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**Messiah: His
Glorious Appearance
Imminent**



By

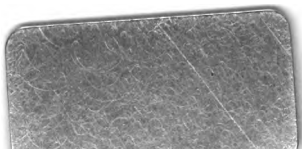
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לכוּנָא וְנוֹדְקָהּ יְאֹמֵר יְהוָה Isa. 1:18
"Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah"

MESSIAH: HIS GLORIOUS APPEARANCE IMMINENT

By

DAVID L. COOPER, TH.M., PH.D., LITT.D.

Founder and President, Biblical Research Society

Editor, Biblical Research Monthly

Bible Teacher

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To

LAURA PEPPER SHAW

*the older sister of the author's wife,
whose generosity and love for Christ
made the printing of this treatise possible,
is this volume dedicated.*

Preface

THIS BOOK, *Messiah: His Glorious Appearance Imminent*, is the sixth volume of the Messianic Series, which, when completed, will contain seven volumes: namely, *The God of Israel, Messiah: His Nature and Person*, *Messiah: His Redemptive Career*, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*, *Messiah: His Glorious Appearance Imminent*, and *Messiah: His Final Call to Israel*. The first four are written from the standpoint of the Hebrew Scriptures, commonly called The Old Testament. The latter three are likewise written from the standpoint of the Old Testament, but in the light of the New Testament. All these books, it is hoped, will appeal especially to those who believe in Moses and the Prophets.

In modern times nations are spoken of in the feminine gender. Britain, for instance, is spoken of as *she* and *her*. As one will see from reading the Old Testament, the nation of Israel is spoken of in the masculine gender. There are few, if any, exceptions to this rule. The Old Testament writers, when referring to the nation, referred to it as *he*, *his* and *him*. In writing the Messianic Series, at times I speak of the nation of Israel in Biblical terminology, and at other times I speak of it in terms of the modern usage.

The world is in a precarious condition. Everyone who is keeping abreast of the times realizes that the world is probably approaching the crossroads. According to statesmen, educators, and scientists, the coming decade may prove to be one of the crucial periods of all history. But those who are acquainted with the prophetic Word, while admitting the seriousness of the present time, know that in the not-distant future the Great Tribulation will burst upon the world. It behooves, therefore, the children of God to be about their Father's business. The night is coming when no man can work.

In my Messianic Series I occasionally refer to chronological data. In the fourth volume of the Series, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, I discuss the chronological facts found in the Scriptures and show that there is a Biblical chronological system beginning with Genesis, chapter 1, and culminating in the year of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth.

In contrast with the Usher chronology, the system that is generally used, the Biblical system of dating events starts with the creation of man and traces his trek through the centuries to the year when Messiah (the anointed) is cut off, the crucifixion of Jesus, and is designated as *A.H.*, *Anno Hominis*, in the year of man.

The Usher chronology begins its reckoning with the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, traces Biblical history backward to the creation of man, and is spoken of as such and such a year *B.C.*, *before Christ*, or *B.C.E.*, *before the Common Era*. It has been shown by various chronologers that there are a number of gaps here and there in the Usher system. These gaps are usually bridged over by guesses and doubtful hypotheses.

The chronology of the present dispensation speaks of the time beginning with the birth of Christ as *A.D.*, *Anno Domini*, in the year of our Lord. But even some of the supposed facts built into the foundation of this system are matters of guessing and theorizing.

This year is known as 1961. In view of the uncertainty of both the B.C. dating and the A.D. dating, one cannot be absolutely certain concerning the exact time of many early historical events that are spoken of in terms of the B.C. and A.D. dates.

It behooves the student of prophecy to be very cautious about setting dates and making out timetables.

According to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles, before that time arrives, the Lord will descend from heaven to the air, raise the dead in Christ, and catch up the living saints. "And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; . . . For the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. . . . But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21 : 25-28). Let us therefore be upon the tiptoes of expectancy—not setting any dates however.

I am especially indebted to the authors of many standard works for the assistance which I received from them, in preparation of this volume.

I am also especially indebted to my four young "Timothys," my Bible students, F. Kenton Beshore, Tim F. LaHaye, Arthur L.

Peters, and Walter W. Scott, Jr., who have done what they could in filling my speaking engagements.

As always, humanly speaking, I owe everything to my wife, Florence Lita Cooper, who day and night bears me and the work of the Biblical Research Society up in prayer.

I am indebted to the many friends all over the country who have prayed for me as I prepared this volume and who have sent in offerings to the work.

I am especially indebted to Miss Aurora Fluker and Miss Esther Smith of the Biblical Research Society staff for the invaluable assistance they have given me in the preparation of this volume.

I am also indebted to Mrs. James L. Mitchell, a faithful volunteer worker of many years, for assisting me in a number of ways in the preparation of the manuscript of this book.

David L. Cooper.

Los Angeles, California
July 5, 1961

Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
PREFACE	vii
CHAPTER ONE	
HOW TO INTERPRET PROPHECY, FULFILLED AND UNFULFILLED	1
I. The Broad Sweep of Prophecy. II. Theories and Speculations Regarding Prophecy. III. The Apostle Matthew and the Historian Luke Interpreting Prophecy. IV. Three Basic Laws of Interpreting Prophecy.	
CHAPTER TWO	
THE TWO COMINGS OF THE ONE MESSIAH, THE FIRST FULFILLED, THE SECOND UNFULFILLED	55
I. The Redemptive Career of King Messiah. II. Prophecies Concerning the First Coming of the Messiah and the Present Age Fulfilled. III. The Second Coming of the Messiah Unfulfilled.	
CHAPTER THREE	
THE SIGN OF THE END OF THE AGE	67
I. Prophecy Regarding the Destruction of the Temple. II. Questions Asked by the Apostle. III. Warning Against False Messiahs. IV. The Christian Dispensation. V. The Sign of Christ's Second Coming and of the End of the Age. VI. The Period of Travail. VII. A Rapid Survey of the Tribulation. VIII. The Second Coming of Christ and the Rapture of the Tribulation Saints. IX. The Budding of the Fig Tree. X. When Ye See All These Things.	
CHAPTER FOUR	
THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES	84
I. The Signs of the Times of the First Century. II. The Signs of the Times of the Twentieth Century.	
CHAPTER FIVE	
THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH	117
I. The Translation of Enoch. II. The Translation of Elijah. III. Did King David Foresee the Rapture of the Church? IV. Is the Rapture Mentioned in Joel 2:32? V. Is the Rapture Seen in Zephaniah? VI. The Rapture in John, Chapter 14. VII. The Rapture in I Thessalonians. VIII. The Rapture in I Corinthians, Chapter 15.	

CHAPTER SIX

THE GREAT TRIBULATION 134
 I. Terms Applied to the Great Tribulation. II. Certain Prophecies Describing the Great Tribulation. III. The Three Purposes of the Tribulation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SECOND COMING OF THE MESSIAH 157
 I. Messiah's Second Coming According to Moses. II. Messiah's Second Coming According to David. III. Messiah's Second Coming According to Habakkuk. IV. Messiah's Second Coming According to the Lord Jesus. V. Messiah's Second Coming According to the Apostle Paul. VI. Messiah's Second Coming According to the Apostle John.



TABLE OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS 193
 SUBJECT INDEX 197

CHAPTER I

HOW TO INTERPRET PROPHECY, FULFILLED AND UNFULFILLED

IN THE five volumes of the Messianic Series which have preceded this one, most of the discussion has been taken up with prophecies that have already been fulfilled. Of necessity some attention has been directed also toward unfulfilled prophecies. In some instances both fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecies are joined together. In passages, for instance, which present the redemptive career of King Messiah, both His first coming and His second appearance are blended into a single picture. In discussing such passages, one cannot altogether isolate one part from the rest of the same oracle; for this reason, some predictive prophecy has of necessity been considered.

In the present volume, *Messiah: His Glorious Appearance Imminent*, our attention is to be directed principally to a study of predictive prophecies—events connected with the Second Coming of the Messiah.

I. THE BROAD SWEEP OF PROPHECY

At the word *prophecy*, many people are frightened and, figuratively speaking, throw up their hands in horror. No one who knows the meaning of the word *prophecy* should have any fear. This word comes from the Greek term meaning "to speak forth." It does not indicate the direction in which the speaker is looking—toward the past, the present, or the future—in issuing his oracle. The prophets in the Scriptures were spokesmen for God who spoke through Moses and the Prophets, revealing His messages to them and speaking through them to the people. To Aaron and Miriam the Lord said, "Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. 7 My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all my house: 8 with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches; and the form of Jehovah shall he behold . . ." (Num. 12: 6-8).

When the prophet was looking toward the past and recording events, he was infallibly guided by the Spirit of God. He used the language of the people to whom he spoke. Usually the proph-

ets spoke in the vernacular, but on occasions employed the literary style. The prophets used words with the same meanings as they had in ordinary conversation. In all their oracles one finds the same fundamental principles of speech and grammar as are found in secular writings. By the average Bible student these facts are unconsciously assumed. Hence he can, as a rule, understand the messages of the prophets when they are speaking of historical facts—revelations concerning things that have already passed.

The Apostle Peter gave us information that enables us to understand more clearly the inspiration and activity of the Holy Spirit: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21). This passage affirms that in vision the prophets were borne along by the Spirit of God—whether backward or forward—and were let down in the midst of the environment of the facts and truths about which they were going to speak or write for God. Let us take a concrete example. Isaiah the Prophet lived in the latter half of the eighth century before Christ. If God had wanted him to write or speak concerning some event which occurred during the days of Moses, the Spirit of God would have, in vision, carried him back to the days of Moses, would have shown him the environment of the events concerning which he was to speak, and would have given him the words by which he was to tell what he had seen and what had been revealed to him. In speaking of the things which he had seen in vision, the prophet would use language with the same significance as in ordinary conversation. There is, therefore, little speculation or guessing concerning the meaning of historical narratives.

On the other hand, when Isaiah spoke of the virgin birth of the Messiah, he was in vision carried forward from his time to the first century of the present era, was let down in the midst of the environment of that day, and was shown the fact that the Messiah would enter the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. In recording what has been revealed, he uses language in its ordinary significance as understood by the people of his own day. There is, therefore, no occasion for speculation and guessing regarding the significance of the oracle: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

At times Isaiah spoke about conditions and circumstances that existed in his day. See, for instance, Isaiah, chapter 1. This passage is easily understood. The Prophet, in this instance, uses language with the same significance as he ordinarily did. In other words, the prophets use the same type of language in speaking of historical facts, present conditions, or future events. There is, therefore, no basis for the assumption that a prophet uses one type of language in discussing historical facts and current events, but an entirely different type of language in recording the revelation made to him regarding events of the future.

As one reads prophecy, he occasionally comes across what seems to be contrary to what has just been said. This literary phenomenon, to which I refer, is found occasionally in the writings of Ezekiel and Daniel and in the first half of Zechariah in the Old Testament, and in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. I refer to the use of symbols. As an illustration of this type of language, the reader should study Ezekiel 37: 1-14. In this passage appears the account of the vision of the valley of dry bones. The Prophet is shown a vast valley over which many dry bones are scattered. The Lord asks Ezekiel if those bones can live. The Prophet maintains the right attitude toward them by saying: "O Lord Jehovah, thou knowest" (Ezek. 37: 3)—speaking in such a manner and implying that he himself does not know. Then the Lord commands him saying,

4 Prophecy over these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. 5 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah (Ezek. 37: 4-6).

When the Prophet obeyed the Lord and spoke to the bones, "there was a noise, and, behold, an earthquake," and the bones began to come together—bone to its bone, so as to form skeletons. Next, sinews appeared on the bones, binding them together. Then flesh covered the bones, and finally skin covered the flesh.

The Lord then commanded, saying to the Spirit: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live" (v. 9). The Prophet did as he was commanded. Then these revitalized bodies arose as a mighty army before the Lord.

If the Prophet had stopped with these words, neither he nor anyone else could have known what the Lord meant. But in verses

11-14 the Lord explains the entire situation and the significance of the vision:

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

According to verse 11, the dry bones symbolize the whole house of Israel, not during their entire history, but at the time when they say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off." Has the nation of Israel taken this attitude throughout the centuries? By no means. When do they take it, and how long do they maintain it? When rationalism began to spread throughout Christendom, it likewise penetrated the ranks of Judaism. As a result, many throughout Christendom and Judaism have given up, to a certain extent, their conviction that the Bible is the infallibly inspired revelation of God to man. In Christendom many now deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Judaism many have given up their belief in the personal Messiah who will bring about the deliverance of Israel from his foes and the re-establishment of Israel in the land of the fathers. It is to this loss of faith in a personal Messiah to which Ezekiel refers in the statement, "Our hope is lost; we are clean cut off." The coming of a personal Messiah has been the hope animating Jewry throughout the centuries. This baneful, blighting effect, upon both modern Christendom and Judaism, became very pronounced about seventy-five or one hundred years ago. During this period, rationalism with its deadening spiritual effect has, like leaven, continued to spread in America. We may be assured, therefore, that Ezekiel was carried forward by the Spirit of God in vision and saw Israel of our own time. He likewise foretells the gloom of despondency that settles down upon the nation when it gives up its faith in a personal Messiah. But such gloom and despondency are simply a passing phase of Jewish spiritual life, for in verses 12-14 the Prophet foretells that the remnant of Israel will arise from their symbolic graves and live before Jehovah, fulfilling the mission to which God called His Chosen People.

The careful observer can see how to interpret an oracle that is in symbolic form. He will note the significance of each statement and interpret it in the light of the facts of the context.

II. THEORIES AND SPECULATIONS REGARDING PROPHECY

Various and sundry theories have been advanced in explaining unfulfilled prophecy. Biblical students hold three leading hypotheses known as premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism. The word *millennium* is of Latin origin, meaning a thousand years, and is based upon the teaching of Revelation, chapters 19 and 20. In the latter part of chapter 19, is the prediction of the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation.

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

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come *and* be gathered together unto the great supper of God; 18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh (Rev. 19: 11-21).

In Revelation 20: 1-6 is a prediction that Christ, having come to earth, will reign thereon for a thousand years.

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that

he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (Rev. 20: 1-6).

During this period, Satan, the adversary of God and man, will be bound in the pit of the abyss. Hence, he will not be able to deceive the nations during his incarceration. But at the end of Christ's reign, Satan will be loosed for a short season during which he will stir up a rebellion against Christ and His authority—a youth movement.¹ At the end of this short period he and those whom he influences will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20: 7-10), where they shall remain forever.

A large segment of prophetic students through the centuries have interpreted the record of Revelation, chapters 19 and 20, literally. They, therefore, believe that at the end of the Tribulation Christ will return to earth, will lift the curse from the earth as indicated in Isaiah 11: 6-9, Zechariah 14: 11, and Romans 8: 18-25, and will reign on the earth for one thousand years.² The

¹ All the people during the thousand-year reign of Christ will be granted the privilege of living at least a hundred years. If they accept Christ and His salvation, they will continue to live on during His reign. But if they reject, refuse, or neglect His salvation, the stroke of judgment will fall upon them, for "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa 65: 20).

All born-again people in that era will see the facts and truths concerning the Lord Jesus and will love Him supremely. None of them will be deceived by Satan and join his rebellion against Christ after the thousand years.

Those, therefore, who do follow Satan will consist of unregenerated, unsaved people who are under a hundred years of age. Because of this fact, they are said to comprise a youth movement.

² And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. 9 They shall not hurt

word *premillennialism* is a current theological term, expressing the idea that Christ will come and reign literally upon the earth for a thousand years. This term is from the Latin, which means before the thousand years of Christ's reign. Those holding this view are, therefore, called premillennialists.

A large number of prophetic students hold what is known as the postmillennial theory. These scholars believe that there are indications in other passages that Christ's spiritual reign, which began at Pentecost (Acts, chapter 2), will continue to spread and increase in influence and power until all people are saved and acknowledge Christ's authority. Christ will, therefore, reign through the preaching of the gospel for a thousand years. A favorite passage relied upon by these scholars is the parable of the leaven "which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened" (Matt. 13:33). Thus they speak of the gospel as leaven which brings all men to Christ. They attach a good meaning to the word *leaven*, but in every place that it is used figuratively, as in the parable of the leaven, it does not refer to something good, but always to something evil. It is a pure assumption, therefore, in this passage to understand leaven as indicating the gospel. This passage and all others that are interpreted to mean that the gospel will eventually triumph and bring all men to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ before the Second Coming will be found not to teach this position when studied in the light of the facts of each context and in the light of related passages.

A third popular theory held by many interpreters is *amillennialism*. This term is a combination of a Greek negative plus the

nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:6-9).

And men shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell safely (Zech. 14:11).

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for *our* adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope were we saved; but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? 25 But if we hope for that which we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for it (Rom. 8:18-25).

Latin word meaning a thousand years. Those holding to this view firmly believe that the record in Revelation, chapters 19 and 20, should not be interpreted literally, but figuratively. Hence the proponents of this theory say that there is not to be a literal reign of Christ upon the earth for a thousand years, nor is there to be a spiritual reign for a thousand years. According to these interpreters, the prediction that Christ will come and reign a thousand years is simply a prediction that He and the forces of good will triumph gloriously over the forces of evil. To them the language that Christ will come and reign for a thousand years is, therefore, not to be taken literally, but figuratively. According to these interpreters, John, the writer of the Book of Revelation, embellished his thoughts and spoke of them in terms of military victory in an effort to magnify the triumph of Christ.

To justify this interpretation, one must force a strained and unnatural meaning upon scores of passages in both the Old and the New Testaments. Every prophecy should be taken at its face value unless there are facts in the context of a given passage, studied in the light of related passages, which indicate a departure from the literal meaning. Unless one can find such negative evidence, he is logically bound to take the plain sense of the passage.

Let us notice a famous passage which concludes the prophecy found in Micah 4: 1-8, concerning the restoration of the Kingdom of God to Israel with Jerusalem as its capital: "And thou, O tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, yea, the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem" (Mic. 4:8). From this verse we learn that the "former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem." The dominion here promised is that which formerly has been in Jerusalem. Thus we are led to believe that the Jewish kingdom will be re-established in Jerusalem when this prophecy is fulfilled. From Acts 1:6, 7 it is evident that the apostles understood that the kingdom will be restored to Israel: "They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority." Let us remember that the apostles asked the Lord Jesus if he were going to restore the kingdom to Israel at that time. After the risen Lord had appeared to them during a period of forty days and had talked with them especially concerning the Kingdom of

God (Acts 1:3) during this time, the apostles, being intelligent men and Jesus a master teacher, they, therefore, could understand what He was talking about. Since they asked the question, if He were going to restore the kingdom to Israel then, we are forced to believe that Jesus taught that the kingdom is to be restored to Israel. This conclusion is logical; for Jesus, in reply, admitted that it shall be; for He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father has set within His own authority" (v. 7). According to the Lord Jesus, the very date when it is to be restored to Israel has already been set by God the Father.

Another passage having a bearing upon this subject is Acts 3:19-21:

19 Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus: 21 whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old.

The inspired Apostle Peter called upon the nation of Israel to repent and to turn again to Jesus Christ in order that "there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old." According to this statement, God will send Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, who will restore all things which the prophets have foretold. The predictions made by the prophets will be fulfilled literally when Jesus Christ returns:

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isa. 2:1-4).

Another passage showing that there will be established a kingdom when Jesus returns is found in Acts 15:14-18. From the context of this passage one sees that at the present time God is calling forth from the Gentiles a people for His name—the Church. After God has called forth this people, Messiah will return and build again the tabernacle of David—re-establish the Davidic house and throne. In view of the passages just examined, one is forced to the conclusion that there will be established a kingdom on the earth at the return of the Lord Jesus.

In addition to the three systems of interpretation—premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism—there are a number of what might be called off-brand interpretations of prophecy. Someone has called the prophetic Scriptures the speculator's happy hunting ground. The predictive prophecies afford an opportunity for the imagination to run riot, since there is little opportunity to check on the theories advanced. Around the year 1000 of the Christian Era there were those who, misinterpreting Peter's statement "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8) were indeed vociferous in proclaiming the coming of the Lord, because one thousand years of Christian history had been fulfilled as they asserted. During the Reformation there were those in Germany who were called the Munster Kingdom, and who were positive that the Lord would come immediately and establish His reign of righteousness upon the earth. In the '40's of the last century the Millerites in New England set a definite date for the Lord to appear. These mis-taught and misguided people, according to reports, wound up their earthly affairs, prepared their ascension robes, and on the appointed day climbed the highest mountains in order to be as near heaven as possible. During World War I there were those who interpreted Kaiser Wilhelm as the Antichrist, claiming that the numerical value of his name totaled 666, the number of the Antichrist. When Mussolini came into prominence and was cutting a wide political swath, there were those prophetic students—good, intelligent men—who were absolutely certain that he was either the Antichrist or the forerunner of the Antichrist. During World War II, when Hitler was marching to victory on every hand, there were other prophetic students who were confident that Hitler was the Antichrist. A few prophetic students, accepting the year-day theory, have set dates for the coming of the Lord. These students are confident that their theories are absolutely correct, since they

are based on mathematical calculations. But time has proved all of them wrong. There is, in my judgment, no justification for this year-day theory.³

Volumes could be filled with the ridiculous and absurd speculations of sincere men who know nothing about scientific investigation of the Scriptures. In order to impress the unlearned and unthinking public, these speculators often claim that the Lord has made a special revelation to them. They are, therefore, in their opinion, infallibly correct in their teaching.

III. THE APOSTLE MATTHEW AND THE HISTORIAN LUKE INTERPRETING PROPHECY

A. Matthew the Apostle Interpreting Prophecy

Having seen how uninspired men have often been mistaken in their interpretation of prophecy, one should turn to the New Testament and learn how its inspired writers interpreted the messages of Moses and the Prophets. We shall now turn to the record written by the Apostle Matthew, who was an associate of Jesus and an eyewitness⁴ of most of the things which he records. Concerning those things of which he was not an eyewitness, he had unimpeachable sources from which he doubtless gathered his information, as did Luke (Luke 1:1-4). Since, however, Matthew was guided and inspired by the Spirit of God, he has given us an absolutely accurate and correct account of the life, labors, and teachings of the Lord Jesus, the Hebrew Messiah.

Since Matthew wrote especially for the Hebrew people, since in the first century of the present era they were largely believers in the Scriptures, and since God had foretold through the Old Testament prophets many things regarding the Messiah, naturally Matthew quotes from the prophets more frequently than the other

³ For a discussion of the year-day theory, see my volume *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, pp. 533-538.

⁴ The Apostle Matthew, an associate of the Lord Jesus, was an eyewitness of most of the events to which he bears testimony. He recorded some events, however, of which he was not an eyewitness. As one may certainly believe, Matthew was closely associated with those who were eyewitnesses and from whom he obtained information. As an example of such an occurrence, examine carefully Matthew's record of the temptations of Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11). Though Matthew was not present on this occasion, he was associated with Jesus from whom he doubtless learned the facts regarding the temptations. Neither was he present at the baptism of Jesus, the account of which he gives in Matthew 3:13-17. One may logically explain all like occurrences.

gospel writers do. In the Gospel of Matthew, therefore, one can learn how to interpret prophecy.

1. MATTHEW 1:23

The first quotation presented by Matthew is found in Matthew 1:23, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us." This passage is taken from Isaiah 7:14. When one examines the context of this verse, he sees that Ahaz, King of Judah, had spurned God's offer to strengthen his faith by performing a special miracle, "either in the depth, or in the height above" (v. 11). In rejecting the divine offer, Ahaz was hypocritical in saying that he would not tempt the Lord his God. He was just making a pious dodge. God abominates all insincerity and hypocrisy. Isaiah, the Lord's spokesman on this occasion, being in tune with God and His will, instantly turned from the impious Ahaz and addressed the House of David of the future: "Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:13, 14).

The narrative of Isaiah, chapter 7, is to be taken literally, as is evident from the historical facts presented. Verse 14, which foretells the miraculous conception and virgin birth of the Messiah in this historical setting, must be interpreted literally, since there is no evidence indicating a departure from the literal meaning of the words. Matthew thus understood the prophecy. The angel of the Lord that came to Joseph understood the prophecy as being literal. He explained to Joseph the case of Mary, to whom he was espoused, as being the literal fulfillment of the prediction of Isaiah 7:14—a literal fulfillment of prophecy. (For a full exposition of the prophecy, see my volume *Messiah: His Nature and Person*, p. 149).

2. MATTHEW 2:6

The second prophecy quoted by the Apostle is found in Matthew 2:6:

And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

When Christ was born, the Wise Men from the East saw His star and interpreted its appearance as being that of the Messiah mentioned in Numbers 24:17:

I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not nigh:
There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,
And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel,
And shall smite through the corners of Moab,
And break down all the sons of tumult.

