." Luke 21:20-24.

It is a matter of historical tradition that when the armies of Titus surrounded Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the Christians who were in it observed the warning of Jesus and left the city. It is said that not one of them was killed, or even hurt, whereas multiplied thousands of non-Christian Jews were slaughtered. Jerusalem at that time was completely destroyed as a habitable city.

Jesus predicted another time of distress and tribulation for Jerusalem. The sign of the first distress was "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies," but the sign of the second distress and tribulation was to be "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place." Dan. 9:27; Dan. 12:11; Mt. 24:15-31.

The abomination of desolation will stand in the holy place at a time of great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be. Jesus said that immediately after that tribulation He shall return in power and great glory. Mt. 24:15-21, 29, 30.

What is the abomination of desolation?

Two princes are mentioned in the seventy weeks prophecy. Messiah the Prince who was crucified over nineteen centuries ago, and one designated as the prince that shall come. Dan. 9:25-27. We believe that the latter is called the coming prince, because he appears in Dan. 7:8, 24, 25 as the little horn who will wear out the saints of the most High for three and one-half years. Rev. 13:5.

This coming prince will make a firm covenant with many for one week. He will make a covenant with the nation of Israel for one week, or a period of seven years. The signing of this covenant will date the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy. Jesus will return at the close of the seventieth week and fulfill the promises made to Israel in Dan. 9:24.

Since the little horn, who is also known as the coming prince, will ultimately become the Anti-Christ, that is what we shall call him hereafter. In his covenant with the Jews the Anti-Christ evidently will grant them military protection and religious freedom.

In the midst of the week, or three and one-half years after Anti-Christ has made a covenant with Israel, he will break his covenant and restrain them from offering sacrifices. Dan. 9:27. At that time the abomination of desolation will be set up in the holy place. Dan. 9:27; Daniel 12:11; Mt. 24:15.

From the time that the Anti-Christ breaks his covenant with Israel, he will become a great persecutor and oppressor of God's people. He will demand human worship of everyone. It is said of him "that he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God." II Thes. 2:4. This assumption of deity on his part, this invasion of the temple by him, this demand of human worship will make him the abomination that will bring desolation. In the old Testament idols were called abominations. I Kings 11:5, 7; II Kings 23:13. Any thing, or person, worshipped instead of God would be an idol. There is a strong presumption that the image of the Anti-Christ will be placed in the temple to be worshipped. Rev. 13:11-15.

Since the abomination of desolation will be set up in the holy place in the midst of the last seven years of Daniel's prophecy, and since that event will be connected with the great tribulation and the return of Jesus in power and great glory, we know that the seventieth week of years of this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. Dan. 9:27; Dan 12:11; Mt. 24:15-31.

## **The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel's Prophecy**

**Daniel 9:24-27**

### **Article VI**

#### **The Church Age Fills The Gap Between The Sixty-Nine Weeks And The Seventieth Week Of This Prophecy. Who The Jews Are**

In previous articles we have brought out the fact that 483 years of the 490 years of this prophecy which are decreed upon the Jews and upon Jerusalem before the full measure of national blessings promised to Israel in Dan. 9:24, come to pass, have already been fulfilled. We have also shown that the 70th week, or the last seven years of this prophecy remains unfulfilled. How can this gap, or interruption in the fulfillment of this prophecy, be justified?

God is a God of sovereign power and authority. He is under no obligation to give to any one a reason for His actions. The prophecy itself does not demand that it be fulfilled without interruption. However, there is a precedent in Scripture for God not counting time when His people were in divine disfavor.

"According to the book of Kings, Solomon began to build the temple in the 480th year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt. This statement, than which none could, seemingly, be more exact, has sorely puzzled chronologers, By some it has been condemned as a forgery, by others it has been dismissed as a blunder; but all have agreed in rejecting it. Moreover, Scripture itself appears to clash with it. In his sermon at Antioch of Pisidia, St. Paul epitomizes thus the chronology of this period of the history of his nation: forty years in the wilderness; 450 years under the Judges, and forty years of the reign of Saul; making a total of 530 years. To which must be added the forty years of David's reign and the first three years of Solomon's making 573 years for the very period which is described in Kings as 480 years. I Kings 6:1; Acts 13:18-21. Can these conclusions apparently so inconsistent, be reconciled?

"If we follow the history of Israel as detailed in the book of Judges, we shall find that for several periods, their national existence as Jehovah's people was in abeyance. In punishment for their idolatry, God gave them up again and again, and "sold them into the hands of their enemies." They became slaves to the king of Mesopotamia for eight years, to the king of Moab for eighteen years, to the king of Canaan for twenty years, to the Midianites for seven years, and finally to the Philistines for forty years. Jud. 3:8, 14; 4:2, 3; 6:1; 13:1. The servitude of Jud. 10:7, 9 affected only the tribes beyond Jordan, and

did not suspend Israel's national position. But the sum of 8 plus 18 plus 20 plus 7 plus 40 years is 93 years, and if 93 years be deducted from 573 years, the result is 480 years. It is obvious, therefore, that the 480 years of the book of Kings from the Exodus to the temple is a mystic era formed by eliminating every period during which the people were cast off by God. If, then, this principle were intelligible to the Jew in regard to history, it was both natural and legitimate to introduce it in respect of an essentially mystic era like that of the seventy weeks." Sir. Robert Anderson in "The Coming Prince."

A few days after 483 years of this prophecy were fulfilled the Jews crucified their Messiah. This brought the divine disfavor upon them as a nation. So far as the 70 weeks prophecy is concerned, God's prophetic clock has quit ticking. Jews as individuals may be saved by repentance toward God and personal trust in Jesus as their Savior, but the nation so far as national blessings are concerned is cast off during this church age.

God, who knows the end from the beginning, foresaw that the Jews would crucify their Messiah, and purposed "from the beginning of the world" . . . Eph. 3:9 . . . to form in this age One Body, the Church, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles. Eph. 3:1-6. So the gap in the fulfillment of this prophecy is used by the Lord to build his church.

Perhaps a few words are in order here about Daniel's people. Dan. 9:24. We believe that it is quite likely that Daniel was of the king's seed. Dan. 1:1-3. If so, he would be of the tribe of Judah. Then why not call him and his people Jews instead of Israelites?

The descendants of Jacob whose name was changed to Israel were originally generally called the children of Israel. But when the kingdom was divided into two nations, I Kings 12:1-33, the smaller nation was called the kingdom of Judah, and the ten tribe nation was called Israel. The name Jew was applied to a member of the kingdom of Judah after the separation of the ten tribes. II Kings 16:6. After the captivity of the two nations, the word Jew, or Israelite, was used regardless of the tribe. Ezekiel, in his prophesying after the captivity, called the captives of the kingdom of Judah, Israelites. The books of Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah all use the word Jew regardless of the tribe. This is also true of the word Israel. This practice was also carried into the New Testament. So after the captivity, the word Jew, or Israelite is applied to any descendant of Jacob regardless of tribal connection.

God's promises of Dan. 9:24 are not for Judah alone, but for all twelve tribes. When God said, "All Israel shall be saved," Rom. 11:26, He meant members of all twelve tribes who are living at the time of Jesus' return who qualify.

