

End-Time Bible Prophecies

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1. Introduction

- This document focuses mainly on end-time Bible prophecies and end-time topics. When studying these prophecies there is no substitute for reading God's Word, guided by the Holy Spirit. The End-Time Topics section covers a variety of subjects, including the rapture, the Great Tribulation and the second coming of Jesus Christ. This document was written and formatted in a style designed to maximize the accuracy of language translation software. The Bible translation used for this document (in English), unless otherwise noted, is the New American Standard Bible (NASB, 1995).

- "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

- "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- Jesus spoke of the witness of fulfilled prophecy; "I go away, and I will come to you... Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe" (John 14:28-29).

>>>>>> Old Testament

2. 2 Chronicles

***2 Chronicles 36;** 70-year prophecy, sabbath rest for the land, end times (36:20-23)

- "He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years" (36:20-21; ESV Bible). This 70-year period is the same period that is mentioned in the prophecies of Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10 (see also Daniel 9:2; Zechariah 1:12). What is the significance of 70 years? This was the number of years that the people had failed to observe God's law of a "sabbath rest" for the land. God told the sons of Israel that every seventh year, the land was to have a sabbath rest (Leviticus 25:1-5); "but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard" (Leviticus 25:4). They would have to trust the Lord to provide for their needs for that year. If the people would fail to follow this command, God would remove them from the land to enforce this "sabbath rest" (Leviticus 26:33-35). For hundreds of years the nation disobeyed God by ignoring this command. This resulted in a 70-year judgment that would allow the land to enjoy its "sabbath rest". This judgment was also a result of the unfaithfulness of the people as they followed all the abominations of the nations and defiled the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:14). Indeed all Israel had transgressed God's law and turned aside, not obeying His voice and rebelled and sinned against Him (Daniel 9:9, 11). For additional information, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- This prophecy will apparently be fulfilled in two phases, totaling 70 years. The Babylonian captivity began in 605 B.C. (refer to Jeremiah 25:11-12 commentary) and marked the beginning of phase one. In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon captured Jerusalem and took some of the vessels from the house of God (temple) to place them in a Babylonian temple (Daniel 1:1-2). He also took captive some of the sons of Israel, including Daniel (Daniel 1:3-7). Phase one began with the removal of the "sons of Israel" from the land and would end with the return of the Jewish people to the land more than 66 years later (538 B.C.). Phase two will be fulfilled during the second half of the Great Tribulation. Since phase two is exactly three and a half prophetic years long (1,260 days; Revelation 12:6), phase one must be 66 and a half years long to total 70 years. Just as phase one began with the desecration of the temple and the captivity of the Jewish people, so will phase two. At the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, the antichrist will desecrate the temple and declare war on the Jewish people. Those who are in Judea and Jerusalem must flee to the mountains. Many Jews "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24; Revelation 11:2). Some Jews will escape and God will miraculously provide a safe haven for them during the second half of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24; Revelation 12:6, 14). During these three and a half years, the Gentiles (Babylon the Great; refer to Revelation 17, 18) will control the land of

Israel and the land will once again have a sabbath rest. This 70-year prophecy will ultimately be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns and brings His people back to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10).

- "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia – in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah – the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 'Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!"' (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; refer also to Ezra 1:1-3). The decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C. was necessary to "fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah". The first phase of the desolation of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:2) and the desolation of the land ("sabbath rest") could not be completed until the Jewish people returned to the holy city. This return was a foreshadow of the second coming of Christ when He will bring His people back to Jerusalem for the last time (Jeremiah 29:10).

3. Psalms

***Psalm 47;** Millennial kingdom described (47:1-9)

- The millennial kingdom is described in this chapter. "For the LORD Most High is to be feared, a great King over all the earth" (47:2). "For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a skillful psalm. God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne" (47:7-8).

4. Isaiah

***Isaiah 2;** The glory of the future kingdom, the Millennium (2:1-4)

- Isaiah probably lived in Jerusalem for most of his life. He prophesied for about 60 years (740 B.C. to 680 B.C.) "during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (1:1). He urged Judah to trust in the Lord and warned against foreign alliances. Isaiah says more about the person and work of Messiah and the millennial kingdom than any other Old Testament prophet.

- "In the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it" (2:2). "For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations... and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war" (2:3-4). The Messiah will rule from Jerusalem for 1,000 years during the Millennium. Gentiles and Jews will know and worship the Lord.

***Isaiah 4;** The millennial kingdom (4:2-6)

- "In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious" (4:2). The Branch is the Messiah and He will rule over the millennial kingdom; "then the LORD will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy" (4:5).

***Isaiah 9;** The sign of Messiah (9:1-7); a vow and judgment on Israel (9:8-21)

- "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this" (9:6-7). This is one of the great prophecies of the coming Messiah. He will come as a baby, will be God in the flesh and will rule on the throne of David.

- A vow spoken in pride and arrogance would result in Israel's judgment. "Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, asserting in pride and arrogance of heart: 'The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with smooth stones; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will replace them with cedars'" (9:9-10). This vow of defiance was spoken by the northern tribes of Israel after Assyria invaded them about 732 B.C. Instead of heeding this warning, repenting and turning to God, they spoke this vow to rebuild. As a consequence, about 10 years later, 722 B.C., Assyria returned, captured Samaria (Israel's capital) and exiled its people. The 10 tribes were scattered throughout their empire and were later called "the ten lost tribes of Israel."

***Isaiah 11;** The rule of the Branch of Jesse (Messiah), millennial kingdom described (11:1-16)

- The character and work of the Branch of Jesse (Messiah) are described in this chapter. "The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him... And He will delight in the fear of the LORD... and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked" (11:2-4). During the millennial kingdom, "the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them" (11:6). "Then it will happen on that day that the LORD will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people... And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (11:11-12).

***Isaiah 13; Prophecies about Babylon (13:1-22)**

- Isaiah's oracle concerns God's judgment on ancient Babylon, end-time Babylon the Great and ultimately the whole world (13:11). The Great Tribulation is described in some of these verses. Few will survive this difficult period since man will be "scarcer than pure gold" (13:12). "Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil... I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the LORD of hosts in the day of His burning anger" (13:9-13). Babylon "will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation" (13:20). Refer to Jeremiah 50-51 for additional information about prophecies against Babylon.

***Isaiah 14; Prophecies about Babylon (14:1-23)**

- Prophecies about Babylon continue from chapter 13. Some writers say that the king of Babylon (14:4) described in this passage may represent Satan (refer also to Ezekiel 28:11-19).

***Isaiah 17; Prophecies about Damascus (17:1-14)**

- Isaiah's oracle is concerning Damascus, the capital city of Aram (modern-day Syria). "Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city and will become a fallen ruin" (17:1). Damascus was captured by Tiglath-pileser of Assyria in 732 B.C. (2 Kings 16:9). Some of these prophecies may find fulfillment in the end times.

***Isaiah 19; Egypt, Assyria and Israel will share in the millennial blessing (19:18-25)**

- During the Millennium Assyria, Egypt and Israel will live in peace and will be blessed by the Lord. "In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance' (19:24-25).

***Isaiah 23; Prophecy of Tyre's fall (23:1-14); 70-year prophecies (23:15-18)**

- "Now in that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot:" (23:15) "Take your harp, walk about the city, O forgotten harlot; pluck the strings skillfully, sing many songs, that you may be remembered" (23:16). "It will come about at the end of seventy years that the LORD will visit Tyre. Then she will go back to her harlot's wages and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth" (23:17). "Her gain and her harlot's wages will be set apart to the LORD; it will not be stored up or hoarded, but her gain will become sufficient food and choice attire for those who dwell in the presence of the LORD" (23:18).

- The 70-year period of Isaiah 23:15-18 is likely the same one as Zechariah 1:12 (refer to section 54, The 70-Year Bible Prophecies). It probably began with the rebirth of Israel, 14 May 1948 (Yom Ha'atzmaut, 5 Iyar 5708 in the Jewish calendar) and ends sometime during the year following Israel's seventieth Independence Day, 19 April 2018 (4 Iyar 5778). The first part of chapter 23 (23:1-14) is a prophecy describing the fall of Tyre, one of the most famous cities of the ancient world. Tyre is located on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, just north of Israel (in Lebanon). Over the years, Tyre has been destroyed and rebuilt several times. Alexander the Great destroyed the mainland city and the island fortress in 332 B.C.

- The last part of chapter 23 (23:15-18) begins with the phrase "in that day". This phrase is not used in the first part of chapter 23, however it is used seven times in what is commonly called "Isaiah's apocalypse" (Isaiah, chapters 24-27), which follows. Isaiah's apocalypse describes the terrible judgments of the Great Tribulation, the deliverance of God's people and the blessings of the millennial kingdom. Perhaps Isaiah's apocalypse really begins with Isaiah 23:15. The fact that 70 years is mentioned three times in this passage (23:15, 17) is another indication that it probably has a connection to the end times and the Great Tribulation. There are several other reasons to conclude this. First, Tyre is mentioned in over 50 Bible verses, yet Tyre is only described as a harlot in Isaiah 23:15-18. She "will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on

the face of the earth" (23:17). This description is very similar to that of end-time Babylon the Great, where "all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her" (Revelation 18:3; see also 17:2, 18:9, 19:2). The end-time global kingdom and false religion is described as "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). Just as the city of Tyre was once one of the great cities of the world, the great city of Babylon the Great will reign over the kings of the earth, and the merchants of the earth will become rich by the wealth of her sensuality (Revelation 17:18, 18:3). Second, the harlot's gain will not be stored up, but will be set apart to the Lord and be given to those "who dwell in the presence of the LORD" (Isaiah 23:18). Since believers will not dwell in the presence of the Lord until the millennial kingdom, we can conclude that the events of Isaiah 23:15-18 occur just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ, including the 70-year period. Third, the 70-year prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel and 2 Chronicles begin and end with a historic event. There is no obvious 70-year period in Tyre's history that matches the details of Isaiah 23:15-18.

- There is another important Bible passage that describes the judgment of Tyre and the fall of the leader of Tyre; Ezekiel 26-28. In the middle passage of chapter 28 (28:11-19), Satan is apparently being described, not the actual king of Tyre, for he "had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty", was "in Eden, the garden of God", was created and was "the anointed cherub who covers", was "on the holy mountain of God" and was blameless in his ways (Ezekiel 28:11-15). After this, unrighteousness was found in him, he was "filled with violence" and sinned, he was cast as "profane from the mountain of God", he was filled with pride, he was cast to the ground and God has turned him to "ashes on the earth" and he will "cease to be forever" (Ezekiel 28:15-19). Since the king of Tyre is apparently Satan in this passage, then the end-time king of Tyre probably represents the antichrist (beast) and Satan, who act as one for the last portion of the Great Tribulation. This also means that end-time Tyre actually represents Babylon the Great.

- Since we have concluded that the last four verses of Isaiah 23 probably describe the end-time global empire known as Babylon the Great, we can now look further into the interpretation of this passage. Verse 15 says that "Tyre will be forgotten for 70 years". As with the other 70-year prophecies, we can assume that a historic event will begin the 70-year period. It would be logical to conclude that this event was the rebirth of Israel (1948; refer to Zechariah 1:12 and section 54, The 70-Year Bible Prophecies). The rebirth of Israel is necessary for the fulfillment of many end-time prophecies. The 70-year period will probably end sometime during the year following Israel's seventieth anniversary of its rebirth. Why has Tyre, which represents Babylon the Great, been forgotten for 70 years (23:15)? We have to remember when the first phase of Jeremiah's prophecies ended (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21). The Jewish people and the surrounding nations were supposed to serve the king of Babylon 70 years, but after approximately 66 years, Babylon was defeated by the Persians (539 B.C.). In order to fulfill the prophecy, a second phase of judgment is necessary. When Israel was reborn in 1948, the second phase of the judgment that awaits the nation was forgotten, along with Babylon. Then, after 70 years, Babylon will be reborn as Babylon the Great, a global empire, ruled by 10 kings and comprised of 10 kingdoms. Shortly after Babylon the Great is established, the Lord will "visit" her (23:17). This is probably a reference to the Ezekiel 38 battle, where God will judge the nations that attack Israel, perhaps a reference to the three end-time horns (kingdoms) of Daniel 7:8 that are pulled out by the roots. The Ezekiel 38 nations that come up against Israel will be "visited" by the Lord (Ezekiel 38:8; NKJV Bible). The same Hebrew word for visit, *paqad*, is used in Isaiah 23:17 and Ezekiel 38:8. In both verses, it is implied that the Lord's visit is with hostile intent. While Israel is being attacked, the other kingdoms of Babylon the Great will not come to her aid. After the Lord's visit, Babylon the Great, who opposes God and His people, "will go back to her harlot's wages and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth" (23:17). This shows the wickedness of end-time Tyre; even after a visit from the Lord, she goes right back to her evil ways. Since the period of "harlot's wages" occurs during the Great Tribulation, this implies that the Tribulation will follow soon after the Lord's visit with Tyre. It is very unusual that "her gain and her harlot's wages will be set apart to the LORD" (23:18). Her gain will "not be stored up or hoarded, but her gain will become sufficient food and choice attire for those who dwell in the presence of the LORD" (23:18). Tyre's gain perhaps represent the "wealth of all the surrounding nations" (Zechariah 14:14) that will be gathered at the end of the Great Tribulation (see also Daniel 11:38). The harlot's "gain" will be used by "those who dwell in the presence of the LORD". This is probably describing believers who will enter the millennial kingdom.

***Isaiah 24; Judgments of the Tribulation period (24:1-23)**

- Chapters 24-27 are known as "Isaiah's apocalypse". These chapters describe the coming Great Tribulation and the blessings to follow in the millennial kingdom and heaven. The end-time judgments will be devastating and only a small remnant will survive. "Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants" (24:1). "The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word" (24:3). "Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left" (24:6; curse, Zechariah 5:3-4). "The city of chaos is broken down" (24:10) may be a reference to "the great city" of Babylon the Great. During the Millennium, Jesus will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem (24:23).

***Isaiah 25; End times described (25:1-12)**

- "For You have made a city into a heap, a fortified city into a ruin; a palace of strangers is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt" (25:2). This is probably a reference to ancient Babylon and also the end-time great city of Babylon the Great. "Cities of ruthless nations will revere You" (25:3). In the millennial kingdom, Gentiles will know and worship God (Isaiah 2:3, 11:9, 49:7, 56:6, 66:20-21; Zechariah 14:16-19; Malachi 1:11). "The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain" (25:6). This may be a reference to the marriage supper of the Lamb, which probably occurs near the beginning of the millennial kingdom (Daniel 12:12; Revelation 19:7-10). "This mountain" is probably Mount Zion in Jerusalem, the center of millennial government (Isaiah 24:23). "And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations" (25:7). This may be a reference to the "veil" that lies over the hearts and minds of unbelievers, which can only be taken away by turning to the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:14-18, 4:3-4). The new heaven and new earth are described where death will be swallowed up for all time, and the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces (25:8).

***Isaiah 26; End times described (26:1-21)**

- The resurrection of the dead is described where the "dead will live; their corpses will rise" (26:19). This verse, along with Job 19:26 and Daniel 12:2, teaches bodily resurrection. The inhabitants of the earth will be punished by the Lord for their iniquity during the Great Tribulation, "and the earth will reveal her bloodshed, and will no longer cover her slain" (26:21; Jeremiah 25:33).

***Isaiah 27; Israel in the millennial kingdom (27:1-13)**

- During the Millennium, Israel will be a blessing to the whole world. "Israel will blossom and sprout, and they will fill the whole world with fruit" (27:6).

***Isaiah 29; A description of millennial blessing (29:17-24)**

- During the Millennium, the deaf will hear, the blind will see and the afflicted will increase their gladness in the Lord.

***Isaiah 30; Israel in the end times and Millennium (30:18-26)**

- "On every lofty mountain and on every high hill there will be streams running with water on the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven days, on the day the LORD binds up the fracture of His people and heals the bruise He has inflicted" (30:25-26). This appears to be a description of Armageddon, which is called "the day of the great slaughter".

***Isaiah 32; Messiah and His kingdom (32:1-20)**

- The Messiah will be king in the millennial kingdom and He will reign righteously and princes will rule justly (32:1).

***Isaiah 34; Armageddon and God's wrath against the nations and Edom (34:1-17)**

- "For the LORD's indignation is against all the nations, and His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter... and the mountains will be drenched with their blood... the sky will be rolled up like a scroll... My sword... shall descend for judgment upon Edom... For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom... thus their land will be soaked with blood... For the LORD has a day of vengeance... and its land will become burning pitch... its smoke will go up forever. From generation to generation it will be desolate (34:2-10). This passage is clearly talking about the war of Armageddon because God's wrath will be poured out on all the nations and all their armies, the sky will be rolled up like a scroll (Revelation 6:14) and the land of Edom will be desolate from generation to generation, which is still in the future. Why does God single out Bozrah and Edom for judgment among all the nations of the world? Bozrah is located in the ancient land of Edom (southeast of Israel, in modern Jordan). Bozrah and the surrounding region may be the location of the safe haven God provides for the Jewish remnant during the second half of the Tribulation. It appears that this will be the site of one of the battles of Armageddon, where the nations of the world attempt to wipe out the Jewish remnant. Refer to the following verses for additional information; Daniel 11:41; Revelation 12:6, 14; Isaiah 63:1-6; and Obadiah 1:15-21.

***Isaiah 35; The millennial kingdom is described (35:1-10)**

- During the millennial kingdom, the land will become extremely productive. The people will be saved, the blind will see, the deaf will hear and the lame will leap like a deer.

***Isaiah 56; Millennial blessings for Gentiles (56:1-8)**

- During the Millennium, Gentiles will be included in Israel's blessings; "For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples" (56:7).

***Isaiah 60;** The glory of Israel in the millennial kingdom (60:1-22)

- "Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising" (60:3). "For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish" (60:12).

***Isaiah 61;** The coming of the Messiah, millennial kingdom described (61:1-11)

- "They will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations; and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations" (61:4). "For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; and I will faithfully give them their recompense and make an everlasting covenant with them" (61:8).

***Isaiah 63;** Judgment of God's enemies, Christ's second coming (63:1-6)

- This passage is apparently a description of Christ's second coming and Armageddon. "Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, this One who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength? It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save" (63:1). Many translations use garments of crimson or red instead of "glowing colors". "Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger, and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment... I trod down the peoples in My anger and made them drunk in My wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth" (63:2-6). Jesus is depicted as coming from Edom and Bozrah and His garments are sprinkled and stained red with blood. He trampled the people in His wrath and poured out their lifeblood on the earth. When Jesus Christ appears in the sky at His second coming, riding a white horse, He will be clothed in a robe dipped in blood (Revelation 19:11-13). It is possible that Jesus will go to Edom in addition to Jerusalem at His second coming. Jesus' second coming will be characterized by judgment (Revelation 14:18-20, 19:11-21). The final war of the Tribulation, Armageddon will apparently occur in several locations, including Jerusalem and Edom (southeast of Israel, in modern Jordan). Bozrah (in Edom) and the surrounding region may be the location of the safe haven God provides for the Jewish remnant during the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6, 14; Isaiah 34:5-6; Matthew 24:15-22; Micah 2:12-13; Daniel 11:41; Obadiah 1:15-21). Apparently the nations of the world will go to Edom in an attempt to destroy this Jewish remnant.

***Isaiah 65;** Heaven and millennial kingdom described (65:17-25)

- God will create "new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind" (65:17). Perhaps we will not remember the sins and suffering of the past. There will be long life during the Millennium, but people will still die (65:20, 22). Sin and its destructive effects will not be eliminated until after the Millennium. Many people will walk closely with the LORD. Before they call on the LORD, He will answer (65:24). "The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox" (65:25). The animal kingdom will live in harmony with people and each other.

***Isaiah 66;** Rebirth of Israel (66:7-9); end times, millennial kingdom and heaven described (66:10-24)

- The rebirth of Israel and the Millennium is described in this passage (66:7-14). In the verses that follow, judgments are described at Jesus' second coming (66:15-17). "For the LORD will execute judgment by fire and by His sword on all flesh, and those slain by the LORD will be many" (66:16). There appears to be a missionary witness during the Millennium (66:18-21). Heaven and the punishment of the wicked are described next (66:22-24). "For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure" (66:22). "All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD" (66:23).

5. Jeremiah

- Jeremiah, like Ezekiel and Zechariah, was both a prophet and a priest. Jeremiah's ministry spanned the final five decades of Judah's history. His call to service came in 627 B.C. in the thirteenth year of King Josiah (1:2), Judah's last good king. Jeremiah compiled his prophecies in stages, but did not compile them chronologically. For more than forty years he faithfully proclaimed God's judgment on apostate Judah, all the while enduring opposition, beatings, and imprisonment. When the Babylonians took Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in 586 B.C., Jeremiah was freed from prison and given the choice of going to Babylon or remaining in Jerusalem. He chose the latter, but was soon abducted and taken to Egypt by Jews who were fleeing from the Babylonians. In Egypt, Jeremiah prophesied a few more years and apparently died there.

***Jeremiah 23; The coming Messiah, the righteous Branch (23:1-8)**

- The Messiah will reign as king during the Millennium. "'Behold, the days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely... and this is His name... 'The LORD our righteousness'" (23:1-6).

***Jeremiah 25; 70-year prophecies, Babylon's judgment and end times described (25:1-38)**

- The word that came to Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, 605 B.C.) he spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He warned them to turn from their evil ways and to not go after other gods to serve them and to worship them, but the people did not listen (25:1-7). "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Because you have not obeyed My words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares the LORD, 'and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation'" (25:8-9).

- "This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (25:11). "'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation'" (25:12). This 70-year period of judgment began with Babylon's first invasion of Jerusalem (approximately September, 605 B.C.), when King Jehoiakim (of Judah) agreed to serve as a vassal king for Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:1; 605 B.C.). At this time Daniel and his companions were taken to Babylon as captives. Some of the vessels from the house of God (temple) were also taken to Babylon and placed in a Babylonian temple (Daniel 1:1-6). Nebuchadnezzar's second invasion of Jerusalem in 597 B.C. resulted in 10,000 captives being led away into exile to Babylon (2 Kings 24:8-20). During the third invasion by Babylon, Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple was burned and the city walls were broken down in 586 B.C. The people who survived were carried away into exile, except for some of the poorest of the land (2 Kings 25:1-12; Jeremiah 34:1-7, 39:1-10, 52:1-30). The rule of Babylon ended suddenly in 539 B.C. (October) when the Persians captured the city of Babylon and King Belshazzar (Babylon's last king) was killed (Daniel 5:28-31). From Babylon's first invasion of Jerusalem (605 B.C.) to Belshazzar's death (539 B.C.) is a period of approximately 66 years. This falls four years short of fulfilling the 70-year prophecies. Since God's Word never fails, we must conclude that these prophecies will be fulfilled in two phases. In a similar fashion, the Daniel 9, 70-weeks prophecies will be fulfilled in three phases, with the third phase representing the seven-year Great Tribulation. The first phase of Jeremiah 25 applies to ancient Babylon and the second phase applies to end-time Babylon the Great and her king, the beast (antichrist; Daniel 11:36). The duration of phase two is about four years, the amount of time that the nations will serve the antichrist during the last portion of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 13:5-8, 17:12-13). These two time periods add up to 70 years and therefore will fulfill the prophecies of Jeremiah 25:11-12. At the second coming of Christ, the nations will have served the king of Babylon 70 years and the king and his empire will be judged by God (Revelation 16:19, 19:19-21). This means that the antichrist (beast) must become the king and supreme ruler of Babylon the Great approximately three years after the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This makes sense because Babylon the Great begins as a global empire ruled by 10 kings and the antichrist is not one of the original 10 (Daniel 7). These kings will fall one by one as the antichrist rises to power. Until the antichrist becomes the supreme ruler, Babylon the Great will not be considered an instrument of judgment against the Jews and will not be counted toward the 70-year judgment period. For more information about Babylon the Great, refer to section 44.

- What is the significance of 70 years and why is this time span used in several other Bible prophecies (Jeremiah 29:10; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Daniel 9:2; Zechariah 1:12, 7:5; Isaiah 23:15-17)? According to 2 Chronicles 36:20-21, this was the number of years that the people had failed to observe God's law of a "sabbath rest" for the land. God told the sons of Israel that every seventh year, the land was to have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. The people were not to sow their fields or prune their vineyards (Leviticus 25:1-5). They would have to trust the Lord to provide for their needs for that year. If the people would fail to follow this command, God would remove them from the land to enforce this "sabbath rest" (Leviticus 26:33-35). For hundreds of years the nation disobeyed God by ignoring this command. This resulted in a 70-year judgment that would allow the land to enjoy its "sabbath rest". For additional information, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- Notice that in the verses following Jeremiah 25:12, God's judgment is experienced by all inhabitants of the earth. This passage (Jeremiah 25:13-38) can only apply to the end-time Great Tribulation, the war of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ. The nations will "stagger and go mad" after drinking the wine of the wrath of God (25:15-16). The Lord declares, "I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth" (25:29). "He is entering into judgment with all flesh" (25:31). "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, evil is going forth from nation to nation, and a great storm is being stirred up from the remotest parts of the earth'" (25:32). "Those slain by the LORD on that day will be from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be lamented, gathered or buried; they will be like dung on the face of the ground" (25:33). These verses describe the multitudes that will be killed during the war of Armageddon.

***Jeremiah 29;** Letter to the exiles, 70-year prophecy, end times, return to Jerusalem (29:1-32)

- "Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon" (29:1). Jeremiah's letter was written after the deportation of King Jeconiah (also called Jehoiachin or Coniah) and many others in 597 B.C. (2 Kings 24:8-15). The exiles were encouraged to live as normal a life as possible and to await God's deliverance (29:1-14).

- "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place'" (29:10). "'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope'" (29:11). This 70-year period is the same period that is mentioned in the prophecies of Jeremiah 25:11-12 that will apparently be fulfilled in two phases. The first phase began with Babylon's first invasion of Jerusalem in 605 B.C. and ended when the Persians captured the city of Babylon in 539 B.C. The second phase applies to the last portion of the Great Tribulation. Notice how similar the wording is to Jeremiah 25:12; "when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation". Since Judah and the surrounding nations served the king of Babylon approximately 66 years, the 70-year completion for Babylon must also include a reign of approximately four years for the king and supreme ruler (antichrist) of Babylon the Great during the last portion of the Great Tribulation (refer to Jeremiah 25 and 2 Chronicles 36). At the second coming of Christ, the Lord will bring the Jewish people back to Jerusalem from all the nations where they were led captive (Luke 21:24) and from their Tribulation safe haven (Matthew 24:15-22; Revelation 12:6, 14) and "will restore" Israel's "fortunes" (29:14; see also 32:44, 33:7, 11, 26). Concerning the phrase, "fulfill My good word to you", a similar phrase is used by Jeremiah, where the Lord says, "I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (33:14). This "good word" includes the Messiah (righteous Branch of David) ruling on earth during the millennial kingdom (33:14-18). "In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness" (33:16). For additional information, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

***Jeremiah 30;** Israel's rebirth (30:3); the Great Tribulation (30:4-8); end times and Millennium (30:9-24)

- The Great Tribulation is described as "the time of Jacob's distress", where the sound of terror and dread is heard, where there is no peace, where faces turn pale, and where people experience pain, as if in childbirth (30:4-8). "Alas! for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it" (30:7). "But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them" (30:9). David will rule as king of Israel during the Millennium. "For I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you" (30:11). "The fierce anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has performed and until He has accomplished the intent of His heart; in the latter days you will understand this" (30:24).

***Jeremiah 31;** Restoration for Israel and the New Covenant (31:1-40)

- The principal Old Testament passage on the New Covenant is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34. "'Behold, the days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people... for they shall all know Me... for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more'" (Jeremiah 31:31-34). This covenant is confirmed elsewhere in the Old Testament and is stated to be eternal and unconditional (Isaiah 61:8-9; Ezekiel 16:60). "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). God's promises to Israel include the forgiveness of sins, the indwelling Spirit and a new heart (Joel 2:28-32). Jesus' sacrifice was the beginning of the New Covenant (Luke 22:20; Matthew 26:27-28; Hebrews 8:6-13; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26; 2 Corinthians 3:6). While believers today enjoy the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant (forgiveness of sins and the indwelling Holy Spirit), the specific promises in Jeremiah 31:31-34 are "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" and will find their ultimate fulfillment for Israel when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His millennial kingdom.

***Jeremiah 32;** Restoration for Israel and an everlasting covenant (32:1-44)

- "Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger... and I will bring them back to this place... They shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart" (32:37-39). "I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me" (32:40). At the second coming of Christ, the Lord will bring back the Jewish people to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10). The "everlasting covenant" that God will make with His people is the New Covenant described in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

***Jeremiah 33;** Restoration promised (33:1-13); millennial kingdom (33:14-26)

- In this chapter, the future restoration of Jerusalem is promised and the millennial kingdom is described. "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth'" (33:14-15). This "righteous Branch of David" is the Messiah.

***Jeremiah 50;** Prophecies against Babylon (50:1-46)

- Jeremiah was to "declare and proclaim among the nations" that "Babylon has been captured... Marduk has been shattered" (50:2). Babylon fell to the Persians in 539 B.C. and Marduk was the chief god of Babylon. "For a nation has come up against her out of the north; it will make her land an object of horror, and there will be no inhabitant in it. Both man and beast have wandered off, they have gone away" (50:3). Several details in this chapter indicate that this prophecy does not apply exclusively to ancient Babylon. First, when Cyrus of Persia took Babylon he did not "make her land an object of horror" or destroy the city so that "there will be no inhabitant in it". Several times Jeremiah repeated this fact about Babylon being without inhabitants (50:39-40, 51:29, 37, 43, 62). The city was spared and made one of the ruling centers for the Persian Empire with Daniel serving there in an administrative position (Daniel 6:1-3). Second, no one fled the city when it fell (51:6). Third, the promise that "in those days and at that time" Israel and Judah will seek the Lord to "join themselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant" was not fulfilled after Babylon's fall (50:4-5). Apparently Jeremiah's prophecy looks beyond the defeat of ancient Babylon in 539 B.C. to end-time Babylon the Great (Jeremiah 51; Revelation 17-18). The defeat of Babylon the Great and the antichrist will be the climax of God's judgment on the Gentile powers.

***Jeremiah 51;** Babylon judged for sins against Israel (51:1-64)

- Prophecies against ancient Babylon and end-time Babylon the Great are continued from chapter 50 of Jeremiah. The passage beginning with verse 6 (51:6-10) appears to be predominately describing future Babylon the Great. This Babylon is very similar to the end-time Babylon the Great described in Revelation (Revelation 14:8, 17:1-18, 18:1-24). First, God's people are told to flee from Babylon to save their life when Babylon is judged (51:6, 45). God's people did not flee when the Persians defeated Babylon because they were not in danger. God's people are told to come out of Babylon the Great so that they would not participate in her sins or receive of her plagues or judgment (Revelation 18:4, 8, 21). Second, "Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are going mad" (51:7-8). A similar description of Babylon the Great appears in Revelation, "having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, 'BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH'" (Revelation 17:4-5). The kings of the earth will be made drunk with the wine of her immorality (Revelation 17:2, 14:8, 18:3). Jeremiah says the nations will "stagger and go mad" after drinking the wine of the wrath of God (Jeremiah 25:15-16). Third, the fall of Babylon (51:8) is also prophesied for Babylon the Great (Revelation 14:8, 18:2, 21). After Babylon falls, some will "wail over her" and try and heal her (51:8). The kings of the earth and the merchants of the earth will weep and lament over Babylon the Great when they see the smoke of her burning (Revelation 18:9-19). Fourth, many will leave Babylon and "each go to his own country" (51:9), since Babylon the Great is comprised of many nations. Fifth, "her judgment has reached to heaven and towers up to the very skies" (51:9). Notice the similarity to Babylon the Great, "for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (Revelation 18:5).

- The Babylon that "destroys the whole earth" and later "will be desolate forever" (51:25-26) is probably a description of Babylon the Great. Daniel says that Babylon the Great "will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" (Daniel 7:23). The Babylon that God has used in the past and will use again as a "war-club" to "shatter nations" and "destroy kingdoms" (51:20-23) will be judged so severely in the end times that not even a stone will be taken from it to rebuild elsewhere (51:26).

- "How Babylon has become an object of horror among the nations! The sea has come up over Babylon; she has been engulfed with its tumultuous waves" (51:41-42). "For the LORD is going to destroy Babylon, and He will make her loud noise vanish from her. And their waves will roar like many waters; the tumult of their voices sounds forth" (51:55). These verses appear to be describing judgment on the end-time great city of Babylon the Great since ancient Babylon was not near the ocean. In Revelation, this future great city is described as having a seaport (Revelation 18:17-19) and is pictured as a great millstone that will be thrown into the sea with violence and "will not be found any longer" (Revelation 18:21).