They were led—providentially—to go to Jerusalem. Upon arriving, they went to the royal palace of King Herod, supposing that the Messiah would be born there. Herod was startled by the story of these Wise Men; so were the people of Jerusalem. Herod, therefore, gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people and inquired of them where, according to prophecy, the Messiah would be born. They replied, “In Bethlehem of Judaea” (Matt. 2:5). Note the words—“In Bethlehem of Judaea.” In the first century there were two Bethlehems: Bethlehem of Galilee, and Bethlehem of Judaea. The Prophet Micah foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judah (Mic. 5:2). In making this prediction, the Prophet foretold that in Bethlehem of Judah would be born “a governor, who shall be shepherd of my people Israel” (Matt. 2:6). This governor, concerning whom the Prophet spoke, was correctly interpreted by the chief priests and scribes as the Messiah of Israel.

The facts of this passage show that this quotation means literally what it states. From all the facts of the contexts of Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:2, we see that these prophecies are to be interpreted literally. They mean what they state. As we shall learn by further investigation, all passages from the prophets must be interpreted literally unless there is indisputable evidence indicating a departure from the literal meaning.

Being warned of God concerning the murderous intention of King Herod to slay the Christ child, the Wise Men did not return to Herod as he had instructed them, but departed for their country by another way.

The angel of the Lord commanded Joseph to take the mother and child into Egypt and to remain there until he should be divinely instructed to return to the land of Israel. Joseph did as he was warned of God “and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the

prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son" (Matt. 2: 15). Everything about the narrative is to be taken literally. Joseph, with Mary and the Child Jesus, went down into literal Egypt. They remained there literally until after the death of Herod. When Herod died, they came up out of Egypt to the land of Israel. Thus every statement in the prophecy means exactly what it says and is to be interpreted *literally*.

3. MATTHEW 2: 15

Matthew states that in the coming of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus back to the land of Israel, the prophecy of Hosea was fulfilled. They came back "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my Son" (Matt. 2: 15). This quotation is from Hosea 11: 1: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." From the context of this verse, one sees that it refers primarily to the Hebrew people who dwelt in Egypt and who came out of it under the leadership of Moses. This passage harks back to Exodus 4: 22, 23: "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, my first-born: 23 and I have said unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and thou hast refused to let him go: behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born."

In Psalm 89:25-28 God also calls Messiah His first-born: "I also will make him *my* first-born, The highest of the kings of the earth" (v. 27). From these and related passages one sees that both Israel and the Messiah are called God's first-born. It is certain, therefore, that the Hebrew people, in a peculiar way, typify the Messiah. On the basis of this fact Matthew could and did quote Hosea 11: 1, which speaks of literal Israel's departure from literal Egypt for the literal land of Israel, and which applies it to the departure of the holy family from literal Egypt to the literal land of Israel. Thus the prophecy is to be taken literally. But, as just seen, there is added to the literal meaning of the prophecy a typical significance. This passage is, therefore, an illustration of that type of prophecy recognized by Bible students as *literal plus a typical significance*.

4. MATTHEW 2: 17, 18

When Herod saw that he had been mocked by the Wise Men, he was filled with anger and slew the babes of Bethlehem two

years old and under. In Matthew 2:17, 18, the writer says of this slaughter: "17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 18 A voice was heard in Ramah, Weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; And she would not be comforted, because they are not." Upon an examination of the context of Jeremiah 31:15, which Matthew quotes, one sees that this verse primarily refers to the Hebrew captives in the concentration camps at Ramah, who were deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. The mothers of those captives realized that they would never see their sons again. Therefore, they wept bitterly. But Matthew interprets the weeping of the mothers of the babes of Bethlehem as being a fulfillment of Jeremiah's statement.

Everything concerning the soldiers in the concentration camp and their being deported to Babylon, together with the weeping of their mothers, is literal. The facts stated by Matthew concerning the destruction of the babes of Bethlehem are literal. Jeremiah's oracle, therefore, is to be taken literally. But Matthew explains the sorrow of the mothers of the babes of Bethlehem in terms of the grief of the mothers of the deported captives. Jeremiah 31:15 is an illustration of that type of prophecy which may be designated as a *literal prediction plus an application*.

5. MATTHEW 2:23

When Herod died, Joseph was instructed by the Lord to take the baby Jesus and his mother back to the land of Israel. Upon arriving in the land of Israel, he learned that "Archelaus was reigning over Judaea in the room of his father Herod" (Matt. 2:22). Being fearful of this ruler, and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into Galilee and settled in Nazareth. He went to Nazareth, Matthew informs us, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23). There is no literal statement by any of the prophets that the Messiah should be called a Nazarene.

One must examine the facts. The word *Nazarene* in the first century was a term of reproach. When Philip learned that Jesus was the Messiah, he found Nathanael and said, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see" (John 1:45, 46). According to this question,

it is certain that the city of Nazareth had a very bad reputation. On account of this fact the people of Israel in general looked down upon the inhabitants of Nazareth, considering them as the off-scouring of the earth. Since there is no prophecy saying that He would be called literally a Nazarene, since the term *Nazarene* was one of reproach, and since there are prophecies which foretell that He would be literally despised and hated, one may conclude that Matthew summarizes all such prophecies by the use of the word *Nazarene*. Figuratively speaking, he gathers into a bundle the prophecies which show that the Messiah would be hated and despised and labels it by the outstanding term which indicates this attitude—*Nazarene*. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that he does not quote any specific prophecy to support his contention, but simply states that the prophets say that the Messiah shall be called a Nazarene. The word *Nazarene*, therefore, summarizes that type of prophecy which speaks of the hatred and the attitude that the people in general would assume toward the Messiah. Matthew 2:23, therefore, presents that type of prophecy which is literal, and which may be designated as *literal plus a summation*.

In this discussion of the four types of prophecy presented in Matthew, chapter 2, one sees that each prediction is to be taken at its literal face value. The first one, however, Matthew 2:6 together with Matthew 1:23 is pre-eminently literal and must be interpreted as such. The second type is a literal prophecy plus a typical significance (Matt. 2:15). The third class (Matt. 2:17, 18) is purely literal plus an application. The fourth and last one (Matt. 2:23) is literal prophecy plus a summation of the teachings of the prophets.

6. MATTHEW 3:3

The next prophecy in the Book of Matthew quoted from the Old Testament is Matthew 3:3: "For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight." This quotation is from Isaiah 40:3. An examination of the context shows positively that in this prediction Isaiah is foretelling the Second Coming of the Messiah. The Prophet calls upon a certain group of people and tells them that their God commands them to give a message of comfort to His people who are in need of it. There are, therefore, two groups whom God recognizes as being His people: the ones who have

the message of comfort needed, and the ones who need the message of comfort: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins" (Isa. 40:1, 2). A careful study of this passage shows that the ones having the message of comfort are the believers in Christ, for only they have such a message; those needing it are the people of Jerusalem, the Hebrew people.

The gist of the message of comfort is "that her [Jerusalem's] warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." Jerusalem's warfare will be accomplished only when the Messiah returns, champions the cause of Israel, and stops all wars.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariots in the fire (Ps. 46:9).

10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth (Zech. 9:10).

When the Messiah returns to earth, stops all wars, and delivers His people from all their foes, they will not need any message of comfort. But the Prophet sees a time when they will need it, and he can bid those having the message to tell the people of Israel that their warfare is accomplished. This language is used relatively, a type of language common to all peoples. The warfare which the people of Israel will yet suffer after being given the message is practically nil in comparison with the warfare and the bloodshed that they have suffered in the centuries of the past. In view of all these facts, one can be certain that Isaiah the Prophet is carried forward in vision by the Spirit of God across the centuries to the time immediately preceding the Messiah's return to earth and urges those who have the message of comfort—the Christians of the end time—to give this message to the Jews. When one takes all the facts into consideration, he may be certain that Isaiah the Prophet spoke to the Christians of the present generation, urging them to give this message of comfort to the Jews. Can the average Christian give this message to them intelligently? I fear not. Only those Christians who have a fairly accurate and

thorough knowledge of the prophetic word, especially of Israel's place in the plan of God, can carry out this command. To tell Israel "that her warfare is accomplished" involves a thorough and accurate knowledge of prophecy—something that very few people have, but something that all Christians should have.

After exhorting the believers of this day to give this message of comfort to Israel (Isa. 40: 1, 2), Isaiah in vision sees and hears a herald announcing the coming of the Messiah and establishing the kingdom of God here upon earth:

3 The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain: 5 and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it (Isa. 40: 3-5).

Everyone who knows anything about the prophetic Word is confident that this quotation is a prediction in the most glowing terms of the Messiah's return and the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth. Who is the herald announcing the coming of the Messiah in this passage? Undoubtedly my Jewish friends are correct in believing that this messenger is none other than Elijah the Prophet. Their reason for believing thus is found in Malachi 4: 5: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come." I am, therefore, of the profound conviction that God will fulfill this promise by sending Elijah to engage in a special ministry in the State of Israel.

Isaiah 40: 1-5 refers primarily to the glorious Second Coming of Christ. The herald announcing his coming is Elijah the Prophet, whom the Lord will send from heaven at the proper time. In Matthew 3: 3, Isaiah 40: 3 is quoted and is interpreted as a prophecy of John the Baptist, the herald of Christ's first coming. Like the other gospel writers, Matthew sees in John the Baptist—the herald of Christ's first coming—a fulfillment of what obviously is primarily a prediction of Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah at His Second Coming. This prophecy of Isaiah, therefore, is an example of the third type of prophecy, the literal plus an application. Some students call this passage an illustration of a double or manifold fulfillment of prophecy. There may be several partial, limited, incomplete fulfillments of a prophecy, but there can be only one full and complete fulfillment of a given

prediction. John the Baptist is a partial and limited fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction, but Elijah will be the complete fulfillment of this prophecy at the Second Coming of Messiah.

7. MATTHEW 4:4

The next Old Testament passage quoted by Matthew is found in Matthew 4:4, which is quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3: Moses said that "man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live." According to Matthew 4:1-11, the devil appeared to Jesus in the wilderness and tempted him three times on this occasion. The Lord had fasted forty days and forty nights. Then hunger seemed to begin to gnaw at His very vitals. At that time the tempter said: "If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Jesus replied, saying, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). At the baptism of Jesus, God spoke audibly from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). The devil knew and believed that Jesus was the Son of God in a special sense, the sense in which God meant it when He said, "This is my beloved Son." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The devil, therefore, did not imply that he doubted that Christ was the Son of God in a special manner. On the contrary, he used that form of the Greek verb in the conditional clause which affirmed his belief regarding Christ's being the Son of God. Let me illustrate the point this way: One man could say to another, "If you are a gentleman, act like one." In making this statement, the speaker does not imply that he doubts that the man is a gentleman. On the contrary, he assumes that the man is a gentleman and urges him to act accordingly. I could reword the conditional clause by saying, "Since you are a gentleman, act like one." The devil said to the Lord Jesus, "If you are the Son of God [since you are the Son of God], command that these stones become bread." Moreover, the devil assumed that Jesus had the power to make bread out of stones. If Jesus, the God-man, had acted upon Satan's suggestion, He would have been taking into His own hands the prerogatives and authority⁵ which

⁵ Christ imposed certain limitations upon Himself when He entered the world and became the God-man. When He was raised from the dead, He was given His glorified body, which had no limitations.

belonged to the Father only: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (James 1:17). All that is said concerning Christ's turning the stones into bread is to be taken literally. Stones were stones and bread was bread.

8. MATTHEW 4: 5, 6

The second temptation mentioned by Matthew is found in Matthew 4: 5, 6.

5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:

and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

The devil took Jesus into Jerusalem, the Holy City, and set him on the pinnacle, or wing, of the Temple. From this position Jesus could look downward toward the East and see the deep Kidron Valley far below. Then the devil said: "If thou art the Son of God [since you are the Son of God], cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee." This quotation is from Psalm 91. Some people think that the devil misquoted this Scripture. He did not, but simply omitted the words, "to keep thee in all thy ways." He knows how to use Scripture. Sometimes he may misuse it when it suits his purpose, but he correctly interpreted the passage in Psalm 91:11, 12 on this occasion. In Psalm 91:1 the writer affirms his own personal faith in God as his refuge. In verses 3-8 he speaks to someone present, saying "thee" (vv. 3, 4), "thou" (vv. 4, 5), "thy" and "thee" (v. 7), and "thine" and "thou" (v. 8).

In verses 3-8 the Psalmist is carried forward in vision and sees the remnant of Israel in the midst of the Tribulation. According to verse 5, there will be wars; according to verse 6, there will be special plagues afflicting the wicked, and destruction will be stalking abroad at noonday. A thousand of the wicked will fall at the side of the one who trusts God, and ten thousand at his right hand will likewise fall, but death will not come near the trustful believer. Proof of this interpretation is found in verse 8. It envisages the destruction of the wicked from the face of the globe

and the protection and preservation of those who trust in Jehovah. When will the wicked be destroyed from the earth? During the Tribulation. In this time of Jacob's trouble, God will be a shield to the remnant of Israel.

As already seen, verses 3-8, addressed to someone seen by the Psalmist in vision, give a vivid description of the destructive war and devastating pestilences and plagues. In sharp contrast with these verses are 9-13:

- 9 For thou, O Jehovah, art my refuge!
 Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation;
 10 There shall no evil befall thee,
 Neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent.
 11 For he will give his angels charge over thee,
 To keep thee in all thy ways.
 12 They shall bear thee up in their hands,
 Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
 13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder:
 The young lion and the serpent shalt thou trample under foot.

These verses are addressed directly to Jehovah: "For thou, O Jehovah, art my refuge!" This divine personality also has made the Most High His habitation. In this verse we see two persons of the Holy Trinity: Jehovah the Son—the Messiah of Israel—in whom anyone who trusts may take refuge, and who makes the Most High—God the Father—His habitation. Why is it necessary for Jehovah the Son to make Jehovah the Father his habitation since He is equal with God the Father, as the Apostle Paul asserts?⁶ The answer is that Jehovah the Son enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, thus becoming the God-man. As the God-man, He voluntarily takes certain human limitations during His sojourn among men.

Having assumed these human limitations, the God-man at times needs supernatural assistance which is promised Him in Psalm 91: 10-12, quoted above.

⁶ 5 Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; 8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; 10 that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth and *things* under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2: 5-11).

The devil correctly interpreted and applied this passage to the Lord Jesus, who likewise knew that Satan was correct in his interpretation. Obviously, Satan was simply asking Jesus to avail Himself of the assistance promised in the passage; but Jesus positively refused, saying, "Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7). His asking God on this occasion for the assistance promised in the written Word would be His making trial of the Lord His God. How could His simply asking for the thing promised be sinful? If leaping from the wing of the Temple into the gorge below had been in the path of duty, in which Jesus always walked, He would not have hesitated for one second, but would have leaped forth, depending upon God to fulfill the promise of help. But the path of duty did not lead in that direction on this occasion. He, therefore, would have been making trial of God the Father if He had leaped into the abyss below.

Jesus knew that the Scriptures are God's infallibly inspired Word. Moreover, He knew that God meant what He said and said what He meant. For him, a "thus saith the Lord" was final on any issue. He pointed the devil to the written Word, saying, "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." He said it in such a way that the devil knew that His statement was final.

9. MATTHEW 4:8-11

The third and last temptation of Jesus by the devil is found in Matthew 4:8-11:

8 Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

The parallel to this passage is found in Luke 4:5-9, which adds a few details not mentioned by Matthew.

From Jerusalem, where the second temptation took place, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and miraculously caused all the kingdoms of the world and the glories thereof to pass in vision before Him. Knowing that Jesus had come into the world to purchase human redemption by his vicarious suffering on the Cross and eventually to set up a reign of righteousness from sea

to sea and from the River unto the ends of the earth, the devil, the god of this world, made his final attempt to circumvent the Lord Jesus and by all means to prevent His going to the Cross. Satan knew that the plan of God outlined in the Scriptures involves not only the redemption of the souls of men, but also his being divested of all authority and power, and his being banished from the presence of God and the glory of His might forever and ever. To prevent Jesus' going to the Cross was, consequently, the number one item on Satan's agenda. All other matters were of little significance in comparison with this major objective. Satan was willing, therefore, to give up all claims and authority over the nations in order to prevent Calvary. If he could only entice Christ to take a step that would make null and void His going to the Cross, the whole scheme of redemption would collapse; there would be salvation for none. In that event, Satan would be victorious over the Lord.

But in supposing that Christ, the God-man, could fall into Satan's trap, one is dealing with impossibilities. Though Satan is cunning and wise above all the rest of God's creatures, he is no match for Christ, from the standpoint of understanding and wisdom.

Satan is the god of this world who blinds the eyes of people so that they cannot ordinarily see the truth (II Cor. 4:4). The Lord Jesus calls him the "prince of the world" and asserts, "He hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). From these passages and others that could be quoted, it is clear that Satan was in possession of the world, and that he could make to Christ the offer of all the kingdoms of the world if the Lord Jesus would only bow to him one time. There can be no doubt that Satan made a bona fide offer to Christ on this occasion. Without doubt Satan knew that eventually Christ would snatch the kingdoms of the world out of his grasp. He, therefore, offered to Jesus a short cut. From all the facts, we probably can reconstruct Satan's thinking and the suggestions which he made to Jesus.

"According to the scheme of redemption outlined in the writings of Moses and the Prophets," reasoned Satan, "Messiah will engage in a personal ministry to the nation of Israel and will be misunderstood and rebuffed on many occasions. He will terminate His earthly career by an ignominious and cruel death on a Roman cross in the midst of shouts of derision and ridicule on the part of His opponents. He will suffer these mental and physi-

cal tortures in order to wrest from my grip all the kingdoms of the world."

"Now you, Jesus," suggested Satan, "instead of choosing voluntarily a life of hardships, terminating in the most excruciating agony of death known to man, in order to reach your objective—wresting the kingdoms out of my grip, as outlined in the Scriptures—I will here and now surrender to you all claims upon the world and my prerogatives over the nations, if you will simply one time bow the knee before me. Why take the hard, tortuous, and almost unbearable journey by way of the Cross to reach your objective? I will tell you the sensible, practical, and wise thing for you to do—bow the knee to me in worship. Immediately, I will surrender all rights and claims of authority to you."

For Jesus to worship Satan by bowing the knee only once would be doing what God said *not* to do. He again quoted the written Word, showing that, if He should bow the knee and worship Satan, He would be violating that which is written: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Matt. 4:10, 11).

10. MATTHEW 4:12-16

The next prophecy which Matthew gives as being fulfilled by Christ's leaving Nazareth and making Capernaum His headquarters is found in Matthew 4:12-16:

12 Now when he heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee; 13 and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: 14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
Toward the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles,

16 The people that sat in darkness
Saw a great light,
And to them that sat in the region and shadow of death,
To them did light spring up.

An examination of this passage shows that each word must be taken at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning. The Prophet Isaiah had spoken of the people in a certain region and of their seeing a great light (Isa. 9:1, 2). It is clear from the context

of the original passage that the light of which Isaiah spoke was spiritual and not literal. Matthew confirms this fact, saying that the prophecy was fulfilled in Christ's moving from Nazareth and locating in Capernaum. Thus this prophecy is a literal statement of a fact.

11. MATTHEW 8:14-17

The next prophecy to be examined is Matthew 8:14-17:

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose, and ministered unto him. 16 And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons: and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick: 17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.

Here is an account of the healing ministry of the Lord Jesus on a given occasion. Matthew states that He performed these cures in fulfillment of a prophecy found in Isaiah 53:4: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . ." The word rendered *griefs* in the text is translated *sicknesses* in the footnote. Every word should be rendered literally unless the facts of the immediate context or related passages indicate a departure from the literal meaning and require a secondary significance. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, Matthew interprets Isaiah literally. Beyond dispute the inspired historian understood Isaiah 53:4 to refer to literal healing.

According to Isaiah and Matthew, healing of the body is part of the ministry of the Lord Jesus. Light is thrown upon this subject in Colossians 1:19, 20: "For it was the good pleasure of the *Father* that in him should all the fulness dwell; 20 and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, *I say*, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens."

In the light of Paul's utterance, physical healing is in the Atonement. Then why does God still allow sickness? Sometimes it is brought on by ignorance of the laws of hygiene and health; sometimes by sin, wrongdoing, and overindulgence. In answer to prayer God does at times heal people; but the healing which is effected by the Atonement of Christ is not to be general now. It will become universal at the return of Christ when the curse is lifted from the earth, according to Romans 8:18-25. In other

words, the full and complete effects of the Atonement of Christ in every sphere of life will become universal in the Millennium.⁷

12. MATTHEW 11:10

The next passage to be considered is Matthew 11:10: "This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way before thee." This prophecy quoted from Malachi 3:1 is very much like Isaiah 40:1-5 already discussed. An examination of this passage makes clear that the principles of interpretation are the same as those in Isaiah's prediction.

13. MATTHEW 12:15-21

The next passage to be examined is Matthew 12:15-21.

15 And Jesus perceiving *it* withdrew from thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all, 16 and charged them that they should not make him known: 17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

18 Behold, my servant whom I have chosen;
My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased:
I will put my Spirit upon him,
And he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry aloud;
Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break,
And smoking flax shall he not quench,
Till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.

On this occasion the Pharisees took counsel against Jesus to destroy Him. Sensing the situation, Jesus withdrew from the community. Nevertheless, many followed Him, and He healed them all and charged them that they should not make Him known—that the prophecy in Isaiah 42:1-4 might be fulfilled which declares that the Messiah will not strive nor cry aloud, nor lift up His voice in the streets. Jesus was not opposed to preaching the truth anywhere, in a quiet and orderly manner; but the Prophet declares that the Messiah would not be a rabble-rouser, haranguing the people with inflammatory propaganda. Thus Matthew quotes this prophecy to show why Jesus retired quietly from the scene of excitement.

⁷ For a further exposition on this point, see my forthcoming volume, *Messiah: His Final Call to Israel*.

14. MATTHEW 13:13-15

The next passage to be examined is Matthew 13:13-15:

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith,

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;
And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross,
And their ears are dull of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed;
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And should turn again,
And I should heal them.

In Matthew, chapter 13, are seven parables of the kingdom. The disciples came to Jesus and asked Him why He was speaking to the multitudes in parables. A parable is an illustration which ordinarily is designed to make the truth under consideration clear to the hearers who want truth. But on certain occasions Jesus spoke the truth in parabolic form in order to conceal it from those who did not want it. "If any man willet to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or *whether* I speak from myself" (John 7:17). Because of these principles the Lord Jesus said, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you" (Matt. 7:6).

When God called and commissioned Isaiah to proclaim His message to Israel (Isaiah, chapter 6), He charged the Prophet to keep on preaching the Word. At the same time the Lord revealed to him that the people would hear, but would not heed. Though the people would hear the message, they would not understand it, the reason being, "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed. . . ." Truth in one particular is like heat: it melts wax, but hardens clay. The truth melts the hearts of those wanting it and mellows their souls before God; at the same time, it hardens the hearts of those who have no longing for God. What was true of the people of Isaiah's day was also true of the people of the time of Jesus. The same principle holds good today and always. Matthew 13:35 is an illustration of the third type of prophecy—*literal plus an application*.

Matthew states that Jesus did not speak to the multitudes without a parable, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world." This quotation is taken from Psalm 78:2 which reads:

I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old.

15. MATTHEW 15:2

In Isaiah, chapter 29, the Prophet sees in vision the people of Israel in the end time and declares that they honor God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. Certain Pharisees from Jerusalem, who were sticklers for the tradition of the elders, asked Jesus, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (Matt. 15:2). Jesus replied, showing them that they were making void the Word of God by their traditions. Moreover, He showed them that in their worship they simply honored God with their lips, whereas their hearts were far from Him. Then He declared that in them was fulfilled the prediction uttered by Isaiah concerning the Hebrew people of the end of the age. This prediction is a literal prophecy plus an application to an analogous case.

16. MATTHEW 21:42

In Matthew 21:42 a most important prediction is quoted from Psalm 118.

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures,
The stone which the builders rejected,
The same was made the head of the corner;
This was from the Lord,
And it is marvellous in our eyes?

What is the significance of the word *stone* in this passage? Is it a literal stone, or is it used symbolically?

According to the Golden Rule of Interpretation, when the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, one is to seek no other sense. When, however, the literal interpretation of a given passage does not make good sense, one is to seek from the facts of the context indications as to the proper interpretation. An examination of Psalm 118, from which the quotation under consideration is taken, shows that this sublime Psalm is a revelation concerning Israel's return to God. This truth becomes evident

by a careful and prayerful noting of the facts which like gems sparkle here and there in the various verses.

According to some expositors, Psalm 118, the last of the Hallel Psalms, was sung by the temple choir at the time of the Passover and by the pilgrims who went to Jerusalem to worship, as well as by the worshipers already congregated there. A group of pilgrims, as they approached Jerusalem, would begin singing this song so that they would be standing before the gate of the Temple by the time that they had finished the first eighteen verses. Then they would sing:

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness:
I will enter into them, I will give thanks unto Jehovah.