At this time the majority of Israelites are blind to the fact that Jesus is their Messiah. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Rom. 11:25. The fulness of the Gentiles refers to the full number of Gentiles that are to be saved in this church age. At the close of the church age blindness will begin to be lifted from Israel.

God will again begin to deal with Israel as a nation when the Anti-Christ makes a firm covenant with the Jews for one week, or seven years. Dan. 9:27. The signing of this covenant will mark the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. The Prince will evidently give the Jews religious freedom and pledge military protection. After three and one-half years of this covenant he "shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." Dan. 9:27. He will break his covenant with Israel and become their persecutor and oppressor. He will receive a deadly wound from which he will recover, but from this time his character will be altogether devilish. For a period of three and one-half years he will demand human worship, and will be the greatest persecutor of God's people who are still on earth this world has ever known. II Thes. 2:3-9; Revelation chapter thirteen.

The last three and one-half years of his reign is called in Scripture the time of "Jacob's trouble." Jer. 30:1-11. It will be during the time of Jacob's trouble that God's two witnesses will prophecy in Jerusalem. Were it not for the power of God's witnesses to bring judgment upon evildoers, Israel would probably be destroyed during this time. Rev. 11:3-12.

At the end of the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy the two witnesses will be killed. After three and one-half days they will be raised from the dead and caught up to heaven. Soon after this Jesus will return to fight the battle of Armageddon. He will save Jerusalem and the Jewish nation from destruction. Zech. 12:1-9. Zech. 14:1-4. It is at the return of Jesus that God's promises to Israel found in Dan. 9:24 will be fulfilled.

Israel restored and converted will in a special sense be God's earthly people. They will be the leading nation in the world during the Millennium. Micah 4:1-7.

The church will be God's heavenly people.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# ***The Last Generation Matthew 24***

## ***Article I***

### ***The Composite Sign Of The Return Of Christ***

"Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" Mt. 24:3. "Consummation of the age," is preferred by many Bible scholars to "end of the world." What is sometimes called the Olivet discourse was given by Jesus during the close of His ministry, in response to these questions. The Olivet discourse may be found in Mt. chapters 24 and 25; Mark chapter 13 and Luke 21:5-11, 20-36.

"These things," in the disciples' first question, refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple. Mt. 24:1, 2. Jesus answered this question in that part of the Olivet discourse found in Luke 21:20-24. Jesus clearly answered the second question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the consummation of the age?" in Matthew chapter 24.

### ***"Signs and "The Sign"***

Jesus knew that in course of time there would be many signs of the nearness of His return. In order to protect His disciples from possible error, and deception, He first gave a negative answer to their questions.

#### ***1. False Christs Are Not The Sign.***

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Mt. 24:4, 5.

Throughout this Christian era there have been at least seventy-two people at one time or other, each of whom professed to be Christ. They deceived many people but God's people were forewarned. They were not to be regarded as a sign of the nearness of the return of Jesus.

#### ***2. Wars Of a Local Nature Between Two or More Nations Are Not The Sign.***

Jesus knew that throughout this age there would be local wars between two or more nations. He also knew that within the lifetime of many of the disciples then living, the Roman Legions would march into Palestine and destroy its villages, and its cities, and massacre multitudes of Israelites. His disciples were not to regard this as a sign that His coming was near.

### **Jesus Gives His Disciples A Positive Answer**

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Mt. 24:7, 8.

The word sorrows, in Mt. 24:8, is a translation of the Greek word, *odin*. It is also the word for travail, or birthpangs. The end of this age implies the birth of a new age, which will be preceded by birthpangs.

"The Sign" Jesus gave was a composite sign, composed of four distinct elements, and all to occur in a relatively short period of time. One of these elements alone could not constitute "the sign," but all four of them . . . a world war, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes would be the beginning of the sorrows of the end of the age, and the beginning of the birthpangs of a new age.

The first element of the composite sign is war. Not ordinary war between two or more nations, but a world war . . . "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." The first world war began in 1914. Soon after the declaration of this war, twenty-seven different nations quickly declared their participation in it. This war eventually involved forty-three of the principal nations of the earth. General Tasker Bliss placed the number of the dead at 11,000,000. Field Marshal Robertson said that if you add the number of the victims of blockades, revolutions, bombardments, sunken and shipwrecked boats, the death toll would be 37,000,000.

Famines is the next element of this sign. Soon following the first world war came the great Chinese famine of 1920. The London Times gave a summary of it. "The population now totally destitute in Chihli is 6,000,000; in Shantung, 2,500,000; in Honan, 3,500,000; in Shensi 1,000,000; in Shansi, 500,000." The number of deaths will never be known.

A year later, the Volga Valley in Russia was swept by famine described by the then Archbishop of Canterbury in these words, "Never in the history of the world has a condition of things existed comparable to the ghastly death by famine of whole millions of men, women and children." Dr. Charles G. Trumbell said of it, "The Russian famine of 1921 was unparalleled." D. M. Panton wrote "Thirty thousand Russians are dying of starvation every day." Robert Ripley, after a tour of the famine stricken area, said the dead were in the

millions. Dr. Nansen, a famous scientist and explorer said of it, "The famine is beyond doubt the most appalling that has ever happened in the recorded history of man."

Pestilences is the next element of this composite sign. Soon after World War One, the epidemic of influenza spread almost simultaneously all over the world. Scribner's magazine says that 20,000,000 people died of this pestilence. Typhus also took a toll of 6,000,000 lives.

Earthquakes is the last element of this composite sign. It is estimated that during the first thousand years of the Christian era there were only five earthquakes recorded for each century. In the 15th century, there were 174 earthquakes; the 17th century had 278; the 18th century had 640; and the 19th century had 2119. In 1920, an earthquake in China killed 180,008 persons. And in 1923, an earthquake in Japan killed 143,000 persons.

Every element of this composite sign . . . a world war including all the leading nations of the earth, the greatest famines the world has ever known, the greatest pestilences in the recorded history of man . . . that of influenza and of typhus, and mighty earthquakes, all took place within a period of less than ten years, from 1914 to 1923. Jesus said that "All These Are The Beginning Of Sorrows." All these taken together, signify that the return of Jesus, and of the consummation of the age are near.

The statement "the beginning of sorrows," implies that others are to follow. In the course of nature, the first sorrows, or birthpangs, are followed by others. At first they may be far between, and not always intensely severe, but as time goes on one may expect them to occur more often, and to become more painful. So it has been in this sick old world since the beginning of sorrows. Mt. 24; 7, 8.

During the close of the first world war there was a Bolshevik revolution in Russia, in which multitudes lost their lives. Political dissidents were imprisoned, many were sent to labor camps, and multitudes of them were executed. Twenty million kulaks, or farmers, were killed because they refused to cooperate with the government program for them. There was a revolution in Germany in which much blood was shed. Mussolini waged war against Ethiopia, and World War II occurred in which millions lost their lives. The Spanish Civil War caused much suffering, and a revolution in China brought that great nation under the heels of communism. Additional sorrows were brought about by wars in Algeria, the Congo, and other parts of Africa; wars in Korea, Malaysia, and Indonesia, a war between India and Pakistan, and there have been three wars between the Arab States and Israel. China crushed Tibet, and now the Vietnam war is in progress.