6. Ezekiel

- Ezekiel, like Jeremiah and Zechariah, was both a prophet and a priest. He spent his early years in Jerusalem, until he was taken with other hostages to Babylon in 597 B.C. Ezekiel prophesied (his ministry began in 593 B.C.) for at least 22 years (1:2, 29:17-21) to the exiles in Babylon while Jeremiah prophesied to the Jews in Judah. In chapters 1-24, Ezekiel's

message focused on Judah's forthcoming destruction because of her sin. After Jerusalem's fall, his message centered on Judah's future restoration. Chapters 33-48 contain many prophecies concerning the end times, including the rebirth of Israel, the Great Tribulation and the millennial kingdom. Ezekiel's prophecies are arranged chronologically, except for some prophecies in chapter 29.

***Ezekiel 11;** Promise of restoration (11:14-20)

- When the Messiah returns, He will bring His people back to the land of Israel and make a new covenant with them (Jeremiah 31:31-34). "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them... Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God" (11:19-20).

***Ezekiel 20;** Israel's unfaithfulness (20:1-32); Israel's future restoration, millennial kingdom (20:33-44)

- God's people rebelled against Him in Egypt (20:8) and in the wilderness (20:13). God resolved to pour out His wrath on them and He acted for the sake of His name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations (20:14, 22). When God brought the house of Israel into the land that He swore to give them, they would go to Bamah, high places where idolatrous worship was practiced (20:29). The Lord God declares, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you" (20:33). Jesus will be king over Israel and the whole earth during the millennial kingdom (Zechariah 14:9). Before that takes place, God will gather His people. "I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered... and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face" (20:34-35). The phrases "mighty hand" and "outstretched arm" were also used to describe God's power in delivering His people from Egypt (Deuteronomy 4:34, 5:15, 7:19, 11:2; Psalm 136:12). At Jesus' second coming, God will once again rescue His people. God will apparently gather His people together in the wilderness and enter into judgment with them "face to face" just as He entered into judgment with His people in the wilderness of the land of Egypt (20:35-36). As a result of that judgment, "all the men of war, died in the wilderness along the way after they came out of Egypt" (Joshua 5:4) and did not enter the land that God promised them. In the same way, after the second coming, the Lord's judgment will result in only believers in Christ being able to enter the land of Israel (20:38). The rebels and those who transgressed against God will be purged (20:38). Refer also to Matthew 25:31-46 for a description of God's judgment on unbelievers following the second coming of Christ.

- The Lord God will make them pass under the rod and will bring them into the bond of the covenant (20:37). This pictures a shepherd holding out his rod and forcing the sheep to pass under it single file for counting and examination (Jeremiah 33:13; Leviticus 27:32). The sheep that were his would be allowed to enter the fold, a place of protection. The "bond of the covenant" represents the fold. The "covenant" probably represents the New Covenant that the Lord will make "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 31:31-34), which will be an everlasting covenant (Ezekiel 16:60). The Lord God declares, "for on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel... there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land... As a soothing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I shall prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations" (20:40-41). After the second coming of Jesus Christ, all His people will be gathered. During the millennial kingdom, all the house of Israel will serve the Lord. "And you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers... Then you will know that I am the LORD when I have dealt with you for My name's sake" (20:42-44).

***Ezekiel 28;** King of Tyre (Satan) described (28:11-19); Israel's restoration and millennial kingdom (28:25-26)

- "You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God... You were on the holy mountain of God... You were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub... and you will cease to be forever" (28:12-19). Satan is apparently being described in this passage, not the king of Tyre. Satan's downfall was his pride and unbelief in God, the root of all sin (1 Timothy 3:6; Isaiah 14:13-14). Notice that Eden, the garden of God, was located on the holy mountain of God, the future location of Jerusalem or Zion (Psalm 2:6, 48:1; Isaiah 27:13, 56:7, 66:20; Daniel 9:16; Joel 3:17). Israel's promised restoration and the millennial kingdom are described in the last portion of this chapter (28:25-26). Refer to Isaiah 23:15-18 and section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies) for information about end-time Tyre.

***Ezekiel 34;** Restoration of Israel and the Millennium (34:11-31)

- During the millennial kingdom, the Lord will be Israel's God and David will be her prince (34:24). The LORD will make a covenant of peace with them and will eliminate harmful beasts from the land, so that they may live securely (34:25).

***Ezekiel 36;** Israel restored, the New Covenant and millennial blessing (36:1-38)

- This chapter describes the restoration of Israel, the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and the blessings of the

millennial kingdom following the return of Jesus. "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God" (36:26-28). "They will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden'" (36:35).

***Ezekiel 37; Vision of the valley of dry bones and Israel's restoration (37:1-28)**

- Ezekiel's vision of a valley of dry bones that were revived illustrates the end-time restoration of Israel. The Lord said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel... Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land (37:11-14). The following verses describe the Millennium and the new heaven and earth. "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd... David My servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people" (37:24-27).

***Ezekiel 38-39; Ezekiel 38 battle (38:1-23, 39:1-29)**

- The Lord's judgment during the Ezekiel 38 battle will be one of the most awesome displays of God's power that the world has ever seen. This battle represents an extremely significant end-time event for a number of reasons. First, when God's mighty power is displayed, He will be glorified and His holy name will be made known in the midst of His people Israel. The world will know that He is the Lord, the Holy One in Israel and He will magnify and sanctify Himself in the sight of many nations. Second, the whole world will be watching as the battle unfolds and this will provide the awareness and the opportunity for Gentiles and Jews to repent and turn to Christ for salvation before the Great Tribulation begins. Third, God's judgment will clear the way for the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. Fourth, this event will be a reminder that all who oppose Israel and God's people will be judged.

- In the last days, "Gog of the land of Magog" (probably refers to Russia) and several other nations will come up against Israel with a massive force (38:1-6). These nations will include Rosh, Meshech, Tubal and Gomer (probably Turkey), Persia (Iran), Ethiopia (Sudan), Put (probably Libya) and Beth-togarmah (probably Syria). Other nations may also be involved that are included with "the many peoples who are with him" (38:22) and "those who inhabit the coastlands in safety" (39:6). God will prod Gog into leading the Ezekiel 38 battle; "I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army" (38:4), and "I will turn you around, drive you on, take you up" (39:2). "After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely" (38:8; NKJV Bible). "You will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you" (38:9).

- 'Thus says the LORD God, "It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan, and you will say, 'I will go up against the land of unwallled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls and having no bars or gates, to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world.' Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all its villages will say to you, 'Have you come to capture spoil? Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil?'" (38:10-13). The invading force will attempt to capture the wealth of Israel, which is located at "the center of the world". "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish" represent Israel's neighbors who are unwilling to get involved in this battle. In fact, not a single nation will come to Israel's aid.

- "It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog" (38:16). "It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel, 'declares the Lord God,' that My fury will mount up in My anger. In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence; the mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground. I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains, 'declares the Lord God.' Every man's sword will be against his brother. With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone. I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD" (38:18-23).

- "And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the LORD" (39:6). God will severely judge the enemies of Israel, even distant nations that may think they are safe. "My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel" (39:7). The nations that are judged by God perhaps represent the three end-time horns (kingdoms) of Daniel 7:8 that are pulled out by the roots, and the battle may represent God's visit with end-time Tyre (Babylon the Great; Isaiah 23:17). "Then those who inhabit the cities of Israel will go out and make fires with the weapons and burn them, both shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, war clubs and spears, and for seven years they will make fires of them. They will not take wood from the field or gather firewood from the forest, for they will make fires with the weapons; and they will take the spoil of those who despoiled them and seize the plunder of those who plundered them, 'declares the Lord God'" (39:9-10). The fact that the weapons will be burned for seven years is a strong indication that this battle will occur before the seven-year Tribulation period. The destruction of Israel's enemies as a result of this battle will clear the way for the building of the Tribulation temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This battle probably occurs shortly after the rapture because if it happened before the rapture, many people would be expecting Jesus' immediate return. We know this cannot be the case because Jesus "is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Matthew 24:44). Also the rapture is described as occurring unexpectedly, like a "thief in the night" (Luke 17:26-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11). After the battle there will be so many bodies, that it will take Israel seven months to bury all the dead "in order to cleanse the land" (39:12-16). The birds and beasts of the field will assemble to consume the fallen enemies of Israel (39:17-20).

- God will set His glory among the nations, "and all the nations will see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them. And the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God from that day onward" (39:21-22). The closing verses of this chapter describe Israel's restoration (39:25-29). "Therefore thus says the Lord God, 'Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name'" (39:25).

***Ezekiel 40-46;** Messiah's (millennial) temple described (40-43); a new service of worship described (44-46)

- Chapters 40 through 46 describe in great detail the instructions for building Messiah's (millennial) temple (40-43) and for the service attached to it (44-46). The temple will be considerably larger than the three previous temples. People from all nations will come to the temple to worship during the Millennium (Zechariah 14:16). The glory of the Lord will return to Messiah's (millennial) temple. "Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing toward the east; and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory" (43:1-2). "And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east. And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house" (43:4-5). The return of God's glory to the temple (the house) after more than 2,500 years is probably associated with the dedication of Messiah's (millennial) temple, just as it was associated with the dedication of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:1-66, 9:1-9). For such a momentous occasion, why is there no mention of any type of dedication or ceremony in this passage? Perhaps some details of this special occasion may be found in Revelation 14:1-5. Apparently the 144,000 servants of God from the Great Tribulation will sing a new song at this temple dedication. Also in attendance will be Jesus Christ (the Lamb), the four living creatures and the 24 elders. The Lord said, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings when they die" (43:7). The Lord announces that His temple must be holy and thus free from "harlotry" (temple prostitution) and separated from the graves and palaces of kings which were on the same hill as Solomon's temple (43:7-9; 2 Kings 23:7, 21:18, 26).

- Chapters 44 through 46 describe a new service of worship for Messiah's temple. Some of the details include who may minister in the temple, offerings, sacrifices, worship, festivals and feasts. Sacrifices will be offered as memorials of the finished sacrifice of Christ. .

***Ezekiel 47-48;** Israel in the millennial kingdom (47-48)

- Chapters 47 and 48 describe the life-giving river emerging from Messiah's temple, the boundaries of the land and the division of the land of Israel.

7. Daniel

- Daniel was taken captive as a youth to Babylon in 605 B.C. He spent the rest of his long life there as a governmental official and as a prophet of the true God. Throughout his life he was uncompromising and faithful to his God. The book of Daniel is important historically because it bridges the gap between Israel's historical books and the New Testament.

***Daniel 2;** The king's dream and interpretation; four kingdoms (2:1-49)

- "Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king" (2:1-2). No one was able to tell the king his dreams and their interpretation until the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. When Daniel spoke to the king, he gave the glory to God. "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place" (2:28-29).

- "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome" (2:31). "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay" (2:32-33). "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them" (2:34). "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (2:35).

- "This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king" (2:36). "You are the head of gold" (2:38). "After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth" (2:39). "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces" (2:40). "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay" (2:41). "As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle" (2:42). "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery" (2:43). "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever" (2:44). "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy" (2:45).

- Babylon is the head of gold (2:32, 38). The breast and arms of silver (an inferior kingdom; 2:32, 39) probably represent the empire of the Medes and Persians and the belly and thighs of bronze probably represent the empire of Greece (2:32, 39). Many writers associate the fourth kingdom with Rome. However, it seems more probable that the fourth kingdom represents end-time Babylon the Great (2: 40-43), for a number of reasons. First, Daniel chapter 2 and Daniel chapter 7 appear to be describing the same four kingdoms. The fourth kingdom in Daniel 7 is describing Babylon the Great because the antichrist will arise from this kingdom (7:23-25). Since the fourth kingdom in Daniel 7 is clearly Babylon the Great, it would follow that the fourth kingdom in Daniel 2 is also Babylon the Great. Second, both kingdoms are made, at least partly from iron (2:33-35, 40-43, 7:7). Third, this kingdom shatters and crushes all things (2:40, 7:7, 19, 23). Fourth, the kingdom is separated into 10 parts; 10 toes (2:41-42) and 10 horns (7:7, 20, 24) which represent 10 kings (7:24). Fifth, the kingdom will be a divided kingdom, represented by its feet and toes made of iron and clay, which do not adhere to one another (2:33, 41-43). Some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle (2:42). During the first half of the Tribulation, most of the original 10 kings will fall (Daniel 7; Revelation 17:9-12), which is a sign of division. Sixth, immediately following the destruction of the fourth kingdom, God will set up His kingdom (2:34-35, 44-45, 7:14, 18, 22, 27). Refer to Daniel 7 and Revelation 17-18 for additional information about Babylon the Great and her kings. A stone that will be "cut out without hands" will strike the statue on its feet, causing the entire statue to be crushed and become like chaff (2:34-35). The wind will blow all the chaff away, leaving not a trace. The complete destruction of all these kingdoms will precede the millennial kingdom, which is represented by a stone which becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth (2:35). The millennial kingdom will precede God's heavenly kingdom which will endure forever (2:44).

***Daniel 7; Daniel's vision of four beasts, antichrist, Babylon the Great, Ancient of Days (God as Judge) (7:1-28)**

- "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it" (7:1). "Daniel said, 'I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea'" (7:2). "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another" (7:3). "The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it" (7:4). "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'" (7:5). "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it" (7:6). "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with

its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns" (7:7). "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts" (7:8).

- Daniel chapter 7 is one of the most important passages in the Bible concerning the antichrist and Babylon the Great. This vision was revealed to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar's reign, 553 B.C. The four beasts of Daniel's vision represent four kings (7:17) and their associated kingdoms (7:23). These are probably the same kingdoms that were previously described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2. The first beast is probably Babylon, the second is likely the empire of the Medes and Persians, the third is probably the empire of Greece and the fourth is Babylon the Great (7:1-8). Babylon the Great is the end-time global empire that "will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" (7:23) and will be controlled by Satan and the antichrist. Refer to Daniel 2 and Revelation 17 and 18 for additional information about Babylon the Great and her kings. Whereas the first three beasts are described as animals or combinations of animals, the fourth beast is not like any known animal, perhaps because it is so different from the former beasts. It has large iron teeth, claws of bronze, 10 horns and is dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong, able to devour, crush and trample all who oppose it (7:19, 20, 23).

- A significant characteristic of this beast is that it has 10 horns (7:7, 20, 24) which represent 10 kings who will rule over a global kingdom of unsurpassed military might (7:7,23). Another horn, a little one, comes up among the first 10 (7:8). This little horn, uttering boastful words (7:8, 11, 20), is later identified as the antichrist (7:19-26). The three horns that are "pulled out by the roots" (7:8) represent three kings and their kingdoms that will fall before it (7:20). Notice that these kings fall "before" the little horn, but not necessarily because of it. It is not likely that the little horn, while it is still rising to power and is not even one of the 10 kings, could be responsible for the decimation of three kingdoms. Horns that are "pulled out by the roots" probably signify the sudden and violent downfall of these three kings and their kingdoms. During the Ezekiel 38 battle, which will probably occur after the rapture but before the Great Tribulation, several nations will come up against Israel with a massive force and will be severely judged by God. Perhaps these nations represent the three horns (kings and their kingdoms) that will be "pulled out by the roots" and that will fall before the antichrist (7:8, 20). Maybe this is the reason that the dragon (Satan; Revelation 12:3, 9) and the beast of Revelation 13 and 17 are described with seven heads rather than 10. Babylon the Great will be established with 10 kingdoms (regions) and 10 kings before the Great Tribulation begins but will only have seven functional kingdoms and seven kings at the start of the seven-year Great Tribulation. The three fallen kingdoms will partially recover by the second half of the Tribulation because 10 new kings will be chosen to rule under the antichrist for the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 17:12-13, 17).

- "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire" (7:11). This verse refers to the beast (antichrist) being slain, probably close to the midpoint of the Tribulation (perhaps by the two witnesses who breathe out fire, Revelation 11:5). Notice that the beast in verse 11 refers to the horn (antichrist) while in verse 7, the beast is describing Babylon the Great. Refer to Revelation 17 and 18 for additional information about the beast, the antichrist and Babylon the Great. It appears that the antichrist will be slain with a sword (Revelation 13:14) and then his body will be destroyed by fire. This passage does not mention that the antichrist will be resurrected after receiving his fatal wound (Revelation 13:3, 12, 14). Some writers place this event at the end of the Tribulation, where the beast will be judged at the second coming of Jesus Christ. The description of this event in Revelation does not quite match up with Daniel 7:11 because at the second coming of Christ the beast is seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). He is not slain and there is no mention that his body is destroyed and burned.

- The "Ancient of Days" is a reference to God as Judge (7:9-10). Jesus will be given glory and an everlasting kingdom. "One like a Son of Man was coming... and to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed" (7:13-14).

- "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me" (7:15). "I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things" (7:16). "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth" (7:17). "But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come" (7:18).

- "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates" (7:19-20). "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom" (7:21-22).

- "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it'" (7:23). "'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings'" (7:24). "'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time'" (7:25). "'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever'" (7:26). "'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him'" (7:27). "At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself" (7:28).

- In three separate verses in this chapter, the fourth beast, which will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, is described as being "different" from all the other kingdoms (7:7, 19, 23). This certainly emphasizes that this kingdom will be unique and unlike anything that has ever existed. All three verses also mention that the beast will devour and crush and trample down "the remainder" (7:7, 19), which is clarified as "the whole earth" (7:23), and probably represents all who oppose it. This global empire will totally dominate and control the entire earth. Daniel emphasizes the incredible strength, destructive nature and terrifying presence of Babylon the Great. In Revelation 17 and 18, Babylon the Great is described as a wealthy, materialistic, evil harlot (prostitute) who reigns over the kings of the earth. The antichrist is also described as being "different" from the kings that will arise before him (7:24). The fourth beast represents end-time Babylon the Great (Revelation 17) and the 10 horns on the beast's head represent a global empire of 10 kings (7:24) and their 10 kingdoms (implied; refer to 7:27; Revelation 17:12). It appears that the kingdom will be established first and then "out of this kingdom ten kings will arise", as if they are appointed (7:24). The little horn is the antichrist. He is not one of the 10 kings, but will be "another" king that will come up from within one of the kingdoms and will arise after them (7:8, 24). It is very interesting that the antichrist is not one of the original 10 kings, yet he has the authority to make a firm covenant with Israel at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 17:8-18). Eventually the little horn will become more powerful than the other horns because it will be "larger in appearance than its associates" (7:20), it will wage war with the saints and overpower them (7:21), it will subdue three kings (7:24) and it will become the king and supreme ruler of Babylon the Great (7:24; Daniel 11:36; Revelation 17:11-13). The antichrist will "subdue three kings" (7:24), implying that he will take an active part in their downfall. These are probably not the same three kings that are "pulled out by the roots" (7:8) or that fall (7:20). The antichrist "will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time" (7:25). The phrase "time, times, and half a time" (time = 1 year, times = 2 years, half a time = half a year), or three and a half years is used three times in the Bible to describe half of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:25, 12:7; Revelation 12:14). In all three cases, the phrase describes the second half of the Tribulation. Refer to Revelation 12:6 and 12:14 for further information. By intending to make "alterations in times and in law" (7:25), the antichrist will attempt to be like God, since God is the author of time and laws (Psalm 31:15; Daniel 2:21; Acts 1:7, Exodus 24:12). At the end of the Great Tribulation, the antichrist and his empire will be judged by God (7:26). Then "the kingdoms under the whole of heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom" (7:27). Notice that kingdoms is plural, implying that Babylon the Great will also be an empire of many (10) kingdoms.

***Daniel 8; Daniel's vision of 2,300 days, antichrist, Tribulation temple (8:1-27)**

- "In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously" (8:1). This vision appeared to Daniel two years after the vision of chapter 7. In this vision, a goat with a "conspicuous horn" came beside a ram, "and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns... he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him... Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven" (8:3-8). "Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land" (8:9). "It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down" (8:10). "It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down" (8:11). "And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper" (8:12). "Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, 'How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?'" (8:13). "He said to me, 'For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored'" (8:14).

- After Daniel had seen the vision, the angel Gabriel came to give him "an understanding of the vision" (8:16). Gabriel said to him, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end... Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end" (8:17-19). The ram with the two horns "represents the kings of Media and Persia" (8:20). "The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the

large horn that is between his eyes is the first king" (8:21). "The broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power" (8:22). "In the latter period of their rule, when the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue" (8:23). "His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform his will; he will destroy mighty men and the holy people" (8:24). "And through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; and he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency" (8:25). "The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; but keep the vision secret, for it pertains to many days in the future" (8:26). Daniel was "astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it" (8:27).

- Gabriel clearly explained to Daniel that the ram and the goat represented the kingdoms of Media and Persia, and Greece. The goat's large horn probably represents Alexander the Great. "As soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken" (8:8), representing the king's death at the height of his power. Alexander became ill and died in 323 B.C. at the age of 32 in Babylon. This is an amazing prophecy, which was accurately fulfilled several hundred years before Christ was born, and represents the first part of Daniel's vision. The second part of his vision is what we will focus on below.

- When the angel Gabriel came to Daniel to explain the vision, the first thing he said was, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end" (8:17). The second thing he said was, "Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end" (8:19). So, when is the "time of the end" and the "final period of the indignation"? Several similar phrases, "end time" and "end of time" are used by Daniel (11:35, 40; 12:4, 9) to describe events that occur during the Great Tribulation. The "final period of the indignation" also occurs during the Great Tribulation, for the antichrist "will prosper until the indignation is finished" (11:36). During the Tribulation, God's indignation will be against all the nations (Isaiah 34:2); the nations will be trampled (Habakkuk 3:12) and the inhabitants of the earth will be punished (Isaiah 26:20-21). God's indignation has been displayed many times throughout history, but the "final period" indicates the last period of indignation. Based on these passages of Scripture, we can conclude that the "time of the end" and the "final period of the indignation" apply to the Tribulation period.

- Since the first part of the vision has already been fulfilled, it is the second part of the vision that applies to the end times, including the four horns, the small horn, the 2,300 mornings and evenings, the regular sacrifice and the holy place. These elements of the vision are all closely tied together. When Gabriel explained the vision to Daniel he actually called it "the vision of the evenings and mornings", which could be stated as "the vision of the 2,300 days" (8:14, 26). This reveals the significance of the 2,300 days. He also explained that the vision is about the "regular sacrifice" (8:13) and that the vision should be kept secret, "for it pertains to many days in the future" (8:26). In a similar fashion, Daniel's words describing the Tribulation period in chapter 12 were to be concealed and sealed up until the end time (12:4, 9). We can therefore conclude that the small horn is the antichrist, not Antiochus IV Epiphanes, as many writers have concluded. Antiochus came to power in 175 B.C., desecrated the second temple and persecuted the Jews. The desecration of the holy place for 2,300 days, therefore, takes place during the Great Tribulation, not during the rule of Antiochus. Since the antichrist comes out of one of the four horns, these horns must represent end-time nations or Gentile powers. Now we will look at each of these end-time elements in more detail.

- The "four conspicuous horns" (8:8) represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation (the kingdom of Greece), although not with his power (8:21-22). This probably means that these kingdoms will be established many years later by people that are descendants of the kingdom of Greece. These four kingdoms will rule at approximately the same time, and "in the latter period of their rule... a king will arise" (8:23), the antichrist. They will exist in the same end-time period as the antichrist because, "out of one of them came forth a rather small horn" (8:9). The four horns are probably the same horns from Zechariah's second vision (Zechariah 1:18-21), which may represent the modern-day Quartet, comprised of the United States of America, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations. The Quartet was established in 2002 to mediate the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Of these four Gentile powers, it would make the most sense for the antichrist to come out of the United States because he will grow "exceedingly great toward the south" (represents South America), "toward the east" (represents Europe), "and toward the Beautiful Land" (represents Israel; 8:9). These regions would represent the primary power base for the antichrist. For additional information, refer to section 50 (What About the United States of America?).

- How are the four end-time horns of Daniel 8 related to the 10 end-time horns of Daniel 7? The four kingdoms represented by the four horns will exist for many years before the Great Tribulation begins because the antichrist will come out of one of them in "the latter period of their rule" (8:23). The 10 horns represent 10 kings (7:24) who will rule over a global empire called Babylon the Great, composed of 10 kingdoms or regions. A little horn (the antichrist) will come up among them and will arise after them (7:8, 20). Babylon the Great will probably be established soon after the rapture, but before the Great Tribulation starts. She will only exist for a little more than seven years because Babylon the Great will be judged and destroyed at Jesus' second coming. Therefore, the United States of America and Russia will be part of one of the 10 regions. The European Union may become one of the 10 regions. The United Nations already represents the nations of the world, and may provide the foundation for a one-world government that will become Babylon the Great. For

additional information, refer to section 44 (Babylon the Great).

- The antichrist will magnify himself, trying to be equal with God (8:11) and "will even oppose the Prince of princes" (8:25). The source of his power will be Satan, since his "power will be mighty, but not by his own power" (8:24). He will "destroy to an extraordinary degree" and will persecute and kill God's people (8:24). Ultimately, he will be "broken without human agency" (8:25), which is probably a reference to his final judgment at Jesus' second coming. The antichrist will remove the regular sacrifice from God, and the place of His sanctuary will be thrown down (8:11). On account of transgression, the Jewish people (host) "will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice" (8:12). The holy place will be trampled for "2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored" (8:13-14). We know from Daniel 9:27 that in the middle of the Tribulation period, the antichrist "will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" and then the "abomination of desolation" will be seen "standing in the holy place" (Matthew 24:15). He will take "his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). This will occur exactly at the Tribulation midpoint, 1,260 days from the start. Apparently the holy place will be defiled in such a way that the regular sacrifice will not be acceptable to God, and then it will be abolished at the Tribulation midpoint (12:11). This period of defilement will last for 2,300 days and then "the holy place will be properly restored" (8:14). This restoration is probably a reference to Jesus Christ's second coming, when the "most holy place" will be anointed (Daniel 9:24).

- If the 2,300 days ends at Jesus' second coming, then one must count backwards to determine the start of this period. Since the Great Tribulation is exactly 2,520 days long (refer to section 38, The Great Tribulation), the 2,300-day period would begin 220 days (approximately seven and a half months; 2,520 minus 2,300) after the start of the Great Tribulation. A time period as precise as 2,300 days would probably begin with an important event that is easy to identify. In this way, the fulfillment of the prophecy would have the greatest impact. Since Daniel's vision requires the existence of the Tribulation temple, the most likely event that would mark the beginning of the 2,300 days would be the dedication of the Tribulation temple.

- The completion and dedication of the Tribulation temple is an extremely significant end-time event for a number of reasons. First, it shows God's compassion toward His people (Zechariah 1:16). Second, the temple is necessary for the fulfillment of many end-time prophecies. Third, the long-awaited third temple will be completed quickly. When it is dedicated 220 days after the Israel-antichrist peace treaty, God will be glorified through the witness of fulfilled prophecy. Fourth, the temple will be a sign and a warning that Jesus Christ will return 2,300 days later to judge the wicked, to rescue His people and to rule His earthly kingdom. The second warning is that 1,040 days later (approximately 34 months; 1,260 minus 220), Israel will be invaded, the antichrist will "put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" (Daniel 9:27), and the Jews will be driven from the land, killed and "led captive into all the nations" (Luke 21:20-24).

- Apparently, the temple and the holy place will be desecrated ("trampled"; 8:13) during the dedication, and will probably, in some way, involve the antichrist. The dedication of the temple will occur after the cleansing of the land. Following the Ezekiel 38 battle, for "seven months the house of Israel will be burying" the dead "in order to cleanse the land" (Ezekiel 39:12). Since the Great Tribulation will probably start shortly after the Ezekiel 38 battle, seven months would be just enough time to cleanse the land before the temple is dedicated.

***Daniel 9; 70-year prophecy, Jerusalem's desolations (9:1-2); 70-weeks prophecy (9:20 -27)**

- "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans - in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years" (9:1-2). This was approximately 539 B.C., 66 years after Daniel had been taken to Babylon. The 70-year period is the same period that is mentioned in the prophecies of Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10 (see also 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Zechariah 1:12). Daniel brings out a unique aspect of this 70-year period compared to the other 70-year prophecies. Jeremiah 25:11-12 emphasizes judgment on the king of Babylon and his people. In the Jeremiah 29:10 prophecy, God visits His people and leads them back to Jerusalem and 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 describes God's judgment on His people because of their disobedience. Daniel observes that after 70 years the desolations of Jerusalem would be complete. Notice that "desolations" is plural, indicating that several desolations are meant. Isaiah prophetically wrote that Jerusalem would become a desolation (Isaiah 64:10). Jeremiah warned the nation that Jerusalem and the cities of Judah would become a desolation, without inhabitant (Jeremiah 6:8, 9:11, 33:10, 44:6).

- Apparently, the Daniel 9:2 prophecy will be fulfilled in two phases, totaling 70 years. The Babylonian captivity began in 605 B.C. (refer to Jeremiah 25:11-12 commentary) and marked the beginning of phase one. In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon captured Jerusalem and took some of the vessels from the house of God (temple) to place them in a Babylonian temple (Daniel 1:1-2). He also took captive some of the sons of Israel, including Daniel (Daniel 1:3-7). Phase one began with the desolation of Jerusalem and the land (2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Jeremiah 25:11) and would end when the Jewish people returned to Jerusalem more than 66 years later (538 B.C.). Phase two will occur during the second half of the Tribulation, ending with the second coming of Christ. Since phase two is exactly three and a half prophetic years

long (1,260 days; Revelation 12:6), phase one must be 66 and a half years long to total 70 years. Just as phase one began with the desolation of Jerusalem, the desecration of the temple and the captivity of the Jewish people, so will phase two. At the midpoint of the Great Tribulation the antichrist will desecrate the temple and declare war on the Jewish people (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 13:7). Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies, indicating that "her desolation is near" (Luke 21:20). Those who are in Judea and Jerusalem must flee to the mountains. Many Jews "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24; Revelation 11:2). Some Jews will escape and God will miraculously provide a safe haven for them during the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6, 14; Isaiah 34:5-6, 63:1-6; Matthew 24:15-22). During the war of Armageddon, all the nations of the earth will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled (Zechariah 12:3, 14:2). When Jesus Christ returns, He will bring His people back to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10), restore His holy city, build His temple and reign as king over all the earth (Zechariah 14:9-11). For additional information, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place" (9:24). "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress" (9:25). "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined" (9:26). "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (9:27).

- The 70-weeks prophecy is a three-phase prophecy and an important end-time revelation given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel (9:20-27). Seventy weeks is literally 70 sevens, which represents 490 prophetic years (360 days per year). During this time period, the Messiah will "make atonement for iniquity" through His sacrifice and the "most holy place" will be anointed when He returns (9:24). At the second coming of Jesus Christ, this anointing probably represents the consecration of the Temple Mount in preparation for the construction of Messiah's millennial temple (refer to Ezekiel 43:12, 45:2-3) and concludes the 70-weeks period. This is likely the same event that occurs in Daniel 8 at the end of the vision of the 2,300 days when "the holy place will be properly restored" after it is trampled by the antichrist (8:13-14). The conclusion of the 70 weeks coincides with the "completion of the desolations of Jerusalem" (9:2) and the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10) at the end of the two-phase, 70-year period.

- Two phases of the 70-weeks prophecy have already been completed, the first 69 weeks (seven plus 62; fulfilled consecutively), and the third phase, the seventieth week, represents the seven-year Great Tribulation. Several verses confirm that the Great Tribulation is seven prophetic years long, or 2,520 days (7 years x 360 days per year; Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6, 13:5; Daniel 7:25), implying that the first two phases were fulfilled just as precisely.

- The 70 sevens begin with a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, given by the Persian king, Artaxerxes Longimanus (approximately 444 B.C.; Nehemiah 2:1-8). The public square and moat of Jerusalem were rebuilt, even in times of distress by the time the first seven weeks (49 years) were completed (9:25). After 69 weeks, "the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing", which is probably a reference to His sacrifice on the cross (9:26). Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be "cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people" (Isaiah 53:8), describing His crucifixion. Although the exact date of Jesus' crucifixion is not known, the end of the sixty-ninth week appears to fall in 33 A.D. (add 476 years to 444 B.C.; accounts for 1 transition years from B.C. to A.D.). Sixty-nine sevens is 483 prophetic years, but really represents 476 actual years (multiply 483 by the ratio 360 to 365.2425 days per year; about five days lost per year).