Immediately, the temple choir would respond to the newly arrived pilgrims, saying,

20 This is the gate of Jehovah;
The righteous shall enter into it.

Then the people who had already assembled in the temple court would burst forth into joyous praise,

21 I will give thanks unto thee; for thou hast answered me,
And art become my salvation.

At this time someone in the audience would shout with hilarious acclaim:

22 The stone which the builders rejected
Is become the head of the corner.

Then the entire audience would burst forth,

23 This is Jehovah's doing;
It is marvellous in our eyes.

A second voice would ring out over the audience, saying,

24 This is the day which Jehovah hath made;

A second time the audience would burst forth into praise:

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Save now, we beseech thee, O Jehovah;
O Jehovah, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.

The officiating priest in solemn tones of accent would bless the expectant worshipers, saying,

26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah:
We have blessed you out of the house of Jehovah.

27 Jehovah is God, and he hath given us light:
Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

Finally, the entire audience—priests and people—would pledge their allegiance saying,

- 28 Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee:
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
29 Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;
For his lovingkindness *endureth* for ever.

In the light of the foregoing analysis of this Psalm, it is evident that the word *stone* is not used literally, but symbolically.

In this Psalm the arrival of pilgrims at Jerusalem and the regular ritualistic services conducted at the time of the Passover are presented as a pageant setting forth Israel's return to God in the end time. By the observance of the Passover feast yearly, there was held up before the people the fundamental facts concerning Israel's return to God. (For an exposition of Psalm 118, see my booklet entitled *Israel's Return to God*—80 pages.)

Since the word *stone* is used symbolically, what is its significance here? In Genesis 49:24 Jacob, in blessing Joseph, says:

But his bow abode in strength,
And the arms of his hands were made strong,
By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob
(From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel).

Here the shepherd who comes from the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob is called "the stone of Israel." An examination of every passage where the word *stone* is used symbolically shows that it refers to the Messiah.

Some scholars say that in the sentence "The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner" (Matt. 21:42) is heard an echo of a tradition found in Jewish lore regarding the building of Solomon's Temple. Under the northeast part of the old city of Jerusalem are what is known as Solomon's quarries, from which the stones used in the construction of the Temple were taken. A vertical shaft was sunk from the level of the temple area through the rock down to the quarries below. With a block and tackle type of windless, the stones, cut to size according to specification, were drawn from the quarry to the surface above. After the survey had been made and the ground staked for the laying of the foundation, the builders—those superintending the work—began looking for the chief cornerstone.

They looked at a stone which seemed to be the one, but upon approaching it, and without actual measurement of it, hastily de-

cided that it was not the right one. Passing by it, they continued their search for the chief cornerstone. In their quest, they examined a number of stones, but none of them were of the right dimensions. Finally, they came back to the first one at which they had looked; and, to their utter amazement, it was the one for which they had been seeking. Then these leaders called for the workmen who took the stone and laid it in its proper position. Thus "the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner."

The set feasts of Israel which were observed in Jerusalem—especially the Passover—therefore furnished the framework into which the inspired Psalmist built new revelations regarding both the rejection of the Messiah at His first coming and of His being enthusiastically welcomed by His people Israel at His Second Coming: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner" (Ps. 118:22). Who rejects the stone (Messiah) at His first coming? The builders (leaders) who fail to recognize Him, and who "err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29).

As chastisement for this tragic and inexcusable mistake of not knowing the Scriptures and of the criminal act of rejecting and executing the Messiah as a deceiver and impostor, the stroke of divine judgment fell upon the nation, which scattered them to the four corners of the earth, where they have been ostracized commercially and politically and have suffered inhuman treatment and indescribable atrocities at the hands of certain Gentile governments and individual anti-Semites⁸ for nearly two thousand years.

But the stone, Messiah, is to become "the head of the corner." Who will put Him in His rightful place? As in the case of the builders of Solomon's Temple, those who rejected the first stone at which they looked, but later accepted it and placed it in its rightful position, so the builders of Israel (leaders of Israel of the end time) will see the tragic mistake made by their predecessors in office and will put Him in His rightful position.

How will these leaders put the Messiah in His rightful place? Obviously, by learning the facts of the case as seen in the Scriptures, by acknowledging before God and man the fatal error of rejecting Him, and by pleading for His return. That this statement

⁸ With shamefacedness genuine Christians have to admit that some who bear the name of Christ are guilty of anti-Semitism and of mercilessly mistreating the Jews and of persecuting them beyond measure.

of the facts is true is seen by the language of the inspired Apostle Peter:

19 Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus: 21 whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old (Acts 3:19-21).

Having called attention to the prophecy regarding the rejection and the eventual acceptance of the stone (Messiah), Jesus continues, saying,

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust (Matt. 21: 43, 44).

According to I Chronicles 28:5, the Kingdom of God in the days of King David was coextensive with the kingdom of Israel. If any Gentile wished to worship the true and the living God, the God of Israel, he had to become a proselyte to the Jewish faith. This situation continued from Sinai to Calvary. But when the builders rejected the stone (the Shepherd of Israel), Israel ceased to be the favored nation occupying the central position in the plan of God. The Kingdom of God was taken from the people of Israel, as the Lord Jesus foretold. When the Kingdom was taken from them, it was "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This prediction is being fulfilled during the present Christian Dispensation, which began on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ and continues until His glorious return. A full account of the beginning of this prophecy is found in Acts, chapter 2. As James said, God is now taking out from the Gentiles a people for His Name—the spiritual nation to whom He gives the Kingdom (Acts 15:14-18).

In this prediction the Lord Jesus says that "he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust." Those falling upon the stone are the ones who reject the Messiah at His first coming and are, according to the prediction, to be broken to pieces.

Forty years later, in the calamity of A. D. 70, the Jewish nation was subdued by the Romans, and the survivors were scattered among the nations and remain so to the present day. Thus, in

the national overthrow of Israel, those falling on this stone—those rejecting the Messiah—were, in the language of this prophecy, broken to pieces.

“But on whomsoever it [the rejected Messiah] shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.” To what event does this prediction refer? The stone falls upon certain ones. The falling of the stone upon them immediately suggests the prediction found in Daniel, chapter 2. In this passage is recorded the vision which was granted to Nebuchadnezzar. There appeared a metallic image in a plain at the foot of a great mountain. A little stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, rolled down the mountainside, struck the image on the feet, and broke it in pieces. These pieces “became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (v. 35).

As already seen, a stone when used symbolically always signifies the Messiah. Unquestionably, the vision of Daniel, chapter 2, is purely symbolic, as is seen in vv. 36-45. The metallic image—head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly of brass, legs of iron, and feet and toes of iron and miry clay—symbolizes four world kingdoms. Since the image is symbolic, the stone likewise is symbolic. The stone symbolizes the Messiah of Israel. But to what event or time does this vision pertain? Since the image symbolizes the kingdoms of the world (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome), since the falling stone destroys the image, and since the stone signifies the Messiah, one naturally concludes that the falling of this stone is a prediction of the Second Coming of the Messiah, who at that time will destroy all human governments and will set up a reign of righteousness “from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Zech. 9: 10).

17. MATTHEW 22: 1-14

In Matthew 22: 1-14 appears a prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, spoken by the Lord Jesus, and the sending forth of the gospel message to all nations. This prophecy is of vital importance and is briefly discussed in *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*, pp. 289-91. In Matthew 22: 44 is a quotation from Psalm 110, which is one of the most important predictions in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, and which is discussed in the next chapter of this book. The Olivet Discourse,

in Matthew, chapters 24 and 25; Mark, chapter 13; and Luke, chapter 21, is one of the Lord's most important prophetic utterances. It describes what properly can be called the unmistakable, infallible sign of the end of the Age. This topic is discussed in Chapter III of this book. In Matthew, chapters 26 and 27, appears the account of the arrest, the trial, and the execution of Jesus of Nazareth. In these chapters appear several prophecies concerning the events narrated. An examination of these quotations in the original Hebrew Scriptures shows that they were fulfilled literally—as foretold. Psalm 22:1-21 and Isaiah 52:13-53:12 furnish the prophetic background of the events recorded in Matthew, chapters 26-28.

This brief survey of prophecy, both fulfilled and unfulfilled, in the Gospel according to Matthew, affords ample proof that prophecy is to be taken literally unless there is absolute proof showing that some element appearing in a given prediction is to be understood figuratively—in the light of the context.

B. *Luke, the Historian, Interpreting Prophecy*

Luke, the beloved physician and co-worker with the Apostle Paul, wrote two books of the New Testament: The Gospel according to Luke and the Acts. Luke's writings at one time were under fire by the rationalistic critics, who thought they had absolute proof which discredits him as a historian. They discredited especially the chronological data in Luke 2:1-7 and 3:1-6, as well as several chronological statements in The Acts. With great gusto they, in substance, shouted "Anachronism! Anachronism!"

At the same time faithful and competent archeologists, such as Sir William Ramsey, were quietly, but diligently, seeking for facts—indisputable facts—regardless of what these facts proved. And Sir Ramsey discovered facts which prove that Luke was a reputable historian of the first magnitude. One should read carefully his book *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?* as well as other voluminous works by the same author. One should also read, *Luke, the Historian in the Light of Research*, by the late Dr. A. T. Robertson. With confidence, therefore, we shall now turn to the writings of Luke. Since this author wrote for the Greeks, who delighted in an elevated style and ornate language, he, a scientific scholar, wrote his message largely in the literary Koine of his day. Since, however, the Greeks knew practically nothing about the Old Testament, Luke, in his record of the gospel, as a rule, quoted

only those prophecies that had already been discussed by Matthew. Whenever he did, he interpreted the quotation literally—just as Matthew had done. We shall now investigate several quotations from the Old Testament found in The Acts.

1. ACTS 1:20

The first passage to be examined is found in Acts 1:20: "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be made desolate, And let no man dwell therein: and, His office let another take." This verse is quoted from two passages—Psalms 69:25 and 109:8. When they are studied in the light of the original contexts, one sees that they are to be taken literally.

2. ACTS 2:17-21

The next passage to be investigated is Acts 2:17-21:

- 17 And it shall be in the last days, saith God,
 I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh;
 And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
 And your young men shall see visions,
 And your old men shall dream dreams:
- 18 Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days
 Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
- 19 And I will show wonders in the heaven above,
 And signs on the earth beneath;
 Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:
- 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness,
 And the moon into blood,
 Before the day of the Lord come,
 That great and notable *day*:
- 21 And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord
 shall be saved.

This quotation is taken from Joel 2:28-32. In order to comprehend this prediction, one must investigate it in its original setting. It begins with these words, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. . . ." The word *afterward* must first be studied because it gives the proper perspective. God will pour out His Spirit upon all people after certain things have occurred. What things? The things referred to, without a doubt, are found in the preceding paragraph, Joel 2:21-27:

21 Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice; for Jehovah hath done great things. 22 Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field; for the pastures of the

wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth its fruit, the fig-tree and the vine do yield their strength. 23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in Jehovah your God; for he giveth you the former rain in just measure, and he causeth to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain, in the first *month*. 24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. 25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, my great army which I sent among you. 26 And ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and shall praise the name of Jehovah your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you; and my people shall never be put to shame. 27 And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am Jehovah your God, and there is none else; and my people shall never be put to shame.

In verse 21 the Prophet exhorts the land, saying, "O land, be glad. . . ." In verse 22 he addresses the beasts of the field, saying, "Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field. . . ." In verse 23, he exhorts the Jewish people saying, "Be glad then, ye children of Zion. . . ." The beasts of the field of verse 22 are literal beasts that are urged not to be afraid, because the pastures will spring forth abundantly, and the fruit trees will yield their strength. The children of Zion of verse 23—the Israelites, or Jews—are urged to be glad, because God gives abundant rain—the former rain in proper measure and likewise the latter rain. As a result, the people will harvest bumper crops every year. But who is addressed in verse 21 by the words "O Land"? Since the Prophet addresses the people of the land in verse 23 as the children of Zion, in verse 21 he is not calling upon the people of the land to rejoice. Can the literal land rejoice and be glad? Of course not. The land is, therefore, not to be taken literally, but figuratively. The Prophet thinks of the land as if it were a person—the figure of personification.

Why is the land to rejoice and be glad? The answer is, "For Jehovah hath done great things." Though the Prophet does not tell what great things Jehovah has done, on account of which the land is to rejoice, we can gather from the context what these things are. As a result of these great things, there is to be an abundance of food for the beasts of the field, and the fruit trees are to yield their strength: that is, all fruit trees will yield their maximum strength as God intended originally. Abnormal weather conditions will be restored to normal, so that the rains will come in the proper quantity and at the right time. Bumper crops will result from these great things which God does for the land. In view of all these facts, it is only logical to believe that the great things which

God does for the land are the lifting of the curse from the ground, from the animals, and from man. This interpretation is confirmed by Isaiah 11:6-9 and Romans 8:18-25.

The former, or early, rains in the Holy Land are the same as the fall rains in Southern California, which prepare the soil for the cultivation and sowing of grain; the latter or spring rains mature the crops. There will be, therefore, an abundance of grain, new wine, and oil.

Can the early rains and the latter rains of this passage be interpreted spiritually as referring to the pouring out of the Spirit of God at the beginning of this Dispensation and again at the close of it? It is clear from the facts of the context that the Prophet is talking about literal rain. There is not the least suggestion in this passage that he is talking about pouring out the Spirit of God.

When God lifts the curse from the ground, He will restore the years that the locusts and other pests have eaten, and the crops that have been destroyed by an invading army (Joel 1:1-7; 2:25).

There will, therefore, be an abundance of all types of food. And the Hebrews will constantly praise God for dealing with them so very bountifully and wondrously. Never again will they be put to shame. Two things will stand foremost in their thinking: that Jehovah their Messiah is in the midst of Israel and that He is their God.

In the statement "It shall come to pass afterward," the word *afterward* refers to the time after the things enumerated in vv. 21-27 have taken place. In other words, after Jehovah the Messiah has come and lifted the curse from the earth, God will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, all nations. At the end of the Tribulation the remnant of Israel—as will be shown in *Messiah: His Final Call to Israel*—will repudiate the national sin of rejecting the Messiah at His first coming, will receive Him at His Second Coming, will herald the message of the gospel to those of the nations that survive the Tribulation, and will lead them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. For the first time in the history of man, there will be a converted world. When these peoples accept Christ as Saviour and Redeemer, God will regenerate their hearts and will pour out His Spirit upon them. Then will be fulfilled Joel's statement "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh."

After taking us into the millennial reign of Christ (Joel 2:21-

28a), the Prophet in his prediction, verses 28b-32, comes back to the period immediately preceding the Tribulation and foretells the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon certain ones of Israel and the first installment of Israel's conversion. In thus speaking, Joel employed the law of recurrence, adding some details to the prophecy that had not been mentioned before. That he is talking about something that will occur before the Tribulation is clear from the context. For in connection with the pouring out of the Spirit, the Lord will "show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh" (Joel 2: 30, 31). These spiritual phenomena and the miracles in the heavens above and in the earth beneath will occur "before the great and terrible day of Jehovah" (Zeph. 1: 14-18). Elijah the Prophet is to be sent by the Lord to Israel "before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come" (Mal. 4: 5).

Whoever at that time believes the message of God's Word and calls upon the name of Jehovah, Messiah, will escape: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as Jehovah hath said, and among the remnant those whom Jehovah doth call" (Joel 2: 32).

Having analyzed the passage in Joel, chapter 2, which the Apostle Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost, one is prepared to examine the construction placed upon it by the inspired Apostle.

3. ACTS, CHAPTER 2

According to Acts, chapter 2, the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus, manifested Himself both visibly and audibly. At that time there were in Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost Jews from sixteen nations. When the Holy Spirit made His presence known, the multitude ran together in excitement, asking, "What meaneth this?" Some mocked, saying, "They [the apostles] are filled with new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day; 16 but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 And it shall be in the last days, saith God,
I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh;

- And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
 And your young men shall see visions,
 And your old men shall dream dreams:
- 18 Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days
 Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
- 19 And I will show wonders in the heaven above,
 And signs on the earth beneath;
 Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:
- 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness,
 And the moon into blood,
 Before the day of the Lord come,
 That great and notable *day*:
- 21 And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord
 shall be saved (Acts 2: 14-21).

In explaining the presence and the activities of the Holy Spirit, Peter declares that these spiritual phenomena were foretold by Joel the Prophet in the passage just quoted. He made a statement which is the crux of the entire situation: "These are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel." Note the words, "This [the coming of the Holy Spirit] is that which hath been spoken through the Prophet Joel." What they were witnessing, declares the Apostle, was mentioned by Joel. He did not say that Joel's prophecy was completely fulfilled on that occasion, but his statement "This is that" is correct. The converse of this proposition, however, is not true. For example, all people who live in Los Angeles live in California, but all who live in California do not live in Los Angeles. What occurred on the day of Pentecost was a partial, limited, and incomplete fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

This prediction falls in the third type of prophecy, which is the literal fulfillment plus an application. Since the occurrences on the day of Pentecost were a partial fulfillment, we may expect the complete fulfillment to be brought about at the time of which Joel speaks; namely, the period just before the great and terrible day of Jehovah, the Great Tribulation.

Having explained from the prophetic Word the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter proceeds to show that Christ's Resurrection was in fulfillment of Psalm 16: 8-11.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; 23 him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,

ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. 25 For David saith concerning him,

- I beheld the Lord always before my face;
 For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:
 26 Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
 Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope:
 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades,
 Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.
 28 Thou madest known unto me the ways of life;
 Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance (Acts 2:
 22-28).

Although God showed His approval of Jesus of Nazareth by mighty miracles, certain of the leaders of Israel demanded that He be put to death. His Crucifixion was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Though it was in the plan of God for Christ to suffer and die for the sins of the world, those who demanded His death were guilty of this heinous crime.

Having been executed and buried, the Messiah arose from the dead, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel (II Tim. 1:10). After His Ascension to heaven, He sat down on the right hand of God where He makes intercession for all who come to God by Him.

4. ACTS 4:24-26

The next prophecy to be examined is Acts 4:24-26. The Apostles Peter and John were thrown into prison over night because of their preaching the Resurrection from the dead through Christ. When they were brought before the high court the next morning, they were threatened with punishment if they continued to preach Christ, and then they were released. They went immediately to the place where the disciples were gathered together and reported what the chief priests and elders had said and done to them.

24 And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: 25 who by the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say,

- Why did the Gentiles rage,
 And the peoples imagine vain things?
 26 The kings of the earth set themselves in array,
 And the rulers were gathered together,
 Against the Lord, and against his Anointed (Acts 4:24-26).

This prophecy is taken from Psalm 2. An examination of this passage shows that it is a prediction of an international atheistic, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, politico-religious convention. It is an international convention because the kings of the earth and the rulers are the delegates; it is atheistic because it is against God; it is anti-Semitic because it is against Jehovah, who reveals Himself as the God of Israel; it is anti-Christian because it is opposed to the Messiah, God's Anointed; it is a political convention because the delegates are simply politicians; finally, it is a religious convention because they meet for the express purpose of outlawing the religion of the Jews and the religion of the Christians.

It is clear from the context that the disciples, in their praying, applied Psalm 2:1-3 to the action that was taken against the Lord Jesus by "Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel" (Act 4:27). According to this statement, there were two petty Roman officials who took action against Christ. The Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court, likewise tried and condemned Him, but by no stretch of the imagination can those taking action against Jesus be thought of as comprising an international convention. Nor could what they did against Him in any wise be interpreted as the action that will be taken against God and the Messiah by this international congress as foretold by the Psalmist. Nevertheless, the spirit-guided disciples applied the original prophecy to the illegal trial, mock condemnation, and criminal execution of Jesus.

When one considers all the factors entering into this case, he sees that this prophecy falls into the classification of a literal fulfillment plus an application to another situation. The action taken against Jesus by His enemies was a partial fulfillment of the prophecy.

The prophecy in its setting (Psalm 2:1-3) envisages an international convention which takes counsel "against Jehovah, and against His anointed, *saying*, Let us break their bonds asunder, And cast away their cords from us." This forthcoming international congress, in its spiritual blindness, will be bold enough to think that it can count God and His Messiah out of all human affairs and bury them along with the pagan superstitions of primitive times. The prophecy of this Psalm will probably be fulfilled in the middle of the Tribulation. In this connection let us

bear in mind that the plans of man will utterly fail, but the counsel of God will stand fast.

- 10 Jehovah bringeth the counsel of the nations to nought;
 He maketh the thoughts of the peoples to be of no effect.
 11 The counsel of Jehovah standeth fast for ever,
 The thoughts of his heart to all generations (Ps. 33: 10, 11).

5. ACTS 7: 49, 50

The next prophetic passage calling for attention is found in Acts 7: 49, 50:

- 49 The heaven is my throne,
 And the earth the footstool of my feet:
 What manner of house will ye build me? saith the Lord:
 Or what is the place of my rest?
 50 Did not my hand make all these things?

In addressing the Sanhedrin, Stephen, the first Christian martyr, traces the history of Israel from the call of Abraham to the days of Solomon. He calls attention to the fact that Israel worshiped idols during the wilderness wanderings, although they had with them the tabernacle of testimony erected at Sinai. King David wanted to build a habitation for God. The Lord would not allow him to do so, but permitted Solomon to build the Temple. In this connection Stephen calls attention to the fact that God does not dwell in material buildings made with the hands of men. To prove this proposition, he quotes from Isaiah 66: 1 ff. When one studies this passage, he sees that the Prophet was given a vision of Israel's building a Temple for the worship of God. At the time that Isaiah saw this vision, Solomon's Temple in its magnificence was still standing in Jerusalem. In view of these facts, it is quite obvious that Isaiah was given a vision of Israel's building a Temple for God in the future. This passage, therefore, presupposes the destruction of Solomon's Temple which was destroyed by the Babylonians at the time of the Exile. At the end of the Babylonian captivity the Temple, on a much smaller scale, was erected by Zerubbabel. This Temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. From that day until now Israel has been without a Temple and its sacrificial services.

An examination of the context of Isaiah's prediction regarding the rebuilding of the Temple shows that the Prophet was carried forward in vision by the Spirit of God to the time of the end and saw Israel building the Temple and worshipping thereat. Several

other passages presuppose the reconstruction of the Temple. In the light of all the facts it is clear that the prophecy regarding the rebuilding of the Temple is to be taken literally.

6. ACTS 8:32, 33

The next passage to be considered is a quotation from Isaiah, chapter 53, found in Acts 8:32, 33. The eunuch, treasurer of Ethiopia, who had been to Jerusalem to worship, was returning home and was reading from Isaiah the Prophet. At that time Philip the evangelist was conducting a revival in Samaria. The Lord spoke to Philip, commanding him to stop the campaign in order that he might bring a message of salvation to the Ethiopian. The eunuch was traveling on the highway from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip was on the road from Samaria going southwestward. This road ran into the Jerusalem-Gaza highway. God times all events in order to bring the maximum good to those who are seeking after Him and after truth. "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, *even* to them that are called according to *his* purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Both men came to the fork of the road at the same time. The eunuch was reading Isaiah the Prophet:

32 Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this,
He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
So he openeth not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:
His generation who shall declare?

For his life is taken from the earth (Acts 8:32, 33).

These men came together at the psychological moment, for the eunuch was reading the very passage which served as a text for Philip to proclaim Christ to him. Thus God had prepared the heart of the eunuch for the gospel message by causing him to read this glorious servant passage. The good seed of the gospel message, proclaimed by Philip, fell into soil that had been prepared for it, and it brought forth abundantly.

This quotation from Acts, taken originally from Isaiah, chapter 53, which the eunuch was reading, foretells the attitude that the Messiah of Israel, the Servant of this passage, would manifest—the attitude of humility and nonresistance.

7 He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its

shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who *among them* considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke *was due?* (Isa. 53:7, 8).

When this passage is read in the light of the gospel accounts, it is clear that the prediction was fulfilled literally.

7. ACTS, CHAPTER 13

Now let us turn to the Apostle Paul's address in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia, the account of which is found in Acts, chapter 13. In this message the speaker briefly sketches the history of Israel from the time of the Exodus to his day. Then he announces to the audience that God has, according to promise, "brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." Instead of accepting Him as their Messiah, they rejected Him.

27 For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled *them* by condemning *him*. 28 And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet asked they of Pilate that he should be slain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the people. 32 And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, 33 that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure *blessings* of David (Acts 13:27-34).

Seeing evidence of dissatisfaction and opposition on the part of certain ones in the audience, the Apostle warned them of the seriousness of the situation, saying, "40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon *you* which is spoken in the prophets: 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; For I work a work in your days, A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you" (Act 13:40, 41).

This quotation is taken from Habakkuk 1:5. Seeing the wickedness of the Chosen People, the Prophet complains to the Lord regarding this situation. To him it appeared that God is indifferent to the prevalence of violence and sin among His people. In reply, the Lord, speaking through the Prophet, calls upon the surrounding nations to observe political developments in the Tigris-

Euphrates Valley. At that time the old Babylonian kingdom that had been buried under the dust of centuries was coming to life through the activity of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar. By Habakkuk's time the neo-Babylonian Empire was marching forward from victory to victory, conquest after conquest.