In the last few years, here in America, in some parts of many of our large cities, we have been confronted, at times, with massive civil disobedience, riots, arson, rapine and murder.

## ***The Last Generation Matthew 24***

### ***Article II***

#### ***Signs Of The Last Generation***

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." Mt. 24:9, 10. In Luke 21:12-17, Jesus made reference to persecutions of the early church, but not here. Be it remembered that Mt. 24 gives us the answer of Jesus to the disciples' question, "what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the consummation of the age?" End time persecutions of Christians that began following World War One are in view here. Notice the word "Then," in the scriptures quoted above. The dictionary tells us that the word may be defined as, "at that time; next; immediately; thereafter; later."

It is historically true that with the introduction of communism in Russia, and other nations, the great end time persecution of Christians began. In Russia atheism is taught in the schools. From the beginning of organized communism there, children with Christian parents have been encouraged to betray them to the authorities. Neighbor has betrayed neighbor, and children of Christian parents have often informed against them. Many Christians have been imprisoned, some sent to prison labor camps, others tortured, and many killed. This has been true, not only in Russia, but also in China, and every communist state.

In recent years Russia seems to have changed her attitude toward the Christian religion. The Greek Orthodox church is allowed to function there now, but her ministers are few, and they are closely supervised by the state. The people may have religion if they demand it . . . provided it is religion controlled by communism.

In some of the large cities a few congregations of spiritual people are allowed, for the purpose of propaganda. In Moscow, there is a truly spiritual Baptist church, but only one is allowed in a city of several million people. The Russian leaders are Anti-God, and Anti-Christ. Persecution of true Christians in communist countries, though oftentimes veiled, persists. It has been, and continues to be persistent, and relentless.

Jesus gave two signs that are sometimes overlooked. He said "Now learn a parable of the fig tree: when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Mt. 24:32-34. See also Luke 21:29-32. We believe that the primary sense of these scriptures is this: just as surely as the

budding of the fig tree, and of all the trees is a sure token of the coming of summer, so is also the actual coming to pass of the signs given by Jesus in the Olivet discourse a positive sign of His near coming,<sup>1</sup> but we believe that in these scriptures, there is a parable within a parable.

Many Bible scholars believe that the fig tree is a symbol of the Jewish nation. Luke 13:6-9. Students of prophecy also see in the fig tree putting forth leaves as a prediction of the build up of the Jewish nation. Ps. 102:13-16. Israel has put forth leaves of national life. On May 15, 1948, she became an independent nation. This is a sure sign of the soon return of Jesus. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." Ps. 102:16.

"Behold the fig tree and all the trees." Luke 21:29. If the putting forth of the leaves of the fig tree has prophetic significance, we believe that the putting forth of the leaves of all the trees, also has prophetic significance. There is a great spirit of nationalism in nearly every nation in the world. Chechoslovakia, Roumania, and South Africa are prime examples.

Another great sign of the putting forth of the leaves of the trees may be seen in the many nations that have come into being since Israel became a nation in 1948. Since the break up of the British, and of the French empires, nearly one hundred new nations have sprung up, according to a Bible student who is informed along these lines.

Jesus said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Mt. 24:33. The disciples perhaps wondered how near His return would be when it was "at the doors." Jesus said that it would be less than a generation. Mt. 24:34. Did Jesus pinpoint the beginning of the last generation, and does the Bible tell us how long a generation is? The answer is yes to both questions.

How long a period of time is a generation? Since we are dealing with a Bible subject let us seek a Bible answer. Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines generation as, "the whole multitude of people living at the same time." Mt. 24:34. The Amplified New Testament concurs in this definition. We quote "Truly I tell you, this generation . . . that is, the whole multitude of people living at the same time, in a definite, given period . . . will not pass away till all these things taken together take place."

What is the definite, given period, referred to above? Could it be the period that began with World War One, in 1914, which marked the beginning of the composite sign given by Jesus as The Sign of His coming, and end with the return of Jesus? Mt. 24:27-30. We firmly believe that all of Matthew, chapter 24, deals with end time events, and the last generation of this age.

It is also said that this period "will not pass away till all these things, taken together, take place." What are "all these things, taken together," that Jesus is talking about? The prediction of end time events found in the Olivet discourse. Some of them are:

1. The composite sign that would signify the soon coming of Jesus. Mt. 24:7.
2. The great persecution of end time Christians. Mt. 24:9, 10.
3. Israel, to put forth the leaves of national life. Mt. 24:32.
4. Gentile people, to put forth leaves of national life. "And all the trees . . . " Luke 21:29.
5. Worldwide preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. Mt. 24:14.
6. The rise of the Anti-Christ, and the great tribulation. Mt. 24:15-21.
7. The return of Jesus. Mt. 24:27-30.

If we interpret Jesus correctly, "the whole multitude of people living at the time" of the fulfilling of the composite sign that signifies His soon coming, shall not pass away until His return. If this is so, then we have been in the last generation of this age since 1914. Mt. 24:7; Mt. 24:33, 34. "Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# ***The Key To The Interpretation Of The Book of Revelation***

## ***Article I***

### ***The Key To The Book Is Its Threefold Division***

Many expositors of the book of Revelation have made a guessing game of its interpretation. One learned commentator explains the action which takes place after the opening of the sixth seal, Rev. 6:12-17, as the total route of the pagan armies by the professed Christian Emperor Constantine. One well known Bible expositor asserted nearly one hundred years ago, that nearly all of the vial judgments of Revelation, chapter sixteen were already fulfilled in his day. He explained the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates river, mentioned in Rev. 16:12, as the destruction of the old Turkish Empire.

There is a God given key to the interpretation of the book of Revelation which should deliver one from all such fanciful and irresponsible handling of God's Word.

### **The Key to the Book is its Threefold Division**

Rev. 1:19

1. The Things Which Thou Hast Seen
2. The Things Which Are
3. The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter
  - a. The Things Which Thou Hast Seen. The vision of the Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Rev. 1:10-20.
  - b. The Things Which Are. The things pertaining to the churches as found in chapters 2 and 3.
  - c. The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter. Hereafter . . . Greek meta tauta. Literally, after these things. In other words, the things which shall come to pass after the church period ends.

It will be noticed that letters were addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor. Why seven? It is a well known fact that there were more

than seven churches in that area. The number seven abounds in the book of Revelation. There are seven churches, seven Spirits of God, seven stars, seven lamps of fire, seven seals, seven horns, seven eyes, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven thousand men, seven heads, seven crowns, seven last plagues, seven golden vials, seven mountains, seven kings, etc.

"It is therefore the number of dispensational fulness. And whatever bears this number, in the divine reckoning, is full, complete, with nothing left out, and nothing of its own kind to be added." J. A. Seiss, in *Lectures on the book of Revelation*.

Since the number seven, when used symbolically, means full, complete, dispensational fulness, and since the book of Revelation is five times declared to be a book of prophecy, and since immediately following the end of the church period the scene shifts from earth to heaven where there are redeemed human beings from every nation, Rev. 4:4; Rev. 5:8-10, we are sure that we are standing on sound scriptural ground when we assert that in the messages to the seven churches, God intends to give a complete view of the church from Apostolic times throughout the centuries until the close of the church age.