- There is a long span of time between the conclusion of the sixty-ninth week and the beginning of the seventieth. The "prince who is to come", also known as the antichrist, "will make a firm covenant with the many for one week", which marks the beginning of the seven-year Great Tribulation (9:26-27). This peace treaty with Israel will be broken after three and a half years, for "in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" and will desecrate the temple. It is very interesting that the antichrist is not one of the original 10 kings of Babylon the Great, yet he has the authority to make a firm covenant with Israel at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:19-25; Revelation 17:8-18). This suggests that he is a man of influence and power well before the start of the Tribulation period. The antichrist's "abomination" is often referred to as the "abomination of desolation" (Daniel 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14). "Abomination" refers to an idol or detestable thing (Jeremiah 13:27; Deuteronomy 29:17). The antichrist is the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, "who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). After the antichrist claims to be God in the newly built Tribulation temple, he will apparently set up an image of himself in the temple. Daniel says, "the abomination of desolation is set up" (Daniel 12:11). Matthew says the abomination of desolation will be

"standing in the holy place", speaking of the temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15). Mark says the abomination of desolation will be "standing where it should not be" (Mark 13:14). The false prophet will require everyone to worship the beast and the beast's image (Revelation 13:11-15). Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), the Seleucid (Syrian) king, set up an abomination of desolation (Daniel 11:31) in the second temple (167 B.C.). When he conquered the city of Jerusalem, the temple was defiled by offering a pig on the altar. He stopped Jewish sacrifices and offerings and erected a statue of Zeus in the Holy of Holies.

- "The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary" is probably describing the destruction of Jerusalem and the Tribulation temple during the war of Armageddon (9:26). The antichrist will rule a global empire; therefore "the people of the prince" would represent Babylon the Great. Jesus indicates that the Tribulation temple will be torn down when He returns at the end of the Great Tribulation (Luke 21). "And its end will come with a flood" (9:26) probably indicates that an actual flood will occur, perhaps in a similar fashion to the flood that will originate from the dragon's (Satan) mouth to destroy the fleeing Jewish remnant at the Tribulation midpoint (Revelation 12:15-16). This flood would serve the same purpose; to destroy the Jewish remnant as they flee from Jerusalem and into the newly formed valley that Jesus creates when His feet touch the Mount of Olives at His second coming (Zechariah 14:4-5). "Desolations are determined" (9:26) likely indicates the end-time desolation of the Tribulation temple, Jerusalem and the land of Israel (Daniel 9:2; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Jeremiah 25:11). Some writers attribute this event to the destruction of the second temple in 70 A.D. by the Romans. This seems unlikely because it did not occur during any of the three phases and the second temple's destruction did not come with a flood. This chapter ends with a prophecy of judgment on "the one who makes desolate" (9:27). At the second coming of Christ, the antichrist will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

***Daniel 10;** Daniel's terrifying vision (10:1-9); Daniel's strengthening (10:10-21)

- "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision" (10:1). Daniel's final vision occurred two years after Cyrus' proclamation allowing the Jewish people to "go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD" (Ezra 1:3; 2 Chronicles 36:22-23; 538 B.C. proclamation). This vision is explained in great detail in chapters 10, 11 and 12. While many returned to Jerusalem, Daniel remained in Babylon, perhaps because of his age. When Daniel was by the bank of the Tigris River, "there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult" (10:5-6). After the vision, Daniel's color turned to a deathly pallor (pale), he lost his strength and fell into a deep sleep. The men who were with Daniel did not see the vision and yet a great dread fell on them and they ran away to hide themselves (10:7-9). Similar wording is used by Jeremiah to describe the Great Tribulation, where the sound of terror and dread is heard and faces turn pale (Jeremiah 30:4-7). John had a similar reaction when he was "in the Spirit" and Jesus appeared to him. He fell at Jesus' feet "like a dead man" (Revelation 1:9-18).

- An angel (perhaps Gabriel; 8:16) woke Daniel from his "deep sleep" and said to him, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you" (10:10-11). The angel explained that he would have come sooner, "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia" (10:13). This satanic adversary was probably a demon (evil angel), seeking to influence the affairs of the nation of Persia. Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help the angel. The archangel Michael (Jude 1:9) is the special guardian of God's people (12:1). This passage gives insight into the nature of warfare fought in the spiritual realm between God's angels and Satan's demons (Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 12:7). The prince of Greece is mentioned (10:20) which reinforces the idea that the battle between good and evil angels over the control of nations continues. The angel told Daniel, "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future" (10:14). The "latter days" are future days culminating in the eternal kingdom (Daniel 2:28, 44).

***Daniel 11;** Prophecies concerning Persia, Greece, Egypt and Syria (11:1-20); Antiochus Epiphanes (11:21-35); the antichrist (11:36-45)

- This remarkable passage contains detailed prophecies concerning Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria (11:1-20) and Antiochus Epiphanes (11:21-35) and is part of Daniel's final vision which spans chapters 10 through 12. These prophecies have already been accurately fulfilled. The final section of this chapter (11:36-45) describes the end-time activities of the antichrist (not Antiochus Epiphanes) because his activities occur "until the indignation is finished" (11:36; see also 8:19), "at the end time" (11:40), and are directly tied to the Tribulation events of chapter 12.

- "Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all" (11:36-37). "But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price" (11:38-39). The antichrist is called "king" and will do as he pleases (11:36). This passage is describing the antichrist during the last portion of the Tribulation when he has total control of Babylon the Great (refer to Revelation 17-18). Jeremiah prophesied that the "king of Babylon" would be judged by God at the end of the Tribulation, "When seventy years are completed, God will punish the king of Babylon" (Jeremiah 25:12). The antichrist is the little horn of Daniel 8 that "magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host" (8:11) and will "prosper" and "will destroy mighty men and the holy people" and "will even oppose the Prince of princes" (8:24-25). He is the "man of lawlessness", the "son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). The king "will prosper until the indignation is finished" (11:36). This is probably a reference to the "final period of the indignation" which occurs at the "time of the end" (8:19) and will conclude with the second coming of Jesus Christ. The antichrist will honor a god of fortresses and will be helped by a foreign god (11:38-39). This "god" is probably a reference to Satan, who will give the antichrist great power and authority (Revelation 13:2). Those who are loyal to the antichrist will help him rule the world as king of Babylon the Great during the last portion of the Tribulation (Revelation 17:12-13).

- "At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him" (11:40). The phrases "end time" and "end of time" are used several times by Daniel (11:35, 40, 12:4, 9) and include the Tribulation period and beyond. Toward the end of the Tribulation, some nations will rebel against the antichrist, who is apparently in Israel at the time. Some people will be "rescued out of his hand; Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon" (11:41). This territory probably represents the western side of modern Jordan. This is most likely the location of the safe haven that God will provide for the Jewish remnant during the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6, 14). Many countries will fall at the hands of the beast (antichrist), but the Jewish remnant will be "rescued out of his hand" by the Lord (11:41). The king of the South may refer to Egypt (11:42-43). In this invasion, Egypt may be joined by the "Libyans and Ethiopians" (11:43). The king of the North may refer to Gog (probably Russia), Turkey (Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, Gomer) or Beth-togarmah (probably Syria; Ezekiel 38:3, 6, 15). Several of these nations (except for Egypt) that will rebel against the antichrist are also mentioned in the Ezekiel 38 battle, which probably occurs just before the Great Tribulation begins. In the Ezekiel 38 battle, these nations attack Israel and are severely judged by God. Apparently toward the end of the Great Tribulation, some of these nations have regained sufficient military strength to try and defeat the beast. "But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many" (11:44). Rumors from the east may be a reference to the "kings from the east" (Revelation 16:12). Empowered by Satan, the beast will defeat all the forces that come against him. This makes sense, for it is Jesus who will judge the beast and Babylon the Great at His second coming (Revelation 16:19, 19:19-21).

- The antichrist will enter the Beautiful Land (land of Israel; 11:16) and will "pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain" (11:41, 45). The seas mentioned are probably the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias) and the Mediterranean Sea. The "beautiful Holy Mountain" is probably a reference to Jerusalem (Psalm 48:1; Isaiah 56:7). Based on this description, the antichrist's royal pavilion will probably be set up at Har-Magedon (Revelation 16:16), also known as the Plain of Esdraelon (Jezreel Valley). If one draws a line on a map from Jerusalem to the midpoint between the two seas, that line goes through the Jezreel Valley. This is interesting because the kings and the armies of the whole world will be gathered together to the Jezreel Valley (Har-Magedon) by the antichrist at the end of the Tribulation (Revelation 16:13-16). The antichrist would certainly want to be at this location to organize and lead the final battle against Jerusalem and ultimately God (Zechariah 12:3, 14:2; Revelation 19:19). Apparently while the beast is battling the king of the North, the king of the South and others, many Jews will return to Jerusalem and will inhabit it once again (Zechariah 12:3-10). Perhaps this is the antichrist's main motivation for summoning the nations of the world to Armageddon, to destroy the Jews. When Jesus returns, the antichrist will "come to his end, and no one will help him" (11:45).

***Daniel 12: End-time prophecies concerning Israel (12:1-13)**

- "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (12:1-2). "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase" (12:4). This passage begins with "Now at that time", indicating that the events of chapter 12 are connected to the activities of the antichrist in chapter 11 (11:36-45). Michael the archangel, the special guardian of the affairs of Israel (Daniel 10:13, 21; Jude 1:9; Revelation 12:7), will arise during the "time of distress", the Tribulation period. Then, "at that time" God's people will be rescued, "everyone who is found written in the book", which is probably a reference to the book of life (Revelation 20:15, 21:27). When Jesus returns, believers "will awake, these to everlasting life". The resurrection of believers will occur at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) and the second coming of Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:4). For unbelievers, their

resurrection of judgment and "everlasting contempt" will occur when the 1,000 year millennial kingdom is completed (Revelation 20:5; John 5:28-29). The phrase, "many will go back and forth" suggests the ease of travel, and at the same time, knowledge will increase greatly.

- "Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing" on both sides of the river and "said to the man dressed in linen... 'How long will it be until the end of these wonders?'" (12:5-6). He informed them "that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed" (12:7). The phrase "time, times, and half a time" (time = 1 year, times = 2 years, half a time = half a year), or three and a half years is used three times in the Bible to describe half of the Great Tribulation (7:25, 12:7; Revelation 12:14). In all three cases, the phrase describes the second half of the Tribulation. The fact that three and a half years is specified rather than seven years, reinforces the idea that Israel will be largely protected from the devastation and persecution of the first half of the Tribulation (refer to Matthew 24:21). The persecution of the "holy people" will end when Jesus Christ returns to earth at the close of the Tribulation to rescue His people, to judge the wicked and to rule His earthly kingdom. Daniel "heard but could not understand" what he had been told (12:8). Twice in this chapter, it was explained to Daniel that "these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time" (12:4, 9), when only "those who have insight will understand" (12:10).

- "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days" (12:11; 30 days added to three and a half prophetic years, which is 1,260 days; see Revelation 11:3, 12:6). At the midpoint of the Tribulation, the antichrist will "put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" (Daniel 9:27) and will defile the temple, "displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Matthew 24:15). The 30 extra days will probably include the gathering and judging of unbelievers after Jesus returns (Matthew 25:32). "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!" (12:12; 75 days after Jesus' second coming). This may be a reference to the marriage supper of the Lamb and the official start of Christ's millennial kingdom. "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age" (12:13). The "end of the age" is often associated with the second coming of Jesus Christ and judgment of the wicked (Matthew 13:49, 24:3). These comforting words are concerning the future resurrection of believers and the blessings of the millennial kingdom. David said, "The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup" (Psalm 16:5).

8. Joel

***Joel 1;** Devastation of locusts (1:1-14); day of the Lord (1:15-20)

- Joel describes the effects of a severe locust plague that had invaded the land. This devastating event was a sign of an even worse calamity to come; the destructive day of the Lord. "Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty" (1:15). The day of the Lord will be characterized by famine, drought and fire. Gladness and joy will be cut off from the house of God (1:15-20).

***Joel 2;** Prophecy of future desolation (2:1-11); call to repentance (2:12-17); deliverance promised (2:18-27); promise of the Spirit (2:28-29); day of the Lord (2:30-32)

- "Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; surely it is near" (2:1). "The land is like the garden of Eden before them but a desolate wilderness behind them, and nothing at all escapes them" (2:3). The locust invasion may be a foreshadow of an invasion of demonic locusts in the day of the Lord, during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 9:1-11). Trumpet judgment five is the release of demonic locusts to torment men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. "The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, and who can endure it?" (2:11). The giving of the Holy Spirit (2:28-29; on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2) and the day of the Lord (2:30-32) are described.

***Joel 3;** Judgment of the nations and Armageddon (3:1-16); the Millennium (3:17-21)

- "For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel" (3:1-2). This is a description of the war of Armageddon. The word "Jehoshaphat" means "Yahweh judges" and may refer to the Kidron Valley on the east side of Jerusalem, lying between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives. The Valley of Jehoshaphat is only mentioned twice in the Bible (3:2, 12), and is also referred to as the "valley of decision" twice in verse 14. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision" (3:14).

- During the Millennium, "the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; and a spring will go out from the house of the LORD" (3:18). The house of the Lord is Messiah's (millennial) temple. "Edom will become a desolate wilderness, because of the violence done to the sons of Judah, in

whose land they have shed innocent blood" (3:19). The judgment upon Edom may be a reference to the war of Armageddon (refer to Isaiah 34:1-17, 63:1-6; Obadiah 1:15-21).

9. Amos

***Amos 9;** The restoration of Israel (9:11-15)

- Following the return of Messiah, God will restore the captivity of His people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them (9:14). "I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them," says the LORD your God" (9:15).

10. Obadiah

***Obadiah 1;** God's judgment on Edom (the house of Esau) and Israel's enemies, day of the Lord (1:15-21)

- "For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you" (1:15). Edom's judgment foreshadows what the Lord will do to all nations who similarly mistreat Israel (Isaiah 34:1-17, 63:1-6). During the end times, God's judgment will be so severe on the nations that oppose Israel that it will seem that they never existed and Edom (the house of Esau) will have no survivors (15-21).

11. Micah

***Micah 2;** Remnant of Israel gathered (2:12-13)

- God will gather the remnant of Israel. "I will put them together like sheep in the fold; like a flock in the midst of its pasture they will be noisy with men. The breaker goes up before them; they break out, pass through the gate and go out by it. So their king goes on before them, and the LORD at their head" (2:12-13). Some Bible translations translate "fold" as "Bozrah". Bozrah is located east of the Jordan River in the ancient nation of Edom (modern nation of Jordan). It is near the city of Petra. The "breaker" speaks of one who goes ahead to remove obstacles in the path. This passage may be speaking of the Jewish remnant that God will miraculously deliver from the antichrist during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 12:6, 14; Isaiah 34:5-6, 63:1-6). The safe haven that God provides may be located in or near Bozrah.

***Micah 4;** Last days, millennial kingdom (4:1-8)

- The millennial kingdom is described in this passage (4:1-8). "And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains... and the peoples will stream to it... from Zion will go forth the law... and He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nations will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken" (4:1-4).

12. Zephaniah

***Zephaniah 1;** Judgment on Judah and end-time universal judgment (1:1-18)

- This chapter is a warning of judgment to Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The disobedience of the people would result in the Babylonian invasion of Judah and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. This passage also speaks of end-time universal judgment that will occur during the Great Tribulation (1:2-3, 18). "Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the LORD's wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth" (1:18).

***Zephaniah 3;** Judgment on nations (3:8); millennial kingdom described (3:9-20)

- During the Great Tribulation, the nations will be judged (3:8). The blessings of the millennial kingdom are described in the last section of this chapter (3:9-20). During the Millennium, Christ will rule as King on the earth. "The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you will fear disaster no more" (3:15).

13. Zechariah

- Zechariah, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel before him, was both a prophet and a priest. He was born in Babylon and his

ministry began after the Babylonian captivity. He returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with almost 50,000 other Jewish exiles. Zechariah began his prophetic ministry in 520 B.C., encouraging the people to spiritual renewal and motivating them to rebuild the temple by revealing to them God's plan for Israel's future. With this prophetic encouragement, the people completed the temple reconstruction in 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15).

***Zechariah 1;** Call to repentance (1:1-6); Vision #1: Patrol of the earth and 70-year indignation (1:7-17); Vision #2: The four horns and the four craftsmen (1:18-21)

- The first six verses of chapter one are a call to repentance. Following this, Zechariah describes eight prophetic visions he saw in a single night (519 B.C.) in the first six chapters of his book. These visions were interpreted by an angel and reveal some important details about the end times and God's plan for Israel and the world.

- Vision #1: Patrol of the earth and 70-year indignation (1:7-17)

- "On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows:" (1:7). "I saw at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel and white horses behind him" (1:8). "Then I said, 'My lord, what are these?' And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, 'I will show you what these are'" (1:9). "And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, 'These are those whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth'" (1:10). "So they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, 'We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet'" (1:11). Based on the end-time events at the end of this vision, it is likely that the patrol occurs just prior to the rapture. Since the rapture will come unexpectedly (except for alert believers), like a thief in the night, it makes sense that the earth would be "peaceful and quiet" prior to this event. "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child" (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). After the rapture, the earth will no longer be "peaceful and quiet" (1:11) because "he who now restrains" (the Holy Spirit) will be "taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7).

- "Then the angel of the LORD said, 'O LORD of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years?'" (1:12). When the angel of the Lord receives the report from the patrol, he is clearly concerned for the people of Jerusalem and Judah. Even though "all the earth is peaceful and quiet" the Jewish people are apparently experiencing anti-Semitism and are being threatened by their enemies. Why the Lord has been without compassion (mercy) and indignant (angry) for 70 years is not stated. Perhaps it is because the Jewish people have rebelled against God and have not believed in the Messiah as their Lord and Savior (Isaiah 64:5; Hebrews 3:17-19). This 70-year period is not the same period that is mentioned in Jeremiah, Daniel or 2 Chronicles; prophecies that will be fulfilled in two phases (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10; Daniel 9:2; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21). Zechariah 1:12 does not mention Babylon or the prophecies of Jeremiah, as these other passages do. Also, the first phase of these prophecies was fulfilled approximately 19 to 20 years before the eight prophetic vision came to Zechariah from the Lord (519 B.C., Zechariah 1:7). In addition, a two-phase fulfillment does not match the details of this vision.

- So when does the 70-year period start? Many of the end-time prophecies that mention a period of time have a clearly defined starting and ending point and are associated with the Great Tribulation. This is true for Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27) and the 70-year prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel and 2 Chronicles. Since the time period of Zechariah 1:12 probably includes the time just prior to the rapture, it would be logical to conclude that the 70 years begins with the rebirth of Israel, 14 May 1948 (Yom Ha'atzmaut, 5 Iyar 5708 in the Jewish calendar). Israel's rebirth in Scripture is often associated with the nation's spiritual awakening and revival (Ezekiel 11:14-21, 36:22-38, 37:1-28, 39:25-29), with the judgment of nations (Joel 3:1-3; Ezekiel 28:25-26), with great tribulation (Jeremiah 30:1-11) and with the coming of Messiah (Zechariah 12, 14). There are several other reasons to make this conclusion. First, Zechariah's eight visions all appear to be associated with the end times. Second, Zechariah's first vision concludes with a description of the millennial kingdom, when the Lord "will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem" (1:17). Third, another patrol of the earth is described in Zechariah's eighth vision, which probably occurs during the Great Tribulation (6:1-8). Fourth, after the fall of Jerusalem in 605 B.C., Israel was not a sovereign nation again until her rebirth in 1948. One could argue that the 70 years of indignation and "no compassion" could not occur until Israel was a nation once again. Since Jerusalem's fall, there has not been an obvious, well-defined 70-year period that would match the details of Zechariah's first vision until Israel's rebirth. For additional information about the 70-year period and the many similarities between Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- The concerns of the angel (1:12) are addressed when the Lord speaks to him with "gracious words" and "comforting words" (1:13). The Lord of hosts said, "I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster" (1:14-15). In spite of God's 70 years of anger, His jealousy for Jerusalem and Zion speaks of His great love for the Jewish people. In Zechariah 8:2, the Lord is

also "exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her". Following this verse is a description of the millennial kingdom. Since "all the earth is peaceful and quiet" (1:11), why is the Lord "very angry with the nations who are at ease"? These same nations who are living at ease (careless and proud) are probably the same nations that are hostile toward God's people and are causing great concern for the angel of the Lord (1:12). The Lord's anger toward these nations increases because "they furthered the disaster". This could be a reference to the Ezekiel 38 battle, which probably occurs just prior to the start of the Great Tribulation. During this battle a mighty army, from many nations, will go up "like a storm" against Israel. These nations will experience God's fury, anger and blazing wrath when He destroys this invading horde (Ezekiel 38-39). Following this battle, God's anger toward the nations will continue throughout the Tribulation period as God's seal, trumpet and bowl judgments are brought upon the earth (Revelation 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16). In the past, God's people often experienced "disaster" as a result of turning away from the Lord. "Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their plans, because they have not listened to My words, and as for My law, they have rejected it also" (Jeremiah 6:19; see also Jeremiah 35:17).

- "Therefore thus says the LORD, 'I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem'" (1:16; see also 2:1). God's long period of "no compassion" (1:12) will end, for He "will return to Jerusalem with compassion" and as a result, the Tribulation temple will be built. The long-awaited third temple will be completed quickly because according to Daniel 8 (see commentary) it will apparently be dedicated 220 days after the Israel-antichrist peace treaty. God's compassion (mercy) for Israel will also be displayed for the whole world to see during the Ezekiel 38 battle. The defeat of Israel's enemies will clear the way for the construction of the temple.

- "Again, proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem'" (1:17). When Jesus returns, He will set up His kingdom and the millennial (Messiah's) temple will be built in Jerusalem (6:12-13). The Lord will "again choose Jerusalem" (see also 2:12) and will dwell in the midst of His people during the millennial kingdom (2:10-11, 8:3).

- Vision #2: The four horns and the four craftsmen (1:18-21)

- This second vision shows God's judgment on the four horns "which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem... so that no man lifts up his head" (1:19, 21). These horns symbolize proud Gentile powers ("horns of the nations"; 1:21). The four craftsmen have come to terrorize the four horns, "to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it" (1:21). Some writers are of the opinion that these four horns represent four Gentile empires, perhaps Assyria, Egypt, Babylon and Medo-Persia. In this case the four craftsmen are the empires that succeeded them, respectively, with the fourth craftsman being Greece. There are several issues with this interpretation. Why would Zechariah have a vision about events that had already taken place, except for the judgment against Medo-Persia? Also, Zechariah's other visions concern end-time events or foreshadows of end-time events. This vision appears to transition directly into the third vision (see notes on 2:1), which describes the end times. These horns are spoken about as a unit, both in their actions and in their judgment. Notice that the horns have "scattered" (past tense, 1:19) Israel before the craftsmen "terrify them" and before they "throw down the horns of the nations". Notice also that these Gentile powers have lifted up their horns against the "land" of Judah in order to scatter it (1:21); the land that God promised to the Jewish people.

- It seems more likely that Zechariah's vision pertains to four end-time horns and craftsmen. The four horns may represent the modern-day Quartet, comprised of the United States of America, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations. The Quartet was established in 2002 to mediate the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This group often pressures Israel to give up land in exchange for peace. In this case, the four craftsmen would represent God's judgment on these four Gentile powers in the form of historically severe catastrophes. Since Israel's rebirth, any nation or political power that has attempted to take land away from Israel either by force or by negotiation has paid the price. Many of these nations have experienced tremendous economic and financial losses and natural disasters as a result of their negotiation efforts. If this is the correct interpretation, then the four horns will act against the land of Judah during the same 70-year period mentioned in Zechariah's first vision (1:12). Four horns are also mentioned by Daniel (8:8, 22-23), which represent four end-time Gentile powers. The antichrist will arise from one of these horns (Daniel 8:9).

***Zechariah 2; Vision #3: The surveyor with the measuring line (end times and Millennium; 2:1-13)**

- "Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand. So I said, 'Where are you going?' And he said to me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is'" (2:1-2). Verse 1 reflects the transition to the next vision and the continuity with the preceding one. A "measuring line" was also mentioned in the first vision (1:16). An angel runs after the young man (surveyor), and says to him, "Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it" (2:3-4; see also Ezekiel 38:11). The absence of walls may be a result of the Ezekiel 38 battle, where every wall will fall to the ground (Ezekiel 38:20). Walls will not be necessary after this battle because the Lord will be a wall of fire around Jerusalem, and the glory in her midst (2:5). This may be a

reference to God's divine protection of Israel during the first half of the Tribulation. A "multitude of men and cattle" reflect prosperity and God's blessing. This divine protection will be removed for the second half of the Tribulation, perhaps due to the disobedience and unbelief of the Jewish people and to fulfill the two-phase prophecies of Daniel 9:2 and 2 Chronicles 36:20-21.

- God's people are strongly encouraged to "Flee from the land of the north" and to "Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon" (2:6-7). This warning anticipates God's judgment on the nations of the world. During Zechariah's second patrol of the earth (eighth vision), the "land of the north" will experience God's wrath, probably during the Tribulation period (6:7-8). After glory, God will judge the nations that plunder God's people, the "apple of His eye" (2:8), symbolizing God's protection of His people (Deuteronomy 32:10). "'Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,' declares the LORD" (2:10). During the Millennium, God will dwell in the midst of His people. Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become His people (2:10-11). "The LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem" (2:12; see also 1:17).

***Zechariah 3; Vision #4: Joshua the high priest and the Branch (Messiah, 3:1-10)**

- Joshua the high priest was standing before the angel of the Lord "clothed with filthy garments" and "Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him" (3:1-3). The filthy garments were replaced with festal robes and a clean turban signifying that his iniquity had been taken away (3:4-5). Joshua and Zerubbabel the governor had returned from Babylon with Zechariah and almost 50,000 other Jewish exiles to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. Joshua was urged to walk in the ways of the Lord and to perform His service (3:6-7).

- The Lord next explained the point of the vision; that Joshua and his friends were symbolic of things to come (3:8). In their priestly cleansing from sin they foreshadowed the future cleansing of the nation of Israel. This future cleansing was associated with the coming Messiah who was given three messianic titles; "My servant", "the Branch", and "the stone" (3:8-9). As the Servant of the Lord, Christ is the One who will do the will of the Father, and "will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11; see also 42:1, 52:13). As the "righteous Branch of David", Christ is the descendant of David who will "execute justice and righteousness on the earth" (Jeremiah 33:15), "will build the temple of the LORD" (Zechariah 6:12) and "will reign as king" (Jeremiah 23:5). As the stone, He was rejected by the builders, but "has become the chief corner stone" (Psalm 118:22). The Messiah is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (1 Peter 2:8) and "he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust" (Matthew 21:44).

- The "seven eyes" that are on the stone (3:9) are perhaps a reference to the "seven... eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth" (4:10). Joshua the high priest is also a foreshadow of Jesus, our "great high priest" (Hebrews 4:14, 3:1, 6:20). Ultimately though, the Messiah will "remove the iniquity of that land in one day" (3:8-9). This is probably a reference to the New Covenant which was initiated by Jesus' sacrifice (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:15). Jeremiah speaks about this New Covenant; "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people... for they will all know Me... for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more'" (Jeremiah 31:31-34). These specific promises will find their ultimate fulfillment for Israel when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His millennial kingdom. Sitting under one's own vine and fig tree refers to conditions of peace and prosperity, probably during the millennial kingdom (3:10; Micah 4:4).

***Zechariah 4; Vision #5: The golden lampstand and the two olive trees (4:1-14)**

- Zechariah saw a "lampstand all of gold" and two olive trees by it (4:2-3). An angel said to him, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts" (4:6). 'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"' (4:7). "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you" (4:9). This vision was an encouragement to Zerubbabel the governor to continue the work of building the temple. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit, would the temple be completed, and every obstacle (mountain) would be removed in the process. The lampstand was probably similar to the lampstand placed in Israel's tabernacle (Exodus 25:31-40) and the 10 lampstands of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:49). These earlier lampstands had to be filled with oil by the priests. However, the unique design of the bowl on top, the seven spouts and the two golden pipes tapped into the olive trees allowed for a continuous supply of "golden oil" to the seven lamps of Zechariah's lampstand (4:2, 12).

- "Then I said to him, 'What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?'" (4:11). The two olive trees are the "two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth" (4:14, see also 4:3, 11), who foreshadow the two mighty witnesses of the Tribulation period (Revelation 11:3-6). Just as Joshua and Zerubbabel were involved in the construction of the second temple (Zerubbabel's temple), the two witnesses will prophesy from Jerusalem during the construction of the third temple (Tribulation temple) and will probably be associated with the temple in some

way.

***Zechariah 5;** Vision #6: The flying scroll (5:1-4); Vision #7: The woman in the ephah (5:5-11)

- Vision #6: The flying scroll (5:1-4)

- The sixth vision describes a huge "flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits" (5:2; approximately 9 by 4.5 meters). "Then he said to me, 'This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side'" (5:3). "'I will make it go forth,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones'" (5:4). This vision is a warning and encouragement that God will judge sin. The severity of the judgment and the fact that the curse is going forth over the face of the whole land suggests a fulfillment during the Great Tribulation. Isaiah describes a similar curse during the Tribulation period. "Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left" (Isaiah 24:6).

- Vision #7: The woman in the ephah (5:5-11)

- The woman in the ephah (barrel) represents wickedness. She was observed when the lead cover was lifted up by the angel. He then replaced the cover to prevent her from escaping (5:5-8). Two women with wings (probably demons) took the ephah away, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal" (5:9-11). The land of Shinar was the location of the tower of Babel (Genesis 10:10, 11:2-4) and later became the site of Babylon (Daniel 1:2). This woman will be set on her own pedestal in a temple made just for her. This strongly suggests that this woman represents the great harlot and false religion of end-time Babylon the Great, who was "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus"; who made the kings of the earth "drunk with the wine of her immorality" (Revelation 17:1-7) during the first half of the Great Tribulation. It is not likely that this passage is talking about a physical temple being constructed in a future, rebuilt city of Babylon. For additional information, refer to Revelation 17-18. Just as the curse of the sixth vision goes forth (mentioned twice), so will the wickedness from the ephah go forth (also mentioned twice). This wickedness will apparently involve false worship.

***Zechariah 6;** Vision #8: The four chariots and patrol of the earth (6:1-8); crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)

- Zechariah's eighth vision describes four chariots with horses (no riders are mentioned), which "are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth" (6:5). The four spirits (or "winds") of heaven may refer to angels of divine judgment. They are eager to patrol the earth and those who are going to the land of the north will appease God's wrath (6:7-8). The land of the north sometimes refers to Babylon (Jeremiah 10:22). In Zechariah's third vision, the LORD declares to Zion, "Flee from the land of the north... for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens... Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon" (2:6-7). In this passage, the "land of the north" is equated with the "daughter of Babylon". Judgment is promised against the nations that "plunder" Judah and Jerusalem (2:8-9). In Zechariah's first vision God was angry with the nations that were at ease (1:15); in this eighth vision He was satisfied with their judgment, probably occurring during the Tribulation period.

- "The word of the LORD" came to Zechariah, instructing him to "take silver and gold" from some exiles that had arrived from Babylon, and to "make an ornate crown and set it on the head Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest" (6:9-11). "Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices"' (6:12-13). The crowning of Joshua as high priest is a foreshadow of the crowning of Messiah (Branch; see also 3:8), who will build the temple of the Lord and unite the offices of king and priest in one person in the millennial kingdom.

***Zechariah 7;** 70-year prophecy and fasts (7:1-14)

- "In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev" (7:1). Almost two years after Zechariah's eight visions (chapters 1 to 6), four messages (chapters 7 and 8) came to Zechariah from the Lord. This was in 518 B.C., 68 years after the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (Jeremiah 52:12-13). Some men from the town of Bethel came to Jerusalem to ask if it was still necessary to observe the fast of the fifth month which commemorated the destruction of the first temple (2 Kings 25:8-10). "Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 'Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, "When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted?"' (7:5). "'When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves?" (7:6). So "these seventy years" is spoken

prophetically since 70 years of fasting and mourning would not end for another two years, when the new temple would be completed "on the third day of the month Adar", which is the twelfth month (515 B.C.; Ezra 6:15; Esther 3:7). Even though two more fasts were to be observed during the next two years, the message is given in the past tense; "you fasted and mourned". The seventieth fifth month fast was the last one observed because the second temple was completed seven months later. This same phrase, "these seventy years", appears in Zechariah 1:12 and is also spoken prophetically. These are the only two occurrences of the phrase "these seventy years" in the Bible. For additional information about the similarities of Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- Since the temple was being rebuilt and was nearing completion, the people wondered if it was still necessary to observe the fast of the fifth month. The first message to the people (7:4-7) was a rebuke for observing self-imposed fasts that were not commanded by God and were observed with the wrong motivation. They were fasting and feasting for themselves, not for the Lord. Even though the people did not inquire about the fast of the seventh month, Zechariah included it in his response. The fast of the seventh month, also self-imposed, commemorated the murder of Gedaliah, the governor of Judah, shortly after the fall of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 41:1-2; 2 Kings 25:25). Jerusalem fell in the fifth month and Gedaliah was murdered just two months later in the seventh month, 586 B.C. The people's question about the fifth month fast (7:3) was answered indirectly in the fourth message. In the millennial kingdom, the fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah (8:19). The fast of the tenth month commemorated the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in January, 588 B.C. (2 Kings 25:1-2; Jeremiah 39:1). The fast of the fourth month commemorated the capture of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25:3-4; Jeremiah 39:2). These fasts were also self-imposed. The third and fourth messages (chapter 8) give encouragement and hope to the people, describing the millennial kingdom where fasts will become feasts.