In the rise of Babylon to a commanding position among the nations of the world, God was behind the scenes, figuratively speaking, directing all activities. The Lord, therefore, through Habakkuk, says to the nations, "I am working a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you." Old Babylon never would have arisen from her grave of the past by her own power. It was God who brought her back upon the stage of historical events and used her as a rod in chastening His disobedient, sinful people, Israel. Babylon's reappearance upon the stage of nations was, therefore, the work of God.

Knowing the ignorance, superstition, and doubtings of the heathen nations and their blindness regarding God in His relation to human affairs, Habakkuk reveals the attitude which they would take toward His message. In a dramatic manner, he makes known their attitude by commanding them, saying, "Behold ye among the nations, and look, and wonder marvelously. . . ." According to this statement, they would look at the work of God in human affairs—the rise of Babylon to a position of world power—in wonderment, being unable to understand the simplest facts and basic truths of human life and relations. Being blinded by Satan, they would not believe any explanation concerning God's working in human affairs, regardless of how logical and conclusive.

God is the Creator and lone Sovereign of the universe, who works all things according to the counsel of His will (I Chron. 29:10-12; Eph. 1:11). He rules and overrules the free choices and actions of men. According to Habakkuk, God works in the political realm.

God works in other spheres also—in the spiritual realm—as the Apostle Paul shows by his quoting Habakkuk 1:5 and applying the principle stated therein to his audience. Some of these, bound by tradition, superstition, and ignorance, withstood the message of truth delivered by the Apostle, who cautioned them concerning the danger into which they were about to plunge. He gave this warning in the language of Habakkuk 1:5: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; For I work a work in your days, A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you" (Acts

13:41). The Apostle does not quote the verse verbatim but rather paraphrases it, emphasizing the spiritual implication—that those who despise and reject the Messiah will perish.

According to Paul's use and interpretation of Habakkuk 1:5, God works in the spiritual realm as well as in the material. After all, spiritual matters are of far greater importance than material, physical matters. In both instances, however, God is working for all lovers of Himself and of truth.

In view of these facts presented, it is clear that this prophecy was interpreted literally by the inspired Apostle.

8. ACTS, CHAPTER 15

The next prophecy to be examined in this study is a quotation from Amos, chapter 9, which appears in Acts, chapter 15. In this passage an account of the first church conference is recorded. Certain Judaizing teachers, members of the Jerusalem church, were insistent that the formula for salvation is Christ plus circumcision and keeping the law of Moses. These misinformed and misguided teachers went as far as Antioch in Syria, propagating their peculiar views and causing much trouble—not only in Antioch, but in other places a little later. The Antioch Church sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles and elders in regard to this matter. After a great deal of discussion on the subject, Peter made a short but important speech:

7 And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; 9 and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they (Acts 15:7-11).

As all can see, the Apostle Peter in a few words showed that God now is accepting both Jews and Gentiles who come to the Lord Jesus by faith. "But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they" (v. 11).

After Peter had made his speech, Paul and Barnabas gave a report of their first missionary tour (v. 12).

James, the writer of the Epistle bearing his name and half

brother of the Lord Jesus, summarized the contents of Peter's speech and showed how this program fits into the prophetic picture, saying, "Brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After these things I will return,

And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen;

And I will build again the ruins thereof,

And I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,

And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,

18 Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old (Acts 15: 13b-18).

By the proclamation of the gospel, God is now, during the present dispensation, visiting the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, and is taking out a people for His name, the Church. But James declared that God is first visiting the Gentiles. He is visiting them first—first before what? Before Jehovah returns and builds again the tabernacle of David, before He re-establishes the Davidic throne and restores the kingdom to Israel. "And thou, O tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, yea, the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem" (Micah 4: 8). When the disciples asked the Lord Jesus, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority" (Acts 1: 6, 7).

According to James, God takes out of the Gentiles a people for His name first, before He restores the former dominion to Israel. With this program the words of the prophets are in perfect agreement. Then James quoted from Amos as one of the prophets teaching this position (Amos 9: 11, 12). This program outlined by James is in perfect alignment with that found in Amos. When one examines Amos 9: 7-15, he sees that verse 7 speaks of God's overruling providence, guiding and directing the movements and affairs of various nations. According to verse 8, God's eyes were against the sinful kingdom of Israel to destroy it. This prophecy was literally fulfilled in the overthrow of the commonwealth of Israel in A.D. 70. According to verse 9, when God overthrows the kingdom of Israel, He sifts as grain those surviving that catastrophe among the nations of earth. According to verse 10,

"All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, The evil shall not overtake nor meet us." This verse foretells the purging of all sinners of a certain type from Israel by the Lord, who has them slain with the sword. When this verse is studied in the light of related passages, one sees that this prophecy refers to the purging of Israel by the Lord in the Tribulation.

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11). According to this promise, in what day will God raise up the tabernacle of David? There is but one answer; namely, the day that He purges all sinners from Israel. As we know from related passages, the Lord purges Israel at the end of the Tribulation. At that time the Lord Himself will come and take the world situation in hand. When He comes in fulfillment of many predictions, He "will return," according to Amos, to raise up the tabernacle of David.

A glance at Amos 9:11 and Acts 15:16 shows that James does not quote Amos literally, but he gives the correct sense. Amos uses the phrase "in that day," which was a normal, natural expression in the development of the thought of the context. On the other hand, James uses the phrase "after these things." After what things? After the completion of the program of calling out of the Gentiles a people for God's name. What will God do? He said, "I will return, And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen. . . ."

What is the significance of the expression "return"? It signifies that God the Messiah has been here once, has gone away, and will return at the appointed time. What will He do when He returns, according to this verse? He will restore Israel and the Davidic kingdom. Is God interested in Israel alone? Not according to this prophecy. He will return and set up the Davidic kingdom "that the residue of men may seek after the Lord" (v. 17a). God is interested in men as men because each one has an immortal soul and must spend eternity somewhere. It is the will of God that none should perish, but that all should come unto repentance (II Pet. 3:9).

An examination of the prophecy from Amos, chapter 9, in the light of its original setting, shows that James interpreted it literally, and that his interpretation is in perfect alignment with the prediction of Amos.

9. ACTS 28: 26, 27

The last passage quoted from the Old Testament to be examined in this study of prophecy is Acts 28: 26, 27. Upon arriving in Rome, Paul called the leaders of the Jews to confer with them. At this time he stated the facts concerning himself and his being in Rome and appointed a day for them to meet with him again for further conference. When they met the second time, Paul expounded the Scriptures from morning till evening, testifying the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning the Lord Jesus. The group was divided—some believing and some disbelieving. The meeting broke up “after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, 26 saying,

Go thou unto this people, and say,
 By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;
 And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:
 27 For this people's heart is waxed gross,
 And their ears are dull of hearing,
 And their eyes they have closed;
 Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
 And hear with their ears,
 And understand with their heart,
 And should turn again,
 And I should heal them (Acts 28: 25b-27).

This quotation is from Isaiah 6: 9, 10. Isaiah, chapter 6, records his call and commission to the prophetic ministry. The idiom in the original Hebrew translated “By hearing ye shall hear . . . and seeing ye shall see . . .” emphasizes the thought of repetition. Isaiah was to keep delivering his messages regardless of circumstances and thus give his audience the opportunity of thoroughly hearing and seeing the truth which was being preached to them. The same idiom appears in Genesis 2: 17 in the clause “for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” A better and more accurate translation of the original is “for in the day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die.” The day that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, the force or power, here called death, descended upon him and began its deadly work, and continued to gnaw at his vitals, bringing about his ultimate death at the end of 930 years. Thus Isaiah was to keep continually preaching the message. The result, however, upon the individual depended entirely upon his attitude toward God and truth. Knowing the attitude

of the people in general of that day toward truth and righteousness, the Lord, by this special idiom, foretold that those who had ample opportunity to hear and receive the truth would not receive it because they had steeled their hearts against it. Unfortunately, many people in all ages have made their hearts adamant by hearing and seeing the truth, but not receiving it. The Apostle Paul quoted this passage from Isaiah and applied it to those in his audience who disbelieved the message. Thus he interpreted Isaiah's prophecy literally.

In this study we have examined the principal quotations from the prophets in the light of the context of each and have seen that all are to be interpreted literally. We have also discovered that there are four general types of prophecy: *the purely literal*, as Matthew 2:6; *the literal plus a typical significance*, as Matthew 2:15; *the literal plus an application*, as Matthew 2:18; and *the literal plus the idea of a summary* as Matthew 2:23.

Sometimes we hear it said that a passage is highly figurative. What is meant by this expression? Those using it usually mean that such a passage is most difficult to understand, that it is unintelligible. Figures of speech basically stand for realities; therefore one must understand the figure that is being used. Everyone knows that a simile, a metaphor, a personification, and the like stand for realities. In studying the prophets or any of the rest of the Scriptures, one must make allowances for figures of speech, as he does in any other literature, and interpret accordingly.

IV. THREE BASIC LAWS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY

Although there are many fundamental principles⁹ involved in the interpretation of prophecy, only three can here be mentioned.

A. The Golden Rule of Interpretation

Since the Scriptures are God-breathed and are very specific, there is only one way for a person to arrive at the purpose of the Holy Spirit in giving His message. God said what He meant and meant exactly what He said. In order to understand the Scriptures, one must know the use of languages: the grammar, the specific meaning of words, and the fundamental laws of speech—

⁹ For brief statements of the most fundamental principles of interpretation, see "Some Basic Laws of Interpretation" in *The World's Greatest Library Graphically Illustrated*, by David L. Cooper, from which the present material is taken.

especially the principles which are characteristic of the Scriptures. Only the most important and fundamental rules of hermeneutics are stated here—the basic and, indeed, the all-inclusive one of which is *The Golden Rule of Interpretation*.

Jesus gave the *Golden Rule* of conduct, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7: 12). This is a basic principle in one's relation to his fellow man. *The Golden Rule of Interpretation* is just as fundamental in the field of the interpretation of language as our Lord's precept is in the realm of ethics and conduct.

Origen, a great Christian scholar, who lived during the latter part of the second and in the first part of the third century, came under the influence of Greek philosophy in the form of Neoplatonism. He adopted some of the so-called principles of this philosophical system and evolved what has become known as the allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures. According to this theory, there is a spiritual meaning of the Bible in addition to that which is plain and obvious. Origen accepted the literal interpretation of the Word, but claimed that in addition to it there was this hidden, spiritual meaning. Everything to him was, therefore, allegorical. He read into the Scriptures this so-called spiritual meaning and built up a mystical system of theology. This method of interpreting the Word wrought havoc in the early church and started what is known as "spiritualizing the Scriptures." Its baneful effects have been felt throughout the centuries. The Christian world has never entirely freed itself from the tenacles of this heathen, subjective approach to God's holy, infallible Word.

The only antidote to this blighting method of handling the Bible is the principle called *The Golden Rule of Interpretation*: When the plain, obvious sense of Scripture makes common sense, one is to seek no other sense. One is to stop there and is not to read subjectively into the record something that is foreign to the context. The Word of God is spiritual and does not need to be doctored in order to make it more so. If one man can read into a given context his own ideas and claim that such is the significance of the passage, another can do the same thing and can read into the record his conception of its meaning. Whenever one adopts the spiritualizing method, he opens the floodgates to every type of speculation, suggestion, and theory. One must not, therefore, go beyond the plain, literal meaning of the Scriptures unless the

facts of the context indicate a deeper, hidden, or symbolic meaning. When, therefore, such evidence is lacking, one must positively accept the literal meaning of the text. On the other hand, if there is absolute proof that the language is, for instance, symbolic, then one is to interpret the given passage in the light of all the evidence, not only of the immediate connection, but in the light of that which is found in parallel cases—if there is such.

But suppose the plain, literal, meaning does not make common sense. In that event one may be assured that, since the Scriptures do not make nonsense, a figurative or metaphorical sense is intended. Then one is to interpret such a passage in the light of the usage found in parallel cases.

Almost every word in all languages has not only a literal, primary, original meaning, but also derived connotations. For instance, in an unabridged dictionary, some English words have as high as twenty-six meanings listed. Whenever the literal sense of a given word does not fit in with the facts of the connections, one is to select that definition which is in perfect accord with them. But in every instance, one is to take the primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning if possible.

An abridged statement of this most important rule is "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the context indicate clearly otherwise." This rule assumes that all truth harmonizes and that there are no discrepancies between accurate statements of facts. This maxim reads in its unabridged form: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise." If anyone follows this criterion, in the spirit and letter of the principle, he can never go wrong. On the other hand, if he fails to follow it, he can never be right. (The reader will do well to memorize and master this rule in order that he may be governed thereby in all his study of the Word.) This principle is true, as it applies not only to the Bible, but also to any document or oral conversation regarding any subject.

B. Law of Double Reference

Another principle for which one finds many applications is *the law of double reference*, or the *manifold fulfillment of prophecy*.

The prophets constantly speak of a local or current event and then, without giving any intimation of a change of scenery, begin to describe a more remote and a greater one, which by far transcends the situation that gives rise to the prediction. This principle might be illustrated by a stereopticon which gives the dissolving effect. One picture is thrown upon the screen. Presently it begins to fade, and at the same time the dim outlines of another begin to appear. By the time the first has faded, the second is in full view. The prophets often blend a prediction relating to the first coming of Christ with one foretelling the Second Advent. In such presentations the entire Christian Dispensation is passed over.

One must master this rule if he is to understand the messages of the prophets.

C. *The Law of Recurrence*

A principle which obtains throughout the prophetic Word is that which is known by Bible students as *the law of recurrence*. After making a statement relative to something in the future, the prophets give a fuller discussion, covering the same ground, but laying the emphasis in a different place. The second presentation is supplemental to the first. It, therefore, clarifies the picture.

As an illustration of this principle, see Genesis, chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 is a synopsis of the work of the six days of reconstruction. In Chapter 2, however, the Holy Spirit gives a second discussion, especially regarding the creation of man. The first account relative to this miracle is found in Genesis 1:26-31. In Genesis 2:7-25 is a second and a fuller description together with a record of his residence in the Garden of Eden. These two accounts are not to be explained upon the basis advanced by the destructive critics—that they came from two sources and are, therefore, contradictory—but upon the sound, fundamental principle of the law of recurrence.

Another illustration of this important law is found in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, which foretell the invasion of the Holy Land by the nations constituting the great northeastern confederacy. (For a full discussion of this important and timely theme, see *When Gog's Armies Meet the Almighty*, by David L. Cooper.) In chapter 38 the Prophet gives the full description of this stupendous world-changing event. He presents the general outline of the incidents that will at that time take place. In chapter 39:1-16 he simply covers the same ground, speaking of the identical affairs, but laying emphasis on different events. One must recognize that

this duplicate account, given according to the principle of the law of recurrence, is but a second view of the one prediction.

In Revelation, chapters 17, 18, and 19, John follows this same law. In chapter 16 he outlines events as they occur during the second half of the Tribulation. That period ends at the close of chapter 16, but in chapter 17 the Prophet goes back to the beginning of this second half and speaks of the overthrow of Babylon the harlot. The facts of this chapter show that this interpretation is correct. Chapter 18 speaks of the literal city of Babylon, which is destroyed at the end of the Tribulation. In chapter 19 is an account of the marriage supper of the Lamb and Christ's coming all the way to earth at the conclusion of the Tribulation. Thus when John pens these three chapters, after giving the outline of the second half of the Tribulation in chapter 16, he is simply following the law of recurrence.

This principle is a most important law which finds many applications throughout the Scriptures. The Bible student should master this principle to the extent that he can recognize an application of it whenever he comes across it.

A person wishing to become proficient in the interpretation of prophecy should procure a good standard work on Biblical hermeneutics. He should study such a work with an open mind, seeking to know and to do the will of God.

CHAPTER II

THE TWO COMINGS OF THE ONE MESSIAH THE FIRST FULFILLED, THE SECOND UNFULFILLED

A THOROUGH examination of the prophetic Word shows that there are four general types of Messianic prophecy. A failure to recognize this fact leads to endless confusion and misunderstandings and beclouds many vital teachings of Moses and the Prophets.

The first type presents the first coming of the Messiah or some event or events connected with it. An examination of Deuteronomy 18: 18 in the light of its immediate context reveals the Messiah's first coming. Psalm 16: 8-11 assumes the death of the Messiah and foretells His Resurrection. Psalm 40: 6-10 is a marvelous prophecy concerning the God-man for whom, as is seen in related passages, God prepares a body. Isaiah 7: 14 foretells the miraculous conception and virgin birth of the Messiah.

The second classification of the Messianic prophecy embraces those predictions which foretell Messiah's Second Coming. The prophets constantly speak of the Second Coming and events connected therewith. See the following passages in their connections which focus attention on the Second Coming: Psalms 2; 48; 72; and 132; Isaiah 2: 1-4; Isaiah, chapters 24; 32; 33; 35; and 60; and Jeremiah 3: 11-18.

The third kind of Messianic prophecy consists of those predictions which blend the two comings of the one Messiah into a single picture. Examples of this kind of prophecy are found in Genesis 3: 15; 49: 10; Psalm 22; Isaiah 9: 5-7; 11: 1-12: 6; Zechariah 6: 9-15; 9: 9, 10. In this type of prophecy the interval separating the two comings is omitted. The predictions concerning the two comings are blended into a single prophecy.

The fourth and last type of Messianic prophecy presents the entire redemptive career of the Messiah. Examples of this kind of prediction are found in Psalm 110; Isaiah 42: 1-4; 61: 1-3.

I. THE REDEMPTIVE CAREER OF KING MESSIAH

110 Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
2 Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion;
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

- 3 Thy people offer themselves willingly
 In the day of thy power, in holy array:
 Out of the womb of the morning
 Thou hast the dew of thy youth.
- 4 Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent:
 Thou art a priest for ever
 After the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110: 1-4).

The first statement of this Psalm, "Jehovah said unto my Lord," is a revelation which the Lord God Almighty—God the Father—makes to Him whom David recognizes as his Lord. When this statement is examined in the light of related passages, it is clearly seen that David is here speaking of the Messiah as his Lord.

The exhortation "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" assumes that Messiah, David's Lord, has enemies and is in some way associated with them. He is, therefore, urged to leave the place where He is—among the enemies—to ascend to heaven, and to sit at the right hand of God Almighty—for a given time, "until I [God the Father] make thine [Messiah's] enemies thy footstool." Who are Messiah's enemies in this passage? The answer to this question is found in verse 2. As is well known by all students of the Hebrew language, what is known as Hebrew parallelism in verse 2 gives the answer. The first line makes a positive prediction concerning Messiah's reigning in Zion, Jerusalem. Line two of this verse repeats the thought of line one and speaks of the people of Zion, the Jews, as Messiah's enemies. This verse, therefore, shows who are the enemies of the Messiah mentioned in verse 1.

Since the passage shows that the people of Zion become Messiah's enemies, it is clear that Messiah, the God-man, leaves heaven, comes to earth, and in some way becomes associated with the Jewish people. Instead of welcoming Him as they should, they become hostile; they become His enemies. When they assume this attitude, God the Father invites the Messiah to leave earth, to ascend to His right hand in heaven, and to be seated there in honor and glory. He is to remain there until God providentially makes these "enemies thy [Messiah's] footstool." The period beginning with the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish people, during which He is seated at the right hand of God the Father, is known as the Christian Dispensation. When God providentially brings the faithful remnant of Israel to the point of repudiating their national sin of rejecting Messiah and also of pleading for

His return, the Messiah will come to earth and champion the cause of Israel. Their doing so is foretold in verse 3: "Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power, in holy array: Out of the womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of thy youth."

The entire redemptive career of the Messiah is set forth in Psalm 110, consisting of His first coming, which occurred nineteen hundred years ago; His being rejected by His people; His death, burial, Resurrection, and Ascension to heaven; His session at the right hand of God the Father throughout the Christian Dispensation; His Second Coming in the near future; and His reign of righteousness over all the nations of the earth.

A. The First Coming of the Messiah

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). In this verse the two comings of the one Redeemer, Immanuel, are seen. But special emphasis is placed upon His coming to earth as the seed of the woman, who at His Second Coming will deal a fatal blow to the seed of the serpent, Satan's man. Genesis 49:10 is also an example of the third type of Messianic prophecy, with special emphasis on His first coming.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh come;
And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.

A passage which is purely of the first type of Messianic prophecy is Isaiah 7:14, which reads: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

In a scholarly volume such as *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, by J. Gresham Machen, may be seen the evidence proving the miraculous conception and virgin birth of the Messiah. Isaiah 7:14 deals with the first coming. Micah 5:2 likewise speaks of the place where He is to be born when He enters the world the first time, assuming the form of man.

Another verse of importance is Isaiah 9:6, which, though it falls into the third type of prophecy, lays great emphasis on the first coming: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name

shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." In discussing the destruction of all the weapons of war and the cessation of all human conflicts, Isaiah speaks of the birth of a Child upon whose shoulders will rest the government of Israel. Following this statement is a list of the names by which this One will be known. The birth mentioned in this verse can refer only to the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Messiah, foretold in Isaiah 7:14.

While He was yet upon earth, He wrought many marvels and miracles which astounded those who had eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand. But the miracles which He will perform when He returns will far surpass those wrought at His first coming, and also those performed at the time of the Exodus (Jer. 23:7, 8) so that the former things will fade from the minds of the people in their contemplation of the marvels wrought at the time of His return. Hence His name shall be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

The passages dealing with the first coming of the Messiah turn the spotlight on the various phases of His entrance into the world and His activities for the redemption of the human family.

B. *The Age of Grace*

61 The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of *the prison* to them that are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified (Isa. 61:1-3).

Although this passage deals with the entire redemptive career of King Messiah, in this connection it is the interval following His first coming which interests one especially at this time, but one must see the specific prophecy in its connection in order to evaluate it properly.

In verse 1 appears the prediction of the coming of the Holy Spirit from Jehovah God in heaven to the Messiah on earth. The coming of the Spirit is to equip the Messiah, the God-man, for the special work of redemption, for which He comes into the world. He is thus equipped and assisted by the Spirit to preach the good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted—to

regenerate the lost who accept Him—to liberate the spirits of the saved (Old Testament believers) held as captives in Sheol, and to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor and the day of vengeance of our God. Messiah functions in the various capacities which have just been enumerated when He comes the first time. Though His death, burial, and Resurrection are not stated in this passage, they are assumed by the statement "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." The connection between these items becomes apparent by the study of related passages.

Jesus, at the beginning of His ministry, spoke in the synagogue of Nazareth when He was invited to do so. When the scroll was given to Him, He found Isaiah, chapter 61, the very passage under consideration. Having read this Scripture, He declared that it was being fulfilled at that time. In saying that the prediction was being fulfilled on that day, the Lord did not mean that the entire passage was being fulfilled, but that it began to be fulfilled on that day. This interpretation is demanded by the facts of the context. This idiom is a common one, which is easily understandable. In other words, Jesus asserted that He was the one spoken of by the Prophet and that He was beginning the work foretold by Isaiah.

According to this prediction, the Messiah proclaims, or makes an announcement, concerning two periods of time: the year of Jehovah's favor and the day of vengeance of our God. The first period is thought of, or compared with, a year; the second, with a day. One has a right to believe that an approximation of the ratio exists between these two periods that obtains between a day on the one hand and a year on the other. The longer period is thought of as one of Jehovah's favor—a time when God is especially extending grace and mercy to mankind. The shorter period is a time of vengeance of our God, a period when God is forced to deal with mankind in wrath and indignation. This period of wrath, or vengeance, is mentioned in the Scriptures under different names. It is called the day of Jehovah, the great day of Jehovah's wrath, and the time of Jacob's trouble. From various Scriptures one learns that this period of wrath is one of seven years. Since the day of vengeance is seven years long, the day of Jehovah's favor, which is compared with a year, would be approximately 365 times as long as the day of vengeance. This day of Jehovah's favor is the Christian Dispensation, in which God is extending

His mercy and grace to mankind in a way He has never done before and never will afterward.

From this Scripture one learns that the period of grace began with the first advent of Jesus of Nazareth and is to be followed by the period of vengeance of our God. Words can hardly express the distress and sorrow which will envelop the globe during this time of vengeance. But Messiah will be able to comfort all who mourn—because of their sins—and all who repent, turn to Him, and accept Him as Lord and Saviour.

At the end of the day of vengeance, Messiah appears on earth “to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified” (Isa. 61:3).

From the facts presented in Isaiah 61:1-3, the age of grace, which is called the year of Jehovah’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God, which is the Tribulation, separate the two comings of the one Messiah (Ps. 110:1, 2; Isa. 42:1-4). Other passages teach this same general truth, but the limited time and space here do not permit further investigation and discussion.

C. The Second Coming of the Messiah

As has been seen thus far, the redemptive career of Messiah consists of His first coming to earth, entering it by miraculous conception and virgin birth; the age of grace; and His Second Coming. In view of the abundance of evidence already presented, it will be necessary in this connection only to mention very briefly His Second Coming.