The messages to the seven churches have a fourfold application:

1. Local, to the churches actually addressed at the time John received the Revelation.
2. To all churches in all time as tests by which they may discern their true spiritual state in the sight of God.
3. To the individual member of the church who may be warned by the failure revealed, and encouraged by the promise to the overcomer.
4. Dispensationally, and Prophetically, they clearly define seven periods, or phases, of church history from Apostolic days to the end of the church age.

The book of Revelation is the only book in the Bible where the divisions are given, and they are here given by Christ Himself.

The first division of the book was fulfilled as soon as John saw the vision of Jesus in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

The second division was in being, and in process of fulfillment in John's day. We are still in that division and will continue to be so until the end of the church age.

The third division will begin immediately following the end of the church age as indicated in Rev. 4:1. The third division will include everything from chapter four, through chapter twenty-two.

The beginning of the third division repeats part of the key to the interpretation of the Book given by Jesus in Rev. 1:19.

"After this" at the beginning, and "hereafter," at the end of the sentence in Rev. 4:1, are translations of the Greek phrase *meta tauta*, which literally translated is "after these things." The Syriac and Emphatic Diaglott versions give the translation of *meta tauta* as "after all this."

It is important to remember that "the things which must be hereafter," Rev. 4:1, will not begin to take place until the end of the church age.

## ***The Key To The Interpretation Of The Book of Revelation***

### ***Article II***

#### ***Dr. Seiss On The Historical Interpretation Of The Book***

According to the divinely given key to the interpretation of the book of Revelation, one must necessarily reach the conclusion that not one of the seven seals of the seven sealed book has yet been opened, Rev. 5:1-9. The events recorded in Rev., Chapter 6 await fulfillment in the future.

However, we agree with what an eminent Bible expositor of the nineteenth century had to say on the subject of the historical interpretation of the Revelation.

We quote: "Some maintain that we are now living under the sixth vial and that nearly everything up to the eighteenth chapter has already been fulfilled. Nor will I dispute that there is a sense, dim and inchoate, in which this is true. Prophecy, in its fulfillment, is made up of several concentric circles, blended in the same general picture. It is said that history is continually repeating itself. Much truer is this of prophecy. But each fulfillment is in a higher fulness till the last sums up all. THERE IS BUT ONE AND ULTIMATE LITERAL FULFILLMENT OF ANY PROPHECY, but in anticipation of that there are typical and precursory fulfillments . . . preliminary rehearsals in advance of the grand performance. We can accordingly trace out in history a very interesting but not always distinct correspondence to what is contained in the first eighteen chapters of this book. But if that were the true and only fulfillment so much learning and acquaintance with history would be necessary in order to track it through the multiplicity and complication of human event, that it must needs remain an uncertain and secondhand thing to the great body of the Lord's people. I look then for another simpler, more direct and easier understood fulfillment.

"It has been said that the way for a missionary to approach a non-Christian population is to 'carry a Bible in one hand and Gibbon in the

other, to show out of the pages of an infidel historian how exactly the prophets have up to the present time been fulfilled' but it will require more evidence than I have yet seen to convince me that it is necessary to take men through the school of the historian, whether skeptic or not, in order to teach them the truth of Christianity or the meaning of the prophets. **THE SCRIPTURES ARE SELF-DEMONSTRATIVE AND SELF-EXPLANATORY, IF MEN WILL ONLY READ THEM AS THEY ARE WRITTEN AND LET THEM SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.** Valuable as history is, and much as may be made of Gibbon, we need neither of them to get at the true meaning of the Apocalypse. (The Revelation). The early Christians had them not and yet understood this book better than all the hundreds of learned commentators who think to verify their interpretation out of Gibbon and history. In other words, the exclusively historic school of interpreters, as things appear to me, do but darken and obscure this book with learned rubbish, and lend their influence to the mischievous notion that it is a book of wild and grotesque fables, and uncertain riddles, which it is wisdom, greatness and piety in a man never to touch.

"Whilst, then, I admit that these predictions may have had a dim, imperfect, but oft scarcely traceable fulfillment in the past, I am firmly convinced that the true and proper fulfillment of everything beyond the third chapter is to take place only after the church has run its course and completed history." Dr. J. A. Seiss in *Lectures On The Book Of Revelation*.

## **Symbols In The Book Of Revelation**

### **Article I**

#### **God's Two Witnesses**

The book of Revelation contains many symbols. In fact, there are more symbols in the Revelation than in any other book in the Bible. In order to escape utter confusion in the interpretation of this book it is important to remember that the **BIBLE INTERPRETS ITS OWN SYMBOLS.** The key to the meaning of some of its symbols is to be found in the Old Testament. When new symbols are introduced, whose meanings are not clear, their symbolic meaning is given.

Following are some symbols in the Revelation:

1. **SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS.** Rev. 1:12. The candlesticks are explained to be seven churches. Rev. 1:20.
2. **SEVEN STARS.** Rev. 1:16. The stars are explained to be the angels of the seven churches. Rev. 1:20. The word angel is translated from the word that means messenger. It is often used of men. Luke 7:24. As used in Revelation 1:20 it probably refers to representatives of the seven churches.

3. A SHARP TWO EDGED SWORD. Rev. 1:16; 19:15, 21. His own word. Heb. 4:12.

4. FOUR BEASTS. Rev. 4:6-11; 5:4, 8, 11, 14; 6:1, 3, 5, 6, 7. The word translated beast in the foregoing scriptures is the Greek word "zoon" which means living creatures or living beings and is so translated in the Amplified New Testament and other modern translations.

5. BEAST. Rev. 11:7. Also in chapters thirteen and seventeen. A translation of the Greek word "theiron" means a wild beast. The word aptly describes the character of the Beast Empire, Rev. 13:1-3; Dan. 7:7, 23 and the Beast Emperor, Rev. 13:4-10; Dan. 7:8, 24-26.

The second Beast of Rev. 13:11, will be a man who will aid and abet the Beast Emperor. Rev. 13:12-18. In Rev. 19:20 and Rev. 20:10, he is called the false prophet. Toward the close of his reign the Beast Emperor, with the aid of Satan through the agency of evil spirits, will gather the armies of the world to Palestine to fight against Israel. Rev. 16:13-16; Zech. 12:1-9; Zech. 14:1-3. It seems that while he is thus engaged, he sees the sign of the return of Jesus and attempts to fight against Him. Rev. 19:19. He and the false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire. Rev. 19:20.

6. THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD. Rev. 5:6. See Isa. 11:2, 3.

- a. "Spirit of Wisdom"
- b. "And understanding"
- c. "Of counsel"
- d. "And might"
- e. "Of knowledge"
- f. "And fear of the Lord"
- g. "And quick understanding"

7. COLORS.

a. White. Peace, righteousness. Rev. 6:2; Rev. 19:8. The white horse rider will be engaged in a peaceful conquest. No bloodshed.

b. Red. Bloodshed, war. Rev. 6:4; II Kings 3:22, 23.

c. Black. Calamity, distress, famine. Rev. 6:5; 12; Lam. 5:10.

d. Purple and scarlet. Rev. 17:4. Scarlet is the distinctive color of the Roman Catholic Church. The inner cloak of The Pope is scarlet, the carriage in which he rides is scarlet, the carpet that is placed for him to walk on is scarlet. The cardinals' hats, clocks and stockings are scarlet. Arch-bishops wear a purple robe.