- There are several unusual things about Zechariah 7 and 8 that should be noted. First, why are two chapters of Zechariah, including four messages from the Lord dedicated to answering what seems to be a relatively unimportant question about a man-made fast? Second, why is a prophecy that was fulfilled in 515 B.C. included in a book that mainly focuses on future events and the end times? Third, since the temple was nearing completion, why would the people of Bethel be so concerned about a one-day fast that would only be observed two more times? Fourth, why are "these seventy years" mentioned when it has only been 68 years? It is spoken in the past tense as if the 70 years have already been completed. Since the temple was completed in the twelfth month (Adar; 515 B.C.; February-March; Ezra 6:15), then the last fast of the fifth month would have been observed in 516 B.C. (fifth month; July-August 516 B.C.). According to this prophecy, the first fast must have begun the year after the temple was destroyed, which was the fifth month (July-August) of 585 B.C. Then the last fast of the fifth month would have occurred exactly 70 years later in 516 B.C. Since Gedaliah was murdered just two months after the burning of Jerusalem, the fast of the seventh month would have first been observed in 585 B.C. (July-August) and the last fast would have occurred 70 years later in 516 B.C. Based on the unusual nature of this prophecy, one must conclude that there is more to this passage than meets the eye. One's attention is drawn to "seventy years" (7:5), a time period that also appears in Zechariah 1:12 and that is often associated with end-time events. The many similarities between the Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5 prophecies suggest that they are connected in a special way. Perhaps the Zechariah 7:5 message from the Lord can be used to help interpret the Zechariah 1:12 passage. For additional information, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- The second message from Zechariah (7:8-14) is a reminder to listen to and obey the word of the Lord. In the past, disobedience resulted in the Jewish people being scattered "among all the nations whom they have not known" and "they made the pleasant land desolate" (7:14).

***Zechariah 8; The future for Jerusalem (Zion, 8:1-23)**

- Of the four messages given to Zechariah in "the fourth year of King Darius" (7:1), the last two are explained in this chapter. The third message (8:1-17) describes God's blessings during the millennial kingdom. "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her'" (8:2). "Thus says the LORD, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain'" (8:3). The Lord will bring His people back, "and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness" (8:8).

- The fourth message (8:18-23) indirectly answers the question about the necessity of observing the fast of the fifth month (7:2-3). "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace'" (8:19). During the millennial kingdom, these fasts will become feasts, and "many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD" (8:22; see also 14:16-18; Isaiah 2:2-3). For additional information about these fasts, refer to the Zechariah 7 commentary. "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you"' (8:23).

***Zechariah 12;** Jesus' second coming, Armageddon, attack and defense of Jerusalem (12:1-14)

- "The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel" (12:1) describes the campaign of Armageddon, the second coming of Jesus Christ and the millennial kingdom in chapters 12 to 14. It is one of the most detailed accounts of this future time period in the Bible. The campaign of Armageddon begins when "the kings of the whole world" and their armies are gathered together in Israel (Jezreel Valley) "for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty" (Revelation 16:13-16). The Lord declares, "Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah (12:2). "It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it" (12:3). The final war (Armageddon) of the Great Tribulation is described in many places in the Bible (Revelation 14:14-20, 16:13-21, 19:11-21; Zechariah 12:1-14, 14:1-15; Isaiah 34:1-17, 63:1-6; Jeremiah 25:12-38; Joel 3:1-17). God will strike the attacking armies with confusion, madness, panic and a devastating plague (12:4, 14:12-13).

- "In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem" (12:6). "In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them" (12:8). It appears that at the very end of the Tribulation many Jews will return to Jerusalem because "the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem". Perhaps some will return in anticipation of Jesus Christ's second coming. "And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (12:9).

- "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn" (12:10). At the second coming of Christ, the Jews will finally realize that the One whom their forefathers rejected and "pierced" (crucified) is Jesus, the Messiah, and "all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him" (Revelation 1:7). "In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem... every family by itself and their wives by themselves" (12:11-14).

***Zechariah 13;** The Lord's cleansing of Jerusalem (13:1-9)

- "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity" (13:1). Following the time of mourning in the preceding chapter, the cleansing of the nation of Israel is described in 13:1-6. In the last three chapters of Zechariah, the phrase "in that day" occurs 16 times. The Lord is "the hope of Israel" and "the fountain of living water" offering salvation to all who believe (Jeremiah 17:13). "In that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem" (14:8).

- "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered" is a reference to the death of Christ and the scattering of the disciples (13:7; Matthew 26:31). Verses 8 and 9 suggest that two thirds of the people of Israel will perish during the end times. "It will come about in all the land, 'declares the LORD', that two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is my God'" (13:8-9). This passage may be a reference to the Jewish remnant that will be refined and tested during the Great Tribulation. God will bring a portion of this Jewish remnant to a safe haven for the last half of the Tribulation period (Revelation 12:6, 14).

***Zechariah 14;** The Lord's second coming, Armageddon, description of Millennium (14:1-21)

- The climactic and triumphant return of the Messiah is described in this chapter. At the close of the Great Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return to rescue His people, to judge the wicked and to rule His earthly kingdom (refer to section 47, Jesus Christ's Second Coming to Earth). "Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you" (14:1). "For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city" (14:2). "Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle" (14:3). "In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south" (14:4). You will flee by the valley of My mountains... Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!" (14:5). During the war of Armageddon (Revelation 16:13-21), Jesus will return in the same way that He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:11) and His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which will split toward Jerusalem's Old City. The Jewish remnant will flee into the newly created valley and will be protected by the Messiah. The "holy ones" that accompany Jesus are angels (Matthew 25:31) and may also include believers from heaven.

- "In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD,

neither day nor night... living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea... And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one. All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site... People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security" (14:6-11). The land around Jerusalem will be changed to a plain, probably as a result of the great earthquake of the seventh bowl judgment, where the cities of the nations will fall, every island will disappear and the mountains will not be found (Revelation 16:17-21). While the mountains of the world are crumbling and the cities of the nations are falling, Jerusalem will actually rise up. During the Millennium, Jerusalem will be rebuilt, Messiah's temple will be constructed and Jesus will be king over all the earth. "Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth" (14:12). "It will come about in that day that a great panic from the LORD will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another" (14:13). "Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance" (14:14).

- The millennial kingdom is described at the end of this chapter (14:16-21). "Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths" (14:16). "And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them" (14:17).

14. Malachi

***Malachi 4;** Elijah and the day of the Lord (4:5-6)

- Jesus said that Elijah already came in the person of John the Baptist and also that Elijah will come in the future and restore all things (Matthew 17:11-12). "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse" (4:5-6). Elijah will appear again during the end times, and will arrive "before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD", which is probably a reference to Armageddon and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The day of the Lord is often connected to this day (Acts 2:20; Joel 2:31, 3:14). Elijah will probably be one of the two witnesses (prophets) described in Revelation 11.

>>>>>> New Testament

15. Matthew

***Matthew 19;** Rewards in the millennial kingdom (19:27-30)

- Rewards in the millennial kingdom are described in this passage (19:27-30). Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (19:28).

***Matthew 24-25;** Jesus discusses the last days, signs of the end of the age, abomination of desolation, great tribulation, second coming of Jesus (chapters 24 and 25; refer to similar passages; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 17:20-37, 21:5-38)

- "Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.' As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" (24:1-3). The first part of the question, "Tell us, when will these things happen?" is concerning the destruction of the temple. Jesus' reply focuses mainly on end-time events, indicating that the destruction of Herod's temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. was perhaps only a foreshadow of the future destruction of the Tribulation temple (refer to Luke 21). The last part of the question, "what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" must have been divinely inspired because the disciples didn't really understand that Jesus was going to die, rise again and return to earth a second time.

- "And Jesus answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs'" (24:4-8). The first thing Jesus says is a warning, "See to it that no one misleads you", for there will be many false Christs and false prophets that will mislead many. This warning is repeated several times in this chapter, emphasizing its

importance (24:4-5, 11, 23-26). Just as birth pangs become more frequent and more severe as time progresses, so will wars, famines and earthquakes become more frequent and severe as the end of the age approaches.

- "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come" (24:9-14).

- "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather" (24:15-28).

- The antichrist (beast) will make a firm covenant (peace treaty) with the Jewish people in Israel, which marks the beginning of the seven-year Great Tribulation. At the midpoint of the Tribulation, the beast will put a stop to sacrifices and offerings in the newly built Tribulation temple. He will take his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God (Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:4). The beast will then wage war against Jewish people and believers in Christ throughout the world. Israeli Jews are instructed to immediately flee to the mountains when they witness the abomination of desolation. God will miraculously protect this Jewish remnant during the second half of the Tribulation by providing a safe haven in the wilderness (Revelation 12:6, 14). Many verses of Scripture indicate that the Great Tribulation will be seven years long (Daniel 7:25, 9:27, 12:7; Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6, 13:5). Why then does verse 21 say, "then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world", as if the Great Tribulation starts with the temple desecration? Since this passage is a warning to Israeli Jews, it implies that Israel will be largely unaffected by the devastation and persecution of the first half of the Tribulation. Zechariah indicates that God will place a hedge of protection (wall of fire) around Jerusalem and that she will be prosperous and blessed until the Tribulation midpoint (Zechariah 2:4-5; refer to Zechariah 1:12 and Revelation 17:15 commentary). For the Jews of Israel, the time of tribulation apparently begins with the "abomination of desolation" (24:15).

- "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (24:29-31). The second coming of Jesus Christ will be with power and great glory and will affect the sun, moon and stars. The Jewish people (tribes) will mourn when they realize that Jesus is their Messiah (Zechariah 12; Revelation 1:7). During the second half of the Tribulation, the Jewish people will be scattered throughout the earth as they are "led captive into all the nations" (Luke 21:24) and as a result of intense persecution. Only the Jews that have fled to God's safe haven will be out of harm's way (Revelation 12:6, 14). The word "tribe" in the New Testament is mostly used to refer to descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30; Hebrews 7:14; James 1:1). The angels will then gather "His elect" from all over the world. The word "elect" is used eight times in the Bible, always referring to believers in Christ (Matthew 24:22, 24, 31; Mark 13:20, 22, 27; Luke 18:7; Romans 8:33). Since the gathering of the elect follows immediately after the mourning of the Jews, it would seem likely that the elect that are gathered would include believing Jews and Gentiles.

- "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away" (24:32-35; see also Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33). This is a very difficult passage of Scripture to understand and it has been interpreted many different ways over the years. The parable of the fig tree may represent the end time rebirth of Israel (14 May 1948; Ezekiel 36:8; Hosea 9:10). Just as the appearance of leaves signifies the approach of summer, seeing "all these things" signifies that the second coming of the Son of Man (24:3, 30), the "end of the age" (24:3) and "the kingdom of God" (Luke 21:31) are near. "All these things" are the end-time events described in Matthew 24, including the abomination of desolation and the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:15, 21). This end-time "generation" will witness "all these things" during their lifetime; probably limited to about 80 years. "As for the days of our

life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years" (Psalm 90:10). In summary, this passage could be explained in this way; the generation that witnesses the rebirth of Israel will also witness the end-time events mentioned in Matthew 24, including the second coming of Jesus Christ.

- "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think he will " (24:36-44). Only God the Father knows the day of the rapture. People were not expecting the flood in Noah's day and most people will not expect the rapture in the end times. Christians should be alert and prepared for the rapture because we do not know which day our Lord is coming. The last passage of chapter 24 describes a wise servant who was rewarded for obeying his master and an evil servant who was judged for his disobedience (24:45-51).

- The parable of the 10 virgins describes the rapture (25:1-13). The prudent virgins were prepared and alert and went to heaven with Jesus. The foolish virgins were not prepared and were left behind. After the shout, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him", there is a brief amount of time before the prudent virgins are actually caught up. They first wake up, then get up, trim their lamps, have a conversation about lamp oil and go to meet the Lord. This implies that believers who are alert and ready may have a few moments after the "shout" of the Lord to say a few last words, to write a quick note, to pull over if driving or to take action if doing something that may endanger lives. Refer also to 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

- The parable of the talents shows the importance of faithfully serving the Lord and being prepared for His return (25:14-30). The next passage describes the judgment of unbelievers after the second coming of Christ (25:31-46). All the people of the world who have survived the Great Tribulation will be gathered before Jesus (24:31-33). "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (25:31-34). "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels'" (25:41). The wicked "will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (25:46). Some writers say that the "nations" that are gathered before Jesus represent Gentiles, but not Jewish people. Although the word "nations" (ethnos) is sometimes translated "Gentiles", all the major English translations use the word "nations" for this verse. Some writers also note that when Jesus is speaking to the sheep, saying, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me" (25:40), "brothers" is referring to the Jewish people. Although this may be the case, it is more likely that "brothers" is referring to brothers in Christ, which would include Gentile and Jewish believers. When Jesus was with a large crowd, He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:49-50, refer also to Ezekiel 20:33-44). Therefore, whoever does God's will, whether Jew or Gentile is Jesus' brother.

***Matthew 28**; The great commission, Jesus' promise (28:16-20)

- Jesus promised His disciples that He would be with them always as they traveled to all the nations making disciples. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (28:19-20).

16. Mark

***Mark 13**; Jesus discusses the last days, signs of the end of the age, abomination of desolation, great tribulation, second coming of Jesus (13:1-37; refer to similar passages; Matthew 24-25; Luke 17:20-37, 21:5-38)

- This chapter in Mark is very similar to Matthew 24-25 and Luke 17:20-37, 21:5-38. As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, He told His disciples about the last days, signs of the end of the age, the abomination of desolation, the time of tribulation and the return of the Son of Man. Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (13:30; refer to Matthew 24:34).

17. Luke

***Luke 12; Be ready for the Lord's return (12:35-48)**

- Christians should be alert and ready for Jesus' return. Most people will not expect the rapture. "Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit. Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks" (12:35-36). "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect" (12:39-40).

***Luke 17; Jesus discusses the rapture and end times (17:20-37)**

- When questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, Jesus replied, "For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst" (17:20-21). "For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day" (17:24). When the kingdom of God comes, everyone will know it.

- When the rapture occurs, it will be similar to Noah's flood and the destruction of Sodom. The righteous will be rescued before God's judgments begin. The vast majority of unbelievers will be unaware of God's approaching judgments. The biggest difference, compared to Noah's flood and Sodom's destruction is that following the rapture, most people will have a second chance to trust in Christ and be saved. "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man... the flood came and destroyed them all... It was the same as happened in the days of Lot... it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed" (17:26-30). This passage implies that the Great Tribulation will follow quickly after the rapture because judgment followed immediately after the righteous were rescued. Notice that the phrase "destroyed them all" follows after Noah's flood and the destruction of Sodom. Just as there were no unbelieving survivors after these two events, there will be no unbelieving survivors after Jesus returns at the end of the Great Tribulation and judges the wicked (Matthew 25:31-46).

- The rapture is described in the following passage. "I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left" (17:34-36).

***Luke 21; Jesus discusses the last days, signs of the end of the age, great tribulation, second coming of Jesus (21:5-38; refer to similar passages; Matthew 24-25; Mark 13)**

- Jesus was talking about the temple and said, "'As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.' They questioned Him, saying, 'Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?'" (21:6-7). Notice that the question Jesus was asked is concerning the destruction of the temple. The question that the disciples asked Jesus in Matthew goes beyond just the temple. "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3). This passage is not just talking about the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. It is also apparently describing the destruction of the end-time Tribulation temple and the "signs" leading up to its destruction. Many of the signs that Jesus mentions occur in the end times, such as "terrors and great signs from heaven", "great distress", "signs in sun and moon and stars" and the second coming of Jesus Christ (21:11, 23, 25, 27). Jesus' reply to the question indicates that the Tribulation temple will probably be torn down at Jesus' second coming and will coincide with the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem during the war of Armageddon (Daniel 9:2).

- "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled" (21:20-22). The beginning of this passage is similar to Matthew 24:15-16 except that people will flee to the mountains after seeing the "abomination of desolation", rather than fleeing after seeing "Jerusalem surrounded by armies". This connects an invasion of Jerusalem (and Israel) with the desecration of the temple at the Tribulation midpoint. The Jewish people "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (21:24; Romans 11:25-26; Revelation 11:2). The Gentiles will take control of Jerusalem during the second half of the Tribulation. The "times of the Gentiles" will apparently end at the second coming of Christ, following the war of Armageddon. "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place" (21:32; refer to Matthew 24:34).

- Christians who are alert and on guard should not be surprised by the rapture (1 Thessalonians 5:4). "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man" (21:34-36).

18. John

***John 14;** Heaven and Jesus' second coming (14:2-3); witness of fulfilled prophecy (14:28-29)

- Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (14:2-3). Jesus promised to return for believers so that they could be with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

- During the end times the witness of fulfilled Bible prophecy should cause many people to believe because it is very evident that only God knows the future. Literally hundreds of Bible prophecies will be fulfilled during the Great Tribulation. In addition to this witness, the prayers of the saints, the word of God, the love of Christ and sharing the gospel will bring many to the Lord. Jesus said, "I go away, and I will come to you... Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe" (14:28-29). The witness of Jesus' return (rapture and second coming) should result in many people believing.

19. Acts

***Acts 1;** The ascension of Jesus (1:6-12)

- "And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.' Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away" (1:9-12). Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives and disappeared into the clouds. At the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus will return in the same way. He will descend from the sky and His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4).

***Acts 2;** Pentecost, beginning of the church (2:1-47)

- "'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind'" (2:17; see Joel 2:28-29). Shortly after the ascension of Christ, believers were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which marked the beginning of the church. Pentecost was the Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks (Leviticus 23:15-22), which occurs fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:16). "The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the LORD shall come" (2:20). This is probably describing the sixth seal judgment during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 6:12). The "great and glorious day of the LORD" is probably a reference to the second coming of Christ.

20. Romans

***Romans 11;** Mystery of Israel's salvation (11:25-32)

- "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uniformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved" (11:25-26; 2 Corinthians 3:14). The partial hardening to Israel will remain until the "fullness of the Gentiles has come in". This "fullness of the Gentiles" will likely occur at the second coming of Christ, when the Jewish remnant will be saved. Zechariah describes the house of David mourning, as one mourns for an only son when the Messiah returns (Zech 12:10-14). Luke says, "Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). The Gentiles will take control of Jerusalem during the second half of the Tribulation. The "times of the Gentiles" will apparently end at the second coming of Christ, following the war of Armageddon. This probably coincides with the "fullness of the Gentiles".

21. 1 Corinthians

***1 Corinthians 15;** Resurrection of Christ and believers, Christ reigns (15:20-26); the rapture (15:51-58)

- "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign

until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death" (15:20-26). Jesus Christ was raised from the dead (resurrected) and is the first fruits of all believers who have died. First fruits is an Old Testament word (Exodus 23:16, 19) used here in the sense of a preliminary installment of what will be both an example and a guarantee of more to come (Romans 8:23). In Adam, all people die physically and in Christ all believers will receive eternal life (1 Thessalonians 4:16). All believers (dead and living) will receive their resurrected bodies "at His coming"; the rapture (15:23, 51-54).

- "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (15:51-52). This is one of the great rapture passages in the Bible (refer also to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The rapture was a mystery in that it had not been known in the Old Testament but now was revealed. This "last" trumpet is the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16), which precedes the resurrection of the dead in Christ. The "first" trumpet is probably the trumpet of the Lord, heard on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16, 19, 20:18). When Jesus returns, both dead (sleeping) and living believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The dead in Christ will rise first, followed by living believers; both groups receiving their resurrected, imperishable bodies (15:53-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). This transformation from a physical body to a spiritual body will happen "in the twinkling of an eye". Then it will be said "Death is swallowed up in victory" for the resurrected body is immortal (15:53-55). Believers are encouraged to give thanks to God, "who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (15:57) and to be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (15:58).

22. Philippians

***Philippians 3; Citizenship in heaven (3:20-21)**

- We should not set our minds exclusively on earthly things; "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory" (3:20-21).

23. 1 Thessalonians

***1 Thessalonians 1; Rapture and rescue from the wrath to come (1:9-10)**

- "For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come" (1:9-10). These believers are waiting for "His Son" (Jesus) from heaven. This is a reference to the rapture (refer to 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13). The Christian's hope of the return of Christ is rooted in the fact that He was "raised from the dead" and promised to come again (John 14:2-3, 28-29). Notice that Jesus will rescue believers "from the wrath to come." This "wrath to come" is probably a reference to the Great Tribulation (Revelation 6:16-17, 11:18, 15:1). Believers who are alive when the rapture occurs will be "caught up" (1 Thessalonians 4:17) and rescued from God's wrath that will be poured out during the Great Tribulation.

***1 Thessalonians 2; Rapture (2:17-20)**

- "For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?" (2:19). "His coming" is a reference to the rapture (refer to 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13).

***1 Thessalonians 3; Rapture (3:11-13)**

- "Now... may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another... so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints" (3:11-13). There are several reasons to conclude that this passage is describing the rapture rather than the second coming of Christ. First, the rapture is a recurring theme in 1 Thessalonians. Every chapter in 1 Thessalonians mentions the rapture (1:10, 2:19, 3:13, 4:14-17, 5:2-4). Second, the fact that Jesus will return "with all His saints" is clarified in the next chapter, when "God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). These are the souls of believers who have died and gone to heaven before the rapture and return with Christ to receive their resurrected bodies during the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Third, the "coming of our Lord Jesus" of chapter 3 (3:13) is similar to the "coming of the Lord" of chapter 4 (4:15), which is one of the classic passages in the Bible concerning the rapture. The author, Paul, is addressing believers who are awaiting the coming of Jesus (1:10, 3:13). This can only apply to the rapture because at Christ's second coming (to earth), these believers would have already been resurrected and dwelling in heaven, and would not be waiting for Jesus to come. At His second coming (advent), Jesus will return to rescue new believers who have trusted in Christ after the rapture.

***1 Thessalonians 4; Rapture (4:13-18)**

- "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words" (4:13-18).

- This is one of the great rapture passages in the Bible (refer also to 1 Corinthians 15:51-58). When a loved one dies who is a believer ("those who are asleep"), we still grieve, but not as the world, which has no hope (4:13). For we have the hope and the promise that we will see our loved ones again in heaven. The body (not soul or spirit) of the believer who dies is said to be "asleep" during the time between death and resurrection. Physical death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body. The figure of sleep for death is common in the New Testament (John 11:11-15; 1 Corinthians 15:51; Matthew 27:52; Acts 7:60, 13:36; 2 Peter 3:4). This does not mean sleep of the soul or spirit. Beginning with the resurrection of Christ, when a believer dies, his soul and spirit go to be with the Lord. The apostle Paul said that it is preferred "to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8; see also Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:10). "Those who have fallen asleep in Jesus" will return with God at the rapture to receive their resurrected bodies (4:14). The body that was asleep will be changed into a spiritual body (heavenly body, imperishable body, immortal body), and reunited with the soul and spirit (1 Corinthians 15:35-57; 2 Corinthians 5:1-9).

- Why are these believers described as being "in Jesus" (4:14) and the "dead in Christ" (4:16)? Is it simply to distinguish between believers and unbelievers? Some writers suggest that these believers only include Christians who have put their trust in Jesus Christ, and do not include Old Testament believers. There are several reasons to believe this is not the case and that these believers include Old Testament believers. First, all those who are "in Adam" (which includes everyone) will die, so also those who are "in Christ" (all believers) will be made alive. "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). This explains that all those who are "in Christ" have received the gift of eternal life and have been raised up with Him ("made alive", Ephesians 2:4-8; Colossians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 3:18). Therefore, those who are "in Christ" must include all believers (from the beginning of creation). Second, the Lord Jesus will come with "all His saints" (1 Thessalonians 3:13), not just some of them. Third, Jesus Christ "died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). Christ's sacrifice was sufficient "for all". "In Christ" the blessing of Abraham came to the Gentiles and all who believe "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14). "There is neither Jew nor Greek... for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). In conclusion, all believers must be "in Christ" in order to go to heaven and receive "the Spirit through faith". Only the "dead in Christ" (dead believers) and living believers will be resurrected during the rapture. All unbelievers who have died will not be resurrected and judged until the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20: 11-15).

- The heart of the gospel is "Jesus died and rose again" (4:14; 1 Corinthians 15:1-5). The fact that Jesus "rose again" proves that He conquered sin, death and the devil. They no longer have power over believers. His resurrection gives believers the hope and confidence that He will keep His promise and come again to rescue them (refer to 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). Christ's resurrection also confirms the certainty of the future resurrection of believers. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the whole basis of the Christian faith; "and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:14, 17). The wording in this passage, such as, "we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord", indicates that Paul believed the rapture was imminent, that it could take place at any moment (4:15; Revelation 1:1, 1:3, 22:20). The truth of Jesus' imminent return brought comfort (4:18).

- It appears that Christ's return with all His saints will be announced forcefully and dramatically from heaven. The Bible does not indicate if unbelievers will be able to hear this announcement. Notice four things must happen before believers are "caught up". They will hear a shout, the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will be resurrected (4:15-17). This implies that alert and ready believers might have a few moments to react after they hear the "shout" and before they are actually "caught up". Refer also to the parable of the 10 virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). The word "rapture" is from the Latin for "caught up". In the parable of the 10 virgins, a "shout" is also heard at the moment of the rapture, announcing, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him" (Matthew 25:6). The "shout" will be followed by the "voice of the archangel" (perhaps Michael, Jude 1:9). The "trumpet of God" occurs next and is referred to as the "last trumpet" in 1 Corinthians 15:52. The "dead in Christ" will be resurrected first, followed by the resurrection of those "who are alive and remain". All resurrected believers will join together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The events describing the rapture differ considerably from those that will accompany Christ's return to earth (Revelation 19:11-21). At His second coming, Jesus will be accompanied by an army of angels and His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:1-21). He will judge the wicked, rescue believers and set up His earthly kingdom. At the rapture, Jesus does

not come down to earth, does not judge the wicked and is accompanied by "all His saints" (1 Thessalonians 3:13), rather than an army of angels. Believers will not just see the Lord in the air, but will actually "meet" Him (4:17). The same Greek word for "meet" is used in the announcement, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him" (Matthew 25:6). After believers "meet" Him, they will "always be with the Lord" (4:17). These words can be used to "comfort one another" (4:18). Great comfort is found in the fact that all believers will be resurrected when Jesus returns and they will be with Him forever. This is the blessed hope of all His saints (Titus 2:13).

***1 Thessalonians 5; The day of the Lord and the rapture (5:1-11, 23)**

- "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape" (5:2-3). These verses show that most people will be taken totally by surprise by the rapture. Just as one does not expect a thief in the night, so the rapture will be unexpected. People will say, "Peace and safety!" just before the rapture, which is similar to the report given to the angel of the LORD, "all the earth is peaceful and quiet" (Zechariah 1:11). The rapture will occur on a day when world conditions are relatively calm and peaceful. The fact that "destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains" implies that after the rapture, the Ezekiel 38 battle and Great Tribulation will follow quickly (refer also to Luke 17:26-30, 2 Thessalonians 2:6-9). The "day of the Lord" can represent different things in the Bible. In the context of this passage, the "day of the Lord" represents an extended period of time, beginning with the rapture (5:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2) and ending after the Millennium, when the old heaven and earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10).

- However, alert Christians should not be surprised by the rapture (Luke 21:34-36; Revelation 3:3). "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober" (5:4-6). Although the day of the rapture is unpredictable, the signs of its coming are discernable. Saints should "put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation" (5:8). Unbelievers will "not escape" judgment (5:3), but believers will be spared from God's wrath as a result of the rapture (because of God's mercy), just as Noah and Lot were spared from judgment in their day (Luke 17:26-30). "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him" (5:9-10). Believers are to encourage and build one another up because of their salvation in Christ and the promise that God will rescue them from the wrath to come.

- "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:23). This verse is another reference to the rapture (refer to 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13). In addition to a "spirit and soul and body", people are also said to have a heart, mind and conscience (Mark 12:30; Romans 2:15; Deuteronomy 6:5).

24. 2 Thessalonians

***2 Thessalonians 1; Jesus' second coming and judgment (1:5-12)**

- Jesus' second coming is described in this passage (1:5-12). Believers will be given relief "when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (1:7-8). Jesus will return with an army of angels to judge unbelievers. They will "pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (1:9). This does not mean annihilation, but eternal death by reason of eternal separation from the presence of the Lord. At His second coming ("that day"), Jesus will be glorified and marveled at among all who have believed (1:10).

***2 Thessalonians 2; Rapture, day of the Lord, antichrist (2:1-12)**

- This passage of Scripture contains important end-time truths concerning the rapture, the day of the Lord and the antichrist. Paul dealt with a doctrinal error concerning the day of the Lord that had crept into the Thessalonian church. The rapture is described in verse 1; "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him" (2:1; refer to 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13, 4:13-18). The rapture is then associated with the day of the Lord in verse 2. The Thessalonian believers were greatly disturbed by some false teaching that led them to believe that the day of the Lord had come (2:2; refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). The "day of the Lord" is used in different ways in the Bible, but in the context of this passage it represents an extended period of time, beginning with the rapture (2:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3) and ending after the Millennium, when the old heaven and earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10).

- Paul told them not to be deceived, for the day of the Lord "will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2:3-4). The apostasy (the falling

away) is a departure or abandoning of a position once held. This rebellion, which will take place within the professing church, will be a departure from the truth that God has revealed in His Word (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 4:3-4). The "man of lawlessness", the antichrist, is also called "the lawless one" and "the son of destruction" (2:3, 8). He "will make alterations in times and in law" (Daniel 7:25) and as king of Babylon the Great (during the last portion of the Tribulation period), will "do as he pleases" and will "exalt and magnify himself above every god" (Daniel 11:36). Lawlessness is really the opposite of righteousness, just as light is the opposite of darkness (2 Corinthians 6:14). "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin" (1 John 3:4-5). The one "who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning" (1 John 3:8). It is very fitting to refer to the antichrist as "the lawless one". The fact that the antichrist is "revealed" must be very significant because it is stated three different times in this passage (2:3, 6, 8). To "reveal" is to make known or to disclose. The lawless one will not be revealed unless the apostasy comes first and the restrainer (Holy Spirit) is taken out of the way (2:3, 6-8) as a result of the rapture. The event that will reveal the antichrist must be significant and easily recognized by believers, after the rapture. This event is probably the signing of the covenant that the antichrist will make with Israel for a period of seven years (Daniel 9:27). This covenant will mark the official start of the seven-year Great Tribulation and will start the countdown to the revelation of Jesus Christ at His second coming. The revelation of the man of lawlessness will only be significant to believers, since unbelievers will probably be unaware of, ignore or dismiss the idea of an antichrist. Prior to the Israel-antichrist covenant, the identity of the antichrist will be uncertain, but once the lawless one confirms the covenant with the Jewish people on behalf of the newly formed world government, there will be no doubt as to his true identity. The antichrist will oppose and exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship, and will take his seat in the temple of God, "displaying himself as being God" (2:4). The desecration of the Jerusalem temple is referred to as the abomination of desolation (Daniel 9:27, 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14) and will occur at the midpoint of the Tribulation. The lawless one will seek to replace the worship of the true God and all false gods with the worship of himself, and will proclaim himself to be God (Daniel 11:36). The temple in Jerusalem must be built before the second half of the Tribulation in order for these prophecies involving the temple to be fulfilled.

- The next passage of Scripture (2:6-9) describes a "restrainer" that must be taken out of the way before the lawless one is revealed. "And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming" (2:6-8). Some say that the "restrainer" represents human governments, the Roman Empire or even Satan but the most likely choice is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the only Person with sufficient (supernatural) power to do the restraining. The antichrist cannot be revealed until the Holy Spirit, indwelling all believers, is taken out of the way as a result of the rapture. This implies that the lawless one will be revealed shortly after the rapture. A scriptural mystery is something unknown in times past but revealed in the New Testament. Although lawlessness is already at work, the "mystery of lawlessness" (2:7) probably means that lawlessness will dramatically increase when the "restrainer" is taken out of the way. At the second coming of Christ, the antichrist will be thrown into the lake of fire (2:8; Revelation 19:20). The antichrist's coming will be "in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish" (2:9-10). God will send upon those who reject the truth a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false (the lie). Instead of believing the truth, they will take pleasure in wickedness (2:11-12).