One of the basic passages presenting Messiah’s Second Coming is found in Deuteronomy 32:39-43. This prediction is the conclusion of Israel’s National Anthem. In Psalm 18:1-19 is a marvelous and graphic picture of Messiah’s Second Coming, when He takes the world situation in hand and establishes His reign of righteousness upon the earth. According to Isaiah 63:1-6, Messiah will first come to Edom to deliver the hard-pressed children of Abraham there besieged. The Prophet Habakkuk gives one of the most vivid and graphic descriptions of the Messiah’s return to earth and the havoc that will be wrought by the mighty titanic strokes of God, enraged over the depths of sin and degradation—and defiance of God—into which the world at that time will have

plunged (Hab. 3: 1-15). (See Chapter VII of this volume for a full discussion of the Second Coming.)

The sages of Israel saw in the Scriptures the various types of prophecy regarding Messiah. They noted the fact that He would suffer and die according to certain predictions. They also saw those predictions which foretell His achievements and triumphal conquests. They could not harmonize such seeming contradictions. Some of them attempted to harmonize the varying elements by asserting that there would be two Messiahs: Messiah the son of Joseph, the Messiah of suffering; and Messiah the son of David, the triumphant conqueror.

Other expositors of Israel attempted to solve the problem by saying that the two types of prophecy foretell two different ways in which the Messiah may come. According to these interpreters, if Israel is still living in sin and rebellion against God at the time that Messiah appears, He will come meek and lowly riding upon an ass, as foretold in Zechariah 9: 9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." On the other hand, if the nation of Israel would live one day free from all sin, Messiah would come on the clouds of heaven, as foretold by Daniel 7: 13, 14:

13 I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The last passage on the Second Coming to be noted is Revelation 19: 11-21:

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

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come *and* be gathered together unto the great supper of God; 18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh (Rev. 19:11-21).

It is overwhelmingly evident that the predictions of the Second Coming of the Messiah await fulfillment, and that they will be literally fulfilled, as were the predictions concerning His first coming.

II. PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE FIRST COMING OF THE MESSIAH AND THE PRESENT AGE FULFILLED

From Eden down through the centuries, Moses and the Prophets pointed forward to the coming of the Messiah. As an artist begins painting a portrait and makes his first stroke with his brush—following it with others until the portrait is finished—thus the men of God, figuratively speaking, guided infallibly by the Spirit, began to paint Messiah's portrait from Eden onward. The first suggestion regarding Him, on the sacred pages of truth, is found in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The expression "the seed of the woman," occurring only in this verse, is strikingly peculiar. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures the progeny is always reckoned after the male, not the female. To all who believe that the Scriptures are infallibly inspired by the Spirit of God, the expression "the seed of the woman" is a veiled reference to the virgin birth of the world's Redeemer. This germinal thought is brought out into the clear light of truth and fact by the revelation found in Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

A. In the Birth of Jesus of Nazareth

The Apostle Matthew was led by the Spirit of God to write an account of the life and activities of Jesus of Nazareth, whom he presented to the Hebrew nation as the long-expected Messiah. He bases his testimony regarding Jesus upon predictions found in the writings of Moses and the Prophets. The reading is clear, logical, and forceful. Those who believe the messages of Moses and the Prophets, and who read the testimony of the Apostle Matthew, cannot avoid the conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the true Messiah, who came at the time scheduled and died vicariously for all who will believe and receive Him as Lord, Saviour, and Messiah.

That the reader may have the benefit of the inspired record regarding the virgin birth of Jesus of Nazareth and of His being the fulfillment of the Old Testament predictions, the account is herewith given:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Immanuel;

which is, being interpreted, God with us. 24 And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; 25 and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JESUS (Matt. 1: 18-25).

Luke, the beloved physician and associate of the Apostle Paul, was a historian of the first magnitude. He did research, as is set forth in his introduction to the Gospel Record bearing his name:

1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, 2 even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, 3 it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; 4 that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed (Luke 1:1-4).

Luke explored all evidence, tracing it to its source, and has given a scientific account of the conception and the birth of Jesus. After the completion of this research on the life and the activities of Jesus, the Holy Spirit led him, as a true scientist, to select what he should write from the material which he had gathered. Thus he has given this scientific and inspired record of the life and labors of the Lord Jesus Christ in the form of the Gospel according to Luke.

Herewith is the account of the Angel Gabriel's Annunciation of the birth of Jesus to Mary:

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. 31 And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, Elisabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. 37 For no word from God shall be void of power. 38 And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her (Luke 1: 26-38).

Herewith is also the matchless account of the birth of the Lord Jesus by this reputable, inspired historian:

Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. 2 This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; 5 to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child. 6 And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her first-born son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. 9 And an angel of the Lord

stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: 11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them (Luke 2:1-20).

B. In the Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus

In the courts of Israel the law delivered by Moses was the standard by which all cases were to be tried. By the testimony of two or three witnesses every word was to be established. God the Father sent His only begotten Son into the world "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). The Lord chose certain disciples to whom He providentially gave firsthand information regarding His life, death, Resurrection, and Ascension. These witnesses—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—were guided by the Spirit of God to give forth a distinct account of the life and labors of Jesus. By the testimony of four witnesses the case of Jesus stands by itself alone. Nothing in all the records of man can approach the accounts of His matchless life.

C. In the Course of Church History

Moses (Deut. 32:21) and Isaiah (Isa. 65:1) foresaw the body of believers called the "body of Christ," or Church of God. In Matthew, chapter 13, occur the seven parables of the kingdom, which, in a broad way, outline the course of the kingdom of God during the Christian Dispensation. In the Great Commission Jesus charged the disciples to "make disciples of all the nations":

19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:

20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28: 19, 20).

God is now visiting the Gentiles, calling forth all who will believe to a life of consecration and service to Him. "Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After these things I will return,

And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen;

And I will build again the ruins thereof,

And I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,

And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,

18 Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old (Acts 15: 14-18).

By the preaching of the truth, the kingdom of God has been carried forward through the centuries. As this last quotation states, after God has called forth believers from all nations, Messiah will return and will restore the kingdom to Israel.

When the New Testament is studied carefully, it is seen that the first coming of the Messiah and the Christian Era, foretold by the prophets, have been fulfilled. There can be, therefore, no question on these points.

III. THE SECOND COMING OF THE MESSIAH UNFULFILLED

Those passages which foretell the Second Coming of Messiah still await fulfillment. There is nothing that has occurred, and that can in any wise be interpreted, as the complete fulfillment of predictions regarding the glorious world-shaking and world-shaping events which will occur when Messiah rends the heavens, comes back to earth, and sets up His reign of righteousness, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2: 14).

CHAPTER III

THE SIGN OF THE END OF THE AGE

THE last week of the life of Jesus was full of activities, but these necessary labors did not crowd out His fellowship and communion with God the Father in prayer. His clash with the Jerusalem authorities ended with His unparalleled denunciation of the scribes and the Pharisees, whom He called hypocrites (Matthew, chapter 23). His denunciations were spoken only to and about those who were hypocritical, for there were notable examples of the highest type of honor and integrity among the Pharisees. With this scathing message to the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus concluded His public earthly ministry.

During Passion Week, Jesus spent each night in Bethany and returned to Jerusalem the next day. The day on which He denounced the Pharisees was probably Tuesday. Having spoken this last message, He left the Temple and went to Bethany. Upon reaching the summit of the Mount of Olives, He sat down and delivered the message called the Olivet Discourse, a brief outline of which is as follows:

Prophecy regarding the destruction of the Temple (Matt. 24: 1, 2).

A brief survey of the Christian Dispensation and the Tribulation (Matt. 24: 3-31).

The Rapture of the Church and the rewarding of the saints (Matt. 24: 32—25: 30).

The judgment of the living nations at the Second Coming of Christ (Matt. 25: 31-46).

Since, however, the aim of this discussion is not to expound the entire message of the Olivet Discourse, but to discover the sign of the end of the age, only that portion of Scripture which bears upon this subject is quoted here, namely, Matthew 24: 1-35:

24 And Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way; and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. **2** But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? **4** And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray. **5**

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray. 6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for *these things* must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. 8 But all these things are the beginning of travail. 9 Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. 12 And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold. 13 But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come.

15 When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), 16 then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains: 17 let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house: 18 and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. 19 But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! 20 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath: 21 for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe *it* not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 Behold, I have told you beforehand. 26 If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe *it* not. 27 For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. 28 Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

29 But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; 33 even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, *even* at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

I. PROPHECY REGARDING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

As Jesus was leaving the Temple, His disciples came to Him and called His attention to the buildings of the Temple. Luke, in his account of this incident, states that some spoke to Him of the Temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and offerings. Knowing that the disciples were unduly interested in the material phases of the Temple and of its services, Jesus foretold its complete destruction: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." This prophecy was literally fulfilled. In the war of A.D. 70 the Romans captured Jerusalem and completely destroyed the city. Although Titus, the Roman general, ordered his men to spare the Temple, one of them threw a burning fagot into it which set the sacred structure on fire and completely destroyed it. Later, according to reports, the Romans dug up the foundation in quest for the gold which had been melted by the fire, and which had run down between the stones. In their search for this gold, they literally fulfilled this prophecy of Jesus.

II. QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE APOSTLES

When Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives—looking back toward the city and the Temple—Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him and asked two questions: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3).

The mention of the destruction of the Temple caused the disciples to think of two events associated with the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem. When two or more ideas are associated in one's thinking, the mention of one frequently pulls related or associated ideas out of the subconscious mind into the field of consciousness. Often one says, "That reminds me. . . ." Such an expression is an echo of the operation of the same psychological principle. Without a doubt three definite events were associated in the minds of the apostles. Jesus mentioned one of them in referring to the destruction of the Temple. His speaking thus pulled up into the field of consciousness two other associated ideas: namely, His coming in glory and power and the ushering in of the Golden Age, the Millennium. Are these three ideas—the destruction of the Temple, the coming of Christ in glory, and the introduction of the new era—associated in any passage in the Scrip-

tures? Most certainly. In Zechariah, chapter 14, for instance, the Prophet foretells the destruction of Jerusalem in the day of Jehovah (vv. 1, 2), the going forth of Jehovah to battle against the nations besieging Jerusalem when His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (vv. 3, 4), and the golden era of the Millennium when Jehovah will be King over all the earth (v. 9 ff.). By asking this question, the Apostles showed that they were familiar with the Book of Zechariah, at least with chapter 14, and possibly related passages. All people who want the truth should search the Scriptures daily. To neglect to do so is a tragic mistake. Jesus answered the two questions raised by the apostles. Matthew, however, gives His answer to the second question only—"and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The answer to the first question is recorded in the parallel passage of Luke 21: 20-24.

An examination of Matthew 24:4-31 shows that Matthew did not record Christ's answer to the first question: namely, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, which occurred in A.D. 70. For in verses 4 and 5 Jesus warns against false messiahs. In verse 6 He speaks about the wars which characterize the Christian Dispensation. In verses 7 and 8 He designates the sign of the end of the age. In verses 9-14 He speaks of the first half of the Tribulation, which is called a period of travail. In verses 15-28 He discusses the second half of the Tribulation. Finally, in verses 29-31 He speaks of His glorious Coming after the Tribulation. In view of all these facts, one sees that Matthew does not record Christ's answer to the first question. On the other hand, a close scrutiny of verses 4-31 shows that in this passage Jesus was answering the question relative to the sign of His Coming and of the end of the world.

This second question is a double one. The apostles understood that there would be one sign of two events: the Second Coming and the end of the world. The expression "the end of the world" is very unfortunate. The apostles did not use the word that is usually rendered *world*, a term referring to the literal, physical, material earth. On the contrary, they used a term that generally refers to an age, a period of time. The apostles, therefore, understood that there would be some thing or some event which would serve as a sign of the nearness of Christ's Coming and of the end of the present dispensation, during which Christ is absent from the earth and in the presence of God.

III. WARNING AGAINST FALSE MESSIAHS

In verses 4 and 5 Jesus warned His disciples against being led astray by false messiahs. He revealed that many would come in His name, claiming to be the Messiah. They would come in His name, not as Jesus of Nazareth, but as the Messiah for whom the nation has long waited.

The first one who claimed to be the promised Messiah was Bar Cochba, who led a revolt against the Romans in A.D. 132. According to tradition, the famous Rabbi Akiba co-operated with and encouraged this impostor. The revolt against Rome dragged on for four years before it was finally suppressed. Those Jews who survived to the end of the war were banished from the country and scattered among the nations.

From time to time, since the days of Bar Cochba to the present, different ones have laid claim to Messianic honors and have promised the people of Israel deliverance from their oppressors and from the miserable plights in which they have found themselves. No doubt some of these men making such claims were honest, but deceived. In all probability some were deceivers and impostors. In many cases these false messiahs with inflammatory propaganda whipped certain unsuspecting and suffering Jewish communities into hysterical revolts against the civil authorities. On such occasions the governments against whom these revolts were launched blotted out, with ruthless iron hands, every vestige of insubordination. When these insurrections were suppressed, the civil authorities usually enacted legislation that limited the liberties of the Jews and made their lot more miserable—even approximating abject slavery in the Jewish ghettos.

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

IV. THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION

After warning the disciples against false messiahs, Jesus speaks of the period during which He would be absent from the world and foretells that it would be characterized by wars and rumors of wars: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for *these things* must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet" (v. 6). Although Jesus the Messiah is called by the Prophet Isaiah the "Prince of Peace," and by his disciples was thus recognized, He did not wish them to have any

delusions concerning the peace of the world. In His last quiet talk with them, He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). In both these quotations Jesus assumes that there will be wars and tribulations for His disciples throughout the period of the Christian Dispensation.

The reason that there will be wars throughout this era is that the causes of war are still here. What causes wars? In the first place, the one who first caused insurrection and rebellion against God's authority is still plying his nefarious activities wherever possible (Ezek. 28:11-19). In the Hebrew language he is called Satan, the adversary; in the Greek he is called the devil. By the Lord Jesus he is called the prince of the world (John 12:31 and 14:30). By the Apostle Paul he is spoken of as the prince of the powers of the air (Eph. 2:1-3). So long as Satan is loose in the world, that long there will be wars.

The second cause of wars is the unregenerated heart of man: "Whence *come* wars and whence *come* fightings among you? *come* they not hence, *even* of your pleasures that war in your members?" (James 4:1). So long as the hearts of men are not regenerated by the Spirit of God, just that long will there be strife and wars. Jesus said, therefore, ". . . *these things* [wars and rumors of wars] must needs come to pass."

When, however, the devil and all evil spirits are cast into the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3), and all men accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and become regenerated, we shall have a warless world—but never until then.

Whenever a local war breaks out, Jesus declares, "the end is not yet." For such wars have no prophetic significance since they occur throughout the Christian Era.

When an ordinary local war breaks out, the disciples are not to fear, nor to be troubled, because "the end is not yet." The end of what? The end of the period of which they were speaking—the end of the age.

V. THE SIGN OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING AND OF THE END OF THE AGE

When a local war breaks out, the end of the age is not yet. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. 8 But

all these things are the beginning of travail" (Matt. 24:7, 8). But what is the significance of the expression "nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom"? This expression is an Old Testament idiom found in II Chronicles 15:1-7. As one sees in II Chronicles 14:9-15, the kingdom of Judah had been invaded by a hostile force. Then the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the Prophet, who went out to meet King Asa of Judah, and who said,

2 . . . Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3 Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: 4 but when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. 5 And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity. 7 But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded (II Chron. 15:2b-7).

"This message was spoken directly to the king and to the people of his kingdom, 'all Judah and Benjamin.' Azariah laid down the general proposition that Jehovah is with His people when they are faithful to Him. He also pointed out that for a long season Israel had been without the true God, and a teaching priest, and the law. Then in their distress they had turned to and found Jehovah. In those days of moral and spiritual declension, declared the prophet, ' . . . there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity' (II Chron. 15:5, 6). Note the expression, 'There was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in.' What is meant by going out and coming in? Since the message was delivered to the king and the people of Judah, the southern kingdom, the going out and coming in can mean but one thing, namely, their going out of the kingdom of Judah into an adjoining country, and the coming in of a citizen of a neighboring nation by crossing the border into Judah. If an inhabitant of Judah, for instance, wished to cross the border into Israel in order to avoid the horrors of war, he did not escape, because there was war in Israel also. Thus it is clear from the facts of the context that before the prophet's mind appeared a vision of the kingdom of Judah and the nations bordering thereon. Great

vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the land of Judah and adjoining nations. These nations were 'broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city.' The conflict concerning which the prophet was speaking started by the rising up of one of these nations seen in the vision against another; then another came into the conflict. The struggle thus spread until it affected all the territory before the mind of the prophet when he made this historical statement."—From *Messiah: His Historical Appearance* by David L. Cooper, pp. 299-300.

Isaiah the Prophet uses the same idiom in Isaiah 19:1-4. He foretells the devastating civil war that would wreck the entire country. In foretelling it, the Lord uses this same idiom: "And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, *and* kingdom against kingdom" (Isa. 19:2). Since this Old Testament idiom, in the only two instances of its occurrence, indicates a war which breaks out by the rising of one nation against another, or one group against another, and the spreading of the conflict until it involves all the territory that is before the speaker's mind when he uses the expression, one is logically forced to accept the same significance when used by the Lord (Matt. 24:7). When Jesus says, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," He refers to a war that begins by the rising of one nation against another and by its spreading until it affects all the territory which is before His mind at the time. From the Olivet Discourse in which this idiom appears, one sees that Jesus has a world outlook in view when He uses the idiom. It, therefore, indicates a world war that starts by the rising of one nation against another and by its developing into a world war.

Having seen that the expression "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" on the lips of Jesus indicates a world war, one is in a position to continue his investigation as to the sign of the end of the age. According to Jesus, there will also occur famines and earthquakes in different places, and pestilences. "But all these things are the beginning of travail" (Matt. 24:8). All of what things? A world war, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in different places of the world.

These four disasters occurring at the same time are the beginning of travail. Another translation which makes the prophecy stand out in bold relief is "all these things are the first birth pain"—

the warning pain notifying the world that the time is at hand for the creation itself to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21).

Since Jesus gave a world war accompanied by famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in different places as the sign of His coming and of the end of the age, no one has any logical reason to expect the return of the Lord and the end of the age until these things have occurred. From time to time throughout the Christian Dispensation, men have arisen who have confidently expected the Lord to return in their own day and have proclaimed from the house-tops, as it were, that He was to return on a certain day. It is needless to say that these and all who accepted their teaching were sadly disappointed. God does not run the affairs of the earth according to man-made schedules and timetables. Neither does He fulfill prophecy according to the guessings and speculations of men. On the contrary, He fulfills His predictions as they are written. Men err, "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29).

Men must not put up their opinions, or what they think should be, as the criterion by which to judge what should or may come to pass. There is but one absolute norm—the infallibly inspired written Word. When the devil tempted the Lord Jesus, He took a positive stand upon the written Word, saying, "It is written." For Him the written Word was final.

One man looks at a given passage and declares that it teaches a certain doctrine. Another looks at the same passage and sees in it something entirely different. Again, the third man looks at it and is positive that it teaches something different from what the other two men see in it. All three cannot be right. Only one can be right. How can one know that he is interpreting the Scriptures correctly? The man who wills to do the will of God shall know of the doctrine of the Redeemer (John 7:17). Regardless of how brilliant a person may be, and what his educational qualifications are, he cannot see truth perfectly unless he is absolutely surrendered to do the will of God under all conditions, as God leads and enables him.

A person can take something into his heart that is questionable, that may develop into a spiritual idol, and that is influencing him unconsciously—without his being aware of what has come to pass in his very innermost soul—and at the same time he wants to

know the will of God on some important matter. As proof of this proposition, study carefully the following quotation:

14 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. **2** And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, **3** Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? **4** Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Every man of the house of Israel that taketh his idols into his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I Jehovah will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols; **5** that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols (Ezek. 14: 1-5).

One must, moreover, believe that the Scriptures are God's revealed will and that God said what He meant and meant what He said. Finally he must follow the Golden Rule of Interpretation: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

Has there been a world war attended by famines, earthquakes in different places, and pestilences, such as Jesus foretold in the Olivet Discourse? In the summer of 1914, without any declaration of war, Germany rose up against France and struck with her great military might; England entered the fray; then Russia threw her might into the conflict. From time to time different nations were drawn into the struggle. At that time, according to certain statisticians, there were sixty-four sovereign nations in the world. All but seven countries were involved: Denmark, Holland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. One or two of these seven were on the verge of entering when the war stopped, November 11, 1918. Without question all nations were affected by this holocaust of destruction.

By common consent, the great war of 1914-18 is spoken of as World War I. There is no question in the mind of the world about that great conflict being a world war. The war of 1939-45 is called World War II. Frequently we hear people talking about World War III, by which the world is often threatened. According to the sure word of prophecy, there will be three world wars during the Great Tribulation. As to whether or not there will

be another world war before the Tribulation begins, no one can say. But the Lord knows.

According to the prediction of Jesus, as we have seen, accompanying the war which He mentions are famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in different parts of the world. Was the world at that time plagued with any of these? There were famines on an unprecedented scale in eastern and central Europe, as well as in China and the Far East. According to some statistics, hundreds of thousands of people died of malnutrition and starvation. But what about earthquakes? There was an unprecedented number of earthquakes. What about pestilences? Myriads of people were swept into untimely graves by cholera and typhus epidemics; but, according to some statisticians, the flu epidemic of 1918-19 alone took a toll of approximately 23,000,000 people.

VI. THE PERIOD OF TRAVAIL

“But all these things are the beginning of travail,” or “But all these things are the first birth pain” (Matt. 24:8). As has already been seen, the events referred to by “all these things” are a world war, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various parts of the world. These disasters constitute the warning pain, notifying men that the period of travail is approaching. What is the significance of the expression *travail*? The prophets use this figure of speech to convey to the minds of men the distress and suffering that will come upon the world. For instance, Isaiah declares:

7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? shall a nation be brought forth at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith Jehovah: shall I that cause to bring forth shut *the womb*? saith thy God (Isa. 66:7-9).

Standing before an intelligent audience, Isaiah declares, “Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child.” He speaks in irony in order to grip the attention of the people. Then he asks, “Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?” These rhetorical questions demand an emphatic denial—No one! Along with these questions he asks, “Shall a land be born in one day?”¹ An impossibility.

¹ Some expositors, not noticing accurately the wording of the question, “Shall a land be born in one day?” (Isa. 66:8), have confused it with the prediction “And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day” (Zech.

"Shall a nation be brought forth at once?" The answer to this question—no. As the labor pains are necessary to the natural birth of a child, so there must be a period of suffering and distress before the new Israel is born. "For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." This translation of the Hebrew is accurate, but it does not fit in with the thought of the passage. Another rendering just as accurate and faithful to the text, and that accords with the drift of thought, is "When Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Zion, the mother of world-Jewry, figuratively speaking, must go through the period of travail in order that she might bring forth her children. As the labor pains in childbirth end in the birth of a child, so Zion's travail will result in the birth of the new Israel. God, who brings to the birth, lets nature take its course and allows the child to be delivered.

Jeremiah the Prophet uses the same figure of travail to convey the idea of intense suffering and applies it to the individual Israelite.

4 And these are the words that Jehovah spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith Jehovah: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child: wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it (Jer. 30: 4-7).

It is hard for one to visualize the intense suffering through which Israel will pass in the period of travail. Zechariah states that two thirds of the people of Israel will die during this period, and that the third part which survives will be further purged:

8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. 9 And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God (Zech. 13: 8, 9).

VII. A RAPID SURVEY OF THE TRIBULATION

In Matthew 24: 9-28 is a prediction concerning the Great Tribulation. Since in Chapter VI of this volume the Great Tribula-

3: 9). As one knows from parallel passages, Israel's period of travail will last seven years. When, at the end of the period, the remnant of Israel repudiates its national sin and pleads for mercy, God will remove the iniquity of that land in one day—the last day of the Tribulation (Hos. 6: 1-3). There is, therefore, no contradiction between these passages, but perfect harmony.

tion is discussed, only the briefest mention of various items will be made here.

As may be seen in Chapter V, the Rapture of all born-again believers occurs before the Tribulation begins and takes place between the events mentioned in Matthew 24:8 and those in verse 9.

The Great Tribulation continues for seven years. The first half of it is set forth in verses 9-14. In these verses one sees that the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be persecuted. Since the church will be removed before the Tribulation, who are these that will be persecuted during that time? They are the tribulation saints that are won to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ by the 144,000 Jewish servants of God who conduct the world-wide revival (Isa. 26:9; Rev. 7:1-17).

Since iniquity will abound and the tribulation saints will be persecuted, the love of the many—those who have made a public profession of Christ without being born again—will wax cold and fall away. During the Tribulation, “this gospel of the kingdom² shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14).

The second half of the Tribulation is presented in Matthew 24:15-28. In verses 15-18 Jesus assumes that the Jewish Temple will be standing in the Tribulation. Isaiah foresees the rebuilding of this structure (Isa. 66:1-4).

In verses 19-23 Jesus vividly sets forth the distress of the second half of the Tribulation. Nothing in the past or future can compare with it. If those days were allowed to continue, the entire human family would be wiped from the face of the globe. They have, therefore, in the counsel of God, been shortened.