The woman who is represented as sitting on a scarlet colored beast and who is called "MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE

MOTHER OF HARLOTS," Rev. chapter seventeen, represents a world federation of churches under the headship of the Roman Catholic Church. All the elements that will make up this harlot church are now in being, but this church is not yet as fully organized as we expect her to be in the near future.

Catholics are now divided. The Russian and Greek Orthodox churches do not recognize the Pope as their head Bishop. They have their own patriarchs. Exploratory talks are now in progress with a view to seek a solution to the differences between the different Catholic groups.

For many years, after the Protestant Reformation, Catholics called Protestants "heretics" and "schismatics." Now they have adopted a more mellow mood. Protestants are now called "our other brethren." Catholics are advocating a return of Protestants to the Roman Catholic Church.

Many churchmen of the Church of England, and modernistic ministers of other Protestant churches, are advocating reunion with Rome. It seems quite likely that in the not too distant future a working arrangement will be reached between apostate Protestant churches and Rome, in which the Protestants will acknowledge the Pope as the first and universal Bishop. The Roman Catholic Church will probably allow the Protestant clergy to marry and will make other minor concessions. Then will come into being the World Federation of Churches as seen in Revelation, chapter seventeen.

This church will be destroyed by the ten kings allied with the Beast Emperor. Rev. 17:16.

e. Horses. Job 39:19-25; II Kings 6:15-18. Swift and irresistible power.

f. Horns. Dan. 7:7, 8, 24. Rev. 13:1; Rev. 17:3, 12. Kings.

g. Dragon. Rev. 12:3, 9. The devil. Satan.

We are convinced that one should hold to the literal meaning of the words used in the Revelation, UNLESS THERE IS CLEAR PROOF OF A FIGURATIVE OR SYMBOLIC USE. Many Bible expositors have assumed that everything in the Revelation has a symbolical meaning. This is far from being the case.

A case in point is the many different explanations that Bible expositors have given of God's Two Witnesses, Rev., chapter eleven. Some expositors claim that the Two Witnesses were John Huss and Jerome of Prague. There is no evidence that these two reformers ever preached in Jerusalem for three and a half years, clothed in sackcloth. History cannot produce any proof that these men had miracle working power to bring judgment on their enemies. They didn't die in the

manner the Two Witnesses of Revelation, chapter eleven will die. Some expositors teach that the Two Witnesses were two groups of people who were God's true witnesses for a period of 1260 years. And yet other expositors say that they represent the Old and the New Testaments.

We quote from Dr. J. A. Seiss: "These witnesses are persons. Primasius says, though somewhat equivocally, "The Two Witnesses represent the Two Testaments preached by the Christian Church to the world," and Bede, and Bishop Andrews, and Melchior, and Affelman, and Croly, and Wordsworth, and some others have taken this view. But it is altogether a mistaken view, necessitated by the embarrassment occasioned by wrong conceptions of the Apocalypse, rejected by the overwhelming majority of interpreters, ancient and modern, and utterly irreconcilable with the text. It is not true that the Old and New Testaments are preached to the world only 1260 days, or years, and then end their testimony; . . . that they are arrayed in sackcloth all the days they are preached; . . . that fire issues out of their mouths and kills those who will to injure them; . . . that there is no rain upon the earth during the days of their prophesyings; . . . that they have power over waters to convert them into blood, or at will to smite the earth with plagues; . . . that they are capable of being killed by man; . . . or that indignity can be offered them, being dead, by refusing to allow them to be put into a sepulchre. Yet all these things are affirmed of these Witnesses. Ten times do we find this word (translated Witnesses) in the New Testament, and in every other place but this no one questions that it denotes persons. In more than fifty places in the Old Testament the corresponding Hebrew word denotes persons only. These persons prophesy. This is the work of a person. More than one hundred times does this word occur in the Bible, and never, except once by metonymy, but of persons. These Witnesses wear clothing of sackcloth, of which we read much in the Scriptures, but always of persons. They work miracles and execute judgments, but nothing of the sort is ever predicted of anything but personal agents. Not without the greatest violence to language and fact, therefore, can we regard these Witnesses as other than real persons. The conclusion may be very damaging to some men's cherished theories, but the integrity of God's Word requires it, and it is impossible to escape it with any just regard to the laws of language and the nature of things.

"These Witnesses are individuals. No reader of the account, having no pre-conceived theory to defend, would ever think of taking them for bodies or successions of people. All the early fathers, from whom we have testimony on the subject, regarded them as two individual men. Two distinct and conspicuous bodies of witnesses for Christ, all prophesying in sackcloth through 1260 years, or even days, and all dying martyrs, as here represented, expositors have searched in vain to find in the history of the Christian ages. Such bodies of men, with such powers, and with such a history, have never existed."

## **One Hundred Forty Four Thousand Sealed Israelites**

In Rev. 7:1-8, one may read the account of the sealing of one hundred forty and four thousand of the tribes of the children of Israel. Strange as it may seem to some of our readers, some Bible interpreters teach that those who will be sealed need not be natural descendants of Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. Gen. 32:28. It is claimed that on the basis of Rom. 2:28, 29, and other scriptures, that converted Gentiles become spiritual Israelites, and thus may qualify to be among those sealed.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. The only people who can possibly be spiritual Israelites, are natural Israelites who have become converted and have received spiritual life. Converted Gentiles become spiritual Gentiles, but not spiritual Israelites. This is quite apparent by the teaching of several scriptures that we shall examine. Let us read Rom. 2:17-29, carefully and prayerfully. It is easy to see that this entire passage of scripture deals exclusively with Jews. Jews, who are Jews by birth, as the natural descendants of Israel, and Jews who become spiritual Israelites, or true Jews, by becoming converted.

Paul's argument is that the Jews claimed to be God's people, they had the law of God, they knew God's will and claimed to be capable of teaching those who were in darkness. Yet, despite all these claims, they did not live up to the teaching of the law of God. As a result of their inconsistent living, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles. They were not true Jews, but only Jews outwardly, the natural descendants of Israel. They needed to become true Jews by receiving spiritual life through Christ. Rom. 2:28, 29.

Jesus indicated the difference between an Israelite who is one outwardly as a natural descendant of Israel, and an Israelite indeed, a true Israelite or Jew, because he had right relationship with God when he said concerning Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." Jno. 1:47. Paul stated the same truth when he wrote, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Rom. 9:6. Paul was saying that not every descendant of Israel is an Israelite indeed, or a true Jew who is one inwardly. Only a natural Israelite who becomes converted meets the qualification.

In Gal. 6:16 Paul wrote, "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, AND UPON THE ISRAEL OF GOD." Who were the Israel of God? Certainly not converted Gentiles, but converted Israelites. There is strong internal evidence in Paul's letter to the Galatian converts that Gentile Christians were the ones principally addressed because Gentiles predominated in the churches of Galatia. However, there were some Jewish converts there. They were the Israel of God.