- In summing up this section, Paul reminded his readers that the persecutions and afflictions they were experiencing (1:4) did not indicate that the day of the Lord had come. Since the apostasy and the rapture had not occurred and the man of lawlessness had not been revealed, the Thessalonians were not experiencing the day of the Lord.

25. 2 Timothy

***2 Timothy 3; The last days (3:1-7)**

- "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power... always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (3:1-7). In the last days people will hold to a form of godliness but they won't be saved.

26. Titus

***Titus 2; Rapture, looking for the blessed hope, Jesus (2:11-14)**

- "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds" (2:11-14). The blessed hope is the return of Jesus

Christ at the rapture, when believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (refer to 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

27. Hebrews

***Hebrews 1;** The last days (1:1-2)

- The last days apparently began with the arrival of Jesus. "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world" (1:1-2).

28. 2 Peter

***2 Peter 3;** The coming day of the Lord (3:1-18)

- "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come... saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?'" (3:3-4). "But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (3:7). The heavens and earth will be destroyed after the Millennium, at the time of the great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11). "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (3:8-9).

- "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (3:10). The earth will not be burned up until after the Millennium. The new heavens and earth will then be revealed (3:12-13). People can hasten the coming of the day of God (3:12). This is probably a reference to the church fulfilling the great commission, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). When Jesus was talking about the last days, He said, "The gospel must first be preached to all the nations" (Mark 13:10). Jesus also said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). During the Great Tribulation, an angel will have, "an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Revelation 14:6). God does not want anyone to perish but for all to be saved. Believers have a responsibility to continue making disciples, sharing the gospel and serving the Lord until Jesus returns.

29. 1 John

***1 John 2;** The antichrist is coming, abide in Christ (2:18, 22, 24-28)

- John speaks about the coming antichrist and that the spirit of the antichrist is already present (4:3). "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour" (2:18). "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son" (2:22).

- Believers should abide in Christ and be encouraged by "the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life" (2:25). "Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming" (2:28).

***1 John 4;** Testing the spirits, spirit of antichrist (4:1-6)

- "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world" (4:2-3).

30. 2 John

***2 John 1;** Antichrist, the deceiver (1:7)

- "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist" (1:7). The spirit of the antichrist is already in the world (1 John 4:3).

31. Revelation

- The author of Revelation was probably John the apostle, a prophet (22:8-9), the son of Zebedee. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ, and He is the center of the entire book (1:1). The book of Revelation is important because it is the last inspired book of the Bible to be written and is rightly positioned as the New Testament's final book. As the New Testament opens with the four Gospels relating the first coming of Christ, so the book of Revelation closes the New Testament with the general theme of the second coming of Christ. The book of Revelation is also the climax of many lines of revelation running through both Testaments, and it brings to conclusion the revelation of many prophecies yet to be fulfilled. The second coming of Christ and the years immediately preceding it and following it are revealed in Revelation more graphically than in any other book of the Bible. The final two chapters describe the new heaven and the new earth.

***Revelation 1;** Revelation of Jesus Christ, message to seven churches, John's vision (1:1-20)

- "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near" (1:1-3). Jesus is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced (crucified) Him (1:7). At the Second Advent (coming), all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Zechariah describes the house of David mourning, as one mourns for an only son when the Messiah returns (Zechariah 12:10-14). "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty'" (1:8). John was told to "write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches; to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea" (1:11). These churches are described in more detail in Revelation 2 and 3. "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things" (1:19).

***Revelation 2-3;** Messages to seven churches (chapters 2 and 3)

- In Revelation 2 and 3, Christ gave a personal message to seven different first century churches in Asia (1:4), with many applications for churches today. The church in Ephesus had left her first love and needed to repent (2:1-7). A warning is given to the church in Smyrna that they are about to be tested and encourages them to "be faithful until death" (2:8-11). Believers will not be hurt by the second death, which is the lake of fire or hell (2:11, 20:14-15). Some members of the Pergamum church were holding to false teaching and were warned to repent (2:12-17). The church in Thyatira tolerated the woman Jezebel, a false prophetess. Those who followed her were told to "repent of her deeds" (2:18-29).

- The believers in Sardis were told to wake up and repent (3:1-6). "Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you" (3:3). The rapture will come like a thief for Christians who are not prepared. Alert and ready believers should not be surprised by the rapture (refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6). The church in Philadelphia kept God's word and did not deny His name (3:7-13). "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. I am coming quickly" (3:10-11). When the rapture occurs, believers will be delivered from the Great Tribulation which follows. The lukewarm believers of Laodicea were wealthy and thought they had "need of nothing", and did not know that they were "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (3:17). They needed to repent because God reproves and disciplines those whom He loves (3:14-22). "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me" (3:20). "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (3:21).

***Revelation 4;** Description of throne in heaven, 24 elders, seven Spirits of God, four living creatures, and worship of the Creator (4:1-11)

- "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things'" (4:1). "Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne" (4:2). John also saw 24 elders, seven lamps of fire which are the seven Spirits of God, and four living creatures. The four living creatures do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come" (4:8). Then, "the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created'" (4:10-11).

***Revelation 5;** The book (scroll) in heaven and the Lamb (Jesus) are described (5:1-14)

- "I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals" (5:1). "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?'"

(5:2). Jesus Christ is referred to as "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" and "a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth" (5:5-6). The "Lamb" is referring to His first coming and His death and the "Lion" is referring to His second coming and His sovereign judgment of the world. Only Jesus will be found worthy to open the book (scroll) and to break its seven seals (5:5, 9). "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (5:12). The scroll may be the will or testament that contains the inheritance of the kingdom. In ancient times, a will was secured with seven seals by the seven individuals who witnessed its execution. The seals must be removed and the scroll must be opened for the Lord Jesus Christ to inherit the kingdom that His Father has given Him. The Lord said, "I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession" (Psalm 2:8). Each of the seals represents a judgment (6:1-17). The seventh seal judgment is the distribution of the seven trumpet judgments and is also an earthquake (8:1-6). Due to this arrangement, the seventh seal judgment is not complete until the seven trumpet judgments have ended (8:7-13, 9:1-21, 11:15-19). At this point loud voices in heaven will say, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (11:15). It is apparently at this time that Jesus Christ will receive the inheritance of the kingdom from His Father. The seal and trumpet judgments will be followed by seven bowl judgments (15:1-8, 16:1-21).

- This event in heaven is truly a momentous occasion, accompanied by a "new song". "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation'" (5:9). "'You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth'" (5:10). "And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever'" (5:13). During the Millennium, a "new song" will be sung by the 144,000 servants of God on Mount Zion for another momentous occasion (refer to Revelation 14:1-5).

***Revelation 6; The seal judgments, one through six (6:1-17)**

- The Lamb (Jesus) begins to break the seven seals of the book (scroll; Revelation 5), one at a time. "Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, 'Come.' I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer" (6:1-2). The rider (probably the antichrist) of the white horse has a bow but no arrows, suggesting he uses his authority and influence to conquer. A crown (authority) was given to him, probably from Babylon the Great.

- "When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, 'Come'. And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him" (6:3-4). The second seal is open warfare and the third seal is famine and inflation.

- "When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, 'Come.' I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, 'A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine'" (6:5-6). A denarius is a Roman silver coin, typically earned for an entire day's work. Food will be in such short supply that an entire day's wages will only pay for a quart (liter) of wheat or three quarts of barley, the equivalent of a few meals. Nothing will be left to buy oil and wine.

- "When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come.' I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth" (6:7-8). Apparently one-fourth of the world population dies by war, famine, pestilence and wild beasts.

- "When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'" (6:9-10). "And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also" (6:11). The fifth seal describes how many believers will be persecuted and killed for their faith in the Lord Jesus (refer also to 7:9-17).

- The sixth seal results in a global earthquake and changes to the sun, moon and stars. "I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind" (6:12-13). "The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (6:14). "Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every

slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'" (6:15-17).

***Revelation 7;** The 144,000 Jews (7:1-8); Great Tribulation martyrs in heaven (7:9-17)

- "After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree" (7:1). This would prevent the movement of clouds and therefore no rain would fall on the earth. "And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads'" (7:2-3). "And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:" (7:4). This special forehead seal of God is mentioned in several other passages (9:4, 14:1, 22:4). In Revelation 9, demonic locusts will torment all the inhabitants of the earth except those who have the seal of God on their foreheads (9:4). The 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel will be chosen to perform some service for God, which may include evangelism. They may also be involved in the construction of the Tribulation temple or serving in it. Apparently, they will also play a part in Messiah's (millennial) temple (14:1-5).

- Martyrs from the Great Tribulation are standing before the throne and before the Lamb in heaven; a great multitude which no one could count, indicating that a vast number of people will be saved and will lose their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus (Revelation 6:9-11, 20:4). A huge revival will occur during the Great Tribulation. There will be so many believers in the world that the dragon (Satan) and the antichrist will wage war against them during the last half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:17, 13:7; Daniel 7:21). "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands... 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb... They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes'" (7:9-17).

***Revelation 8;** The seventh seal judgment (8:1-5); trumpet judgments one through four (8:2, 6-13)

- Trumpet judgments one through four are described in this chapter (8:2, 6-13). The seven seal judgments and the first four trumpet judgments probably occur during the first half of the Tribulation. The seventh seal judgment is the distribution of the seven trumpet judgments and an earthquake (8:1-5). After Jesus broke the seventh seal, "there was silence in heaven for about a half an hour" (8:1), revealing the significance of this event. "Another angel came and stood at the altar... And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand" (8:3-4).

- "And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them" (8:6). "The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up" (8:7). "The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed" (8:8-9). "The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter" (8:10-11). "The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way" (8:12). Verse 13 is a warning that the last three trumpet judgments are very severe. "Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!'" (8:13).

***Revelation 9;** Trumpet judgments five and six (9:1-21)

- The last three trumpet judgments (five through seven) and the seven bowl judgments probably occur during the second half of the Tribulation. For the fifth trumpet, apparently Satan is given the key to the bottomless pit (abyss; 9:1, 11). "Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him" (9:1). "He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit" (9:2). "Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power" (9:3). "They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads" (9:4). Earlier in the Tribulation, the 144,000 of Israel received the seal of God on their foreheads (7:3-4). Although it is not specifically stated, it is likely that all Tribulation believers will have the seal of God on their foreheads, having already been "sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13; see also 2 Corinthians 1:22). In new Jerusalem, God's

name will be on the foreheads of all believers (22:4). Perhaps this seal will only be visible to believers during the Tribulation. In contrast, followers of the antichrist will have the mark of the beast on their forehead or hand, for all to see (14:9). Apparently, believers will also be spared from the first and fifth bowl judgments (16:2, 10-11).

- "And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man" (9:5). "And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them" (9:6). These bizarre, demonic locusts have the appearance of "horses prepared for battle", "crowns like gold", "faces of men", "hair of women", "teeth of lions", "breastplates of iron", loud wings and "tails like scorpions" (9:7-10). "They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss", and his name means "destroyer" in both Hebrew and Greek (9:11). Trumpet judgment five is also called the first woe (9:12). This event probably coincides with Satan being thrown down to earth along with his demonic angels (12:7-12). "Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" (12:12).

- "Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice... 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates'... so that they would kill a third of mankind. The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them" (9:13-16). "And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone" (9:17). "A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths" (9:18). "For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm" (9:19). "The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands" or of their immorality, but continued to worship demons and idols (9:20-21). The devastation of the sixth trumpet judgment (second woe) results in the death of a third of mankind (stated twice; 9:15, 18). When combined with the fourth seal judgment (6:7-8; one fourth of the earth's population is killed), these two judgments alone account for the death of half the world's population. The four angels are probably demons, since holy angels would not be bound. The massive armies of the horsemen, 200 million strong, that accompany them, are probably demonic.

***Revelation 10: The strong angel and the little book (10:1-11)**

- In this chapter, a strong angel comes down from heaven with a little book (scroll) in his hand (10:1-2). John is told to "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey" (10:9). "And they said to me, 'You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings'" (10:11). The book appears to represent the word of God because after it is eaten, John is told to prophesy again. For believers, the word of God is "sweeter than honey" (Psalm 119:103), but God's judgments will be "bitter" to unbelievers.

***Revelation 11: The temple (11:1-2); the two witnesses (11:3-14); the seventh trumpet judgment (11:15-19)**

- The Tribulation temple will be built during the first half of the Great Tribulation in the "holy city" (11:1-2). The "holy city" refers to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 11:1; Isaiah 52:1). It must be built quickly because the antichrist will desecrate the temple at the midpoint of the Tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The outer court of the temple will be given to the nations and they will tread under foot Jerusalem for 42 months, meaning the last half of the Tribulation (11:2; Luke 21:24). This coincides with the antichrist waging war against Jews and believers during the second half of the Tribulation. This is a strong indication that the antichrist will set up Jerusalem as the new world capital of his global empire (Babylon the Great) during the second half of the Tribulation (refer to Revelation 17 and 18), as the nations occupy and control the holy city. Why was John told to measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship in it? Perhaps measurements show that the temple and altar will physically exist during the Tribulation. The presence of worshipers confirms that the temple will function as a place of Jewish worship. Measurements will also be taken of Messiah's temple (Ezekiel 40), Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:16, 2:1-2) and new Jerusalem (Revelation 21: 15-17). The fact that this sanctuary is called "the temple of God" indicates God's approval of the third temple. There is no indication that God's glory will return to this temple. God's glory departed from Solomon's temple (first temple; Ezekiel 10:4, 18-19) and will not return until Messiah's temple (fourth temple) is built during the Millennium (Ezekiel 43:1-5).

- The two witnesses (prophets; 11:3, 6, 10) will be appointed by God and will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth during the first half of the Great Tribulation (11:3). Sackcloth is dark, coarse clothing worn as a sign of mourning (Genesis 37:34), earnest prayer and fasting (Daniel 9:3), or repentance (Matthew 11:21). Verses 2 and 3 confirm that the Great Tribulation will be seven prophetic years long, or 2,520 days (7 years x 360 days per year; Daniel 9:27; Revelation 12:6, 13:5); 1,260 days of prophesying by God's witnesses followed by 42 months, where the nations will control Jerusalem. These men are the two olive trees and two lampstands referred to in Zechariah 4:3, 11, 14 (Revelation 11:4). In New Testament times God's witnesses did not torment their enemies or avenge themselves. However, these two witnesses will be living in times of great tribulation and judgment and will be given special judgment powers. If anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies (11:5). They have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying (11:6), which could mean up to 1,260 days (11:3). This is similar to the

miracle that occurred in the days of King Ahab. Elijah prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months (James 5:17-18; 1 Kings 17:1). They also have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire (11:6). These powers are reminiscent of those of Moses (Exodus 7:20, 8:1-12:36) and Elijah (1 Kings 18:36-40; 2 Kings 1:10-12). Apparently the witnesses will use their powers frequently to torment those who dwell on the earth because when they are dead, many will celebrate (11:10).

- After they have finished their testimony (1,260 days long), "the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them" (11:7). Notice that no one will be able to harm them until their testimony is finished. The fact that the beast (antichrist) comes out of the abyss probably signifies that he has been resurrected (by the devil) from his fatal wound and is now possessed by Satan (13:3-8, 12). Their "dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified" (11:8). Here, Jerusalem is called "the great city", another indication that this will be the second world capital of Babylon the Great (Revelation 17-18). Why is "the great city" mystically called Sodom and Egypt? The word "mystically" is also translated spiritually, figuratively or symbolically in other translations. Sodom indulged in gross immorality, committed abominations (Isaiah 3:9; Jude 1:7) and was ultimately judged by God (Genesis 18-19). The righteous that fled (Lot and his daughters) were spared from judgment. Likewise, the Jewish remnant that flees from the antichrist will be miraculously protected for the second half of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:15-22; Revelation 12:6, 14). Egypt was judged by God for enslaving the Jewish people, treating them cruelly and for their idolatrous practices. Just as God sent fire and brimstone upon Sodom, and judgment plagues upon Egypt, He will send terrible judgments upon Jerusalem and the whole world for the second half of the Tribulation (11:2). This will culminate with the completion of the final desolation of Jerusalem during the war of Armageddon (Daniel 9:2).

- "Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth" (11:9-10). Notice that people all around the world will look at their dead bodies and will celebrate and send gifts to each other over the course of only three and a half days. This type of global response would only be possible in light of today's rapid electronic communication. The worldwide celebration will be short-lived. After three and a half days, God will raise them from the dead and take them to heaven (11:11-12). Many people throughout the world will witness the death, resurrection and ascension of these two prophets of God; a powerful demonstration of the truth of their testimony. Those who behold them will be terrified and many will give glory to the God of heaven (11:11, 13).

- These two witnesses may be Elijah (a Jew) and Enoch (a Gentile) because these men of God are the only two people mentioned in the Bible who were taken to heaven without physically dying (Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11). Enoch was a prophet of judgment who announced the coming of the Lord in the days before Noah's flood (Jude 1:14-15). "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God" (Hebrews 11:5). Like Enoch, Elijah was a bold and courageous prophet of judgment (1 Kings 18:36-40). It is prophesied in Malachi (3:1-3, 4:5-6) that Elijah will appear on the earth once again to prepare the way for the Messiah's second coming. The Lord said, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD" (Malachi 4:5). In the context of this passage, the "day of the LORD" probably means Armageddon and the second coming of Christ. Moses has also been suggested as one of the witnesses because of the many plaques that he brought upon Egypt (Exodus 7:14-12:36) and his presence along with Elijah when Jesus was transfigured (Matthew 17:1-13). The problem with this is Moses would need to be resurrected at the start of the Tribulation and then die a second time (at the hand of the antichrist). This does not seem likely for the Bible says, "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Also, resurrected bodies are immortal (1 Corinthians 15:53). After the two witnesses are raised from the dead, there will be a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city will fall and 7,000 people will be killed (11:13).

- Why are these "two prophets" (Revelation 11:10) also called God's "two witnesses" (Revelation 11:3)? A witness, in the New Testament, refers to an individual who testifies to what he has seen or perceived. What is it that they witnessed? The things that they personally witnessed will probably be shared with those who will be left behind after the rapture. Perhaps they will share what they experienced after they were taken from the earth. Elijah went to heaven (2 Kings 2:11) and God "took" Enoch (Genesis 5:24) presumably to heaven also. Is it possible they also witnessed the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ? Shortly after Jesus' resurrection, "two men" stood near the women who had come to the empty tomb and told them that Jesus had risen (Luke 24:4-7). On the Mount of Olives, when Jesus ascended into heaven, "two men" in white clothing told those who were looking into the sky that Jesus would come in just the same way as they had watched Him go into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Just before Jesus ascended, he said, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). What other events in all of human history would be more important to witness than the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ? Why were two witnesses chosen? Jesus said, "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true" (John 8:17; Deuteronomy 19:15).

- The seventh trumpet judgment (third woe; 11:15-19) includes an earthquake and a great hailstorm. Loud voices in heaven will say, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (11:15). The 24 elders will worship God and say, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign" (11:17). It is apparently at this time that Jesus Christ will receive the inheritance of the kingdom from His Father (Psalm 2:8; Revelation 5:1-14).

***Revelation 12;** The woman, Israel; the red dragon, Satan; the male child, Christ (12:1-6, 13-17); war in heaven (12:7-12)

- The woman represents Israel, who gave Jesus (the male child) to the world (12:1-2, 4-6). The great red dragon represents Satan (12:3-4, 9), "having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems" (12:3). This is the same description given to the beast and Babylon the Great in Revelation 13:1 and 17:9-12. The only difference is the number and placement of diadems (crowns). The dragon has seven crowns on his heads (12:3) and the beast has 10 crowns on his horns (13:1). The crowns may represent the authority given to the seven rulers (kings) during the first half of the Tribulation (17:9-11) and the authority given to the 10 rulers (kings) serving under the antichrist (beast) during the second half of the Tribulation (17:12-13, 17). The seven heads of the great red dragon probably represent the same kings (horns) of Daniel 7:7-8, 19-26. Shortly after Babylon the Great is formed, according to Daniel 7:8, 20, three kings will fall, leaving the seven kings (heads) referred to in Revelation 12:3, 13:1 and 17:9-12. The characteristics and the actions of the beast and Satan are very similar in these passages. This is an indication that the beast will be possessed by Satan, since they appear to act as one. The dragon's tail "swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth" (12:4). This may refer to Satan's past rebellion against God (Ezekiel 28:15-19), suggesting that a third of the angels joined Satan and were cast out of heaven with him. The dragon tried to "devour" the woman's male child (Jesus Christ) who will one day rule all the nations with a rod of iron. The statement that the child "was caught up to God" is probably a reference to the ascension of Christ (12:5).

- God will prepare a place in the wilderness where Jews will be protected from the wrath of the antichrist during the second half of the Tribulation (12:6, 14; Matthew 24:15-22). "Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (12:6). Verse 14 equates "time and times and half a time" (time = 1 year, times = 2 years, half a time = half a year), or three and a half years with the prophetic time of verse 6, which is 1,260 days (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 11:2-3, 13:5). Notice that God does not just provide a place, but actually prepares (12:6) a place for His people where they will be nourished (stated twice; 12:6, 14). These details show how God still loves and cares for His people. Matthew and Mark explain that the beast's persecution of the Jews will occur immediately following the abomination of desolation at the Tribulation midpoint (Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-19). Israeli Jews are instructed to flee to the mountains without hesitation (Matthew 24:16; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:21). Luke warns the Jewish people to flee when they see Jerusalem surrounded by armies and that her desolation is near (Luke 21:20). This verse connects an invasion of Jerusalem (and Israel) with the desecration of the temple at the Tribulation midpoint. The Jewish people "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24; Revelation 11:2). The Gentiles will take control of Jerusalem during the second half of the Tribulation. This safe haven for the Jewish remnant may be located in modern Jordan (ancient Edom, Moab and Ammon; refer to Micah 2:12-13; Daniel 11:41; Isaiah 34:5-6, 63:1-6; Obadiah 1:15-21). Some suggest that it might be located at Petra (in Edom) or locations in the vicinity, south of the Dead Sea. This remnant could include up to one-third of the Israeli Jewish population (Zechariah 13:8-9), which will likely increase dramatically during the first half of the Tribulation. There will be much excitement in Israel as the temple is being constructed and as the nation enjoys the protection and blessing of God.

- The devil and his angels are thrown down to earth. "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him" (12:7-9). "Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" (12:12). This event probably occurs at the midpoint of the Tribulation, just prior to the fifth trumpet judgment (9:1-12). Satan (dragon), in his great wrath will then persecute the woman (Israel; 12:13) and try to destroy her, in order to thwart the promises of God. "But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth" (12:14-16). God will miraculously deliver the Jewish remnant to their safe haven, out of Satan's reach. "So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (12:17). When the dragon (Satan) realizes that he will not be able to kill the Jewish remnant, he will make war with Jews and believers in Jesus throughout the world. The beast (antichrist) will likewise persecute the saints (13:7). The declaration of war against believers indicates that there will be a large number of believers in the world at the Tribulation midpoint.

***Revelation 13:** Beast from the sea (antichrist, Babylon the Great; 13:1-10); beast from the earth (false prophet; 13:11-18); dragon (Satan), mark of the beast (13:1-18)

- "And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names" (13:1). The beast is like a leopard, has feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion (refer to Daniel 7:4-6). The dragon (Satan) gives him his power and his throne and great authority (13:2). "I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?'" (13:3-4). "There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him" (13:5). "And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven" (13:6). "It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him" (13:7). "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" (13:8). "If anyone has an ear, let him hear" (13:9). "If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints" (13:10).

- The dragon is Satan (12:9), and the beast represents Babylon the Great, the end-time global empire, and the antichrist himself (13:1; Revelation 17 and 18). The meaning of the 10 horns and seven heads of the beast is revealed in Revelation 17:9-13. During the second half of the Tribulation period, the final 10 kings of Babylon the Great are represented by the 10 horns. Each horn has a diadem (13:1; crown), perhaps signifying the authority that has been given to these 10 rulers by Satan (13:2, 4; refer also to 12:3). The seven heads represent seven kings (and their kingdoms) of Babylon the Great from the first half of the Great Tribulation. These seven kings (heads) are probably the same kings that are described in Daniel 7. According to Daniel 7, Babylon the Great will begin with 10 kings and kingdoms, but three kings will fall shortly after the formation of this global empire (Daniel 7:8, 20), leaving the seven kings (heads) referred to in Revelation 12:3, 13:1 and 17:3, 7, 9-12. Of these seven, one will be replaced with the beast (antichrist; 17:11, 13:1-3). Satan (a great red dragon) is also described as having seven heads and 10 horns (12:3).

- The antichrist, represented by one of the beast's heads, receives a fatal wound (is slain with a sword, possibly beheaded; 13:3, 12, 14, 20:4) and then he is healed (13:3). The whole world is amazed and follows after the beast and worships him and Satan (13:3-4). These verses strongly suggest that Satan resurrects the antichrist, possesses (indwells) him and gives him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation (13:2-5, 7-8, 12, 14). It is likely that the antichrist is resurrected shortly before the Tribulation midpoint. Afterward, he will kill the two witnesses (11:7), desecrate the temple and put a stop to temple sacrifices and offerings (Daniel 9:27). The beast is given authority to act for 42 months (13:5; the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation; Daniel 9:27; Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6). He will make war with the saints and overcome them (13:7). All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name is not found in the book of life (13:8).

- The second beast described in this chapter is the false prophet (16:13, 19:20, 20:10). He will perform great signs and even make fire come down out of heaven. The false prophet will require everyone to worship the beast and to receive the mark of the beast in order to buy or to sell. Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet can be described as the unholy trinity (16:13). "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon" (13:11). "He exercised all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed" (13:12). "He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men" (13:13). "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life" (13:14). "And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (13:15). "And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name" (13:16-17). "Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six" (13:18). Since the number of the beast can be calculated, this is probably a reference to the practice of gematria. Gematria is the technique of using the numeric values of words or phrases to find hidden or symbolic meanings. Each letter of the Hebrew and Greek alphabet represents a number and therefore each word has a numeric value. Much has been written about the mysterious number 666 over the years, but only the person who has understanding and wisdom will be able to calculate the number of the beast. Since the identity of the antichrist will not be known for certain until the seven-year "firm covenant" is made with Israel (Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), it is likely that the exact meaning of 666 will not be fully understood until that time as well.

***Revelation 14:** The 144,000 (14:1-5); three angels' messages (14:6-13); the earth is harvested (14:14-20)

- "Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads" (14:1). The 144,000 are probably the same 144,000 of Israel that are mentioned in Revelation 7:1-8. Apparently, this passage is talking about an event that actually occurs on Mount Zion (Jerusalem) during the Millennium. The fact that Jesus is actually standing on Mount Zion means that this event must occur after the second coming of Christ, when Jesus' feet will touch the earth (Mount of Olives; Zechariah 14:4) for the first time since His ascension (Acts 1:9-11). This momentous occasion appears to be the dedication of Messiah's (millennial) temple. This would explain the presence of the Lamb, the 144,000, the four living creatures and the elders (probably the 24 elders of Revelation 4:10). A voice is heard from heaven that sounds like many waters, loud thunder and harps (14:2). The 144,000 sing a new song before the throne, the four living creatures and the elders (14:3). The "throne" on Mount Zion is probably the throne that will be in Messiah's (millennial) temple. This throne is described by Ezekiel. "He said to me, 'Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever'" (Ezekiel 43:7). This verse is part of a passage in Ezekiel that is apparently the dedication of Messiah's temple (Ezekiel 43:1-12). "And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east. And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house" (Ezekiel 43:4-5). God's voice is "like the sound of many waters" (Ezekiel 43:2), just as it is described in Revelation 14:2. Zechariah explains that the Messiah will build His millennial temple and sit and rule on His throne, uniting the offices of king and priest in one person (Zechariah 6:12-13). During the Great Tribulation, a "new song" will be sung in heaven for another momentous occasion (refer to Revelation 5:9).

- When Solomon's temple (first temple) was dedicated, God's glory also filled the temple (1 Kings 8:1-66, 9:1-9). "It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD" (1 Kings 8:10-11). During this magnificent occasion, Solomon was "before the altar of the LORD... on his knees with his hands spread toward heaven" (1 Kings 8:54). He offered up a long prayer and supplication to the Lord before the assembly of Israel. "Solomon offered for the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the sons of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD" (1 Kings 8:63). Over the years, God's people turned away from following Him causing the glory of God to leave the temple. God's glory did not return to Zerubbabel's temple (second temple, also known as Herod's temple) and will not return to the Tribulation temple (third temple) either. However, in the same way that God's glory departed Solomon's temple by the way of the east gate (Ezekiel 10:4, 18-19), God's glory will also return to Messiah's temple (fourth temple, also known as the millennial temple) by the way of the east gate (Ezekiel 43:4).

- Perhaps the 144,000 will be involved in the construction of Messiah's temple or serving in it. They may also play a part in the Tribulation temple. "These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless" (14:4-5).

- Three angels will proclaim three different messages to all the earth, each one following the next, probably in quick succession (14:6-13). The first angel has "an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" and says with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters" (14:6-7). People living during the Great Tribulation have only a short time to put their trust in Christ and be saved before the hour of God's judgment arrives. God does not want anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). "And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality'" (14:8). Very similar wording is used in Revelation 18:2-3 to describe the fall of Babylon the Great. The fact that this proclamation is made before the third angel's proclamation, indicates that Babylon the Great (the great harlot and the great city), will be judged and destroyed close to the Tribulation midpoint (refer to Revelation 17 and 18). This will send a very strong message to all the inhabitants of the earth, that even the most powerful kingdom will fall if its people are consumed by immorality, greed and idolatry and are drunk with the blood of the saints. Notice that the warning of the third angel would probably occur near the Tribulation midpoint. "Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb'" (14:9-10). "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name" (14:11). It would make sense that this warning would be proclaimed about the same time that the mark was required (13:11-18), near the midpoint of the Tribulation, so that people would have an opportunity to heed the warning. The message of the three angels will be very clear; fear God, glorify and worship Him and be saved or face God's wrath for worshiping the beast and receiving his mark.

- "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on... that they may rest from their labors" (14:13). This verse

indicates extreme persecution and suffering of believers during the second half of the Tribulation, so much so that the dead who die in the Lord are called blessed.

- The earth is harvested in the following passage (14:14-20). "Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped" (14:16). People, depicted as grapes, are thrown into the great wine press of the wrath of God (14:19; 19:15). "And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles" (14:20). The "city" mentioned is probably a reference to Jerusalem. A river of blood 200 miles (325 kilometers) long and about four feet (1.2 meters) deep represents the judgment of many millions of people, probably during the war of Armageddon.

***Revelation 15; Prelude to the seven bowl judgments (15:1-8)**

- This chapter is a prelude to the seven bowl judgments which are described fully in chapter 16. "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished" (15:1). Seven angels were given seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God (15:7).

***Revelation 16; The seven bowl judgments (16:1-21); Armageddon (16:13-21)**

- "Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, 'Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God'" (16:1). These are the last of the 21 judgments of God and "in them the wrath of God is finished" (15:1). The first bowl "became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image" (16:2). The second bowl will turn the seas into blood "and every living thing in the sea died" (16:3). Rivers and springs of waters will be turned to blood from the third bowl (16:4). In judgment, the wicked will be given blood to drink "for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets" (16:6). People will be scorched with fire and fierce heat from the sun as a result of the fourth bowl (16:8). "Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds" (16:10-11). The fifth bowl appears to be a judgment specifically applied to the beast and his kingdom, which is Babylon the Great. These are the same individuals who will be tormented with festering sores because they receive the mark of the beast and worship his image (16:2). In spite of these severe judgments, people will blaspheme the name of God and refuse to repent (16:9, 11). "The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east" (16:12). This implies that the kings will come from locations east of the Euphrates River and will march toward Israel near the end of the Tribulation. These kings may represent the "rumors from the East" that will disturb the antichrist (Daniel 11:44).

- Three unclean spirits come out of the mouths of the unholy (satanic) trinity of Satan (dragon), the beast (antichrist) and the false prophet (16:13). The fact that unclean spirits come out of the mouths of the beast and the false prophet is a strong indication that they are possessed by Satan and his demons (see also Revelation 11:7). Satan entered into Judas, the one who betrayed Jesus, on two separate occasions (Luke 22:3, John 13:27). These spirits of demons go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty, to the place called Har-Magedon (or Armageddon), in Israel (16:14, 16). The word Har-Magedon is only used once in the Bible (16:16). It is made up of two words in Hebrew: Har (mountain) and Megiddo (a city in the northern part of ancient Israel). The ancient city of Megiddo was built on a hill, and it is therefore called the mountain of Megiddo; Armageddon. The city of Megiddo overlooks a beautiful, large valley known as the Plain of Esdraelon (Jezreel Valley), the scene of many Old Testament battles (Judges 4, 7). The beast and the armies of Babylon the Great will gather in this valley and plan their final campaign against the Jews, against Jerusalem and against God (19:19).