Verses 23-28 foretell the appearance of false messiahs and false prophets who will by the power of Satan perform wonders in order to deceive the people. These miracles will be of such a nature that even the elect will have difficulty in determining the origin or the power by which they are wrought. These false leaders will claim that the Messiah is present in the world, having secretly come. When, however, the Lord comes, His glory will emblazon

² In Galatians 1:6-10 Paul declares that there is but one gospel. When matters concerning the Kingdom stand out in bold relief, the message is called the gospel of the Kingdom. When, however, the emphasis is placed upon the grace of God, the message is called the gospel of the grace of God. When the gospel is thought of in connection with eternity, it is called the everlasting gospel.

the heavens and will flash across the skies as the lightning flashes from east to west.

VIII. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND THE RAPTURE OF THE TRIBULATION SAINTS

At the conclusion of the Tribulation, the last blackout that is mentioned in the Scripture will occur: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matt. 24: 29). This prediction is to be interpreted literally.

When the entire earth is enveloped in midnight darkness, "then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Matt. 24: 30a). The inhabitants of the world will be terrified and mourn, for they shall see the sign of the Son of man which will burst in full-orbed splendor in the skies above.

Then Christ will send forth His angels with the sound of a trumpet to gather His elect from the four corners of the globe. Who are these elect? They are undoubtedly the tribulation saints who survive to the end of the Tribulation.

IX. THE BUDDING OF THE FIG TREE

In Matthew 24: 1-31 the Lord Jesus has given a general survey of the period beginning with His time, running through the centuries and terminating with the Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation. As has been noted, this passage simply is a sketchy outline of this period; but in Matthew 24: 32—25: 46 Jesus, following the principle of the law of recurrence, adds details to what He has already said. The principle of the law of recurrence may be illustrated by the artist who, in painting a portrait, first "blocks it out" and, at subsequent sittings, adds new details. Thus the portrait is blocked out in Matthew 24: 1-31, and new details are added in Matthew 24: 32—25: 46, as follows:

32 Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; 33 even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, *even* at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only. 37 And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. 38 For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and

drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, 39 and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. 40 Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: 41 two women *shall be* grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left. 42 Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. 44 Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45 Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. 48 But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; 49 and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken; 50 the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, 51 and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

25 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them: 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.

14 For *it is as when* a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey. 16 Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. 17 In like manner he also that *received* the two gained other two. 18 But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. 20 And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 And he also that *received* the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few

things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; 25 and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. 26 But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; 27 thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. 28 Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. 30 And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: 32 and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; 33 and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; 36 naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? 38 And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. 46 And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

In this passage, Jesus urges the disciples to learn a lesson from the fig tree. Whenever it begins to put forth its leaves, "ye know that the summer is nigh." What is meant by the fig tree? Some interpreters say that it stands for the Jewish nation. It is true that in certain passages the fig tree does symbolize Israel, but the facts of the context in such cases must indicate that a literal meaning is not intended, but rather that a symbolic significance is in-

tended. Is there evidence in this context justifying one's interpreting it symbolically? There is no such evidence. According to the Golden Rule of Interpretation, if the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, one is to seek no other sense. Being governed by this unquestionably correct principle, one must interpret the passage literally. When the fig tree (Luke in his record adds "and all the trees" [Luke 21:29]) puts forth its buds, one may know that summer is near in that part of the world.

X. "WHEN YE SEE ALL THESE THINGS"

"Even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know that he is nigh, *even* at the doors" (Matt. 24:33). What is meant by "all these things"? One minister said that the term in this connection means all the things which Jesus has mentioned in the verses 15-28 immediately preceding, concerning His personal return. This position cannot be correct, because Jesus says "When ye see all these things," one can know that He (Jesus) is nigh. When one actually sees the Lord coming, he will not say that the Lord is near, but will know that the Lord is here. This interpretation, therefore, cannot be correct, but must be studied further in the light of all the facts.

The expression "all these things" of verse 33 is logically an echo of the same expression of verse 8: "But all these things are the beginning of travail." As has already been seen, "all these things" of verse 8 are a world war, famines, earthquakes in divers places, and pestilences, which, as previously shown, are the sign of Christ's Coming and of the end of the age. Since Jesus is discussing the same point—His Second Coming—in verses 32 and 33, He is logically using the expression "all these things" with the same significance.

In view of the Lord's teaching concerning the sign of His coming, it behooves every Christian to be about the Father's business. Everyone should ask God to open his eyes to the seriousness of the hour and should act accordingly. He should also pray the Lord to enable him to see the facts as they are and to avoid all speculation.

CHAPTER IV

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ON ONE occasion some Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and asked that He show them a sign from heaven. Since He had wrought miracle after miracle, all of which were manifest to the multitude, they doubtless made this request, not to have their faith strengthened, but to ensnare Him in some error :

16 And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and trying him asked him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 But he answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather*: for the heaven is red. 3 And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day*: for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot *discern* the signs of the times. 4 An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah. And he left them, and departed (Matt. 16:1-4).

According to this testimony of Matthew, Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of His opponents by calling their attention to the fact that they could forecast the weather by the appearance of the sky, but could not read the signs of the times—the fulfillment of prophecy and the miracles wrought by Him to attest His message. Then He uttered a scathing denunciation of these, His contemporaries: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah." Though Jesus labeled His generation in general as an evil and adulterous one, there were many notable exceptions as the Gospel Records clearly show.

As one sees from the reading of the Gospels, Jesus performed many miracles and wonders—both before and after this clash with the Pharisees and the Sadducees, but all of them had a special local situation in view. There was, however, but one sign wrought by Jesus which was beamed, not to some local situation, but to the entire nation. This one miracle was the "sign of Jonah"¹ (Matt. 12:39, 40).

I. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES OF THE FIRST CENTURY

A. *The Virgin Birth of the Messiah*

One of the first signs of the times indicating the dawn of the Messianic Age was the miraculous conception and virgin birth of

¹ For a discussion of the sign of Jonah the Prophet, see *Messiah: His Historical Appearance* by David L. Cooper, pp. 237-240.

Jesus of Nazareth. The record of certain facts pertaining to the birth and early life of the Babe of Bethlehem is found in Matthew, chapters 1 and 2, and in Luke, chapters 1 and 2. These records have a ring of sincerity, simplicity, and divine revelation. Nothing bizarre is to be found in connection with them. No special efforts were used to spread the glad announcement of the Messiah's birth. After the flight to Egypt and the return to the land of Israel, Jesus lived in obscurity in the village of Nazareth in Galilee. When He began His public ministry, nothing was said about His birth—by either friend or foe, until the last year of His life. Jesus usually attended the set feasts at Jerusalem. When He attended the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:1—10:21), He had several clashes with the Jerusalem authorities.

At this time, certain Jews believed ² that Jesus was the Messiah, to whom He said, "If ye abide in my word, *then* are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31b, 32). This statement was the occasion of a sharp word battle with the Jerusalem authorities. This discussion is of such importance that it must be reproduced here:

33 They answered unto him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. 35 And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. 36 If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you. 38 I speak the things which I have seen with *my* Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from *your* father. 39 They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this

² The word in the original rendered *believe* is a broad term. Its significance in a given case must be determined by the facts of the context. Its meaning ranges from intellectual assent to absolute trust. The facts of the present passage show that on this occasion those who are said to have believed simply for the time being accepted in a superficial manner the position that Jesus was the true Messiah and acted accordingly.

Jesus was at Jerusalem during the Passover season mentioned in John 2:13-25. At that time He performed many miracles and many people believed on Him.

But He did not trust Himself to them because He knew the fickleness and the unreliability of man. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did. 24 But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men" (John 2:23, 24).

did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *Even* because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. 45 But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear *them* not, because ye are not of God (John 8: 33-47).

The discussion rose to the boiling point on the part of some of the opponents of Jesus when He said, "Ye do the works of your father." Then the pent-up animosity, hatred, misinformation, and ignorance concerning the facts regarding the birth of Jesus boiled over in the explosive utterance, "We were not born of fornication; we have one father, *even* God." Straws, we are told, show which way the wind is blowing. This unguarded expression tells volumes. The authorities at Jerusalem knew about the birth of Jesus—that it was supernatural in that it was not a normal natural one. They might not have understood the implications of the facts which they knew, and which they explained on a naturalistic and immoral basis.

Rumor, superstition, and ignorance circulated an infamous lie concerning the birth of Jesus which claims that His mother was a Jewish harlot and His father a Roman soldier. It is quite probable that this statement "We were not born of fornication [as you were]" was an echo of this libelous report.

B. John the Baptist

The second sign of the times which proved that the Messianic Era was dawning was John the Baptist—the herald announcing the coming of King Messiah and His establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth. Concerning John the Baptist and his ministry, the Apostle Matthew speaks of his life and labors in the following passage:

- 3 And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, saying, 2 Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight.

4 Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about the Jordan; 6 and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: 9 and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and ~~in~~ fire: 12 whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire (Matt. 3: 1-12).

According to Matthew's testimony, there "went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about the Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. 3: 5, 6).

Flyvius Josephus, the well-known Jewish historian of the first century, gives the following testimony concerning John and his ministry:

"Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called *Baptist*; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do any thing he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's sus-

picious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure to him."

Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*,
Bk. XVIII, Ch. V, Par. 2 (Winston Ed.)

According to the unimpeachable testimony of Matthew, the nation was temporarily awakened by the preaching of this bold, courageous herald of the Messiah. Many of the people confessed their sins and were baptized in the Jordan by John, in expectation of Messiah's soon coming. Their repentance, however, was soon forgotten; and the nation fell back into its spiritual lethargy. Nevertheless, John the Baptist was one of the signs of the times.

C. *The Baptism of Jesus*

A third sign of the times consisted of events connected with the baptism of Jesus. He "went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16, 17). As stated in this quotation, the heavens were opened when Jesus was baptized, and the Spirit of God visibly, in the form of a dove, descended out of the heavens upon Jesus, and a voice from the Almighty declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." As is indeed evident, these events did not take place in a corner.

D. *Jesus' Galilean Teaching and Healing Ministry*

A fourth sign of the times of Jesus consists of His Galilean teaching and healing ministry, recorded in Matthew 4:23-25:

23 And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. 24 And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. 25 And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Judæa and *from* beyond the Jordan.

From this passage, one sees that the country was greatly shaken by the ministry of Jesus, for "there followed Him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and *from* beyond the Jordan."

E. Jesus As a Teacher

On one occasion, the Jerusalem authorities sent officers to take Jesus: "And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. 45 The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why did ye not bring him? The officers answered, Never man so spake" (John 7: 44-46). The officers who had been sent to arrest Jesus would not lay hands on Him because never had man spoken as He did. These men had spiritual discernment because they recognized that Jesus could not be classed with other men. They revered Him and dared not lay hands on Him.

If one considers the great teachers of the world, he will find only a very few. All their teachings are marred more or less by imperfection and basic errors. Few, if any, have ever dug down to a solid foundation of real facts and basic principles and consistently stood thereupon.

The cornerstone of the foundation of the temple of knowledge and understanding is the fear of Jehovah.³

10 Wherefore David blessed Jehovah before all the assembly; and David said, Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. 11 Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is *thine*; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou art exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all (I Chron. 29: 10-12).

To fear Jehovah is to recognize one's absolute and utter dependence upon the Almighty; for it is "in him we live, and move, and have our being . . ." (Acts 17: 28). To fear Jehovah is to recognize that God "would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2: 4). To fear Jehovah is to render adoration and praise to Him, which are correct expressions of principles, facts, and reality.⁴ Concerning the attitude

³ "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; *But* the foolish despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1: 7). To fear Jehovah is to recognize the existence of the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Creator of the universe. To fear Jehovah is to recognize, along with King David, His absolute sovereignty.

⁴ God is not, as some unbelievers have thought, a self-centered tyrant whose egotism feasts upon seeing His creatures groveling in the dust before Him and begging for mere existence; but He is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. 57: 15).

of God toward the human family, His providential activities in behalf of those for whom He can consistently work, and His glorious plans for the future regarding them, one should meditate upon the following passage :

- 4 Jehovah is high above all nations,
 And his glory above the heavens.
 5 Who is like unto Jehovah our God,
 That hath his seat on high,
 6 That humbleth himself to behold
The things that are in heaven and in the earth?
 7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
 And lifteth up the needy from the dunghill;
 8 That he may set him with princes,
 Even with the princes of his people.
 9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house,
And to be a joyful mother of children.
 Praise ye Jehovah (Ps. 113:4-9).

Jehovah, being the God of truth, seeks those to worship Him who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. In asking men to worship Him, He does so because He wishes them to acknowledge principles, facts, and truths as they are.

To fear Jehovah in the ways just described is the proper perspective from which to view all things. Jesus of Nazareth, the God-man, took His stand and stood firmly on these fundamental principles.

An examination of the life and teachings of Jesus shows that on all occasions and at all times He stood upon the basic principle of the life just discussed: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge."

At the age of twelve, He went to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover with Mary, His mother, and Joseph, His foster father. At the conclusion of the festivities, the pilgrims started homeward. The parents of Jesus supposed that He was among them; but, when they could not find him, they returned to Jerusalem:

And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: 47 and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. 49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? (Luke 2:46-49).

The respectful and profound reply of Jesus to the reprimand of Mary shows that at this early age He realized that He sustained

a special, yes, a unique, relationship to God the Father. With Him, at this time, as always, the fear of Jehovah was the beginning of knowledge.

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. 51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2: 50-52).

The Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7, is acclaimed by some Biblical and literary critics as one of the greatest pieces of literature in existence. The depth of thought, the breadth of vision, the terseness and pointedness of every utterance, and the comprehensiveness of eternal issues prevent anyone's classifying Jesus as a mere man.

II. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

As has been seen, certain events of the First Century showed that the coming of Messiah was close at hand. Although the evidence was crystal clear and unmistakable, the bulk of the nation of Israel rejected Him when He did appear. In a manner similar to this situation God has pointed out certain events and movements that characterize the Twentieth Century, and that point most definitely to the conclusion that the Second Coming of the Messiah is at hand. Though the prophets have delineated the last days of the present era, only seven predictions will be discussed here.

A. Increase of Wickedness

When man yielded to temptation and sinned, his nature was corrupted: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). Regarding the sinfulness of man, this statement appears in Ecclesiastes 7: 29: "Behold, this only have I found: that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." After the Fall the bulk of the human race plunged headlong into sin and wickedness. An inspired account of man's turning away from God and following the phantoms of his sinful nature appears in Romans 1: 18-32:

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; 19 because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested

it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, *even* his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: 21 because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves: 25 for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.

28 And even as they refused to have God in *their* knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: 32 who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them.

A careful examination of history shows that man's nature has remained the same through the centuries. Some have erroneously thought that education, culture, and refinement can change the nature of man, but they cannot. Men and women are as wicked today as they have ever been, as all right-thinking people will admit. The only thing that can change man's nature is the work of regeneration in the heart of the believer accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

A passage which throws a bright light on the moral and spiritual conditions of the world in the end time is found in Psalm 92:6-9:

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

When the wicked spring as the grass and the workers of iniquity flourish, it will then be time to destroy them from the face of the globe forever. The springing up of the wicked on every hand and the flourishing of the workers of iniquity constitute one of the signs of the end time.

Another significant statement bearing upon the lawlessness of the end time is in Psalm 119:126: "It is time for Jehovah to work; *For* they have made void thy law." Whenever men make null and void the Word of God, it is time for God to act—drastically. Ever since rationalism invaded the Christian and Jewish ranks, there has been a growing sentiment and tendency to discount the Word of God. This underrating of the Word of God is likewise one of the signs of the times.

Another passage which deals with the conditions of the end time is Matthew 24:37-39:

37 And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. 38 For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, 39 and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

The civilization of Noah's day was godless, pleasure-loving, and utterly indifferent to all spiritual values. Materialism was the order of the day. At that time, Jehovah, looking down upon man, "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). The civilization of Noah's day is typical of that of the end time. The average person today is little interested in spiritual values. Pleasure and material gains seem to engross largely the thinking of humanity. The present time is rapidly taking on the complexion of the times of Noah. This fact is pointing directly to the last days. The trend of our civilization, therefore, is one of the signs of the times.

A detailed statement of the attitude and the actions of men and women in general is set forth in the following prophecy:

3 But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; 5 holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away. 6 For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, 7 ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (II Tim. 3:1-7).

B. Increase of Knowledge and Travel

In the Book of Daniel, chapters 10-12, is the last vision that was granted to Daniel the Prophet, who foretells, in a very brief manner, World War II of the Tribulation (Dan. 11:36-45). In Daniel 12:1 the Prophet begins his sentence by saying, "And at that time. . . ." Since in the two preceding paragraphs Daniel is talking about the events of the Tribulation, what he says in chapter 12 pertains to the same time and events.

12 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (Dan. 12:1-4).

Though this passage is replete with fundamental eternal truths which should be emblazoned on the skies because of their importance, they must be passed over here for lack of space. According to verse 4, Daniel was instructed to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end. . . ." His shutting up the words and sealing the book were symbolic acts indicating that the knowledge would not be accessible to people in general until the time of the end. The Book of Daniel, as also the Book of Revelation, has been the happy hunting ground of guessers and speculators. In this time of the end, with centuries of Christian history serving as a background, the messages of the Book of Daniel become bright and shining lights. To study, to trace, and to interpret the Book of Daniel—especially chapters 2, 7, 9 and 10-12—are to see in a new and a logical way the absolute inspiration and infallibility of this Book. Since we are in the time of the end, the Book of Daniel furnishes the general background for the understanding of the Book of Revelation. Each of these Books supplements the other.

In the time of the end "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4b). This utterance, without doubt, foretells the increase of travel in the end time.

It is likely that to certain of the prophets some of the methods of present-day travel were revealed. Ezekiel, for instance, seems

to speak of an air-borne armada from Russia that will swoop down upon the Holy Land. In addressing Gog, the generalissimo of a great aerial armada, Ezekiel says, "And thou shalt ascend, thou shalt come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy hordes, and many peoples with thee" (Ezek. 38:9). Note that the language is very specific—"Thou shalt ascend." To ascend is to go up. "Thou shalt come like a storm." After ascending, Gog, with his hordes and many peoples, comes like a storm. How would military men of today interpret such language? Gog with his hordes comes thundering down from the North upon the Holy Land. "Thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land." Probably there is echoed in this language a vast number of planes involved in this operation, because "thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land."

Isaiah probably saw the Jews returning to their land by air, as well as by ships. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" (Isa. 60:8). The Prophet says that they fly, and he compares their flying to a floating cloud and to doves flying to their nests. It is likely that in this passage the Prophet foresaw the Jews returning to their home by air.⁵

Nahum, the Prophet, was given a vision concerning Nineveh, the capital of ancient Assyria. In this oracle he foretells the siege and fall of Nineveh. This prophecy may have had a partial fulfillment in the past. There are indications, however, that it awaits its complete and full realization. This interpretation is based upon facts in the context.

The following verse is of special significance: "The chariots rage in the streets; they rush to and fro in the broad ways: the appearance of them is like torches; they run like the lightnings" (Nahum 2:4). Nahum sees what he calls chariots dashing to and fro at tremendous speeds in the streets and the public squares of the city, having lights which remind him of torches. Their movements are indeed rapid, because he compares their speed to

⁵ Many of the Yemenite Jews returned to the land of their fathers by air. When I was in the State of Israel in December, 1949, and January and February, 1950, this transportation was called the magic carpet. One morning I was at the Lydda Airport and saw eight big transport planes that had arrived the night before from Yemen. I happened to look on the inside of these planes and discovered that all the seats had been removed. I was told that each of these brought one hundred Yemenite Jews. The seats had been removed to make more room for the largest number of passengers and to accommodate them to their regular manner of sitting on the floor.

flashes of lightning. These chariots are war chariots, because the Prophet is describing a siege and fall of Nineveh. Are these chariots literal? This interpretation is possible. Another interpretation is that the Prophet speaks of mechanized war equipment of the end time in terms of the equipment of his own day and that possibly what Nahum calls chariots is to be understood as modern tanks. This interpretation appears to be the correct one. For a similar case, see Joel 2:1-11. When automobiles were first manufactured, fifteen to twenty miles an hour was considered the speed limit. At the present time modern automobiles can move at a rate of more than 150 miles an hour.

Travel is indeed on the increase. Someone has tersely and aptly said that the present generation lives on wheels. With the passing of each year, travel is increasing. People are on the go.

In scientific circles, the aims and aspirations of men now seem to be focused on travel in outer space. The scientists are feverishly working to make such travel possible. Some scientists and statesmen today are laying plans and formulating national policies to govern in the age of space travel. To many thinkers much of the talk about travel in outer space is the wild fantastic dreamings of an overwrought imagination. The wise and prudent one, however, will hold himself in a modest reserve, awaiting developments before committing himself.

Without doubt travel is on the increase. People now travel by land—automobiles, busses, trains; by air—in planes of many different types; and by sea—on the surface and beneath the waters.

Daniel also states that knowledge will increase. Illiteracy has been characteristic of the masses of all nations throughout the centuries. Only the privileged few, the rich and influential, have had an opportunity, and have availed themselves of it, to acquire an education. But in the Twentieth Century literacy is increasing very rapidly all over the world. The people of all nations are on the march in their quest for knowledge and understanding—even though, figuratively speaking, they often stumble and fall. Though their forward march is slow, they are making gains all the time.

In the most highly intellectual and advanced nations, knowledge is increasing rapidly. Constantly the boundaries of the fields of knowledge are being pushed back, and new areas are all the time being added to their present possessions. The scientists and research workers in all fields are toiling feverishly and are making

discoveries daily which startle the world. Each new discovery is a step forward toward new and better things—judged from the human standpoint. “But all that glitters is not gold.” Nevertheless, we thank God for the blessings and advantages which the labors of the scientists have made possible.

When one considers the illiteracy and ignorance of Daniel’s day in comparison with that of our own time, and when he understands Daniel’s statement “knowledge shall increase,” he is forced to the conclusion that Daniel was given, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, a vision of the last days. Without doubt, therefore, the running to and fro and the increase of knowledge are to be understood literally as referring to modern travel and man’s unprecedented acquisition of knowledge.

But these predictions must be studied in the light of the immediate context in which they appear. As already noted, Daniel, in chapter 12, discusses the situation which will exist in the world during the latter half of the Tribulation—“a time, times, and a half”: one year, two years, and a half year. As the Tribulation advances, the situation in the world deteriorates daily.

An examination of all the passages bearing upon the subject of soul-winning in connection with the Tribulation shows that the chief purpose of God’s sending the Tribulation is to bring about the world-wide revival. Daniel, therefore, says, “And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:3). Since, in discussing the Tribulation, Daniel states that “they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever,” he sees clearly that there will be those who show their wisdom by turning many to righteousness during the Tribulation. He sees *many* turning to righteousness—being saved. When Daniel 12:3, 4 is studied in the light of Revelation, chapter 7, it is clear that both Daniel and John place the world-wide revival in the Tribulation. In Revelation, chapter 7, John is very specific as to its magnitude. “After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev. 7:9). John is interested in this vast throng of saved people. When one of the elders asks him, “Who are they, and whence came they?” he in substance confesses that he

does not know. Then this elder informs him that "these are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). This verse shows beyond peradventure that this vast throng of people will come out of the great Tribulation. Daniel and John are, therefore, agreed that a great host of people will go into the Tribulation unsaved, will hear the message of the truth preached by those "that are wise" during the Tribulation, and will come out of the Tribulation having "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Since knowledge will have increased and will have largely banished illiteracy from the face of the earth, and since every means of transportation will be available, "they that are wise," who turn many to righteousness, will, from one standpoint, have a promising situation confronting them—promising, in the sense that all things will be most favorable for the proclamation and triumph of the gospel. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9b). The terrific judgments of the Tribulation may be thought of as rain which, coming in sufficient quantities, moistens the dry ground and makes vegetation spring forth. As the rain melts the hard clods, the judgments will melt the hard hearts of myriads upon myriads of people who under no other condition would think of spiritual things and of salvation. Truly "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Thus God will work out all things for the good of those who really will accept salvation—even though they are driven to do so by the unparalleled suffering and distress of the times. The bulk of people in that day will be in a state of spiritual stupor, caused by indifference to spiritual matters, godlessness, and lawlessness. Only such judgments as God will send upon the world at that time can arouse the bulk of humanity out of this diabolical stupor.

The judgments of that time will affect all men alike except the servants of God, the 144,000 Jewish Evangelists, who will be sealed against any injury and all hindrances.

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. **2** And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, **3** saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. **4** And I heard the number of

them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel (Rev. 7:1-4).

That the purpose of the sealing is to protect those thus sealed from dangers confronting them is seen by a careful study of a similar situation recorded in Ezekiel, chapter 9. That all humanity will suffer alike under the devastating judgments of God is asserted in the following passage: "And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the creditor, so with the debtor; as with the taker of interest, so with the giver of interest to him" (Isa. 24:2).