Converted Gentiles are called the spiritual children of Abraham because God's promise of salvation to the entire human family came through the Abrahamic covenant. Gal. 3:6-9; Gen. 12:1-3.

Nowhere in scripture are converted Gentiles called the children of Jacob, or Israel. In Rom. 11:17-24, Paul gives an illustration of how the Gentiles were to become partakers of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant by being grafted into the stock of the good olive tree, which in his illustration represents Israel. The Amplified New Testament renders Rom. 11:17 as follows: "But if some of the branches were broken off, while you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among them to share the richness (of the root and sap) of the olive tree." This passage of scripture does not teach that Gentiles become spiritual Israelites when they become Christians. All it teaches is that according to the Abrahamic covenant Gentiles are to share equally in the blessings of the gospel with Israel.

Some nursery catalogs advertise apple trees that will bear as many as five different varieties of apples. The five varieties are grafted into one stock. The part that is grafted into another stock always bears its own kind of fruit. A branch from a Jonathan apple tree that is grafted into the stock of a Delicious apple tree will bear Jonathan apples. A branch from a sweet cherry tree grafted into a sour cherry tree will bear sweet cherries. Likewise, Gentiles grafted by faith into the body of Christ may become spiritual Gentiles, but never spiritual Israelites. We see no warrant anywhere in the Bible for calling converted Gentiles Israelites.

According to the conclusions that we have reached from the study of the foregoing scriptures, the one hundred forty and four thousand sealed Israelites are all natural descendants of Israel. There can be no converted Gentiles among them. They are said to be of the children of Israel. Twelve thousand are sealed of twelve tribes that are named.

Israel as a nation is now in divine disfavor because of her past sins. Jews are eligible to the privileges of the gospel, but the majority of them are blind to the fact that Jesus is their Savior and their Messiah. This blindness will last until the "fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Ro. 11:25. That is, until the full number of Gentiles who are to be saved in this church age have been saved. After the church age closes the blindness that is now upon Israel will be lifted, and at the return of Jesus, Israel as a nation, will be saved and restored to divine favor. Rom. 11:25, 26, 27; Zech. 12th chapter; Zech. 13:8, 9.

Isaiah chapter 54, tells of the desolate condition of Israel since she went into captivity and of her future glory. Ezk. chapters 36 and 37, tell about God's future plans for Israel as a nation after the return of Jesus. Read especially Ezk. 36:24-38; Ezk. 37:21-28; Ezk. 20:33-44; Jer. 32:37-41; Jer. chapter 30.

These scriptures are to be taken literally. The children of Israel mean the natural descendants of Israel and not converted Gentiles. Israel is yet to become the leading nation in the world. Micah 4:1-7.

This article concludes our studies from the book of Revelation. These articles were not meant to be a commentary on the entire book of Revelation but a key to help in the study and interpretation of this wonderful prophetic book.

## ***Salvation During The Great Tribulation***

Some people sincerely believe that no one will receive a spiritual experience of salvation during the time of the great tribulation. There are two principal scriptures that cause them to believe this way. They are:

1. "The door was shut." Mt. 25:6-12. These words are sometimes interpreted to mean that after the rapture of the saints, the door of salvation will be shut. Here the door into the bridehood class is in view, not the door of salvation. There is strong scriptural evidence that some people will continue to be saved during much of the tribulation period.

2. The Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way. II Thes. 2:6, 7. With no Holy Spirit present there can be no regeneration, it is contended.

It is true that the Holy Spirit who indwells the raptured class will at the time of the rapture take them to be with the Lord. The church age at that time will close. The restraining influence of the Holy Spirit will cease to operate as it does today. But these scriptures do not teach that the Holy Spirit will not be in the world at that time. Are we asked to believe that all there is of the Holy Spirit will be in the raptured class? When King Solomon dedicated the temple, he said that "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." I Kings 8:27. This is also true of the Holy Spirit. The raptured class can not contain Him. Psa. 139:7-10. God is everywhere, so is the Holy Spirit. He will continue to operate in the world as He did in Old Testament times.

### **1. Salvation During The Great Tribulation.**

a. All the following scriptures will be fulfilled during the great tribulation. Rev. 6:9-11; Rev. 7:9-17; Rev. 14:6-12; Rev. 15:4; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 18:1-4; Mt. 25:3-40.

b. **STRONG DELUSION:** II Thes. 2:7-12. People of the church age who have heard the truth, and have failed to receive a love for it, will then be given strong delusion by the Lord. They won't be able to be saved during the great tribulation.

## 2. Preachers During The Great Tribulation.

a. We believe the 144,000 sealed Israelites will preach during the first part of the tribulation. Rev. 7:1-4.

The Bible does not say they will preach, but there is a strong presumption that they will. After the rapture, blindness to the fact that Jesus is their Messiah will be lifted from Israel. Rom. 11:25. Some will be saved at that time. The sealed Israelites give evidence of having spiritual life. They carry a heavy burden. Ezk. 9:3, 4. They will be especially protected by the Lord. Rev. 9:1-4. Why? Some people believe that it is to preserve them to enter the millennial kingdom. But there seems to be evidence that many more than the 144,000 will enter the kingdom. Zech. 13:8, 9; Ezk. 20:33-44. We believe that they will be protected to preach Jesus as the Messiah to Israel.

### b. THE TWO WITNESSES. Rev. 11:3-12.

These two men will preach with divine protection over their lives for a period of 1260 days. Their ministry will end just before the return of Jesus.

### c. THREE HEAVENLY PREACHERS. Rev. 14:6-12.

God is so merciful that during the great tribulation He will send three angels to preach to the inhabitants of the earth. The church has failed to reach multitudes of people with its message of the gospel of the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

1. The first angel will preach the everlasting gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Rev. 14:6, 7. This is not a message of the grace of God as preached by the church, but a message of impending judgment. Everybody, without exception, will hear this message. Multitudes who never had a chance to be saved will hear this message, and many will turn to the Lord. "For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isa. 26:9; Ps. 2:7, 8.

2. The second angel will announce the impending fall of Babylon. Rev. 14:8.

3. The third angel will warn against the Anti-Christ. No one will take the mark of the Beast without first having been warned against it by this angel. In view of this message from heaven there won't be any possible excuse for any one to be ignorant of the true nature of the Anti-Christ. Rev. 14:9-12.

## CHAPTER NINE

# **God's Husbandry**

## **I Corinthians 3:9**

### **Article I**

#### **God's Ministers Should Wholly Follow The Lord**

The Amplified New Testament renders I Cor. 3:9 as follows:

"For we are fellow workmen . . . joint promoters, labourers together . . . with and for God; and you are God's garden and vineyard and field under cultivation; you are God's building." Other names for God's people in the New Testament are: "The church of God," "The flock of God," "God's heritage," and "The body of Christ." Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2, 3; Eph. 1:22, 23.

One cannot overestimate the importance of remembering the price God paid for the redemption of His church. May every Christian never forget that he is not his own, that he belongs to God, and that as God's purchased possession he was bought with a price. I Cor. 6:19, 20. And what a price . . . the blood of the Son of God. Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 1:18, 19; Rev. 1:5.