- "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame" (16:15; 3:3). Believers should be alert and ready, so that when Jesus returns, they will not be embarrassed. For believers who are not alert and for unbelievers, Jesus' return will be "like a thief" because they will not expect it.

- "Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, 'It is done'" (16:17; John 19:30). These words are probably spoken by Jesus, signifying that the wrath of God is finished (15:1). The seventh bowl judgment is poured out during Armageddon resulting in the largest earthquake in history. "The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (16:19-20). "And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe" (16:21). The "great city" probably represents Jerusalem (11:8), as the final world capital of Babylon the Great (Revelation 17 and 18). Babylon the Great (the global empire) and her king (the beast) will experience God's wrath during Armageddon and at the second coming of Jesus Christ (19:19-21). During this global earthquake, the cities of the nations will fall, but the "great city" will not. It will,

however, be split into three parts. This may be a result of the Mount of Olives splitting at Jesus Christ's second coming (Zechariah 14:4). This "great city" (16:19) is not the same "great city" of Revelation 17 and 18. The original great city of Babylon the Great is destroyed close to the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation period (Revelation 17 and 18), whereas the second great city experiences the completion of its final desolation (Daniel 9:2) at the very end of the Tribulation, but is never described as fallen or destroyed. The experiences of the original and second great cities are quite different. In Revelation 16, the second great city is struck by an earthquake, is split in three parts, is pounded with hail and is in the midst of a raging war (Zechariah 12:1-14, 14:1-21; Revelation 19:19-21). The original great city is described as "fallen" (18:2) and is devastated by plagues, pestilence, mourning, famine, and fire (18:8) and will "not be found any longer" (18:21). Since it will "not be found any longer", it cannot be the same city as the second great city. We know that Jerusalem will be rebuilt during the Millennium. "People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security" (Zechariah 14:11).

***Revelation 17-18; Babylon the Great – the harlot, the beast, the great city (chapters 17 and 18)**

- "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality'" (17:1-2). The harlot will sit on "many waters", representing "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues" (17:15). John was invited by the angel to witness the judgment of the great harlot, which symbolizes the global, evil, false religious system and the great city (world capital) of end-time Babylon the Great. This judgment will apparently take place close to the midpoint of the Tribulation period when the beast (antichrist) and the 10 newly appointed kings will destroy the harlot (17:16) and God will judge the great city of Babylon the Great (17:18, 18:8, 20, 19:2). The judgment of the beast is not mentioned in this passage, for that will occur when Jesus Christ returns at the end of the Great Tribulation (19:11-21). The leaders (kings) and the unsaved inhabitants of the earth will become part of this false religious system and participate in its evil practices.

- "And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns" (17:3). "The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, 'BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH'" (17:4-5). "And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly" (17:6). "And the angel said to me, 'Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns'" (17:7).

- The woman and the beast she rides on both represent end-time Babylon the Great. The harlot will be wealthy, materialistic, and wickedly sinful and will deceive the nations with her sorcery (17:4-5; 18:3, 7, 9-19). The fact that the great harlot sits on "many waters", which represent "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues", and on the "scarlet beast", shows the extent of her control and power (17:1, 3, 15). The word "tribes" (descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel; Jews) is omitted from "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues" (17:15). A similar phrase, "peoples and tribes and tongues and nations" is used to describe all the people of the world (5:9, 7:9, 11:9, 13:7, 14:6; word order varies), but in Revelation 17:15, "tribes" has been replaced with "multitudes". This implies that the harlot will not control the Jewish people (or Israel) for the first part of the Great Tribulation and they will apparently not be persecuted. Perhaps this is due to the antichrist's seven-year peace treaty (covenant; Daniel 9:27) with them and the memory of God's divine protection of Israel during the Ezekiel 38 battle. Several verses suggest that God will place a hedge of protection (wall of fire) around Jerusalem and that she will be prosperous and blessed during the first half of the Great Tribulation (Zechariah 2:4-5; Matthew 24:21). The harlot's name, which will be written on her forehead, reveals her evil nature (17:5). Babylon the Great will be responsible for the persecution and death of many believers, to the extent that she will be "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus" (17:6). "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth" (18:24). "Her sins have piled up as high as heaven" (18:5). This false religious system will be used by Satan for the first part of the Tribulation to persecute and kill the saints. At the midpoint of the Tribulation, the antichrist will break the treaty with Israel and make war with Jews and believers (Revelation 12:17, 13:7; Daniel 7:21-22).

- "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come" (17:8). "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while" (17:9-10). "The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction" (17:11). "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour" (17:12). "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast" (17:13). "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and

chosen and faithful" (17:14). "And he said to me, 'The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues'" (17:15). "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire" (17:16). "For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled" (17:17). "The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth" (17:18).

- In the last part of this chapter (17:8-18), the angel tells John the "the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has seven heads and ten horns" (17:7). The angel begins by first describing the beast. Almost the identical phrase is used twice in the same verse (17:8) to describe the beast that "was and is not and will (is about to) come", emphasizing its importance. A shorter version of this phrase, "was and is not" is used in 17:11. In this passage, the beast is a man (the antichrist, referred to as "he") and is also a "king" (17:10-11). The tense of 17:8 suggests that the beast "was" just recently present but now "is not", but will be coming soon. This observation, then, must occur just before the midpoint of the Tribulation. The beast (antichrist), which "was" one of the seven kings (17:11) has apparently been killed because he currently "is not". It appears that the antichrist will be raised to life because he will come out of the abyss (17:8; 11:7). The beast would probably not be in the abyss unless he had been killed because the abyss is the prison for demons, and Satan is their king (9:11, 20:1-3). Satan will apparently raise the antichrist from the dead and possess him during the second half of the Tribulation (17:8). Unbelievers will "wonder" when they see that the antichrist has come back to life (17:8). At the return of Christ, the beast will "go to destruction" (17:8, 11) as he is thrown alive into the lake of fire (19:20). Even though the angel tells John the mystery, "wisdom" is still required to understand (17: 9). "Wisdom" is also required to "calculate the number of the beast" (13:18). The beast in this chapter (Revelation 17) not only describes the antichrist, but also describes Babylon the Great, the end-time global kingdom (17:7, 9, 16:19, 19:19). Babylon the Great also represents the great harlot (woman; 17:5) and the great city of Babylon the Great (17:18).

- Revelation 17 and 18 is one of the main passages in the Bible explaining the mystery of the beast, the woman (great harlot), Babylon the Great and the great city and how they are all connected. The beast has seven heads (17:3, 7), which represent seven mountains and seven kings (17:9-10). The seven mountains are probably a reference to the seven kingdoms that the seven kings rule. The mountain described in Daniel 2:35, 44-45 represents the eternal kingdom of God. This passage is probably describing the same 10 kings (horns) of Daniel 7, who rule the end-time global kingdom called Babylon the Great. According to Daniel 7, three kings will fall shortly after Babylon the Great is formed, leaving the seven kings (heads) referred to in Revelation 17:9-10, 12:3 and 13:1. Only the remaining seven kings and their kingdoms will be subject to the control and influence of the woman. Of these seven, five more will fall (17:10), leaving just two kings, one of them being the antichrist, and then the antichrist will be killed (13:3). Actually, of the original seven kings, six of them must fall because the beast becomes one of the seven (17:11). After the antichrist is killed, one king will remain. Perhaps this last, lone king will become the false prophet. This beast is one of the seven kings, yet is also an eighth (17:11), perhaps signifying that after he comes out of the abyss, he is fundamentally different from the other kings, even his former self. He will also be an eighth king in the sense that he becomes a king after the first 10 kings (or first seven kings) are already established and after the first three kings have been "pulled out by the roots" (Dan 7:8). The eighth king, then, probably represents the king of Babylon the Great. In order to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy (Jeremiah 25:11), the nations (including the Jewish people) must serve the king of Babylon for approximately the last four years of the Great Tribulation (refer to Jeremiah 25 commentary and section 54, The 70-Year Bible Prophecies). This implies that the antichrist will become the king and supreme ruler of Babylon the Great about three years after the start of the Great Tribulation. It is very interesting that the antichrist is not one of the original 10 kings of Babylon the Great, yet he has the authority to make a firm covenant with Israel at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:19-25, 9:27; Revelation 17:8-18).

- The 10 horns are 10 kings who have "not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast" (17:12-13). Ten kings will be chosen to rule over the 10 kingdoms (regions) of the world and to serve under the beast. The beast and his new rulers will "wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them" (17:14). They will also "hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire" (17:16). This verse describes the demise of the global false religious system. Notice how intense the beast's hatred for the great harlot is and how extremely severe her judgment. The beast will proclaim himself as god and demand that the world worship him alone (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). He will be given power and authority by Satan and will continue to strengthen his position as the supreme ruler (king; Daniel 11:36) of the world and Babylon the Great.

- Babylon the Great is also described as a great and strong city which reigns over the kings of the earth (17:18, 18:10, 21). This implies that this great city is the world capital of a global government and a global empire and resides in a powerful, wealthy and influential nation. The city will have a bustling seaport (18:17-19) and will be characterized by the "sound of harpists and musicians" and craftsmen of many trades (18:22). The merchants of the earth will become rich from her and by the wealth of her sensuality (18:3, 11-19), and all the nations will be deceived by her sorcery (18:23).

- An angel, having great authority, will come down from heaven and cry out, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has

become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality" (18:1-3). The second angel of Revelation 14 will also announce, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality" (14:8). These proclamations are a strong indication that Babylon the Great (the great harlot and the great city), will be judged and destroyed near the Tribulation midpoint. Refer to Revelation 14:6-13 for further details. The great harlot must be destroyed by the beast and his 10 kings (17:16) so that the beast can command the worship of himself. Demons and unclean spirits will dwell in the great city, which is known for its immorality and materialism (18:2-3). God's people are warned by a voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (18:4-5). In a similar fashion, Lot and his family were warned to leave Sodom before it was destroyed by God for its wickedness (Genesis 19:12-13).

- Babylon the Great will be judged severely by God and will be paid back "double according to her deeds" with "torment and mourning" (18:6-7). In one day "her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong" (18:8). The kings of the earth will "weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come'" (18:9-10). The phrase "one hour" is used three times in chapter 18 to emphasize how swiftly and unexpectedly her judgment will come (18:10, 17, 19). The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because they became rich by her wealth and "no one buys their cargoes any more – cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones... and slaves and human lives" (18:3,11-13). They "will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?'" (18:15-18). "And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'" (18:19). Believers will rejoice because God has pronounced judgment for them against her (18:20). In judgment, the great city is pictured as disappearing into the sea; "Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, 'So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer'" (18:21). Since the great city is a seaport city (18:17-19), perhaps it will literally be overcome by waves as it is judged and will disappear into the sea forever. Jeremiah appears to be describing judgment on the great city of Babylon the Great when he says, "The sea has come up over Babylon; she has been engulfed with its tumultuous waves" (Jeremiah 51:42). "For the LORD is going to destroy Babylon, and He will make her loud noise vanish from her. And their waves will roar like many waters; the tumult of their voices sounds forth" (Jeremiah 51:55). Musicians, craftsmen and merchants will no longer be found in the city (18:22). All the nations will be deceived by her sorcery (18:23). In her will be found the blood of prophets and of saints "and of all who have been slain on the earth" (18:24).

- After the first great city is destroyed, a new world capital must be chosen for the second half of the Tribulation. It is possible that the antichrist will choose Jerusalem (see also Revelation 16:19 commentary). There are several reasons to propose this. First, the outer court of the Tribulation temple will be given to the nations, "and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months" (11:2), which represents the second half of the Tribulation. Second, Babylon the Great and Jerusalem are both referred to as "the great city" (11:8, 16:19, 17:18, 18:10, 21). Third, the antichrist will make numerous appearances in Israel during the end times. He will be in Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation, at the midpoint, during the second half and at the close of the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27, 11:41; Revelation 19:19-21). Fourth, Jerusalem (especially the Temple Mount) is the most important place on earth and is the center of the world (Psalm 87:1-3; Ezekiel 5:5, 38:12). Since the antichrist wants to be like God, it would make sense that he would also want to rule God's land (Israel) and rule from God's holy city (Jerusalem) and from the Tribulation temple. At the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, he will take "his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4), and will require all to worship him and his image (13:12-15).

- The destruction of the great harlot and the great city does not mean the end of Babylon the Great, for new Babylon the Great will continue on, more powerful than ever for the second half of the Great Tribulation, but with a more sinister and satanic nature. New Babylon the Great will have new leadership, a new false religion, a new world capital and a new purpose. For additional information about new Babylon the Great, refer to Revelation 16:19, 17:8-18, 19:19 and for the original Babylon the Great, refer to Revelation 14:8, 17:1-11, 15-18, 18:1-24. New Babylon the Great will be under the leadership of the beast (antichrist), empowered by Satan and his 10 newly appointed kings. The beast, Satan, the false prophet and new Babylon the Great will become almost one in their purpose and nature. The beast will claim to be God, will demand worship, will wage war against Jews and believers, and "will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" (Daniel 7:23). Satan will be in control of the entire world, as the beast becomes the supreme ruler and king of new Babylon the Great. Satan's goal is not only to rule the world, but to be like God; to be worshipped like God (13:4, 12, 15) and to defeat God. Babylon the Great will not be destroyed until the last day of the Great Tribulation, during the war of

Armageddon (16:19). The "beast and the kings of the earth and their armies" will assemble to make war against Jesus Christ at His second coming (19:19). The beast and false prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire and the rest will be killed when Jesus Christ returns (19:20-21).

***Revelation 19;** Fourfold hallelujah (19:1-6); Lamb's marriage and marriage supper (19:7-10); second coming of Christ and Armageddon (19:11-21)

- Four hallelujahs are proclaimed in the beginning of chapter 19 (19:1-6). "After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her'" (19:1-2). "And a second time they said, 'Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever'" (19:3). God will judge the great harlot (Babylon the Great) because of her immorality and wickedness (17:1-6, 18:1-8, 20). God is praised in the heavens; "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns" (19:4-6).

- "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready" (19:7). Jesus' bride is all believers and her fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints (19:8). The marriage supper of the Lamb will probably take place on earth toward the beginning of the 1,000 year (Millennium) reign of Jesus Christ. "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (19:9).

- At the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth, during the war of Armageddon, all who oppose Him will be defeated. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war" (19:11). "His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself" (19:12). "He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God" (19:13). Jesus' robe is dipped in blood signifying He is coming to judge. "And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses" (19:14). "From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty" (19:15). "And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS'" (19:16). "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army" (19:19). During the war of Armageddon, Babylon the Great, led by the antichrist, will try and defeat Jesus Christ at His second coming (16:13-16, 19). "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone" (19:20). "And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (19:21).

***Revelation 20;** Satan bound (20:1-3); saints resurrected (20:4-6); Satan and unbelievers judged (20:7-15)

- Satan is bound for a thousand years and thrown into the abyss, "so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed" (20:1-3). Believers that lose their life after the rapture and during the Tribulation days will come to life and reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom on earth. "And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (20:4). Unbelievers will be resurrected after the Millennium for the purpose of judgment (20:5).

- Satan will be released after the thousand years are completed to deceive the nations. The nations will then gather together for war against Jesus; "the number of them is like the sand of the seashore" (20:7-8). Fire will come down from heaven and devour them. Satan will then be thrown into the lake of fire (20:9-10).

- Unbelievers will be judged at the great white throne judgment (20:11-15). "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire" (20:14). "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (20:15).

***Revelation 21;** New heaven, new earth and new Jerusalem (21:1-27)

- God will reveal a new heaven and a new earth, unstained by sin. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea" (21:1). "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (21:2). "And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.' And He

who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new'" (21:3-5).

- "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, I will show the bride, the wife of the Lamb'" (21:9). "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper" (21:10-11). "The city is laid out as a square", and its length and width and height are each 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers; 21:16). "And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass" (21:21). "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (21:22). "And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb" (21:23). "The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it" (21:24). "In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (21:25-27).

***Revelation 22;** New Jerusalem (22:1-5); final words (22:6-21)

- New Jerusalem is described in the beginning of this chapter (22:1-5) and then final words are given (22:6-21). "Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (22:1-2). "There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads" (22:3-4). "And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever" (22:5).

- The angel said to John, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near" (22:10). "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (22:12). "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (22:13). "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star" (22:16). "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (22:17). "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen" (22:20-21).

>>>>>> End-Time Topics

32. End Times Defined

- In this document, the "end times" will be defined as a period of time beginning with the rapture and including the Great Tribulation and the millennial kingdom and culminating with the new heaven and earth. The phrases "end time" or "end of time" are used several times by Daniel (Daniel 11:35, 40, 12:4, 9). Daniel describes a battle that will occur during the Great Tribulation, "and at the end time the king of the South will collide with him" (Daniel 11:40). This "end time" battle will probably occur toward the end of the Tribulation and will involve the antichrist. Daniel is told to "conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time" (Daniel 12:4). Later, in the same chapter, Daniel is again told that "these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time" (Daniel 12:9). The twelfth chapter of Daniel describes events that will occur during the Great Tribulation and beyond.

- The phrase "last days" is often used to describe the end times but it actually defines a longer period of time. The "last days" began with the first coming of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:2) and include the time leading up to the rapture (Acts 2:17; 2 Peter 3:3-4), the period after the rapture (Ezekiel 38:16) and the millennial kingdom (Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1).

- Another important Biblical term to understand is the "day of the Lord". This phrase is used often in the Old Testament and New Testament to describe any time God intervenes directly and dramatically in history either to judge or to bless. God has intervened in this way in the past, and he will do so again in the future. There have been specific, past "days of the Lord" when God intervened dramatically to judge. For instance, the destruction of Egypt by ancient Babylon was called the "day of the Lord" (Ezekiel 30:1-4). The locust plague described by Joel was a "day of the Lord" when God intervened directly to judge ancient Israel (Joel 1:15). Many of these past days of the Lord are a foreshadow of the final, future "day of the Lord". The "day of the Lord" is often used in the Bible to describe the Great Tribulation, Armageddon and the second coming of Jesus Christ (Joel 2:31; Obadiah 1:15; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20). This term can also mean an extended period of time, beginning with the rapture (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4) and ending after the Millennium, when the old heaven and earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10). Joel refers to the "day of the Lord" as "that day" when "the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk... and a spring will go out from the house of the LORD" (Joel 3:14, 18). God's blessings during the millennial kingdom are described in this passage.

33. Rebirth of Israel

- The rebirth of the nation of Israel is the fulfillment of one of the most prophesied events in Scripture. Israel became a nation once again on 14 May 1948 (Yom Ha'atzmaut, 5 Iyar 5708 in the Jewish calendar). The countdown to end-time events probably begins with the rebirth of Israel. Israel's rebirth is often linked to the nation's spiritual awakening and revival (Ezekiel 11:14-21, 36:22-38, 37:1-28, 39:25-29), to the judgment of nations (Joel 3:1-3; Ezekiel 28:25-26), to great tribulation (Jeremiah 30:1-11), to the rule of King David and the reign of Messiah. God will make an everlasting covenant of peace with Israel, and David will be their king forever (Ezekiel 34:24, 37:24-28; Jeremiah 30:9; Hosea 3:5). The Messiah (a righteous Branch) will reign over all the people and nations of the world (Jeremiah 23:1-8, 33:14-16; Isaiah 4:2-6, 11:1-5; Zechariah 3:8-9, 6:12-13; Ezekiel 20:33-44; Revelation 20:4). Israel's rebirth is also described in the following verses: Isaiah 11:11-12, Ezekiel 34:11-16, 38:8 and Daniel 9:24-27.

- Israel's rebirth is essential for the fulfillment of many end-time prophecies. The current restoration of Israel is only temporary, however, because at the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, the antichrist will break his covenant and will force the Jews off the land in his attempt to wipe them out (Daniel 9:27). Many Jews will be killed and many will be led captive into all the nations. The nations of the world will tread under foot Jerusalem for the second half of the Tribulation (Luke 21:20-24). The final and permanent restoration of Israel will occur at the second coming of Jesus Christ, when He will judge the wicked, rescue His people and bring them back to the land, and set up His kingdom. God's promises to His people of a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:26), an everlasting covenant of peace (Ezekiel 34:25) and the reign of Messiah (Zechariah 14:9) will be fulfilled at that time.

34. The Rapture

-The rapture is imminent (1 Thessalonians 4:15; Revelation 1:1, 1:3, 22:20). Following the rebirth of Israel, the rapture is the next major Bible prophecy to be fulfilled. Jesus will return and take all His believers (those living and those who have died) to heaven before the seven-year Great Tribulation begins. Millions of Christians will vanish worldwide as a result. The billions of people left behind will be scared and confused. Many theories will be proposed to explain their disappearance, but the Bible reveals the truth. The rapture was prophesied (foretold) in the Bible almost 2,000 years ago (John 14:1-3; Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Revelation 3:10-11). The word "rapture" is from the Latin for "caught up" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Believers who have previously died are already in heaven, but will return with Jesus to receive their resurrected bodies. Living believers and the dead in Christ will meet the Lord in the air. Jesus will return again at the end of the Great Tribulation to rescue believers and His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4).

- When Jesus returns, four things must happen before believers are caught up. They will hear a shout, the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will be resurrected (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). This implies that alert and ready believers may have a few moments to react after they hear the "shout" and before they are actually "caught up". The rapture is also referred to as the "day of Christ" (Philippians 1:10, 2:16), the "day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6) and the "day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:8). New Testament believers are described as eagerly waiting for the return and revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is also a reference to the rapture (1 Corinthians 1:7; Romans 8:19, 23, 25; Galatians 5:5; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 9:28). Believers, children of God, will be like Him when He appears because they will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; Philippians 3:21). For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For in those days, they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away (Matthew 24:36-39). "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left... For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think he will" (Matthew 24:40-44). The parable of the 10 virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) stresses the importance of being alert and prepared for the Lord's return, for no one knows the day or the hour.

- "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord " (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

- The Bible clearly states that we will not know the day of the rapture. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Matthew 24:36). The fact that we will not know the "day" or "hour" of Jesus' return is emphasized in many different verses, including several parables (Matthew 24:36, 44, 50, 25:13; Mark 13:32; Luke 12:39, 40, 46). Perhaps the repeated use of the words "day" and "hour" convey the idea that although we don't know the day of the rapture, we should know the season.

- The rapture is sometimes described as occurring like a thief in the night, meaning that it will take most people by surprise and will come unexpectedly (Matthew 24:36-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11). However, Christians who are alert and ready should not be surprised by the rapture. "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:4). "Be on guard... and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap" (Luke 21:34). "Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you" (Revelation 3:3). We don't know the day, but we should know the season. Believers should be able to "discern the signs of the times" (Matthew 16:3) as Jesus expected the religious leaders of His day to do. Because of God's grace and mercy, Christians at the time of the rapture will be spared from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9; Revelation 3:10). The convergence of Bible prophecies and world events indicate the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

- The Bible clearly shows that during the end times many people will be saved and many will lose their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus (Revelation 6:9-11, 20:4). There will be a huge revival during the Great Tribulation. The book of Revelation describes a great multitude (that no one could count) of believers in heaven that have come out of the Great Tribulation. This indicates that a vast number of people will be saved. There will be so many believers in the world that the dragon (Satan) and the antichrist will wage war against them during the last half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:17, 13:7; Daniel 7:21). "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands... These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb... They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore: nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 7:9-17).

35. Ezekiel 38 Battle – Nations Attack Israel ... God Destroys Them

- The Lord's judgment during the Ezekiel 38 battle will be one of the most awesome displays of God's power that the world has ever seen. This battle represents an extremely significant end-time event for a number of reasons. First, when God's mighty power is displayed, He will be glorified and His holy name will be made known in the midst of His people Israel. The world will know that He is the Lord, the Holy One in Israel and He will magnify and sanctify Himself in the sight of many nations. Second, the whole world will be watching as the battle unfolds and this will provide the awareness and the opportunity for Gentiles and Jews to repent and turn to Christ for salvation before the Great Tribulation begins. Third, God's judgment will clear the way for the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. Fourth, this event will be a reminder that all who oppose Israel and God's people will be judged.

- Gog (probably refers to Russia) and many other nations will come up against Israel with a massive force. This battle probably occurs shortly after the rapture (refer to Luke 17:26-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:6-9) and just before the seven-year Great Tribulation (Daniel 9:27). Ezekiel 38 and 39 describe this battle and how God miraculously rescues the people of Israel. "My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel" (Ezekiel 39:7). For additional information, see the commentary for Ezekiel 38 and 39.

36. The Antichrist (Beast)

- The antichrist will rise out of a "dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong" kingdom made up of 10 smaller kingdoms. This global kingdom will be different from any other kingdom that has ever existed. It will "devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" (Daniel 7:7-8, 23). As the antichrist (little horn) rises to power, three kingdoms (kings) will be pulled out by the roots before him (Daniel 7:8, 20). The antichrist will initially be a man of peace (will sign a peace treaty with Israel; Daniel 9:24-27). He will try to change the set times and the laws, will deny the god of his father, will lead a one-world government, will speak boastfully, will be feared, will have a fatal wound and come back to life, will wage war against believers (persecuting and killing believers), will exalt and magnify himself above every god, will say unheard-of things against the God of gods, and will be worshiped.

- In order to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy (Jeremiah 25:11), the nations (including the Jewish people) must serve the king of Babylon for approximately the last four years of the Great Tribulation (refer to Jeremiah 25 commentary). This implies that the antichrist will become the king and supreme ruler of Babylon the Great about three years after the start of the Great Tribulation. After the antichrist comes back to life, He will break the treaty with Israel and desecrate the Jerusalem temple at the Tribulation midpoint (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). God's holy people will be delivered into his hands for the second three and a half years of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-8). Satan (dragon) will give the antichrist (beast) his power and his throne and great authority.

- "I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the

beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?' There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" (Revelation 13:3-8). Refer to the following verses for additional information about the antichrist: Revelation 13:1-18, 17:1-18, 18:1-24, 19:1-21, 20:1-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Matthew 24:15; Daniel 7:7-28, 9:24-27, 11:36-45, 12:1-13; and 1 John 2:18-22.

37. Peace Treaty Between Israel and Antichrist

- Even though the antichrist is not one of the original 10 kings of Babylon the Great, he will have the authority to make a firm covenant (peace treaty; Daniel 9:27) with Israel on behalf of the one-world government, thus revealing his identity (Daniel 7:19-25; Revelation 17:8-18). This seven-year covenant marks the official start of the Great Tribulation.

38. The Great Tribulation

- The Great Tribulation is a seven-year period of time that will end with the second coming of Christ. According to Daniel, the official start of this period is the signing of the covenant (peace treaty) between Israel and the antichrist (Daniel 9:27), which will probably occur shortly after the rapture (refer to Luke 17:26-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:6-9). Twice the Bible uses the phrase "great tribulation" to describe this period of time. "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will" (Matthew 24:21). Martyrs from the "great tribulation" will stand before the throne and before the Lamb in heaven, a great multitude which no one will be able to count (Revelation 7:14).

- These seven years will be a time of pain and suffering and God's judgment unlike any other time in human history, resulting in the death of billions of people (Revelation 6:8, 9:15). "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short" (Matthew 24:22). On the other hand, the greatest revival in human history will occur during the Great Tribulation. So many people will be saved that no one will be able to count them (Revelation 7:14). At the same time, Jews and followers of Christ will be mercilessly persecuted and killed.

- Many verses throughout the Bible describe the Great Tribulation (Isaiah 24:1-23; Jeremiah 25:12-38, 30:4-7; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Revelation 4-20). Jeremiah describes it as "the time of Jacob's distress" (Jeremiah 30:7). Daniel says it will be "a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time" (Daniel 12:1). In 1 Thessalonians that period is described as "destruction" that will come upon the people of the world suddenly "like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:3). Revelation describes God's devastating 21 judgments that will claim the lives of billions of people during those seven difficult years (Revelation 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16).

- Scripture is very clear that the duration of the Great Tribulation will be seven prophetic years. A prophetic year is 360 days long, rather than 365 days. God's two witnesses will "prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days" during the first half of the Tribulation (Revelation 11:3). The Israeli Jewish remnant will be miraculously protected and "nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days" by God for the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6). This adds up to 2,520 days, or seven prophetic years (360 days per year). Daniel says that the antichrist will "make a firm covenant" with the Jews "for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" (Daniel 9:27). This "one week" represents seven prophetic years (refer to Daniel 9). The phrase "time, times, and half a time" (time = 1 year, times = 2 years, half a time = half a year), or three and a half years is used three times in the Bible to describe half of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:25, 12:7; Revelation 12:14). In all three cases, the phrase describes the second half of the Tribulation. "Forty- two months" (three and a half years) is used twice in the Bible to describe the second half of the Tribulation period (Revelation 11:2, 13:5).

- What is the purpose of this seven-year period of suffering, persecution and death? There are at least four reasons to consider. First, God's name will be magnified throughout the world, especially to the Jewish people. As a result of the Ezekiel 38 battle, which probably occurs shortly before the Tribulation, the Lord will be made known in the sight of many nations and they will know that He is Lord (Ezekiel 38:23). "My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel" (Ezekiel 39:7). Following the Ezekiel 38 battle, God's mighty power will continue to be displayed throughout the Tribulation period. Second, God desires as many people as possible to be saved before the end of the age. The Great Tribulation will witness the greatest revival in human history (Revelation 7:9-17) as people are tested and compelled to make a decision for or against Christ (Revelation 3:10). During the Tribulation, hundreds of Bible prophecies will be fulfilled, and the witness of fulfilled prophecy will cause many people to believe (John 14:28-29). Third, the wicked will be judged. All those who refuse to put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will experience the wrath and

judgment of God. Satan, the beast (antichrist), the false prophet and demons (evil angels) will also be judged. Fourth, God will use this time of testing to prepare the Jewish people for their Messiah. They will be brought through the fire to refine and test them so that they will say "the Lord is my God" (Zechariah 13:8-9). When Jesus Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation riding on a white horse, many Jews will finally recognize Him as their Messiah and will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son (Zechariah 12:10-12; Revelation 19:11). While the Great Tribulation will be a time of unparalleled suffering, persecution, judgment and death, God's sovereign purposes will be accomplished for His honor and glory.

39. Jewish Temple Rebuilt in Jerusalem

- God's mighty deliverance of His people during the Ezekiel 38 battle and the defeat of many of Israel's enemies will clear the way for the construction of the long-awaited temple in Jerusalem. The temple will be completed quickly during the first half of the Great Tribulation because at the midpoint, the antichrist will put a stop to sacrifice and offering and desecrate the temple (Daniel 9:27, 12:11; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). Daniel's vision of the 2,300 days indicates that the Tribulation temple will be dedicated approximately seven and a half months (220 days) after the start of the Great Tribulation. For additional information, refer to Daniel 8.

40. Two Prophets in Israel ... Killed (Rise from the Dead)

- The two prophets (witnesses) will be appointed by God and will prophesy for 1,260 days (Revelation 11:3; first half of Tribulation), clothed in sackcloth. God will give them special powers. "And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire"(Revelation 11:5-6). When they have finished their testimony in Jerusalem, the beast (antichrist) will attack and kill them. Most of the inhabitants of the world will celebrate their deaths because these two prophets will torment those who live on the earth. God will raise them from the dead after three and a half days, and they will go up to heaven in a cloud. Many people throughout the world will witness the death, resurrection and ascension of these two prophets of God; a powerful demonstration of the truth of their testimony. Those who behold them will be terrified and many will give glory to the God of heaven (11:11, 13). At that very hour, there will be a severe earthquake in Jerusalem and a tenth of the city will collapse and 7,000 people will be killed. According to Malachi, one of the prophets may be Elijah (Malachi 4:5; Revelation 11:3-13).

41. Mark of the Beast and False Prophet

- The false prophet will perform great signs and even make fire come down out of heaven. He will require everyone to worship the beast and to receive the mark of the beast in order to buy or to sell (Revelation 13:11-18). Several verses in the Bible warn people to not receive the mark of the beast. If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he will experience the wrath of God. He will be tormented with fire and brimstone and ugly, festering sores and ultimately will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11, 16:2, 20:15).