In the light of all the facts connected with the increase of travel and knowledge herein discussed, it is clear that God providentially will rule and make all events contribute to the advancement of His purpose of the ages and to the blessing of everyone who will let God have His way in his life.

C. Satanic and Demonic Activity

4 But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; 3 forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer (I Tim. 4:1-5).

According to verse 1 of this quotation, the Spirit of God emphasizes that in the last days evil spirits will be very active. The spirits to which reference is made are the demons who are under Satan. They are called seducing spirits because they seduce or lead people away from the truth and into error. From the very beginning, Satan, who is their master and king, adopted the plan of deception in order to accomplish his nefarious design; thus he planted doubt in the mind of Eve regarding God and His goodness. Many people will be led away from the faith by the "doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men, that speak lies. . . ." This statement seems to point to systems of doctrines inspired by demons and spoken—as well as written—by hypocritical people who have little or no regard for truth, for they are "branded in their own conscious as with the hot iron." Beware of cults!

The men through whom these demons speak will forbid people to marry. It seems that they oppose the God-ordained institution of holy matrimony and the home, because they are animated by the demonic teaching of free love.

These hypocritical and demonically inspired teachers will also command that men abstain from eating meats, which God added to man's diet after the flood (Genesis, chapter 9). All food which God provides for man ought to be eaten with thanksgiving.

According to the Lord Jesus, the type of civilization which existed prior to the flood will be dominant in the end of the age (Matt. 24: 37-39):

37 And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. 38 For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, 39 and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

A very clear picture of the antediluvian civilization is found in Genesis 6: 1-4:

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

Who are the sons of God? Likewise who are these daughters of men? Some exegetes believe the sons of God are the descendants of Seth, the godly line that descended from Adam. Other expositors are of the firm conviction that the Sons of God of this passage are fallen angels. Though we dare not be dogmatic on this point, the preponderance of evidence supports the latter position. Nowhere are good and righteous men of the Old Testament called sons of God. In Job 38: 7 the angels are called sons of God. Moreover, we are told that the Nephilim were in the earth in those days. The word *Nephilim* means "fallen ones." These fallen ones took unto themselves wives of the daughters of men. From these unions sprang a race of giants, "the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown." These facts support the interpretation

that the sons of God are fallen angels. Further confirmation is found in Jude 6 and 7:

6 And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

The angels of whom Jude is speaking kept not their principality, but left their proper habitation. In doing so, they did as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah who gave themselves over to fornication and went after strange flesh—flesh that was not human, but animal—an abomination in the sight of God (Deut. 27:21). In going after strange flesh, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were acting as the fallen angels had done in going after flesh strange to them.

Since, according to Jesus, the civilization of the end time is to be like that which preceded the flood, and since demon activity characterized that period, there is perfect harmony between the statement of Jesus and that of Paul regarding demon activity of the end time.

During the first part of the Tribulation, demon activity will reach its highest point, as is set forth in Revelation, chapter 9. The special activity of demons which begins before the Tribulation, and which is one of the signs of the times, will reach its culmination in the Tribulation.

D. Men Not Enduring Sound Doctrine

The message of eternal redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ was first spoken by Him and was confirmed to the generation succeeding the apostles by those who heard Him personally.

2 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away *from them*. **2** For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; **3** how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; **4** God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will (Heb. 2:1-4).

Jesus selected the Apostles, whom he thoroughly trained to carry on the work of proclaiming the truth after His departure.

In one of His quiet talks with them just before His arrest, He promised that the Holy Spirit would come and guide them into all the truth.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. 8 And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; 11 of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, *these* shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare *it* unto you. 15 All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare *it* unto you. 16 A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me (John 16: 7-16).

God gave the Scriptures for the guidance of His people. Each of the sixty-six books of Holy Writ was given for a definite specific purpose. If any portion of the Word is neglected or rejected, the one acting thus does so to his own spiritual detriment—he is the loser for both time and eternity. “16 Every scripture⁶ inspired of God *is* also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: 17 that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (II Tim. 3: 16, 17). The revelation of God has been completely given to His people, as Jude declares: “Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (v. 3).

The Word of God which we have in the form of the Bible is forever settled in heaven. “For ever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in heaven” (Ps. 119: 89). It cannot be changed one iota, for the Lord Jesus declares: “Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil” (Matt. 5: 17). According to Jeremiah 1: 11, 12, God watches over His Word to perform it—to fulfill every promise and to

⁶ The word *scripture* is derived from the Latin word meaning “to write.” In the Graeco-Roman world of the first century any writing was known as scripture. In this passage Paul states that only those writings that are God-breathed are profitable for spiritual guidance.

carry out every threat. "11 Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond-tree. 12 Then said Jehovah unto me, Thou hast well seen; for I watch⁷ over my word to perform it."

God warns the people of Israel neither to add to nor to diminish from the Word which He has delivered to them. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2). In the same tenor and for the same purpose the Lord, in concluding His revelation, warns men neither to add to nor to take from the words of the Book of Revelation. But this admonition applies to all the Books of the Bible. For the same reason all of them are equally inspired and are settled in heaven. Man, therefore, dare not attempt to alter or change any portion of the Scriptures.

Notwithstanding the truths and facts stated in this section, many people pay little or no attention to these solemn warnings. In these last days this indifference is especially evident, and it is becoming more so with the passing of time. The spirit of rationalism is dominating more and more the thinking of the educated classes and is causing them to doubt the Biblical verities. This deadly virus, like an epidemic, is spreading everywhere.

A spirit of laxity, lightness, and levity is settling down on the entire Christian world—with few and notable exceptions. All too often men do not ask, "What saith the Lord?" but, "What do we want?" The Apostle Paul foresees the nominal church of these days and warns, saying,

4 I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. 5 But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry (II Tim. 4:1-5).

In II Thessalonians 2:1-4, the Apostle Paul again, by the Spirit, mentions the falling away from the faith:

2 Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him; 2 to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or

⁷ The word which Jeremiah used in explaining to the Lord what he had seen in vision is the Hebrew term *shaked* and which means the watcher-tree. In reply to Jeremiah the Lord said, "Thou hast well seen: For I watch (*shoked*) over my word to perform it."

by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; 3 let no man beguile you in any wise: for *it will not be*, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, 4 he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.

According to verse 3 of this quotation, the Tribulation will not be, except the apostasy from the faith come first. The apostasy is a deliberate abandonment of the faith. Its real character may be seen in the light of I John 2: 18, 19:

18 Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us.

The Apostle Peter foresees the same departure from the faith and foretells it in the following passage:

2 But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of (II Pet. 2: 1, 2).

These false teachers bring in destructive heresies, or, according to the marginal reading, "sects of perdition." Since they are sects of heresies, it is clear that these groups are unsaved people, even though they make a profession of Christianity. Moreover they deny Jesus Christ, "the Master that bought them." In their thinking, they reduce Him to the stature of mere man.

E. *One-World Government*

We are told that history repeats itself and that it runs in cycles. The facts seem to bear out these generalizations. In the earliest times, civilization was headed up at Babel in the plains of Shinar (Gen. 11: 1-9). The type of culture that was built up was godless. With it, the Lord was displeased, as is seen in His judgment which fell upon it—the confounding of the speech of the people and their being scattered abroad to the four winds. From the historical record, one may logically conclude that the people of Babel were not only godless, but were rebellious in their spirit toward God and seemed to defy the Almighty and to challenge His prerogatives.

Because of the present trend of our time a number of students of the prophetic Word are convinced that the world civilization of the end time will be headed up in Babylon in the plains of Shinar. Historians have been in the habit of speaking of the unchanging East. For the last few decades—since World War I—the unchanging East is changing. A new day is dawning for it. The countless throngs of Asiatics have bestirred themselves and are now on the march. They are demanding that their voices be heard in the councils of the nations. Some modern historians see that the center of world political gravity, which has been located in western Europe for centuries, has in recent times been shifting eastward. Professor Toynbee is said to be among those who recognize this fact and is bold in expressing his opinion that Old Babylonia is probably the place to which world dominion will move within the near future. If history repeats itself at this time, Babylon will rise from its grave, in which it has been lying for centuries, and will become dominant among the nations.

It is indeed informative to study present world trends in the light of the infallibly inspired prophetic Word. According to Isaiah, chapter 13, "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride" will be destroyed in the day of Jehovah, the Tribulation. In order that this prophecy may be fulfilled, Babylon must be rebuilt on the magnificent scale set forth in this prediction. It will then be the glory of kingdoms. Jeremiah, in chapters 50 and 51, likewise sees the great city of Babylon—literal Babylon—standing as the dominant power of the end time. In Revelation, chapter 18, John the Apostle sees Babylon as the commercial center of the world, which will be destroyed at the very end of the Tribulation.

This conclusion is confirmed by the basic teaching of Daniel, chapter 7. The Prophet sees in vision the great sea, the waters of which are agitated by the four winds of heaven. Then emerges from it a lionlike beast, which comes upon the land and is dominant over all that it surveys. Again the waters are troubled by the blowing of the winds. This time a bearlike beast emerges from the troubled waters, comes upon the land, and is likewise master of all that it surveys. A third time the waters are agitated in like manner. Then a leopardlike beast comes forth that takes the place of the second one. For a fourth and final time, the waters are agitated. There emerges a nondescript beast, "terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; . . . it devoured and brake

in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it . . ." (v. 7).

Are these beasts literal, or are they symbolic? Daniel is disturbed about this vision until an angelic being explains the situation, saying, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, that shall arise out of the earth" (Dan. 7: 17). From this statement it is clear that these four beasts are symbols signifying kings. But according to Daniel 7: 23, "The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces." According to these two verses, these beasts signify kings and the kingdoms over which they reign. Figuratively speaking, in verse 17 Daniel uses the spotlight of prophecy, focusing light upon the ruler especially. But in verse 23, no longer using the spotlight but the floodlight, Daniel sees illuminated the entire realm over which the king rules. Thus a beast used symbolically signifies both the ruler and the realm over which he reigns. The facts of each context must point to the special meaning intended in each case.

To conservative scholars the lionlike beast symbolizes the Babylonian Empire; the bearlike beast, the Medo-Persian; the leopardlike beast, the Grecian; and the nondescript beast, the Roman.

Has Rome ever devoured the residue (of the nations)? The answer is, No. If Rome is signified by the fourth beast and is destined to devour the rest of the nations, according to verses 7 and 23, it must do so in the future. But did not Rome play her part in the historic drama and pass off the stage of human existence and activity? If so, how can this prophecy be fulfilled? The Roman Empire arose and succeeded the Grecian Empire, as indicated by Daniel's prophecy. But did it not pass out of existence in A.D. 476? This question is answered both affirmatively and negatively, according to the theory held. Daniel, however, answered it in the negative—the Roman Empire has not passed out of existence.

For the sake of clarity, let us think of Daniel as being at a moving-picture show. There are two screens—an upper and a lower. On the lower one, the visions of the four beasts are thrown. As just stated, Rome succeeded Greece. Daniel sits very observant of what he sees on the screen. He informs us that the fourth beast succeeds the third, taking its place. As the drama of this fourth beast unfolds before his enrapt vision, he declares, "I be-

held till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, *and* the wheels thereof burning fire" (Dan. 7:9). From the time that the fourth beast appears on the screen, Daniel focuses his eyes on it. Then he declares, "I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit. . . ." Note the words, "I beheld till thrones were placed. . . ." In other words, Daniel continues to look at the picture of the fourth beast on the lower screen from the time that it is first thrown until another picture is projected on the upper screen. This latter picture thrown on the upper screen is of the Almighty's entering the courtroom of heaven and of his pronouncing judgment against the world dictator of the end time. Since the fourth beast remains on the lower screen from the time it is first shown and continues there until the Almighty pronounces judgment upon the world dictator at the end of the age, it is certain that Rome as a world power succeeds Greece and remains there until the end of the age. Thus we can be certain that Rome did not pass away.

On the other hand, if Rome passed out of existence in A.D. 476, how could Daniel say that he continued to look at the fourth beast, the symbol of Rome, from the time it succeeded Greece until the judgment scene at the end of the Tribulation? Under those conditions, he would have had to say that he looked at the beast from the time that it arose to the time that it disappeared from the historic scene.

Has Rome continued in existence through the Christian centuries from the time that it arose, following the Grecian Empire, to the present time? And will it continue until the end of the Tribulation? To these questions I answer in the affirmative.

Additional light is thrown upon this situation by Daniel, chapter 2. The four world empires which are shown under the symbolism of the four beasts of Daniel, chapter 7, as we have just seen, are presented under the symbolism of the metallic image of chapter 2. The head of gold signifies the Babylonian Empire; the chest and arms of silver, the Medo-Persian Empire; the belly of brass, the Grecian Empire; and the legs of iron and feet and toes of iron and miry clay, the Roman Empire. On these points most conservative, believing scholars agree. Each of these metals signifies a different type of government—a literal civil government.

Rome, the fourth empire of the series, is a divided kingdom,

as indicated by the legs which join to the torso and continue all the way to the feet and toes. When this vision was shown to Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel, they doubtless concluded that this fourth kingdom, somewhere in the early stages of its career, would be divided into two sections, both of which would continue throughout its existence. But they doubtless concluded that, in the very end of the Empire, it would be subdivided into ten sections, as shown by the toes.

When the toe stage of this kingdom is reached, the God of heaven sets up "a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

As indicated by the legs, Emperor Diocletian in A.D. 285 divided the Empire into two sections—the western division, headed up at Rome; and the eastern, at Byzantium on the Bosphorus. The western section of the Empire collapsed under the sledgehammer blows of the Germanic tribes which invaded the country in A.D. 476. On Christmas Day, A.D. 800, Charles the Great was crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of the West. There were added to his territory the fragments of the destroyed Empire. Thus the center of political gravity shifted from Italian soil to French territory. In A.D. 962 Otto I of Germany crossed the Rhine, overthrew the Holy Roman Empire of the Frankish nation, and annexed the conquered territory to his realm. The center of political gravity of the western section of the Roman Empire was shifted from Frankish territory to Germanic soil and became known as the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation. The rulers of the empire called themselves Kaisers—Caesar spelled in German.

The name of the capital of the eastern half of the Roman Empire, Byzantium, was changed to Constantinople, the city of Constantine. The eastern part of the Roman Empire remained intact until A.D. 1453. At that time the country was overrun by invading Asiatic hordes that overthrew the government. The scholars fled to the West with their culture and learning, thus laying the foundation for the Renaissance and the Reformation. The politicians and statesmen fled northward into Russia and infiltrated the government. By so doing, they romanized the country, which was first headed up at Kiev. Later the government was shifted to Moscow, next to St. Petersburg, and in 1917 back to Moscow.

The Russian rulers, believing that they were successors of the old Roman Caesars, called themselves Czars—Caesar spelled in Russian.

From the facts just stated, and many others that could be given, one sees that the mighty Roman Empire was divided—as indicated by the legs of Daniel's image—into two sections, and has continued from the days of the ancient Caesars to the present time. Since the center of political gravity was shifted from one place to another in both instances, one concludes that it is the type of government and not the local boundaries that persists and continues through the centuries.

An illustration may clarify and emphasize the situation by referring to the history of America, supplemented by some imaginary events. If one should ask, "Who was the first President of the United States?" everyone would answer, "George Washington." Washington was the President of the United States at the time that it consisted of only the thirteen original colonies. To the question, "What is the capital of the United States?" everyone would reply, "Washington, D. C." As a matter of fact, the first capital was New Amsterdam, later named New York. Next, the government shifted to Philadelphia. Finally a site on the Potomac was chosen for the capital of the nation, which was named Washington, D. C. So much for the real history. Now let us use our imagination. Suppose the Russians should attack America on the Atlantic seaboard with a mighty force and drive our armies westward. When it becomes clear that America cannot repel the invaders, the government immediately moves westward—to Cincinnati, for instance. But the Russians, like a steam roller, continue to march westward. The government, seeing the peril, moves to Kansas City. The invaders finally reach the Mississippi River. By this time in the hypothetical war, the American forces dig in to fight to the last ditch. "The Battle of the Mississippi" proves to be the decisive one of the war. An armistice is signed. A peace treaty is drawn up and is properly signed. In this treaty America cedes to Russia all of its territory east of the Mississippi. All the American forces and interests are withdrawn from the conquered territory. What would be the name of the country west of the Mississippi with the capital at Kansas City? Everyone would answer, "The United States of America." Why? The people in the country are the descendants of those who lived in the original thirteen colonies. They have the same type of gov-

ernment, laws, statutes, institutions, and general culture. They are connected with the past by an unbroken historical continuity. From every point of consideration, these people and their country are called the United States of America, even though they do not possess one foot of the original thirteen colonies.

In a manner analogous to this illustration, Rome, in both the East and the West, was shifted northward from its original territory. Since, however, the very warp and woof of the political fabric continues the same as it was originally and has an unbroken continuity with the past, one can see that Daniel, in speaking of Rome's continuing through the centuries, is referring to the type of government apart from local boundaries.

Let us always bear in mind that the fourth kingdom, symbolized by the thighs, legs, feet, and toes of the metallic image of Daniel, chapter 2, is the same kingdom that is represented by the fourth beast of Daniel, chapter 7:

23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings. 25 And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. 26 But the judgment shall be set, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 27 And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him (Dan. 7: 23-27).

The fourth world kingdom, Rome, "shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces" (Dan. 7: 23). Note the language of this quotation. This fourth beast symbolizes a fourth kingdom, a world kingdom. It will be different from all kingdoms that have ever been. In the very end of its existence it will devour the whole earth, tread it down, and break it in pieces. The earth will have its first real blood bath when this prophecy is fulfilled. Thus some irresponsible demagogue will wade through blood to seize the scepter of world dominion. It is by revolutionary means and methods that the fourth kingdom becomes a world kingdom.

As already seen, the Roman Empire has persisted through medieval and modern times in the form of the great German and

Russian kingdoms. It is the type of government—imperialism, Caesarean dictatorship—that Daniel sees continuing to the end of the age, and that will infiltrate and spread all over the world, bringing all nations and peoples into the grip of its iron claws. Keen political observers now see the presence and the working of the leaven of imperialism, dictatorship, as it is now rapidly spreading throughout the nations. The present world situation is just awaiting some demagogue to seize the banner of world government and with inflammatory propaganda hypnotize the great unthinking masses, promising them everything for nothing. In some such manner, old Roman imperialism “shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.”

In verse 24 the Prophet explains more fully the entangled situation. On the fourth beast, the symbol of the Roman Empire, were ten horns: “And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings.” After this fourth kingdom assumes world-wide proportions, out of it ten kings will arise. Evidently these words imply a counter-revolution against those who have seized authority and imposed their will and regime upon the whole world. Thus the world government, the foundations for which are now stealthily and surreptitiously being laid, will collapse, breaking into ten sections, or divisions. What causes the collapse of this world regime was not revealed by the Prophet. To attempt an explanation is to speculate.

A dictator in each of these ten sections will seize authority in a particular area. The political situation in every nook and corner of the world will be in a more or less chaotic condition. Each dictator will have his problems—which will be all but insurmountable. Each will need all the help that he can get.

Suddenly there will appear upon the scene an unusual character who will promise aid to each of the dictators. By his extraordinary powers and keen insight into human nature and behavior, he will be able to suggest a solution for the problems of each. In some such manner, this mysterious person will ingratiate himself into the favor of the dictators. Finally, by his scheming and maneuvering, which will be by satanic power, he will gain the ascendancy over the dictators and become the dominant figure in world government. At last the ten dictators will practically surrender all their power and authority to their self-styled benefactor,

who will rule with an iron hand. This dictator, in Daniel 11: 36-45, known as the willful king, will reign along with the ten others for the first half of the Tribulation; and, according to Daniel 7: 24, 25, in the middle of the Tribulation, he will put down three of the ten and will reign with a high hand the rest of the time.

From Daniel, chapters 2 and 7, we see that in the conclusion of this age—before the Tribulation begins—there is to be a world government, the beginnings of which are clearly discernible in the light of prophecy. Thus one of the signs of the times which point definitely to the winding up of this era is the present trend toward a one-world government.

Haggai, one of the postexilic prophets, sees that there will be a world government in the end time. Speaking for God, the Prophet declares, “. . . I will shake the heavens and the earth; 22 and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations . . .” (Hag. 2:21, 22). This government is doubtless the one which Daniel describes, as we have just seen. We are living in momentous days. Prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes.

F. The Return of the Jews to the Land of Their Fathers

12 Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12: 1-3).

As a rule, a call of God is a challenge to separation and to special service. Abraham the father of the faithful, in answer to the call of God, left his native land, broke all connections with the past, and by faith went in search of the country which the Lord had promised him. There is, therefore, no wonder that his name appears on the roster of faith in Hebrews, chapter 11.

The country to which Abraham went is known as the Holy Land. Lot, his selfish nephew, took advantage of the magnanimity of his uncle, separated from him and took the best of the land. Then the Lord said to Abraham,

14 And Jehovah said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward: 15 for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever (Gen. 13: 14, 15).

After Abraham had delivered Lot from his captors and had refused gifts and tainted goods from the King of Sodom (Gen. 14: 17-24), the Lord appeared to him, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15: 1). Abraham believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. At that time, the Lord entered into a special covenant with him.

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

From this passage it is clear that the land promised Abraham includes the vast territory from the river of Egypt to the River Euphrates. Though God gave this land to Abraham and his seed, he did not possess in reality one foot of the soil, for Stephen in Acts 7: 5 asserts, "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he promised that he would give it to him in possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child."

Since God promised this land to Abraham and his seed, and since he has not in reality possessed any of it, he and his seed will in the future possess it. The gifts and the calling of God are not repented of; that is, God does not change his mind, but will make good every promise. The people of Israel, therefore, will possess all of this territory in God's good time and way.

The return of Israel to the land, according to Ezekiel, chapter 37, is a process, a development, yes, a program—as shown by the vision of the valley of dry bones.

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

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, an earthquake; and the bones came together, bone

to its bone. 8 And I beheld, and, lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them. 9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army (Ezek. 37: 1-10).

When Ezekiel, in obedience to the command of God, prophesied concerning the dry bones scattered over the valley, a great earthquake and a mighty noise occurred. Then the scattered bones began to move, bone to its bone, so as to form skeletons. Then sinews began to appear, uniting the bones. Next flesh formed on the bones. Finally skin covered the flesh. Bodies, therefore, were seen over the valley; but they had no life. The final stage of Israel's return to the land and to God—according to this vision—is the infusing of life by the Spirit of God into these bodies. When the Holy Spirit imparts life into these bodies, spiritual life, these newly born-again ones will arise a mighty army of God.

The first stage, or step, in Israel's return to God is seen in Zephaniah 2: 1-3:

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

It is clear from this passage that there is a return on the part of some of the nation to the land of the fathers before the day of wrath bursts forth upon the world. In fulfillment of this prediction, approximately two million Jews have returned to the land. Though the state of Israel became a reality in 1948, and the people of Israel in the land are doing marvelous things in spite of opposition and all but insurmountable obstacles—a modern miracle of human planning, scientific execution, and indefatigable energy—the present return to the land is not that full and complete restoration of which the psalmists sang and the prophets spoke.

In Joel 3: 1-8 the specter of war and of ruthless, savage deportation of those who are now in the land arises and casts its appalling shadow over a defenseless people.

3 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will execute

judgment upon them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations: and they have parted my land, 3 and have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink. 4 Yea, and what are ye to me, O Tyre, and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? will ye render me a recompense? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompense upon your own head. 5 Forasmuch as ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly precious things, 6 and have sold the children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem unto the sons of the Grecians, that ye may remove them far from their border; 7 behold, I will stir them up out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head; 8 and I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the men of Sheba, to a nation far off: for Jehovah hath spoken it (Joel 3:1-8).

According to this passage, the nations will cast Israel out of their land and scatter them among the peoples of the earth. Moreover they will divide the land. For what purpose and how they will do it, the Scriptures do not say. He who touches Israel touches the apple of Jehovah's eye.

The Lord told Jeremiah that He watches over His word to perform it (Jer. 1:11, 12). Repeatedly He promises Israel that He will restore the remnant of the nation. Among His promises of restoration is Isaiah 41:8-20.

8 But thou, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend, 9 thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called from the corners thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee and not cast thee away; 10 fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. 11 Behold, all they that are incensed against thee shall be put to shame and confounded: they that strive with thee shall be as nothing, and shall perish. 12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contend with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. 13 For I, Jehovah thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. 14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith Jehovah, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. 15 Behold, I have made thee *to be* a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. 16 Thou shalt winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; and thou shalt rejoice in Jehovah, thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17 The poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; I, Jehovah, will answer them, I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. 18 I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool

of water, and the dry land springs of water. 19 I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, the pine, and the box-tree together: 20 that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of Jehovah hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

A great and glorious future awaits the faithful remnant of Israel.

In this chapter, six of the leading signs of the times have been examined. From the data discovered, it is abundantly evident that we are rapidly approaching the last days; and what we intend to do for God, we should do it without delay. "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21 : 28).