Since the Lord has such a fabulous investment in His heritage, it is only reasonable to expect that He would provide His own chosen workmen to oversee the work in His garden, His vineyard, His field and to feed His church. And such we find to be the case in our study of the Scriptures.

The Scriptures show that in this dispensation of the Holy Spirit **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IN THE SERVICE OF THE LORD IS LEFT TO MERE HUMAN JUDGMENT AND SELF-CHOOSING.** The Lord chooses His own ministers and designates their field of service. Jesus chose, ordained, and commissioned His apostles. Jno. 15:16. It is the Holy Spirit who appoints the true elders to office whether or not they labor in the word and doctrine. Acts 20:17, 28; I Tim. 5:17. The Amplified New Testament renders Acts 20:28 as follows: "Take care and be on guard for yourselves and the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you bishops and guardians to shepherd the church

(that is, tend and feed and guide the church) of the Lord God which He obtained for Himself . . . buying it and saving it for Himself . . . with His own blood."

In Acts 13:1-4, we are told that the Holy Spirit called and sent Saul and Barnabas on a missionary journey. Our thoughts on this incident are that the Holy Spirit had made known to Saul and Barnabas they were to leave the church at Antioch and do missionary work for a while. The church felt they could not get along without them and begged them not to go. So a prayer meeting with fasting was called. The Holy Spirit confirmed to the church His call of these ministers to missionary work. We believe it is safe to assume that the Holy Spirit made known His will to the church through the spiritual gift of prophecy or the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues.

On his second missionary journey Paul had Silas as his companion and helper. The Scriptures make it plain that even the apostle Paul was not always allowed to choose his place of service. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." Acts 16:6, 7. The Lord gave Paul a vision which indicated to him that He wanted him to work in Macedonia. Acts 16:9, 10.

Sometimes the Lord providentially selects the place of service for His ministers, rather than through the direct leading of the Holy Spirit. Such was the case when the church at Jerusalem heard that many people at Antioch were being saved. The church sent Barnabas to minister to them. No doubt both the church at Jerusalem, and Barnabas, knew they were acting in God's will. When Barnabas saw the mighty way in which the Lord was working at Antioch and the magnitude of the work to be done, he felt that other help was needed. A man full of the Holy Ghost, as Barnabas was, would soon know what to do. He went to Tarsus to seek Saul, who later was better known as Paul, to ask him to help minister at Antioch. So we see in this case a door of service was providentially opened to Saul. It may well be that at this very time Saul had been praying for guidance. This incident would correspond to a church inviting a minister to become its pastor. Acts 11:19-26.

What does a church desire in its minister? A church certainly has a right to expect its minister to be a consecrated man of God who seeks first and foremost to please God and to do His will. II Tim. 2:4; Acts 5:29. A church would like for its pastor to be a man of prayer and of faith, and one who carries a burden for the lost and for the spiritual interests of the church. It is not too much for a church to expect its minister to be a faithful and diligent student of God's word, and one who preaches the Word in love without fear or favor. In addition to these basic qualifications, it certainly would be in a minister's

favor if he is not too young, nor too old, if he has a pleasing personality, is a good mixer, makes a good appearance, and is a great soul winner and church builder.

Of course, many ministers come far short of having all the qualities that the exacting members of some of our churches would like to see in their ministers. Yet God has a place in His vineyard for every minister whom He has called. Ministers preach, not because they feel that they are God's supermen, but because they have the call of God on their lives.

There is a passage of Scripture which sheds light on Christ's purpose in giving His ministry gifts to the church. Eph. 4:11-16. We shall give Weymouth's rendering of verses eleven and twelve. "And He Himself appointed some to be apostles, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers in order to fully equip His people for the work of serving . . . for the building up of Christ's body." In addition to being soul winners, the ministers' chief function is to equip, through teaching and preaching, the people of God for their work of serving. And their work of serving contributes to the building up of the church.

It is a great mistake for the church to expect the pastor alone to be a soul winner and to build up the attendance of the church. God places this responsibility on the church as a whole. It is the sheep and not the shepherd who give birth to lambs.

## ***God's Husbandry***

### ***I Corinthians 3:9***

#### ***Article II***

#### ***Encouraging Young Ministers. Calling A Pastor***

"And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps. GOVERNMENTS, diversities of tongues." I Cor. 12:28. This verse of Scripture indicates to us that the Lord has made every provision for the upbuilding and spiritual welfare of His church. The word "governments" is rendered administrators in the Amplified New Testament.

In this dispensation of grace the spiritual oversight, or government, of the church is vested in elders. God does not believe in democracy in church government. Heb. 13:17. Elder and bishop designate the same office. Tit. 1:5, 7; Acts 20:17, 28; Tim. 3:1-7. The former refers to the man, the latter to a function of the office. Some elders labor in the word and doctrine and some do not. I Tim. 5:17. That is, pastors are elders who preach and teach, and there are elders who have the spiritual oversight of the church who do not preach and teach.

How long should a minister remain as pastor of the same church? Certainly as long as the Lord wants him to, but no longer. The fact that a church has lovely people who love their pastor, support him generously, and furnish him with a good place to live should not be the deciding factor as to whether he should stay or leave. Some pastors with children are fortunate in having a charge where the schools are good. The children like their school, and they dread moving from place to place. This is natural, and fathers like to please their children. But a consecrated pastor will sincerely seek to know and to do God's will, whatever it is.

How long should a church keep its pastor? Just as long as the Lord wants it to, and no longer. Some people have the strange and unscriptural idea that the church should procure and dismiss a pastor on the same basis that a business man hires and fires his employees. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The business man is taking care of man's business, but the church is God's business. Far too often mere human judgment, and self-pleasing, enters into the calling of a pastor. The same Holy Spirit who reveals God's will to a consecrated prayerful pastor can reveal His will to the consecrated prayerful governing elders and members of the congregation. If all concerned can pray objectively, sincerely desiring to know and to do God's will whatever it may be, and are willing to lay aside personal preferences and prejudices, the Holy Spirit without fail will make known God's will.

We indicated in a previous article that God has a place in His vineyard for every minister whom He has called to the ministry of His word. Some ministers are quite young and inexperienced, yet the Lord who called them has the right place for them. It should be the constant prayer on the part of the ministry and of the church that God's will be done in the promotion of His work.

Some of our churches are too finicky in their choice of a pastor, or evangelist. They sometimes want a young man, but he must not be too young and inexperienced, and they sometimes want a mature man with experience, but it is desirable that he be not too old.

What is the solution to the perplexing problems faced by both the churches and the ministry in furthering the work of God?

The solution is simple, but not easily carried out. Let both the ministry and the laity always bear in mind that church work is the work of God, and should be carried on according to the will of God. Let both ministry and laity acknowledge that we are too ignorant, in our own wisdom, to run God's business. Let us acknowledge that only an all wise God is capable of knowing where His ministers should work. Let us quit trying to run our own lives and the church of God. Let us concede that this is God's prerogative. Let us lay aside our own human wisdom, our self-pleasing spirit, our personal preferences, and let God have

right of way in all things. If we do this humbly, sincerely and in faith, God will lead us in the solution of our problems.

We are happy to say we believe that perhaps the majority of our churches have been humble enough to seek and to obtain God's directives for the carrying on of His work, and have followed these directives. When God's will is done His people are blessed. When men try to run the business of God in their own wisdom, His work suffers.