42. God's 21 Judgments

- During the Great Tribulation billions of people will die (Revelation 6:8, 9:15). "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short" (Matthew 24:22). God's 21 judgments include seven seal judgments, seven trumpet judgments and seven bowl judgments. The seven seal judgments will begin after the Israel-antichrist peace treaty (covenant). They will include wars, famine, extreme inflation, plagues, death of one-fourth of the world's population, intense persecution of believers, earthquakes and disturbances of the sun, moon and stars (Revelation 6:1-17, 8:1-6). The seven trumpet judgments include hail and fire mixed with blood (one-third of the earth is burned up), a great burning mountain (one-third of the sea turns to blood, one-third of all sea creatures die, one-third of all ships are destroyed), a great burning star (one-third of the fresh water on earth is poisoned), darkening of the sun, moon and stars, demonic locusts, plagues (one-third of humanity dies) and war (Revelation 8:7-13, 9:1-21, 11:15-19). The wrath of God is finished in the last seven plagues known as the seven bowl judgments (Revelation 15:1). The bowl judgments include festering sores, seas becoming blood (all sea life dies), rivers and springs becoming blood, scorching heat from the sun, darkness and pain, the Euphrates River drying up (prepares the way for the kings from the east), a catastrophic earthquake (cities of the nations collapse, every island disappears, mountains are leveled) and huge hailstones (Revelation 15:1-8, 16:1-21).

43. 144,000 Jews Commissioned by God for His Service

- The 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel will be chosen to perform some service for God, which may include evangelism. They may also be involved in the construction of the Tribulation temple or serving in it. Angels will seal these servants of

God on their foreheads. Apparently, they will also play a part in Messiah's (millennial) temple (Revelation 7:1-8, 14:1-5).

44. Babylon the Great

- End-time Babylon the Great is described in various ways in the Bible. She is a global kingdom that will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. She is a great harlot (prostitute) that represents a false religious system. She is a great city that will rule over the kings and nations of the earth. She is described as a dreadful, terrifying and extremely strong beast that will become almost one with the antichrist and Satan during the second half of the Great Tribulation. Babylon the Great will be responsible for the persecution and death of many believers, to the extent that she will be "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus" (Revelation 17:6). She will fall twice; close to the midpoint of the Great Tribulation and then at the very end of the Tribulation period when Jesus Christ returns.

- The Bible contains much information about Babylon as the source of false religion, the record beginning with the building of the tower of Babel (Genesis 10-11). The name "Babel" suggests "confusion" (Genesis 11:9). Later the name was applied to the city of Babylon which itself has a long history dating back to as early as 3,000 years before Christ. Babylon then, is the symbol of apostasy and blasphemous substitution of idol-worship for the worship of God in Christ. Ancient Babylon was in many ways similar to end-time Babylon the Great. Both empires are characterized as being powerful, arrogant and wicked, and are used by God to bring judgment on the Jewish people. Jeremiah describes Babylon as a gold cup, beautiful on the outside but filled with idolatry and wickedness. "Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are going mad" (Jeremiah 51:7). Five times in the Bible the phrase "Babylon the Great" is used; once to describe ancient Babylon (Daniel 4:30) and four times to describe the end-time empire (Revelation 14:8, 16:19, 17:5, 18:2). The end-time city of Babylon the Great is sometimes referred to as just Babylon or the great city (Revelation 17:18, 18:10, 16, 18-19, 21).

- End-time Babylon the Great will be a global false religious system that is described as a "great harlot" (prostitute) that "sits on many waters", representing "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues", and is also described as a "woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns" (Revelation 17:1, 3, 15). The fact that she sits on many waters and the scarlet beast shows the extent of her power, influence and control. The kings of the earth will commit acts of immorality with her and those who dwell on the earth will be drunk with the wine of her immorality (Revelation 17:2). The harlot will be drunk with the blood of the saints, will be wealthy, materialistic and extremely evil and will deceive the nations with her sorcery (Revelation 17 and 18). "The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, 'BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH'" (Revelation 17:4-5). The mystery of Babylon the Great is revealed to John by an angel (Revelation 17:8-18), yet wisdom is still required to understand (Revelation 17:7, 9).

- The woman (harlot) of Revelation 17 is also described as a great and strong city called Babylon (also Babylon the Great), which reigns over the kings of the earth (Revelation 17:18, 18:2, 10, 21). This implies that this great city will be the world capital of Babylon the Great and will probably be located in a powerful, wealthy and influential nation. The city will have a bustling seaport (Revelation 18:17-19) and will be characterized by the "sound of harpists and musicians" and craftsmen of many trades (Revelation 18:22). She will be "a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit" (Revelation 18:2). All the nations will drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth will commit acts of immorality with her (Revelation 18:3). The merchants of the earth will become rich from her great wealth (Revelation 18:3, 11-19), and all the nations will be deceived by her sorcery (Revelation 18:23). In her will be found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth (Revelation 18:24). In Revelation 17 and 18, spiritual Babylon is united with political and commercial Babylon in a dominating and controlling manner. Notice that "all the nations" (Revelation 18:3) will be influenced by Babylon the Great.

- Babylon the Great is depicted as a great beast with 10 horns in Daniel 7 and a beast having 10 horns and seven heads in Revelation 13 and 17. Satan (a great red dragon) is also described as having seven heads and 10 horns (Revelation 12:3). Daniel describes this beast as "dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong" (Daniel 7: 7) and as "a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" (Daniel 7:23). The beast's 10 horns represent 10 kings (Daniel 7:24) who will rule over a global empire of extraordinary military might, composed of 10 kingdoms or regions (refer to Revelation 17:12, 17; Daniel 7:27, 2:41-42). A little horn (the antichrist) will come up among them and will arise after them; and three of the first horns will be "pulled out by the roots before it" (Daniel 7:8, 20). The little horn will be different from the previous ones and will become more powerful than the other horns because it will be "larger in appearance than its associates", it will wage war with the saints and overpower them (Daniel 7:19-21), it will subdue three kings (Daniel 7:24) and it will become king of Babylon the Great. The three horns that are "pulled out by the roots" (Daniel 7:8), represent three kings and their kingdoms that will fall as the antichrist is rising to power (Daniel 7:20). These kings fall "before" the little horn, but not necessarily because of it. Horns that are "pulled out by the roots" probably signify the sudden and violent downfall of these three kings and their

kingdoms. During the Ezekiel 38 battle, which will probably occur after the rapture but before the Great Tribulation, the enemies of Israel will be severely judged by God, especially Gog (probably Russia) and the other nations that attack Israel. Perhaps Israel's enemies represent the three horns (kings and their kingdoms) that will be "pulled out by the roots". This is probably the reason that the dragon (Revelation 12:3) and the beast of Revelation 13 and 17 are described with seven heads (representing seven mountains and seven kings, Revelation 17:9-10) rather than 10. The seven mountains are probably a reference to the seven kingdoms (regions) that the seven kings rule. Babylon the Great will be established with 10 kingdoms (regions) and 10 kings before the Great Tribulation begins but will apparently only have seven functional kingdoms and seven kings at the start of the seven-year Great Tribulation. Only these seven kings will be under the influence and control of the harlot, since she rides on a beast with seven heads and 10 horns (Revelation 17:3, 7). During the second half of the Tribulation period, the final (last) 10 kings of Babylon the Great are represented by the 10 horns (Revelation 17:12-13).

- More kings will fall during the first half of the Tribulation. Of the remaining seven kings, the antichrist will replace one of them because he is "one of the seven" (Revelation 17:11). Of these seven, five more will fall, leaving the antichrist and one other king to rule the empire (Revelation 17:10). Close to the Tribulation midpoint, the antichrist receives a fatal wound and then is healed (Revelation 13:3, 12, 14), suggesting that Satan resurrects and possesses him (the beast comes out of the abyss; Revelation 17:8, 11:7). He will then kill the two witnesses of God (Revelation 11:7), desecrate the Jerusalem temple and end the peace treaty (covenant) with Israel (Daniel 9:27) at the Tribulation midpoint. Satan gives the antichrist authority to rule over the earth as the king and supreme ruler of Babylon the Great for the last portion of the Tribulation (Revelation 13:2-14, 17:9-13; Daniel 7:24, 11:36). Ten new kings will be chosen and they will give their power and authority and their kingdom to the beast (Revelation 17:12-13, 17). They will "hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire" (Revelation 17:16) and then require everyone to worship the beast and to receive the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:11-18).

- There are several reasons to conclude that Babylon the Great will be a global kingdom consisting of 10 smaller kingdoms or regions. First, Babylon the Great will be ruled by 10 kings (Daniel 7:15-28). It appears that the kingdom will be established first and then out of this kingdom 10 kings will arise, as if they are appointed (Daniel 7:24). This implies that they will rule over regions, not just a single nation. Second, 10 new kings will be chosen to rule under the antichrist for the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 17:12-18). These rulers will receive a kingdom and receive authority as kings with the beast (Revelation 17:12). They will have one purpose, and they will give their power and authority and their kingdom to the beast (Revelation 17:13, 17). This passage also implies that these rulers will be chosen to rule over a regional kingdom. Third, the fourth kingdom of Daniel 2, which probably represents Babylon the Great, will also be separated into 10 parts, represented by 10 toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron (Daniel 2:40-43). This kingdom will crush and shatter all things and will be a "divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron... some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle" (Daniel 2:41-42). Fourth, kings are often associated with the kingdoms they rule. The fourth beast of Daniel 7 is first described as a king (Daniel 7:17) and then as a "fourth kingdom on the earth" (Daniel 7:23). Horns are sometimes used in Scripture to represent kings and kingdoms (Daniel 7:24, 8:20-22; Revelation 17:12). Fifth, when Jesus Christ returns, the sovereignty of all the kingdoms (not just one) under the whole of heaven will be given to believers (Daniel 7:27).

- All nations will probably be part of Babylon the Great because first, all the nations will drink the wine of the passion of her immorality (Revelation 14:8, 18:3) and all the nations will be deceived by her sorcery (Revelation 18:23). Second, Satan will give the antichrist authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation (Revelation 13:7). Third, all people will be required to receive the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16) and the whole world (except believers) will worship the beast (Revelation 13:8). Fourth, the beast and his 10 kings will "wage war against the Lamb" (Revelation 17:14), and at the end of the Great Tribulation, the kings of the whole world and their armies will be gathered together in Israel for the war of Armageddon (Revelation 16:13-16). According to Zechariah, all the nations of the earth will be gathered against Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:3, 14:2).

- End-time Babylon the Great will fall twice during the Great Tribulation. The first time will probably be near the midpoint of the Tribulation and the second time will be during the war of Armageddon. The final defeat of Babylon the Great and the antichrist will be the climax of God's judgment on the Gentile powers at the close of the Great Tribulation when Jesus Christ returns with His army (Daniel 7:26; Revelation 16:19, 19:19-21). This final defeat is described in the verses which follow. "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (Revelation 19:19-21). "The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (Revelation 16:19-20). This will all occur during the seventh bowl judgment (Revelation 16:17-21). There will be a global earthquake, the most devastating in history, that will cause the cities of the nations to fall; every island will disappear and the mountains

will be leveled. Huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds (45 kilograms) each will come down from heaven upon men.

- The phrase "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great" occurs twice in the Bible and both times the proclamation is uttered by an angel (Revelation 14:8, 18:2). Isaiah uses a similar phrase ("Fallen, fallen is Babylon") to describe the fall of ancient Babylon (Isaiah 21:9). In Revelation 14:6-12, three angels deliver a message to every nation and tribe and tongue and people. Since one angel follows the next, it appears that their announcements occur in quick succession. The first one has an eternal gospel to preach and says with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come" (Revelation 14:7). The second angel follows, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality" (Revelation 14:8). The third angel follows them with a warning not to worship the beast or receive his mark (Revelation 14:9-11). Some writers say that Babylon the Great only falls at the end of the Great Tribulation. If this is the case, then it would not make sense to announce on the last day of the Great Tribulation that Babylon the Great has fallen and then to warn people not to worship the beast or receive the mark of the beast. The third angel's warning would be too late at that point to make any difference. Even the second angel's message would be unnecessary at that point. So, we can conclude that Babylon the Great falls twice during the Great Tribulation. In order to determine the time frame for the initial fall of Babylon the Great, let's look closer at the third angel's warning to not worship the beast or receive his mark. The most logical time to proclaim this warning would be at the midpoint of the Tribulation when people will begin worshiping the beast and receiving the mark. Then the second angel's message that Babylon has fallen would also be proclaimed near the Tribulation midpoint.

- Revelation 17 and 18 describe the fall of the great harlot and the great city; both referred to as Babylon the Great. An angel, having great authority, will come down from heaven and cry out, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality" (Revelation 18:1-3). God's people are warned by a voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (Revelation 18:4-5). In a similar fashion, Lot and his family were warned to leave Sodom before it was destroyed by God for its wickedness (Genesis 19:1-29). In one day her plagues will come, "pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong" (Revelation 18:8). Close to the Tribulation midpoint, 10 kings will be chosen to rule over the 10 kingdoms (regions) of the world and to serve under the beast (Revelation 17:12-13, 17). The beast and his new rulers will "wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them" (Revelation 17:14). They will also "hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire" (Revelation 17:16). This verse describes the demise of the global false religious system, also known as Babylon the Great (Revelation 17:5). Since the 10 new kings do not receive authority as kings until close to the Tribulation midpoint, Babylon the Great cannot fall until close to the midpoint. Also, the harlot must be destroyed so that the beast can proclaim himself as god and demand that the world worship him alone. God's judgment on the great city is described as plagues, pestilence (literally death), famine and fire (Revelation 18:4, 8). There is no mention of a great earthquake, the war of Armageddon, huge hailstones or the second coming of Jesus Christ as one would expect if this event occurred at the end of the Great Tribulation.

- When we look at the kings of the earth, we can also see that Babylon the Great must fall twice. During the initial fall, the kings of the earth will weep and mourn and lament over Babylon when they see the smoke of her burning (Revelation 18:9-20). They will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment (Revelation 18:10). When Babylon the Great falls the second time, the kings of the earth will no longer be spectators. They will be gathered together in Israel (Armageddon, Revelation 16:14-16) to make war against God (Revelation 19:19). They will experience God's fierce wrath (Revelation 16:19) because the kings of the earth and their armies and the beast and false prophet are all part of Babylon the Great (Revelation 19:19-21). By examining these passages of Scripture (Revelation, chapters 14, 16-19), we can conclude that the original Babylon the Great will probably fall close to the Tribulation midpoint.

- The destruction of the great harlot and the great city does not mean the end of Babylon the Great. Babylon the Great, the global empire, will continue on, more powerful than ever for the second half of the Great Tribulation, but with a more sinister and satanic nature. New Babylon the Great will have new leadership, a new false religion, a new world capital and a new purpose. The beast (antichrist), empowered by Satan, will be the supreme ruler of the world and king (Daniel 11:36) of new Babylon the Great. The beast, Satan and new Babylon the Great will become almost one in their purpose and nature. The antichrist will claim to be God, will demand worship, will wage war against Jews and believers, will require the mark of the beast, will control and dominate virtually the entire world, and will ultimately try to defeat God Almighty.

- After the great city of Babylon is destroyed, another world capital will be needed for the second half of the Tribulation. It is possible that the antichrist will choose Jerusalem (see also Revelation 16:19 commentary). There are several reasons to propose this. First, the outer court of the Tribulation temple will be given to the nations, "and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months" (Revelation 11:2), which represents the second half of the Tribulation. Second, Babylon the Great (Babylon) and Jerusalem are both referred to as "the great city" (Revelation 11:8, 16:19, 17:18, 18:10, 21).

Third, numerous Bible prophecies mention that the antichrist will be in the land of Israel and Jerusalem during the end times; at the start of the Great Tribulation, at the midpoint and toward the end, in the days leading up to the second coming of Christ (Daniel 9:27, 11:41, 45; Revelation 19:19-21). Fourth, Israeli Jews will flee to the wilderness to escape the beast's persecution during the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:13-17, 13:5-8). This will allow the antichrist and his evil forces to occupy Israel and Jerusalem. Fifth, Jerusalem (especially the Temple Mount) is the most important place on earth and is the center of the world (Psalm 87:1-3; Ezekiel 5:5, 38:12). Since the antichrist wants to be like God, it would make sense that he would also want to rule God's land (Israel) and rule from God's holy city (Jerusalem) and from the Tribulation temple. At the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, he will take "his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4), and will require all to worship him and his image (Revelation 13:12-15).

- There are several "70 year" Old Testament prophecies that connect ancient Babylon to end-time Babylon the Great and ancient Jerusalem to end-time Jerusalem (refer to 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10; Daniel 9:2). These prophecies will be fulfilled in two phases, totaling 70 years. According to Jeremiah 25:11-12, the nations will serve the king of Babylon 70 years and when the 70 years are completed, God will punish the king of Babylon and his people. This final judgment on Babylon the Great and her king (antichrist) will occur at the second coming of Jesus (Revelation 16:19, 19:19-21). At this time, Jesus will rescue His people and bring them back to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10). Also at this time, the 70-year sabbath rest for the land will be fulfilled (2 Chronicles 36:20-21) and the desolations of Jerusalem will be complete (Daniel 9:2).

- As mentioned above, at the close of the Tribulation period, during the war of Armageddon, the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies will gather in Israel to make war against Jesus Christ and His army. Babylon the Great will experience the fierce wrath of God when Jesus Christ returns on the last day of the Great Tribulation to save His people, to judge the wicked and to set up His kingdom (Daniel 7:26; Revelation 16:19, 19:19-21). The beast and the false prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire and their armies will be defeated. Satan will be bound for a thousand years and thrown into the abyss (Revelation 20:1-3). For additional information about Babylon the Great, refer to Jeremiah 50-51, Daniel 11:36-45 and Zechariah 5:5-11.

45. Jesus' Words (and others) About the End Times

- Some of the most detailed and descriptive prophecies of end-time events were spoken by Jesus. As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, He described to His disciples the signs of His coming and of the end of the age (Matthew 24:3). Jesus said, "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many" (Matthew 24:4-5). "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars... but that is not yet the end... for nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you... This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:6-14). Jesus also spoke about the abomination of desolation, the Great Tribulation and His glorious second coming to earth (Matthew 24:1-51, 25:1-46; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 17:20-37, 21:5-36). Timothy and Peter also had many things to say about the last days and the coming day of the Lord (2 Timothy 3:1-9; 2 Peter 3:1-18).

46. Armageddon (Judgment Day)

- The word Har-Magedon (Armageddon) is only used once in the Bible (Revelation 16:16). It is made up of two words in Hebrew: Har (mountain) and Megiddo (a city in the northern part of ancient Israel). The ancient city of Megiddo, southwest of the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias in Israel), was built on a hill, and it is therefore called the mountain of Megiddo; Armageddon. The city of Megiddo overlooks a beautiful, large valley known as the Plain of Esdraelon (Jezreel Valley), the scene of many Old Testament battles (Judges 4, 7). This plain is 32 kilometers (20 miles) long and 23 kilometers (14 miles) wide and could accommodate a vast army.

- Armageddon can be described as a war or campaign because it involves more than a single battle at one location. Armageddon is the final war of the Great Tribulation, which ends when Jesus Christ returns to rescue His people, to judge the wicked and to rule His earthly kingdom. The campaign of Armageddon begins when three unclean spirits come out of the mouths of the unholy (satanic) trinity of Satan, the beast and the false prophet (Revelation 16:13). These spirits of demons go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty, to the place called Armageddon (Revelation 16:14-16). Why will the kings and their armies be summoned to Israel? They want to make war against God and His army (Revelation 19:19), and they want to once and for all eradicate the Jewish people and thwart the promises of God.

- Apparently while the beast (antichrist) is battling the king of the North, the king of the South and others (Daniel 11:40-45), some Jews will return to Jerusalem and will inhabit it once again (Zechariah 12:3-10). When the beast realizes that the Jews have returned to Jerusalem, it appears that he will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion in the Jezreel Valley (Daniel

11:45; Armageddon) and will summon the nations of the world to join him there. These nations will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle (Zechariah 12:3, 14:2). God will defend the Jews in Jerusalem and will give them supernatural strength (Zechariah 12:8). Eventually, "the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south" (Zechariah 14:2-4). The split in the Mount of Olives will travel toward Jerusalem's Old City. The Jewish remnant will flee into the newly created valley and will be protected by the Messiah.

- The war of Armageddon is not limited to the battle for Jerusalem. Apparently there is also a battle in Edom (modern Jordan). Isaiah describes the war of Armageddon in graphic detail and explains that all the nations and all their armies will be utterly destroyed as a result of God's wrath. He then says, "the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom... thus their land will be soaked with blood... For the LORD has a day of vengeance... and its land will become burning pitch... its smoke will go up forever. From generation to generation it will be desolate (Isaiah 34:6-10). Why does God single out Bozrah and Edom for judgment among all the nations of the world? Bozrah is located in the ancient land of Edom (southeast of Israel, in modern Jordan). Bozrah and the surrounding region may be the location of the safe haven God provides for the Jewish remnant during the second half of the Tribulation. It appears that this will be the site of one of the battles of Armageddon, where the nations of the world attempt to wipe out the Jewish people. For more information about the safe haven that God will prepare for the Jewish remnant during the second half of the Tribulation, refer to the following verses: Revelation 12:6, 14; Isaiah 63:1-6; Obadiah 1:15-21; Zechariah 13:7-9; Micah 2:12-13; Daniel 11:41; Matthew 24:15-21; Mark 13:14-19; and Luke 21:20-24. In another passage, Isaiah appears to be describing Christ's second coming and Armageddon (Isaiah 63:1-6). Jesus is depicted as coming from Edom and Bozrah and His garments are sprinkled and stained red with blood. He trampled the people in His wrath and poured out their lifeblood on the earth. When Jesus Christ appears in the sky at His second coming, riding a white horse, He will be clothed in a robe dipped in blood (Revelation 19:11-13). It is possible that Jesus will go to Edom in addition to Jerusalem at His second coming. God's judgment will result in a 325 kilometer (200 mile) long river of blood (Revelation 14:19-20). This may indicate that the battles of Armageddon will span the territories between Bozrah (Edom) and the Jezreel Valley, which is almost 325 kilometers (200 miles).

- When Jesus Christ returns, riding on a white horse, the Jews will recognize Him as their Messiah and will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son (Zechariah 12:10-12; Revelation 19:11). He will be accompanied by an army of angels on white horses (Revelation 19:14; Matthew 16:27, 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). The armies of the nations will be defeated and thrown into the great wine press of the wrath of God. The wine press will be trodden outside the city, which is probably a reference to Jerusalem (Revelation 14:19-20). The beast and the false prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire and the rest will be killed with the sword which comes from the mouth of Jesus (Revelation 19:20-21). God's wrath will not be limited to the armies in Israel for "those slain by the LORD on that day will be from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be lamented, gathered or buried; they will be like dung on the face of the ground" (Jeremiah 25:33). The final war (Armageddon) of the Great Tribulation is described in many places in the Bible: Revelation 14:14-20, 16:13-21, 19:11-21; Zechariah 12:1-14, 14:1-15; Isaiah 34:1-17, 63:1-6; Jeremiah 25:12-38; Joel 3:1-17; Obadiah 1:15-21; Zephaniah 1:18, 3:8; Malachi 4:1-6; and 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9.

47. Jesus Christ's Second Coming to Earth

- Jesus Christ's second coming to earth will be no secret. During the Great Tribulation millions of Christians will know the exact day when Christ will return and the exact place. The Bible tells us Jesus' feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (east of Jerusalem's Old City; Zechariah 14:4) seven prophetic years (2,520 days; 360 days per year; Revelation 11:3, 12:6) after the Israel-antichrist peace treaty (covenant; Daniel 9:27) is confirmed. Also, Christ will return following specific judgments and prophecies outlined in the book of Revelation and other books of the Bible. Refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies) for additional information concerning the timing of Jesus' return. The second coming of Jesus Christ to earth is one of the most anticipated and prophesied events in all of Scripture and the climactic event of the Great Tribulation. Jesus Christ, the "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" will return to earth to rescue His people, to judge the wicked and to rule His earthly kingdom. At Jesus' second coming, during the war of Armageddon, all who oppose Him will be defeated.

- The date of Jesus Christ's second coming can easily be determined using a cell phone calendar, which will account for leap years. Seven prophetic years represents exactly 360 weeks and the Tribulation midpoint is 180 weeks.

- "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

- God will give relief to believers who are afflicted, "when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty

angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

- "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (Matthew 24:29-31).

- "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS'" (Revelation 19:11-16). "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (Revelation 19:19-21).

- "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne" (Matthew 25:31).

- Satan will then be bound for a thousand years and thrown into the abyss so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years are completed (Revelation 20:1-3). Believers that lose their life after the rapture and during the Tribulation days will come to life and reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom on earth. "And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

- Shortly after the second coming of Jesus Christ, all the people of the world who have survived the Great Tribulation will be gathered before Jesus; believers (sheep) on His right, unbelievers (goats) on His left. The wicked "will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:31-46). Surviving believers will enter the millennial kingdom and will begin to repopulate the earth. For more information about Jesus' second coming, refer to the following verses: Zechariah 12, 14; Isaiah 34:1-17, 66:15-17; Jeremiah 25:12-38, 29:10; Daniel 12:1-13; Joel 2:28-32, 3:1-17; Zephaniah 1:14-18, 3:8; Luke 17:20-24; and Hebrews 9:28.

48. The Millennium

- When Christ returns to earth He will establish Himself as King in Jerusalem, sitting on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:32-33). He will establish His earthly kingdom where He will reign over all the people and nations of the world for a thousand years (Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 20:4). His kingdom will be characterized by justice, righteousness and His unfailing love. There will be harmony in all creation as the earth becomes a lush paradise, like the Garden of Eden. Wolves will dwell with lambs and lions will be led by little boys (Isaiah 11:6-9). People will be healed and healthy, will live in peace and will multiply and fill the earth. Since only believers will enter the Millennium, it will be a time of righteousness (Matthew 25:34-46); obedience (Ezekiel 11:19-20); holiness (Isaiah 35:8; Jeremiah 31:31-34); security (Isaiah 65:21-23; Ezekiel 37:24-28); and fullness of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29; Ezekiel 36:26-27).

- Who will live in the millennial kingdom? Shortly after the second coming of Jesus Christ, "He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (Matthew 24:31; see also Matthew 25:31-34). These believers will enter the millennial kingdom and will begin to repopulate the earth. In addition to mortal believers, Scripture says there will also be resurrected believers living on earth during the Millennium. Believers that lost their lives after the rapture and during the Tribulation days will come to life and reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4). This resurrection will occur just after the second coming. We also know that resurrected King David will be King of Israel and will rule from Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:24, 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5). Since King David will probably be resurrected during the rapture as an Old Testament saint, it is very likely that all resurrected believers will be a part of the millennial kingdom (refer to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Also, after believers meet the Lord in the air during the rapture, it is stated that they "shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). This implies that all resurrected believers will be with the Lord on the earth during His 1,000 year reign. The marriage supper of the Lamb will likely take place toward the beginning of the Millennium

on earth and will probably include all mortal and resurrected believers (Revelation 19:7-10). In summary, we can conclude that the millennial kingdom will include mortal believers and resurrected believers, and of course Jesus Christ and His angels.

- Two major tasks will occur toward the beginning of the Millennium; rebuilding Jerusalem and constructing Messiah's temple. Ezekiel 40-46 provides detailed instructions for building Messiah's (millennial) temple and for the service attached to it. The temple will be considerably larger than the three previous temples. Scripture briefly describes the dedication of Messiah's temple (Revelation 14:1-5; Ezekiel 43:1-12) and how the glory of the Lord will return. "And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east. And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house" (Ezekiel 43:4-5). Throughout the Millennium, people from all nations will come to the temple to worship the Lord (Zechariah 14:16). Jerusalem will be the center of the world and rule (Zechariah 8:3), rising physically to reveal its prominence (Zechariah 14:10). Jesus will sit and rule on His glorious throne in the temple on Mount Zion as king and priest (Zechariah 6:12-13, 14:16; Psalm 2:6-8). "And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one" (Zechariah 14:9).

- When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from the abyss and will come out to deceive the nations. Many will follow Satan and attempt to defeat Jesus Christ. Fire from heaven will devour them and the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire. Non-believers will then be judged before the great white throne and death and Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:7-15). The old heaven and the old earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:7, 10-13). For additional information about the Millennium, refer to the following verses: Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-10, 24:23, 35:1-10, 56:1-8, 60:1-22, 61:1-11, 65:17-25, 66:10-24; Jeremiah 31:27-40; Ezekiel 34:11-31, 36:22-38, 37:21-28, chapters 40-48; Daniel 7:13-14; Joel 3:18-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:1-8; Habakkuk 2:14; Zechariah 8:1-23, 9:10; and Psalm 2:6-9, 47:1-9.

49. New Heaven and New Earth

- Following the great white throne judgment, God will reveal a new heaven and a new earth, unstained by sin (Revelation 21:1-27, 22:1-5; John 14:2-3; 2 Peter 3:13). "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away'" (Revelation 21:1-4).

- "Then one of the seven angels... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone... And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it" (Revelation 21:9-24).

- "Then he showed me a river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:1-5).

50. What About the United States of America?

- One cannot ignore the United States of America when discussing end-time events. America's global influence and leadership, economic clout, military might and wealth are unsurpassed. The United States has been Israel's strongest ally through the years and for the most part, has been a friend to Israel. So what role, if any, will America play in the end times? Before this question can be answered, we must first make some assumptions, otherwise there are countless possible scenarios. One, we will assume that the rapture is imminent and that America is still the world's only superpower when the rapture occurs. Two, we will assume that the Ezekiel 38 battle occurs shortly after the rapture (within a few months, at the most; refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). Three, we will assume that the Great Tribulation begins shortly after the Ezekiel 38 battle (within a few months, at the most; refer to Luke 17:26-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:6-9). Given these assumptions, we can narrow down America's end-time role to three possible scenarios.

- Scenario 1: America will have a minor role or no role following the rapture because the disappearance of millions of believers will set in motion the downfall of America. This is a very common view because many Christians believe that the antichrist will arise from a European nation or a nation in the Middle East. In order for the antichrist and Europe or the

Middle East to have a dominant role in the end times, America must have a minor role, at best.

- Scenario 2: America will recover after the rapture but will play a minor role in the end times because the United States will submit to the will of the one-world government and the antichrist. This is not a common view because it is highly unlikely that a strong America would be willing to give up its global leadership role and submit to a one-world government and to the antichrist.

- Scenario 3: America will recover after the rapture and will play a major role in the end times because the antichrist will be a United States leader. This appears to be the most likely scenario if the rapture occurs while America is the world's only superpower. America will have many challenges after the rapture, however, in spite of the panic, confusion and turmoil, a majority of America's leaders will be left behind to pick up the pieces. America's military would remain formidable and her economy would probably recover with time. The United States of America is not specifically mentioned in Scripture but New York City certainly fits the description of "the great city" of Babylon the Great (Revelation 17-18). Babylon the Great is described as a great and strong city which reigns over the kings of the earth (Revelation 17:18, 18:10). This implies that the great city is the world capital of a global empire and will reside in a powerful, wealthy and influential nation. The city will have a bustling seaport (Revelation 18:17-19) and the merchants of the earth will become rich from her and by the wealth of her sensuality (Revelation 18:3, 11-18). The United Nations (UN) is an international organization that basically functions as a world government and its headquarters is located in New York City. After the rapture, it is possible that the UN will provide the foundation for a one-world government that will become Babylon the Great. Since Babylon the Great will be a world empire, virtually every nation, including America, will be a part of one of its 10 kingdoms (regions). This scenario would explain how the antichrist, who is not even one of the original 10 kings of Babylon the Great, has the authority to make a firm covenant (peace treaty) with Israel on behalf of the one-world government at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:19-25, 9:27; Revelation 17:8-18). Four horns are mentioned by Zechariah (1:18-21) and Daniel (8:8, 22-23), which represent four end-time Gentile powers. The antichrist will arise from one of these horns (Daniel 8:9) and that horn probably represents the United States of America. For additional information, refer to Daniel 8 and Zechariah 1.

51. Chronology of End-Time Events

- There is some speculation in this section as the authors attempt to interpret Bible prophecies and discern the signs of the times. Refer to other sections of this document for additional details and related Bible verses. End-time Bible prophecies and world events are converging as never before in history. Alert Christians are aware that He is right at the door.

- The rapture is imminent. Following the rebirth of Israel (14 May 1948; Yom Ha'atzmaut, 5 Iyar 5708 in the Jewish calendar), the rapture is the next major Bible prophecy to be fulfilled (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Millions of Christians will vanish worldwide as a result of the rapture, probably resulting in global panic. This will be a strong motivation for the world to unite and create a one-world government, which will become Babylon the Great, the end-time global empire composed of 10 kingdoms (regions) and ruled by 10 kings (Daniel 7; Revelation 17-18). The Bible describes Babylon the Great as a harlot, (false religious system) that hates and persecutes God's holy people. She will corrupt the earth with her immorality and wickedness. Babylon the Great will also be a great city that rules over the kings of the earth and will be a dwelling place for demons. She will be exceedingly powerful and "will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" (Daniel 7:23).

- Following the rapture, the world will be in a state of shock and confusion. It is likely that the enemies of the Jewish people will see this as an opportunity to destroy Israel and "to capture great spoil" (Ezekiel 38:13). According to Ezekiel 38 and 39, Gog (probably refers to Russia) and many other nations will come up against Israel with a massive force. God will intervene and severely judge the invading armies and their nations. God's mighty display of power will leave the inhabitants of the world in awe. These nations will be devastated by God's wrath and probably represent the three kingdoms that are described by Daniel as being "pulled out by the roots" (Daniel 7:8). Even though the antichrist is not one of the original 10 kings of Babylon the Great, he will have the authority to make a firm covenant (peace treaty; Daniel 9:27) with Israel on behalf of the one-world government, thus revealing his identity. This seven-year covenant marks the official start of the Great Tribulation. God's mighty deliverance of His people during the Ezekiel 38 battle and the defeat of many of Israel's enemies will clear the way for the construction of the long-awaited temple in Jerusalem. The temple will be completed quickly during the first half of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 8) because at the midpoint, the antichrist will put a stop to sacrifice and offering and desecrate the temple (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

- At the beginning of the Tribulation period, two prophets (witnesses), appointed by God, will appear and prophesy for 1,260 days (three and a half years). If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies and they have power to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. When they have finished their testimony in Jerusalem, the beast (antichrist) will attack and kill them. Most of the inhabitants of the world will celebrate their deaths because these two prophets will torment those who live on the earth. God will raise them from the dead after three and a half days, and they will go up to heaven in a cloud (Revelation 11:3-13).

- During the Great Tribulation, billions of people will die (Revelation 6:8, 9:15) as a result of God's 21 judgments; seven seal judgments, seven trumpet judgments and seven bowl judgments. The seven seal judgments will be first and will result in wars, famine, inflation, plagues, death of one-fourth of the world's population, persecution of believers, earthquakes and disturbances of sun, moon and stars (Revelation 6:1-17, 8:1-6). The seven trumpet judgments follow (Revelation 8:7-13, 9:1-21, 11:15-19) and the wrath of God will be finished in the seven bowl judgments (Revelation 15:1-8, 16:1-21). It appears that Israel will be largely unaffected by the devastation and persecution of the first half of the Tribulation. Apparently, God will place a hedge of protection (wall of fire) around Jerusalem and she will be prosperous and blessed until the Tribulation midpoint (Zechariah 2:4-5; Matthew 24:21; refer to Zechariah 1:12 and Revelation 17:15 commentary).

- Angels will put a seal on the foreheads of 144,000 servants of God, which will include the name of Jesus and the name of His Father. These 144,000 from all 12 tribes of Israel will be commissioned by God for His service, which may include evangelism or temple service (Revelation 7:1-8, 14:1-5).

- Of the original 10 kings of Babylon the Great, three will fall shortly after her formation. The antichrist will replace one of the remaining seven and five of these kings will fall before the Tribulation midpoint (Daniel 7; Revelation 17), preparing the way for him to become the supreme ruler of Babylon the Great. Just before the Tribulation midpoint, the antichrist (beast) will be killed (possibly by the two witnesses) and resurrected (Revelation 13:3, 12, 14). It is likely that Satan will possess the antichrist at this point and give him the authority and power to continue his rule as king of Babylon the Great. Ten new kings will be chosen to rule over the 10 kingdoms (regions) of the world and to serve under the beast. These rulers will pledge their loyalty to the antichrist (Revelation 17:12-13). With his satanic powers, the antichrist will kill the two witnesses in Jerusalem (Revelation 11:3-13). The Jerusalem Tribulation temple will be completed quickly during the first half of the Tribulation because at the midpoint, the antichrist will put a stop to sacrifice and offering, desecrate the temple (abomination of desolation; Daniel 9:27, 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14) and proclaim himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). At that time, Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies and many Jews will be killed, led captive into all the nations and driven from the land (Daniel 9:27; Luke 21:24; Revelation 11:2). The Gentiles will take control of Jerusalem (and Israel) during the second half of the Tribulation (Luke 21:20, 24). The antichrist (beast) will hate the false religious system (harlot) and will eliminate it during the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 17:16). The false prophet (the second beast) will demand that everyone worship the beast (Revelation 13:12).

- The great city of Babylon the Great will be destroyed, probably close to the Tribulation midpoint. In one day there will be plagues, pestilence, mourning and famine and she will be burned up with fire (Revelation 14:8, 18:2, 8). A new world capital will then be chosen. It is likely that Jerusalem will be the new capital (Revelation 11:2, 16:19).

- After the temple desecration, the antichrist will declare war on the Jews and believers in Jesus Christ (Daniel 7:21; Revelation 13:7). The false prophet will require everyone to receive the mark of the beast in order to buy or sell (Revelation 13:16-17). The beast will use this mark to expose believers and to tighten his grip on the world. Those who receive the mark of the beast and worship his image will be judged severely by God (Revelation 14:11, 16:2, 19:20). God will miraculously save a remnant of Jews from the wrath of the beast and will provide a safe haven for them throughout the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6, 14; Isaiah 63:1-6). Toward the end of the Tribulation period, some Jews will return to Jerusalem and inhabit the city (Zech 12:6-7). Shortly after this, the war of Armageddon will begin. All the nations of the earth will be gathered against Jerusalem and God will give His people special strength and protection as they fight against the forces of evil (Zechariah 12:3, 8).

- Jesus Christ, the "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" will return to earth on this final day of the Great Tribulation to rescue His people, to judge the wicked and to rule His earthly kingdom. The antichrist, the kings of the earth and their armies will gather to make war against God. The beast and false prophet will be seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire and the armies of the earth will be destroyed. Satan will then be bound for a thousand years and thrown into the abyss. All the nations will be gathered before Jesus for judgment. Non-believers will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life (Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 19:20).

- Jesus will establish His earthly kingdom where He will reign over all the people and nations of the world for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-6). His kingdom will be characterized by justice, righteousness and His unfailing love. There will be harmony in all creation as the earth becomes a lush paradise, like the Garden of Eden. Wolves will dwell with lambs and lions will be lead by little boys (Isaiah 11:6-9). People will be healed and healthy, will live in peace and will multiply and fill the earth.

- When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from the abyss and will come out to deceive the nations. Many will follow Satan and attempt to defeat Jesus Christ. Fire from heaven will devour them and the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire. Non-believers will then be judged before the great white throne and death and Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20). The old heaven and the old earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:7, 10-13).

- God will reveal a new heaven and a new earth, unstained by sin. New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven from

God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. It will shine with the glory of God, and its brilliance will be like that of a precious jewel. The holy city will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will be its light. "And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them'" (Revelation 21:3). He will wipe every tear from their eyes and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for God will make all things new (Revelation 21-22).

52. Chronology of End-Time Events (Summary)

- Rebirth of Israel (14 May 1948; Yom Ha'atzmaut, 5 Iyar 5708)
- Rapture of Christians (millions vanish; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)
- One-world empire formed (Babylon the Great; Revelation 17-18)
- Nations attack Israel...God destroys them (Ezekiel 38-39)
- Israel-antichrist peace treaty (Great Tribulation begins; Daniel 9:27)
- Antichrist revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10; Daniel 7:24, 9:27)
- Two prophets in Israel (special powers; Revelation 11:3-14)
- Jewish temple construction begins in Jerusalem (Revelation 11:1-2)
- 144,000 Jews commissioned for God's service (Revelation 7:1-8)
- God's seven seal judgments (Revelation 6:1-17, 8:1-6)
- God's seven trumpet judgments (Revelation 8:6-13, 9:1-21, 11:15-19)
- Jewish temple completed in Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)
- Antichrist killed (rises from the dead; Revelation 13:3, 12, 14)
- Antichrist breaks treaty at Tribulation midpoint (Daniel 9:27)
- Antichrist desecrates temple (Matthew 24:15)
- Antichrist displays himself as being God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)
- Invasion of Jerusalem; Jews led captive into all nations (Luke 21:20, 24)
- Jewish remnant escapes to God's safe haven (Revelation 12:6, 13-17)
- Two prophets killed (rise from the dead; Revelation 11:3-13)
- Antichrist makes war with believers and Jews (Revelation 13:7)
- False prophet requires all to worship antichrist (Revelation 13:12)
- Antichrist eliminates harlot (false religious system; Revelation 17:16)
- Great city of Babylon the Great is destroyed (Revelation 14:8, 18:2)
- Antichrist chooses a new world capital (Revelation 11:2, 16:19)
- Ten new kings chosen to rule Babylon the Great (Revelation 17:12-13)
- Mark of the beast required to buy or sell (Revelation 13:16-17)
- God's seven bowl judgments (Revelation 15:1-8, 16:1-21)
- War of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16, 19:11-21; Zechariah 12, 14)
- Jesus Christ's second coming to earth (Revelation 1:7, 19:11-21)
- Antichrist and false prophet thrown into lake of fire (Revelation 19:20)
- Satan bound for 1,000 years and thrown into abyss (Revelation 20:1-3)
- Unbelievers judged and thrown into lake of fire (Matthew 25:31-46)
- Resurrection of Tribulation martyrs (Revelation 20:4)
- Jesus reigns over the world for 1,000 year Millennium (Revelation 20:4-6)
- Marriage supper of the Lamb (during Millennium; Revelation 19:7-10)
- Messiah's temple dedicated (during Millennium; Ezekiel 43:1-12)
- Satan released from abyss (after 1,000 years; Revelation 20:7)
- Satan and unbelievers try to defeat Jesus (Revelation 20:8-9)
- Unbelievers defeated; Satan thrown into lake of fire (Revelation 20:9-10)
- Great white throne judgment; unbelievers judged (Revelation 20:11-15)
- New heaven and new earth revealed (Revelation 21-22)
- God dwells with His people forever (Revelation 21:3-4)

53. Abraham's Covenant, David's Covenant and the New Covenant

- God made three great, unconditional, eternal covenants with His chosen people that established a permanent relationship between God and the Jewish people; Abraham's covenant, David's covenant and the New Covenant. It is important to understand these covenants in order to fully comprehend end-time Bible prophecies.

- The first of these covenants was with Abraham. God's promise to Abraham was first made in Genesis 12:1-3. The promise was formalized into a covenant in Genesis 15:1-21 and then was amplified in Genesis 17:1-21. The Lord said to Abraham, "I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). "On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates'" (Genesis 15:18). This promised land belongs to Israel and includes a territory much larger than the current nation of Israel. The Lord appeared to Abraham and said to him, "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (Genesis 17:6-8). This unconditional promise of the land has never been completely fulfilled in history, but it will be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom when Christ gives the Jewish people the land He promised (Isaiah 60:21). God's promise to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham has been partially fulfilled in the blessing that has come to the entire world through Abraham's greatest descendant, Jesus Christ. However, the final blessing from Abraham through Christ will come when all believers inhabit the new heavens and the new earth.

- David's covenant with God builds on Abraham's covenant and is also unconditional and eternal (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The Lord said that David's descendant (Solomon) would build a house for Him and that the throne of his kingdom would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:12-13). "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16). This great covenant will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ, from the line of David, sits on David's throne in Jerusalem, ruling over Israel and the entire world in the millennial kingdom and on into eternity (Ezekiel 37:22-25). "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

- The principal Old Testament passage on the New Covenant is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34. "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people... for they will all know Me... for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more'" (Jeremiah 31:31-34). This covenant is confirmed elsewhere in the Old Testament and is stated to be eternal and unconditional (Isaiah 61:8-9; Ezekiel 16:60). "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). God's promises to Israel include the forgiveness of sins, the indwelling Spirit and a new heart (Joel 2:28-32). Jesus' sacrifice was the beginning of the New Covenant (Luke 22:20; Matthew 26:27-28; Hebrews 8:6-13; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26; 2 Corinthians 3:6). While believers today enjoy the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant (forgiveness of sins and the indwelling Holy Spirit), the specific promises in Jeremiah 31:31-34 are "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" and will find their ultimate fulfillment for Israel when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His millennial kingdom.

54. The 70-Year Bible Prophecies

- There are seven, 70-year passages in the Bible that reveal very important details about the end times. In these passages, the phrase "seventy years" is used eight times (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Daniel 9:2; Isaiah 23:15-17) and "these seventy years" twice (Zechariah 1:12, 7:5). Three different 70-year periods are described in these verses, yet they are all related. The first 70-year period is described in Jeremiah 25 and 29, 2 Chronicles 36 and Daniel 9. These prophecies will be fulfilled in two phases. The first phase has already been fulfilled, and the second phase will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns at the end of the Great Tribulation. The second 70-year period, described in Zechariah 7:5, represents 70 years of fasting to commemorate the destruction of the first temple in 586 B.C. The third 70-year period, described in Zechariah 1:12 and Isaiah 23:15-17, probably began with the rebirth of Israel, 14 May 1948 (Yom Ha'atzmaut, 5 Iyar 5708 in the Jewish calendar) and ends during the year following Israel's seventieth Independence Day, 19 April 2018 (4 Iyar 5778).

- "This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years"

(25:11). "'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation'" (Jeremiah 25:12).

- "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place'" (Jeremiah 29:10).

- "He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years" (2 Chronicles 36:20-21; ESV Bible).

- "In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years" (Daniel 9:2).

- The four Bible passages above describe the two-phase, 70-year prophecies (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Daniel 9:2). They all begin with Babylon's first invasion of Jerusalem in 605 B.C. and find their complete fulfillment when Jesus Christ returns at the end of the Great Tribulation. There are some slight differences in the duration of each phase, which will be discussed below.

- In 605 B.C., Jeremiah spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and warned them to turn from their evil ways, but the people did not listen (Jeremiah 25:1-10). Jeremiah prophesied that the whole land would be a desolation and a horror, and that the Jewish people and the surrounding nations would serve the king of Babylon 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11). Jeremiah also prophesied that the king of Babylon would be punished when 70 years were completed (Jeremiah 25:12). In the same year as Jeremiah's prophecy, the 70-year period of judgment began with Babylon's first invasion of Jerusalem (approximately September, 605 B.C.). At this time Daniel and his companions were taken to Babylon as captives. Some of the vessels from the house of God (temple) were also taken to Babylon and placed in a Babylonian temple (Daniel 1:1-6). The rule of Babylon ended suddenly in 539 B.C. (October) when the Persians captured the city of Babylon and King Belshazzar (Babylon's last king) was killed (Daniel 5:28-31). From Babylon's first invasion of Jerusalem (605 B.C.) to Belshazzar's death (539 B.C.) is a period of approximately 66 years. This falls four years short of fulfilling the 70-year prophecies. Since God's Word never fails, we must conclude that these prophecies will be fulfilled in two phases. In a similar fashion, the Daniel 9, 70-weeks prophecies will be fulfilled in three phases, with the third phase representing the seven-year Great Tribulation. The first phase of Jeremiah 25 applies to ancient Babylon and the second phase applies to end-time Babylon the Great and her king, the beast (antichrist; Daniel 11:36). The duration of phase two is about four years, the amount of time that the nations will serve the antichrist during the last portion of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 13:5-8, 17:12-13). These two time periods add up to 70 years and therefore will fulfill the prophecies of Jeremiah 25:11-12. At the second coming of Christ, the nations will have served the king of Babylon 70 years and the king and his empire will be judged by God (Revelation 16:19, 19:19-21). This means that the antichrist (beast) must become the king and supreme ruler of Babylon the Great approximately three years after the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This makes sense because Babylon the Great begins as a global empire ruled by 10 kings and the antichrist is not one of the original 10 (Daniel 7). These kings will fall one by one as the antichrist rises to power. Until the antichrist becomes the supreme ruler, Babylon the Great will not be considered an instrument of judgment against the Jews and will not be counted toward the 70-year judgment period. For more information about Babylon the Great, refer to section 44.

- Jeremiah 29:10 will also be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ. Following the abomination of desolation, at the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, Israeli Jews will be killed, driven from the land and led captive into all nations (Luke 21:24). When 70 years have been completed for Babylon, the Lord will visit His people, fulfill His good word to them and bring them back to Jerusalem, fulfilling the Jeremiah 29:10 prophecy.

- The 70-year prophecies of 2 Chronicles and Daniel emphasize the desolation of the land and Jerusalem. The significance of the 70-year period is revealed in 2 Chronicles 36:20-21. This was the number of years that the people had failed to observe God's law of a "sabbath rest" for the land. God told the sons of Israel that every seventh year, the land was to have a sabbath rest (Leviticus 25:1-5); "but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard" (Leviticus 25:4). They would have to trust the Lord to provide for their needs for that year. If the people would fail to follow this command, God would remove them from the land to enforce this "sabbath rest" (Leviticus 26:33-35). For hundreds of years the nation disobeyed God by ignoring this command which resulted in a 70-year judgment that would allow the land to enjoy its "sabbath rest". This judgment was also a result of the unfaithfulness of the people as they followed all the abominations of the nations and defiled the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:14). Indeed all Israel had transgressed God's law and turned aside, not obeying His voice and rebelled and sinned against Him (Daniel 9:9, 11). These prophecies will also be fulfilled in two phases, although the duration of each phase will be slightly different than Jeremiah's prophecies.

- Phase one began with the removal of the "sons of Israel" from the land (605 B.C.) and would end with the return of the Jewish people to the land more than 66 years later (538 B.C.). Notice that phase one does not end with the conquest of Babylon by the Persians in 539 B.C. (October), as it did for Jeremiah's 70-year prophecies. The emphasis of 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 is the sabbath rest of the land as it remained desolate. Therefore, phase one did not end until the Jewish people returned to Jerusalem several months after the fall of Babylon. Shortly after the Persians conquered Babylon, Cyrus king of Persia sent out a proclamation "in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah", allowing the Jews to return to their land (2 Chronicles 36:22-23). Almost 50,000 Jews made the long journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, arriving in 538 B.C. Although the Bible does not give the exact date of their arrival, we can conclude that phase one was approximately 66 and a half years long, to add to the three and a half years of phase two, totaling 70 years. Ezra describes how the "sons of Israel" were in the cities and then gathered in Jerusalem on the seventh month (September-October, 538 B.C.) to build the altar, to offer burnt offerings and to celebrate the Feast of Booths (Ezra 3:1-6).

- Just as phase one began with the desecration of the temple and the captivity of the Jewish people, so will phase two. At the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, the antichrist will desecrate the temple and declare war on the Jewish people. Those who are in Judea and Jerusalem must flee to the mountains. Many Jews "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24; Revelation 11:2). Some Jews will escape and God will miraculously provide a safe haven for them during the second half of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24; Revelation 12:6, 14). During these three and a half prophetic years, the Gentiles (Babylon the Great; refer to Revelation 17, 18) will control the land of Israel and the land will once again have a sabbath rest for exactly 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6). This 70-year prophecy will ultimately be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns and brings His people back to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10).

- The 70-year prophecy of Daniel 9:2 is similar to 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 in that their two phases are identical. Daniel's prophecy reveals that "the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem" would be 70 years. Notice that "desolations" is plural, indicating several desolations are meant. Just as with the other 70-year prophecies, phase one began with Babylon's first invasion (605 B.C.) and the desolation of Jerusalem and the land. Phase one ended with the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. Phase two will occur during the second half of the Tribulation, ending with the second coming of Christ.

- "Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted?'" (Zechariah 7:5).

- The second 70-year period is found in Zechariah 7:5. It represents 70 years of fasting to commemorate the destruction of the first temple. Zechariah gave four messages in chapters 7 and 8, and Zechariah 7:5 is part of the first message. According to Zechariah 7:1, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah "in the fourth year of King Darius... on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev". This was in 518 B.C., 68 years after the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (Jeremiah 52:12-13; 2 Kings 25:8-10). So "these seventy years" is spoken prophetically since 70 years of fasting and mourning would not end for another two years, when the new temple would be completed "on the third day of the month Adar", which is the twelfth month (515 B.C.; Ezra 6:15; Esther 3:7). Even though two more fasts were to be observed during the next two years, the message is given in the past tense; "you fasted and mourned". The seventieth fifth month fast was the last one observed because the second temple was completed seven months later. This same phrase, "these seventy years", appears in Zechariah 1:12 and is also spoken prophetically. These are the only two occurrences of the phrase "these seventy years" in the Bible.

- Since the temple was being rebuilt and was nearing completion, the people wondered if it was still necessary to observe the fast of the fifth month. The first message to the people (Zechariah 7:4-7) was a rebuke for observing self-imposed fasts that were not commanded by God and were observed with the wrong motivation. They were fasting and feasting for themselves, not for the Lord. The fourth message indirectly answers their question. In the millennial kingdom, the fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah (Zechariah 8:19).

- There are several unusual things about Zechariah 7 and 8 that should be noted. First, why are two chapters of Zechariah, including four messages from the Lord dedicated to answering what seems to be a relatively unimportant question about a man-made fast? Second, why is a prophecy that was fulfilled in 515 B.C. included in a book that mainly focuses on future events and the end times? Third, since the temple was nearing completion, why would the people of Bethel be so concerned about a one-day fast that would only be observed two more times? Fourth, why are "these seventy years" mentioned when it has only been 68 years? It is spoken in the past tense as if the 70 years have already been completed. Based on the unusual nature of this prophecy, one must conclude that there is more to this passage than meets the eye. One's attention is drawn to "seventy years" (Zechariah 7:5), a time period that also appears in Zechariah 1:12 and that is often associated with end-time events. The many similarities between the Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5 prophecies will be discussed below.

- "Then the angel of the LORD said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years?" (Zechariah 1:12)

- The third 70-year period is described in Zechariah 1:12 and Isaiah 23:15-17. This period probably began with the rebirth of Israel, 14 May 1948 (Yom Ha'atzmaut, 5 Iyar 5708 in the Jewish calendar) and ends during the year following Israel's seventieth Independence Day, 19 April 2018 (4 Iyar 5778). Zechariah describes eight prophetic visions he saw in a single night in the first six chapters of his book. Zechariah's "these seventy years" prophecy is part of the first vision (Zechariah 1:7-17). The vision begins with a patrol of the earth. After the patrol, the angel of the Lord receives the report that "all the earth is peaceful and quiet" (Zechariah 1:11). Based on the end-time events at the end of this vision and in Zechariah's other seven visions, it is likely that the patrol occurs just prior to the rapture. Since the rapture will come unexpectedly (except for alert believers), like a thief in the night, it makes sense that the earth would be peaceful and quiet prior to this event (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11). When the angel receives the report, he is clearly concerned for the people of Jerusalem and Judah. Even though "all the earth is peaceful and quiet" the Jewish people are apparently experiencing anti-Semitism and are being threatened by their enemies. Why the Lord has been without compassion (mercy) and indignant (angry) for 70 years is not stated. Perhaps it is because the Jewish people have rebelled against God and have not believed in the Messiah as their Lord and Savior (Isaiah 64:5; Hebrews 3:17-19). This 70-year period is not the same period that is mentioned in Jeremiah, Daniel or 2 Chronicles; prophecies that will be fulfilled in two phases. Zechariah 1:12 does not mention Babylon or the prophecies of Jeremiah, as these other passages do. Also, the first phase of these prophecies was fulfilled approximately 20 years before the eight prophetic vision came to Zechariah from the Lord (519 B.C., Zechariah 1:7). In addition, a two-phase fulfillment does not match the details of this vision.

- So when does the 70-year period start? Many of the end-time prophecies that mention a period of time have a clearly defined starting and ending point and are associated with the Great Tribulation. This is true for Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27) and the 70-year prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel and 2 Chronicles. Since the time period of Zechariah 1:12 probably includes the time just prior to the rapture, it would be logical to conclude that the 70 years begins with the rebirth of Israel, 14 May 1948 (5 Iyar 5708). Israel's rebirth in Scripture is often associated with the nation's spiritual awakening and revival (Ezekiel 11:14-21, 36:22-38, 37:1-28, 39:25-29), with the judgment of nations (Joel 3:1-3; Ezekiel 28:25-26), with great tribulation (Jeremiah 30:1-11) and with the coming of Messiah (Zechariah 12, 14).

- There are many similarities between the Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5 prophecies. First, these are the only two verses in the Bible that use the phrase "these seventy years". Second, the four messages of Zechariah 7-8 follow directly after the eight visions of Zechariah 1-6. Third, exact dates were given for both prophecies (Zechariah 1:7, 7:1) showing that they were spoken only one year and 10 months apart. The dates also reveal that both prophecies were spoken 20 years or more after the fall of Babylon and therefore are not describing the two-phase prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel or 2 Chronicles. Fourth, both 70-year periods are followed by the completion of the temple in Jerusalem (second temple, Ezra 6:15; Tribulation temple, Zechariah 1:16). Fifth, the verses that follow Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5 describe the millennial kingdom and how the Lord is exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion and how He will return to Jerusalem to establish His kingdom and will dwell with His people (Zechariah 1:14-17, 2:10-12, 8:2-3).

- The unusual nature of Zechariah 7 and 8, combined with the many similarities of Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5, suggest that the Zechariah 7:5 prophecy could be used to help interpret the Zechariah 1:12 prophecy. This implies that the 70-year period of Zechariah 1:12 would also begin with a significant event, such as the rebirth of Israel (14 May 1948; 5 Iyar 5708). This also suggests that shortly after the seventieth Israeli Independence Day (19 April 2018; 4 Iyar 5778), God's period of "no compassion" will end. "Therefore thus says the LORD, 'I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem'" (Zechariah 1:16). The whole world will witness God's compassion for Jerusalem when the Tribulation temple is built, which will apparently be completed 220 days after the start of the Great Tribulation (refer to Daniel 8 commentary). God's compassion will also be displayed during the Ezekiel 38 battle, when God will judge the many nations that attack Israel. This battle probably occurs shortly after the rapture and just before the Tribulation.

- "Now in that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot:" (Isaiah 23:15) "Take your harp, walk about the city, O forgotten harlot; pluck the strings skillfully, sing many songs, that you may be remembered" (23:16). "It will come about at the end of seventy years that the LORD will visit Tyre. Then she will go back to her harlot's wages and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth" (23:17). "Her gain and her harlot's wages will be set apart to the LORD; it will not be stored up or hoarded, but her gain will become sufficient food and choice attire for those who dwell in the presence of the LORD" (Isaiah 23:18).

- The 70-year period of Isaiah 23:15-18 is likely the same one as Zechariah 1:12. It probably began with the rebirth of Israel, 14 May 1948 (5 Iyar 5708) and ends sometime during the year following Israel's seventieth Independence Day, 19 April 2018 (4 Iyar 5778). The first part of chapter 23 (Isaiah 23:1-14) is a prophecy describing the fall of Tyre, one of the

most famous cities of the ancient world. Tyre is located on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, just north of Israel. Over the years, Tyre has been destroyed and rebuilt several times. Alexander the Great destroyed the mainland city and the island fortress in 332 B.C.

- The last part of chapter 23 (Isaiah 23:15-18) begins with the phrase "in that day". This phrase is not used in the first part of chapter 23, however it is used seven times in what is commonly called "Isaiah's apocalypse" (Isaiah, chapters 24-27), which follows. Isaiah's apocalypse describes the terrible judgments of the Great Tribulation, the deliverance of God's people and the blessings of the millennial kingdom. Perhaps Isaiah's apocalypse really begins with Isaiah 23:15. The fact that 70 years is mentioned three times in this passage (Isaiah 23: 15, 17) is another indication that it probably has a connection to the end times and the Great Tribulation. There are several other reasons to conclude this. First, Tyre is mentioned in over 50 Bible verses, yet Tyre is only described as a harlot in Isaiah 23:15-18. She "will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth" (23:17). This description is very similar to that of end-time Babylon the Great, where "all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her" (Revelation 18:3; see also 17:2, 18:9, 19:2). The end-time global kingdom and false religion is described as "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). Just as the city of Tyre was once one of the great cities of the world, the great city of Babylon the Great will reign over the kings of the earth and the merchants of the earth will become rich by the wealth of her sensuality (Revelation 17:18, 18:3). Second, the harlot's gain will not be stored up, but will be set apart to the Lord and be given to those "who dwell in the presence of the LORD" (Isaiah 23:18). Since believers will not dwell in the presence of the Lord until the millennial kingdom, we can conclude that the events of Isaiah 23:15-18 occur just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ, including the 70-year period. Third, the 70-year prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel and 2 Chronicles begin and end with a historic event. There is no obvious 70-year period in Tyre's history that matches the details of Isaiah 23:15-18.

- There is another important Bible passage that describes the judgment of Tyre and the fall of the leader of Tyre; Ezekiel 26-28. In the middle passage of chapter 28 (28:11-19), Satan is apparently being described, not the actual king of Tyre, for he "had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty", was "in Eden, the garden of God", was created and was "the anointed cherub who covers", was "on the holy mountain of God" and was blameless in his ways (Ezekiel 28:11-15). After this, unrighteousness was found in him, he was "filled with violence" and sinned, he was cast as "profane from the mountain of God", he was filled with pride, he was cast to the ground and God has turned him to "ashes on the earth" and he will "cease to be forever" (Ezekiel 28:15-19). Since the king of Tyre is apparently Satan in this passage, then the end-time king of Tyre probably represents the antichrist (beast) and Satan, who act as one for the last portion of the Great Tribulation. This also means that end-time Tyre actually represents Babylon the Great.

- Since we have concluded that the last four verses of Isaiah 23 probably describe the end-time global empire known as Babylon the Great, we can now look further into the interpretation of this passage. Verse 15 says that "Tyre will be forgotten for 70 years". As with the other 70-year prophecies, we can assume that a historic event will begin the 70-year period. It would be logical to conclude that this event was the rebirth of Israel (1948), as explained for Zechariah 1:12 above. The rebirth of Israel is necessary for the fulfillment of many end-time prophecies. Based on Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5, we concluded that the 70-year period will probably end sometime during the year following Israel's seventieth anniversary of its rebirth. Why has Tyre, which represents Babylon the Great, been forgotten for 70 years (Isaiah 23:15)? We have to remember when the first phase of Jeremiah's prophecies ended (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21). The Jewish people and the surrounding nations were supposed to serve the king of Babylon 70 years, but after approximately 66 years, Babylon was defeated by the Persians (539 B.C.). In order to fulfill the prophecy, a second phase of judgment is necessary. When Israel was reborn in 1948, the second phase of the judgment that awaits the nation was forgotten, along with Babylon. Then, after 70 years, Babylon will be reborn as Babylon the Great, a global empire, ruled by 10 kings and comprised of 10 kingdoms.

- Shortly after Babylon the Great is established, the Lord will "visit" her (Isaiah 23:17). This is probably a reference to the Ezekiel 38 battle (Ezekiel 38:8), where God will judge the nations that attack Israel, perhaps a reference to the three end-time horns (kingdoms) of Daniel 7:8 that are pulled out by the roots. While Israel is being attacked, the other kingdoms of Babylon the Great will not come to her aid. After the Lord's visit, Babylon the Great "will go back to her harlot's wages and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth" (Isaiah 23:17). This shows the wickedness of end-time Tyre; even after a visit from the Lord, she goes right back to her evil ways. Since the period of "harlot's wages" occurs during the Great Tribulation, this implies that the Tribulation will follow soon after the Lord's visit with Tyre. It is very unusual that "Her gain and her harlot's wages will be set apart to the LORD; it will not be stored up or hoarded, but her gain will become sufficient food and choice attire for those who dwell in the presence of the LORD" (Isaiah 23:18). Tyre's gain perhaps represent the "wealth of all the surrounding nations" (Zechariah 14:14) that will be gathered at the end of the Great Tribulation. The harlot's "gain" will be used by "those who dwell in the presence of the LORD". This is probably describing believers who will enter the millennial kingdom.

- Now that we have looked at all the 70-year passages, let's summarize what we know. First, the two-phase prophecies of Jeremiah reveal that the antichrist will become the king and supreme ruler of Babylon the Great approximately three years

after the Great Tribulation begins and the Jewish people and the surrounding nations will serve the antichrist for the remaining four years until he is judged at the second coming of Jesus Christ. When Jesus returns, He will lead His people back to Jerusalem and set up His millennial kingdom. Second, the two-phase prophecies of Daniel and 2 Chronicles indicate that the Jewish people will be removed from the land for the second half of the Tribulation period to fulfill the 70-year sabbath rest judgment and for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem. Third, Zechariah's and Isaiah's 70-year prophecies indicate that shortly after Israel's seventieth Independence Day, 19 April 2018 (4 Iyar 5778), seven major events will occur; the Zechariah 1 patrol of the earth (not observable on earth), the rapture, the formation of Babylon the Great, the Ezekiel 38 battle, the Israel-antichrist peace treaty, the start of the Great Tribulation and the construction of the Tribulation temple. Jesus Christ will return exactly seven prophetic years (2,520 days) after the start of the Great Tribulation. Since only God knows the day of the rapture (Matthew 24:36), believers should continue to be alert and ready. The 70-year prophecies offer great hope for God's people, because in the end, Jesus Christ will return to judge the king of Babylon the Great and his empire, to rescue His people and to rule His earthly kingdom.