In order to train and develop His ministers, the Lord occasionally calls on a well established church to become a nursing mother to a young minister. By this, we mean that a church which normally would engage a minister with a mature ministry, is definitely led to engage as pastor, a young man with no experience. Happy is the church which obeys when the Lord speaks in this way. The Lord, sometimes by force of circumstances, crowds a church into calling the man of His choice as its minister. We know a fine church which tried without success to engage a mature minister as its pastor. Finally, this church called a fine young man to be their shepherd. At first he was not their first choice, but he was God's choice. It was not long until the people fell in love with their pastor and he with them. He grew by leaps and bounds in spiritual stature. He became a blessing to the church and the church to him.

In like manner, the Lord seeks to promote a spirit of helpfulness toward young evangelists. We are acquainted with a pastor who is shepherd to a spiritual church, who frequently invites novices in the ministry to conduct revivals. The Lord always blesses because the people of this church are humble enough to give His young servants encouragement and help.

May we ever remember: That the church is God's husbandry and should be respected as such.

That ministers are Christ's gifts to the church and are led by the Holy Spirit in their service and place of labor.

That the business of the church is God's business, and should be conducted according to His will.

## ***Tithes And Offerings. Malachi 3:8-12***

### ***Malachi 3:8-12***

#### **THE TITHE**

The tithe is a tenth part, especially the tenth part of one's possessions, or income, given to support the ministry.

1. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, king and priest of Salem. Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:12.

2. Jacob promised the Lord the tithe of all the substance he might acquire in Mesopotamia. Gen. 28:22.

Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, otherwise known as Israel, had twelve sons as follows: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulan, Issacher, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. Gen. 49:1-27.

The descendants of each one of Israel's sons, except Joseph, became a large tribe. There was no tribe of Joseph but he had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Their descendants became important tribes in Israel. Altogether there were thirteen tribes. Twelve of them were given landed possessions. One tribe, Levi, set aside by the Lord to be devoted to religious services, received no landed possession but was given cities in which to dwell. Num. 35:1-7.

1. The Lord reserved all the tithe for Himself. Lev. 27:30. He in turn gave all the tithe to the tribe of Levi for their maintenance in their ministry for Him. Num. 18:20, 21, 24. Some of the Levites were priests, some were scribes, some were singers, and some were workers at the temple service. All these and others because they gave full-time service to the Lord, were supported with tithes.

2. The Levites were to give their tithes to the High Priest. Num. 18:25-28.

3. A second tithe was to be used for the Lord's feasts and sacrifices, and was to be eaten where the ark should be at the tabernacle, or the temple. Deut. 14:22, 23, 24.

4. In addition to these two, there was to be every third year a tithe for the poor to be eaten in their dwellings. Deut. 14:28, 29.

### **The Results of Withholding Tithes**

1. Nehemiah 13:10-12.
2. II Chronicles 31:4-10.
3. Withholding tithes brings a curse. Mal. 3:8, 9.
4. Withholding tithes is robbing God. Mal. 3:8, 9.
5. Paying tithes brings spiritual and temporal blessings. Mal. 3:10-12; Prov. 3:9, 10.

### **Offerings**

1. The tabernacle was built with free-will offerings. Ex. 25:1-9; Ex. 35:4-9, 21-24, 27-29.

2. The temple was built with free-will offerings. I Chron 29:1-9. No tithes were used to erect either building.

### **The Support of the New Testament Ministry**

**I Corinthians 9:7-14;**

**Hebrew 7:1-10**

Paul quotes from the law of Moses to strengthen his argument for the support of the ministry. We know how the ministry was supported

under the law. Likewise, under grace the ministry is to be supported with tithes. Jesus endorsed tithing. Mt. 23:23.

The Levitical priesthood under the law has passed away. Heb. 7:11, 12. It is said of Christ, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Heb. 7:17. Melchisedec was a priest and king who lived in the days of Abraham. It is said of him that he was . . . "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually." Heb. 7:3. We believe this means that so far as the record is concerned, he had no beginning of days nor end of life, that he might be a perfect type of Christ. He had an independent priesthood; so also has Christ. He received tithes. Heb. 7:4-9. So should Christ's ministers receive tithes because they belong to the Melchisedec priesthood of whom Christ is High Priest.

If we follow the pattern established in the Old Testament all the tithes will go to the ministry. The building and up-keep of churches is to come from offerings.

### **Alms**

In the early Apostolic church, collections were taken in the churches of Asia and Europe for the poor saints at Jerusalem. The poor were given help through free-will offerings . . . not tithes. "Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." II Cor. 9:7; Acts 4:32-37; Acts 6:1-4; II Cor. 8:1-15; II Cor. 9:1-11.

## **Government**

Government, both civil and religious, is ordained of God. So far as the scripture is concerned, human government was instituted by God after the flood when He told Noah, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man." Gen. 9:6. The highest function of government is the judicial taking of human life. All other governmental powers are implied in that. In his letter to the church at Rome, Paul declares that governmental powers are ordained of God, and he enjoins Christians to obey civil rules and the laws of the land. Rom. 13:1-7.

We know that sometimes rulers are wicked, and that some laws are unjust, and even bad. Good laws are sometimes ignored, and by-passed, which results in a maladministration of justice. But in spite of all that, poor government is better than no government at all. Indescribable confusion and many evils would surely be the result of not having government. This is true in religious as well as civil affairs.

The Lord has set "governments" in the church. I Cor. 12:28. Church government is to be administered by religious rulers known as

Elders and Bishops. Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Tim. 5:17. Their qualifications and duties are described in 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3.

Elder (Greek, presbuteros) and bishop (Greek, episcopos) designates the same office. Tit. 1:5, 7; Acts 20:17, 28. In Acts 20:28 the word overseers is from the Greek word episcopos which is elsewhere translated bishop. Elder refers to the man, and bishop to a function of his office.

Let us now consider the duties of Elders and Bishops.

1. They are spiritual rulers, guides, or overseers. 1 Tim. 3:4, 5; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17. They are not to be dictators over the flock, but are to be examples. 1 Pet. 5:1-3.

2. They are responsible for upholding sound doctrine. Tit. 1:9.

3. They are to feed and to watch over the flock. Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-7.

Ministers of the gospel are elders who labor in the word and doctrine. 1 Tim 5:17. Pastors are elders and by virtue of their office are also bishops or overseers. As a matter of fact, the pastor of a church is the leading Elder and Bishop of his church, and should work in harmony with the other official elders of the church where he is laboring. In The Apostolic Faith Movement, the officially designated elders of a local church are usually called Members of the Church Board.

Frequently, the elders or members of church boards, in addition to their spiritual duties, are also trustees of the physical properties of the church.

There should never be one member, or minority decisions, and actions by members of a church board relative to the business or spiritual interests of the church. Even majority decisions are not all that could be desired. The entire membership of the church should act together when possible, to insure perfect harmony. However, conformity and unity of action should not be sought at the price of compromise with what is known to be right.

In conclusion, may we add the observation that church government, even if it is sometimes not all that could be desired, is better than no government at all. Let us work with and pray for our spiritual overseers.