CHAPTER V

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

FOR the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chron. 16: 9). Throughout the centuries of human history, God has continued to hunt for men, men whom He can trust, and who will lay all on the altar of service and sacrifice in the Lord's cause.

The call of God is to separation. Often it involves leaving one's native country, relatives, and friends—as in the case of Abraham.

12 Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12: 1-3).

In answering the call of God, Abraham became a pilgrim and a stranger, even in the land of promise. Concerning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares that,

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. 15 And if indeed they had been mindful of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city (Heb. 11: 13-16).

This life will soon be over—with all of us. With the Psalmist we should pray:

- 4 Jehovah, make me to know mine end,
And the measure of my days, what it is;
Let me know how frail I am.
- 5 Behold, thou hast made my days *as* handbreadths;
And my life-time is as nothing before thee:
Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity [Selah
- 6 Surely every man walketh in a vain show;
Surely they are disquieted in vain:
He heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather them
(Ps. 39: 4-6).

This life is but the vestibule leading into the halls of all eternity—as far as the righteous are concerned. But over its threshold the lost will never cross; on the contrary, they will go away into outer darkness, never to see the light of the glory of God.

There are two ways of passing out of this life into the great beyond: by physical death or by translation. All who have ever departed from this life have gone through the portal of physical death—with the exception of two men, Enoch and Elijah.

I. THE TRANSLATION OF ENOCH

21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: 22 and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: 23 and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: 24 and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him (Gen. 5:21-24).

Enoch walked with God by faith. We are justified in believing that he was snatched away from earthly scenes suddenly, and that neighbors and friends, upon missing him, hunted for him. Of course, they could not find him. Concerning his translation, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews states, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God" (Heb. 11:5).

Almost every sane person would prefer passing out of this life into the next one by being translated, as was Enoch, rather than by lying on a sick bed, wrecked with pain from head to foot, or by dying in some disaster.

II. THE TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH

Elijah, the bold, courageous prophet, was likewise translated so that he did not pass out of life through the portal of death. To the "sons of the prophets," the Lord in some way had revealed that He was going to take Elijah in a miraculous manner. Elisha would not allow Elijah to get out of his sight, fearing that the Lord would snatch Elijah away during his absence. Realizing the gravity of the situation and earnestly desiring to be filled with the Spirit of God for service, Elisha implored Elijah, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" (II Kings 2:9b). To this request Elijah replied

10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall

not be so. 11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!

And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces (II Kings 2: 10-12).

Evidently Elijah had finished his lifework when he was translated; otherwise the Lord would not have taken him until he had finished his ministry. But God has still a work for Elijah to do on this earth, for Malachi foretells God's sending Elijah to engage in a ministry to Israel yet in the future: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come" (Mal. 4: 5).

III. DID KING DAVID FORESEE THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH?

In Psalm 7: 6, 7 David makes a wonderful revelation:

- 6 Arise, O Jehovah, in thine anger;
 Lift up thyself against the rage of mine adversaries,
 And awake for me; thou hast commanded judgment.
 7 And let the congregation of the peoples compass thee about;
 And over them return thou on high,

The proper approach to the investigation of this passage is to examine carefully the principal words and the general drift of thought. The entreaty "Arise, O Jehovah, in thine anger" assumes that Jehovah is either reclining or sitting.¹ Light on this Scripture shines forth from Psalm 110: 1: "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool." When this passage is studied in the light of related ones, one can immediately see the significance of the word *arise* in Psalm 7: 6. In these related passages appear predictions that one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity leaves heaven and enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7: 14). "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Ever-

¹ The Psalmist is, of course, using human phraseology in addressing the Lord. But his speaking in this manner is not the only explanation of the passage.

lasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Thus the Second Person of the Holy Trinity enters the world and becomes the God-man.

Not knowing Him or the Scriptures, some of the leaders of Israel demanded that He be executed. He was, therefore, crucified and buried. According to the unimpeachable and inspired records, He arose on the third day, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. During the following forty days, He appeared to certain ones chosen of God to be witnesses of His triumph over death and the grave.

At the end of the forty-day period, Jesus and the apostles went out to the Mount of Olives from which He ascended to heaven (Acts, chapter 1). Upon reaching "the heavens of the heavens," He sat down at the right hand of God the Father in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1: "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Throughout the centuries, since His Ascension, He has remained there in glory. Eventually the faithful remnant of Israel will learn about Him and His whereabouts and will pray to Him:

80 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
 Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;
 Thou that sittest *above* the cherubim, shine forth.
 2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up thy might,
 And come to save us.
 3 Turn us again, O God;
 And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved (Ps. 80: 1-3).

But to God the Father this penitent remnant will pray: "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, Upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself" (Ps. 80: 17). Seated at the right hand of God, therefore, is the God-man, to whom the penitent remnant of Israel will turn and implore His coming for their deliverance.

The word *arise* of Psalm 7:6 is undoubtedly addressed to this God-man, who is seated at the right hand of God the Father. When the word *arise* is addressed to the Lord, the student should examine the facts of the context to ascertain who is praying.

Since the inspired writer implores Jehovah the Son to arise in His anger in order to execute vengeance upon the evil doers and in order to bring deliverance, it is clear that the situation, as seen by the Prophet, stirs the indignation of the Son. The Psalmist also prays, "Arise, O Jehovah, in thine anger; Lift up thyself

against the rage of mine adversaries, And awake for me; thou hast commanded judgment" (Ps. 7:6).

In this quotation the writer speaks of himself individually, but when verses 6 and 7 are studied together, it is clear that he identifies himself with "the congregation of the peoples" and prays for his persecuted brethren. When all the facts are taken into consideration, one sees that a campaign of hatred and of persecution will be launched against the congregation.

What is the significance of "the congregation of the peoples"? This expression occurs in the Scripture this one time only. Does the Psalmist conceive of all the people of the world as members of this congregation? The term could have that meaning if it is torn completely from its context. Since the congregation of the peoples is persecuted by its adversaries, there are, therefore, two groups of people in the world: the congregation and its adversaries. The first meaning, therefore, must be discarded.

According to the New Testament, God is now calling out from among all nations a people for His Name. In speaking to the Jerusalem Conference, James, the inspired speaker, said, "Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited² the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:13b, 14). He is calling this body of people out from the world by the preaching of the gospel. Those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by faith are regenerated by the Spirit of God and are brought into a spiritual communion known as the body of Christ. In this fellowship, no racial or social distinction is recognized. The expression "the congregation of the peoples" probably refers to the group of believers who are called out from all nations into a spiritual fellowship.

The Psalmist continues his prayer, saying, "And awake for me; thou hast commanded judgment." Obviously, by this petition the Psalmist implores Jehovah to champion the cause of the congregation of the peoples. The reason which he assigns for this urgency of his petition is that Jehovah "hath commanded judgment."

² The word in the original Greek rendered *visited* is in the aorist tense, which indicates point action—that is, a single act; or, if a series is spoken of, and the aorist tense is used, still the entire series is thought of as a single act.

The aorist tense never indicates the time. The time element is gathered from the context. In the translation being used, Acts 15:14 reads: "Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles. . . ." A more accurate rendering is "Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visits the Gentiles."

In what sense does the Lord command judgment? The world at the time here foreseen will be ripe for punishment and purging. The Lord, therefore, commands His hosts to prepare for this period of judgment. What hosts? The angelic hosts, concerning whom the writer of Hebrews declares: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

The Psalmist concludes his petition saying,

"And let the congregation of the peoples compass thee about;
And over them return thou on high" (Ps. 7:7).

In view of the punitive judgments and plagues which will rain down, figuratively speaking, on the world during the Tribulation, the Psalmist pleads that the congregation of the peoples may compass the Lord about. In other words, he pleads that the Lord will gather His congregation from all over the world and will return on high over them. The drift of the thought suggests very strongly that the taking out of the congregation of the peoples by the Lord will occur before the judgments begin to fall. In other words, the Psalmist prays the Lord to take His people out of the world before the Tribulation.

When analyzed and studied in the light of the New Testament teaching, Psalm 7:6, 7 probably is an Old Testament prophecy concerning the Rapture of all believers before the Tribulation.

IV. IS THE RAPTURE MENTIONED IN JOEL 2:32?

And it shall come to pass afterward,^a that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. 30 And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh. 32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as Jehovah hath said, and among the remnant those whom Jehovah doth call" (Joel 2:28-32).

The first installment of the conversion of Israel is foretold in verses 28 and 29. This turning to God of certain ones in Israel will be accompanied by wonders in the heavens and in the earth. At that time the sun will be darkened and the moon will become

^a See pages 35-38 for exposition of the facts of the context of this passage.

as blood (vv. 30, 31). This back-to-God movement in Israel and the wonders and signs in the physical realm will occur "before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh." The great and terrible day of Jehovah, mentioned also in Zephaniah 1:14-16 and in Malachi 4:1-6, is generally spoken of by the prophets as "the day of Jehovah." This period of judgment is known in modern theological terminology as the Great Tribulation. Since the beginning of the revival in Israel and the wonders and signs in the physical realm occur together, and since they take place before the great and terrible day of Jehovah, these unusual phenomena will take place before the Tribulation begins.

At that time "whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered." Delivered from what? Obviously, from the judgments of the great and terrible day of Jehovah. They will, of course, be saved spiritually, because they call upon the name of Jehovah. That those who are delivered by the Lord will escape the horrors of the Tribulation is also confirmed by the concluding statement of verse 32: "for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as Jehovah hath said, and among the remnant those whom Jehovah doth call."

How will those in Israel who call upon the name of the Lord be delivered from the judgments of the Tribulation? This passage does not tell. When, however, one turns to the New Testament teaching, he may find a clue: "For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come" (I Thess. 1:9, 10). Beyond question, the wrath to come is the tribulation judgments. The Lord Jesus is going to deliver His people out of the world, so that they will not have to pass through that period of judgments. In the Joel passage, Jewish believers are delivered from the Tribulation—the wrath to come. Since there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ, it is logical to believe that both Jewish and Gentile believers will be delivered.

V. IS THE RAPTURE SEEN IN ZEPHANIAH?

2 Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation that hath no shame; **2** before the decree bring forth, *before* the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of Jehovah come upon you, before the day of Jehovah's anger come upon you. **3** Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the

earth, that have kept his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger (Zeph. 2: 1-3).

In Zephaniah 1: 14-18 appears one of the most vivid and terse statements concerning the Great Day of Jehovah to be found in the prophetic Word. As has been seen, the Great Day of Jehovah is known in theological terminology as the Great Tribulation, a period of seven years in which God will pour His wrath upon a defiant and sinful world. Before that day comes, Israel returns to the land of their fathers.⁴ In making this prediction, Zephaniah dramatically speaks as if he were commanding the Jews to return: "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation that hath no shame. . . ." As a matter of fact, they are at the present time returning of their own free will and accord. Speaking for God in this passage, Zephaniah commands the Jews to gather together in their homeland. Allowing each person to make his own choice, God overrules and providentially takes them back to the land of their fathers.

This regathering occurs before the Tribulation. "Gather yourselves together . . . before the decree bring forth, . . . before the fierce anger of Jehovah come upon you. . . ." As stated above, this regathering before the Tribulation involves only a representative number of the nation and must be clearly distinguished from the final restoration of Israel which takes place at the end of the Tribulation, and which is foretold in such passages as Isaiah 66: 18-21 and Ezekiel, chapter 37.

Zephaniah, furthermore, urges the nation of Israel, saying, "Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger" (Zeph. 2: 3). It is clear that the Prophet is speaking primarily and directly to the Jews who are now in the land of their fathers and to those who are now going.

While he is speaking to all Israel in the present regathering, he appeals especially to those who have a meek spirit and who have kept God's ordinances, and urges them to seek righteousness and meekness. In other words, the Prophet is appealing to the devout, sincere Israelites who are seeking for the truth.

⁴ This initial returning to the land of Israel, which is going on at the present time, does not necessarily imply that every Jew will return. As one scholar of the prophetic Word states, Zephaniah's prediction does not necessarily imply that all the Jews will return, but only a representative number.

By the statement "It may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger," the Prophet holds out a possible hope of protection and preservation during the day of Jehovah's wrath to those who sincerely seek God—His righteousness and meekness. Why did Zephaniah say, "It may be ye will be hid"? Did he have any doubts? No, not concerning God. But he did have misgivings concerning human beings. Man constantly flickers. Listen to Jeremiah:

5 Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her. 2 And though they say, As Jehovah liveth; surely they swear falsely. 3 O Jehovah, do not thine eyes look upon truth? thou hast stricken them, but they were not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return (Jer. 5:1-3).

Though Jeremiah could not find a man—a human being who is every inch a man—I personally am persuaded that there are many in the state of Israel now "thy hidden ones" (Ps. 83:3) who are really seeking God in order that they may do His will and glorify Him—though I do not say they come up to God's standard as expressed by Jeremiah.

"It may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger." In what way or ways will those who seek God and His righteousness be hid? A possible clue to the correct answer may be found in the New Testament. In I Thessalonians 1:10 the inspired apostle asserts that Jesus is the one who "delivereth us from the wrath to come." We know from various passages in the New Testament that believers will be delivered from the wrath to come by the Rapture. Since these of whom Zephaniah speaks seek God and His righteousness they are believers and probably will be hidden by being taken up in the Rapture.

VI. THE RAPTURE IN JOHN, CHAPTER 14

During the passover supper which Jesus and His disciples observed, Jesus told Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27b). Immediately Judas left the room. After they had finished observing the paschal meal, Jesus instituted what is now known as the Lord's Supper. At this time Jesus foretold His departure, saying, "Yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now

I say unto you" (John 13:33). As usual, Peter spoke up, asking Jesus where He was going. Jesus' reply was that Peter could not follow Him then, but that later he could follow. Then Peter, in his impetuous manner, wanted to know why he could not follow Him then; for, declared he, "I will lay down my life for thee" (v. 37). Jesus then revealed to Peter his weakness, in foretelling that he would deny Him three times that night.

Evidently Christ's announcement of His departure caused a feeling of sadness and deep depression to settle down on the apostolic company. Seeing the expressions of despair and gloom on their faces, Jesus poured out His very heart to them in the following words of promise:

14 Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. **2** In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. **4** And whither I go, ye know the way. **5** Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? **6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. **7** If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him (John 14:1-7).

Jesus declares that in His Father's house are many mansions, or abiding places. What is meant by His Father's house? There is some place in the universe which Jesus calls His Father's house, and in which, He declares, are many mansions. Probably the inspired writer refers to the place of the Father's house in Psalm 115:16: "The heavens are the heavens of Jehovah."

Jesus informs the apostles that He is leaving them for the time being, going to His Father's house and making full preparation for their coming. He promises them that He will come again for them. Nineteen hundred years ago He came to this earth to purchase our redemption, entering by miraculous conception and virgin birth. As the risen and glorified Lord, He is coming again for His saints in order that He might take them to these many mansions in His Father's house where He will be associated with them. In view of all the facts in this passage, it seems evident that Jesus is speaking of His coming for His saints, which we know will occur before the Tribulation.

Thomas stated that the apostles did not know where Jesus was going, nor did they know the way. Jesus' reply was, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father,

but by me." For salvation one must, therefore, receive Jesus as Lord, Saviour, and Messiah, since He is the way to God.

VII. THE RAPTURE IN I THESSALONIANS

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Church that they had turned from idols to God for two purposes: "to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come" (I Thess. 1:9b, 10). The common saying "People are saved for service" is indeed true. People are saved by the grace of God through faith and are to be rewarded according to their works: "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not of works, that no man should glory. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

In regenerating people, God gives them a new nature. They are, therefore, "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." The Lord blesses with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus in order that His people may be a blessing to others.

The saved are to keep in mind that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming back for them, "who delivereth us from the wrath to come."

The Old Testament prophets at times spoke of God's wrath which He will pour out upon the world in order to purge it from sin, preparatory to the establishment of a reign of righteousness. Isaiah speaks of "the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. 61:2). The year of Jehovah's favor is the present Christian Dispensation, during which God is extending mercy and grace in a special manner to all nations—Jews and Gentiles alike. This period is to be followed by "the day of vengeance of our God," which is the Great Tribulation.

Zephaniah speaks of "the great day of Jehovah," which "is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements" (Zeph. 1:15, 16).

Concerning this time of wrath, Malachi says, "For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all

that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4: 1).

The King James Version renders I Thessalonians 1: 10 "... and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivered us from the wrath to come." According to this rendering, the deliverance which Jesus brings is in the past, something that has already been accomplished. The American Standard Version (1901 edition) renders this verse "... and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come." The translators of this version render the Greek correctly—He will deliver us when He returns. "The wrath to come" comes upon the earth in the form of devastating judgments and plagues. For Jesus to deliver His people from these judgments, He will have to remove them from the world. Since He will deliver them from this wrath, it is evident that He delivers them before the Tribulation. In other words, the Rapture of the saints occurs before the Tribulation begins.

The second passage dealing with the Rapture of the Church in this Epistle is I Thessalonians 4: 13—5: 11:

13 But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 17 then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

5 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: 5 for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for

a helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 11 Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do.

In this passage the Apostle Paul asserts that Jesus will descend from heaven to the air; will raise the dead in Christ; and will catch up, in the clouds, those saints who are living at that time (I Thess. 4: 13-18). About this position there can be no reasonable question.

Concerning the times and the seasons of the Rapture, the Thessalonians had no need that anything should be written to them; for, having been taught the Scriptures, they knew that the day of the Lord (the Great Tribulation) would come upon the world as a thief. According to I Thessalonians 5: 3, there will be a period of false peace and security before it breaks forth upon the world. The people of the world, uninformed concerning Biblical prophecy, will misinterpret the times in which they are living, and the Tribulation will come suddenly upon them "as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape."

Christians who are well taught in the Word are "sons of light" and realize the situation in which they find themselves. The approaching darkness cast by the coming Tribulation will not come suddenly upon them (II Pet. 1: 19, 20).

Some interpreters, however, think that the implication of verse 4 is that the Church will go through the Tribulation because the Apostle states that "ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." According to these interpreters, the day of Jehovah overtakes the children of light—the only difference between the Christians on the one hand and the people of the world on the other is that the Tribulation comes upon the men of the world unawares, whereas it comes upon the Christians, who know about it ahead of time from the teaching of the prophetic Word.

The word translated *overtake*, in the middle voice, is intransitive and has variety of meanings. It may mean "to stand upon; to be set over; to stand by, be present, be at hand, come on or upon." This word, therefore, does not imply that the Tribulation does come upon the sons of light.

This interpretation is confirmed by verse 9: "For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation.

through our Lord Jesus Christ." This verse states the truth both negatively and positively: Christians are not appointed unto wrath, but they are appointed unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. The saved people who are living at the time when the Rapture occurs will, therefore, obtain deliverance from wrath.

VIII. THE RAPTURE IN I CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER 15

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: 57 but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15: 50-58).

In this passage the Apostle declares that he is telling a mystery to the Corinthian church. In the original the word *mystery* does not mean something that is incomprehensible, but something unrevealed, a secret. The secret which Paul had in mind on this occasion was that "we all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The word *sleep*, as used in this passage and in I Thessalonians 4:13, refers to dying, falling asleep in Jesus. When the Apostle, therefore, says, "We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed," he means that all Christians will not die, but all of them at a given time will be changed. The time when this prophecy will be fulfilled is "at the last trump."

What is the last trump, and when is it blown? Some believe that it is the last trump mentioned in the Book of Revelation. This interpretation cannot be correct because the Corinthians knew nothing about the message of the Book of Revelation. The Corinthian letters were written about A.D. 56, 57, but the Book of Revelation was probably written in A.D. 96, forty years later. To assert that the last trump of the Corinthian letter is the last of

the seven trumpets of the Book of Revelation is without foundation. Examination shows that the seven trumpets are used to call forth seven different types of judgment upon the world. The trumpets mentioned in the Thessalonian and the Corinthian letters are to call forth both the dead in Christ from their graves and the living saints into the presence of Christ.

When the dead in Christ are raised, they come forth from the grave with glorified, immortalized bodies. When the living saints are translated, their mortal, corruptible bodies likewise are changed into incorruptible, immortal bodies. When this miracle of grace and glory takes place, the prophecy in Isaiah 25:8 will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

In order to understand this prophecy correctly, one must study the connection in which it appears.

6 And in this mountain will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. 7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. 8 He hath swallowed up death for ever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it (Isa. 25:6-8).

According to verse 6 of this passage, God will provide "in this mountain" a feast of good things for all peoples of the earth. In what mountain? In Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, as one sees in Isaiah 24:23. Is this banquet a literal or a figurative feast? Figurative, of course. When the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense. To interpret this fact literally does not make good sense.

According to Isaiah 25:7, the Lord will, in the same mountain, destroy the covering that covereth all nations. Satan is the one who blinds the eyes of people so that they cannot see the truth. "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: 4 in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (II Cor. 4:3, 4). This veil cannot be taken literally, but it is a figurative expression. What are the facts that are set forth by this figure? According to Revelation 20:1-5, the Lord, when He returns to Jerusalem, will incarcerate Satan and all the evil spirits in the pit of the abyss for the thousand years of His reign upon earth. In

this manner the covering which Satan has held over the minds of the people will be destroyed.

According to Isaiah 25:8, the Lord hath "swallowed up death for ever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it." As already seen, the prediction of Isaiah: 25:6, 7 is to be realized in the future. In verse 8, suddenly, the Prophet switches from the future tense to the present perfect: "He hath swallowed up death." This Hebrew idiom is common and is known as the prophetic perfect. When the Hebrew prophet wanted to vivify his message, he often used this idiom—speaking of things in the future as if they had already been accomplished. Thus the prophecy lives before the audience.

What is the meaning of "swallowed up death"? Satan who now has the power over death will be incarcerated in the pit (Rev. 20:1-5) and will cease to have anything to do with human affairs during the Millennium. At that time, death will be swallowed up.⁵

After using the prophetic perfect, Isaiah continues his prophecy regarding the future, saying, "And the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces. . . ." From the connection it is clear that Isaiah is speaking of tears caused by death. Since death will be no more, there will, therefore, be no more tears.

The Lord will also take away forever the "reproach of his people." The people of whom He is speaking are the Jewish people. They have suffered reproach throughout the centuries. When the time here foreseen comes, anti-Semitism and racial prejudice will be things of the past.

From this investigation of Isaiah 25:6-8, it is clear that the Prophet is talking about the time that Christ returns and establishes His reign on the earth. At the Second Coming of Christ, death will be eliminated⁵ from human experience. The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15:54 says that Isaiah's prediction, "Death is swallowed up in victory," is fulfilled at the time of the Rapture, but Isaiah has put the swallowing up of death at the end of the Tribulation when Christ comes to reign. In the light of the facts brought forth by Isaiah and Paul, one sees that Isaiah 25:8 is an example of the law of double reference. The Rapture of the

⁵ During the Millennium, however, everyone will accept the Saviour and be redeemed, with few exceptions: those reaching their one hundredth birthday without accepting the Saviour will be condemned (Isa. 65:20).

Church before the Tribulation is a partial, limited fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, according to I Corinthians, chapter 15. But this prophecy will be completely fulfilled at the Second Coming of Christ.

As has already been seen, the Rapture of believers occurs before the Tribulation. During the Tribulation, the great revival sweeps the world in which multiplied millions will come to a saving knowledge of Christ. Some of these doubtless will die a natural death; others will be martyred by the Antichrist. Many of them will survive the Tribulation, remaining on earth until the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. Then will occur the Rapture of the living tribulation saints.

30 and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24: 30, 31).

Since we do not know the day or the hour of our Lord's coming for His saints, it behooves each one of us to be alert at all times. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is" (I John 3: 1, 2).

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

THE omnipotent, omniscient Creator sees and knows everything that transpires throughout the great fields of universal space (Psalm 139). He, the God of truth, is holy and cannot countenance sin in any form except with righteous indignation. Since He endowed His creatures—both angelic beings and men—with freedom of the will and the power of choice, He never forces their wills, but allows each of them to make his own decisions and to act on his own initiative. Nevertheless He overrules their acts and steers the course of history toward a glorious consummation.

When, however, they fill up their cups of iniquity to overflowing, God deals with the situation righteously, but drastically. When, for example, the anointed cherub led a revolt against the Almighty (Job, chapter 25; Ezekiel 28: 11-19), the rebels were cast from their positions of trust and honor. Throughout the period of human history, the Lord has allowed these insurrectionists against His government certain liberties. Eventually they will fill up the cups of their iniquity to overflowing. Then the Almighty will consign them to their eternal doom, from which they can have no hope of escape. "Let burning coals fall upon them: Let them be cast into the fire, Into deep pits, whence they shall not rise" (Ps. 140: 10).

After the Fall (Genesis, chapter 3), men multiplied upon the earth, rushing headlong toward the abyss of destruction. Concerning their plunging into the depths of sin, we are informed in Genesis 6: 1-8, 11, 12:

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

5 And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And Jehovah said, I will destroy man

whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah.

11 And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

There was but one thing that a holy and righteous God could do, namely, to blot out the human family. He, therefore, sent a universal flood which destroyed all humanity except Noah's immediate family.

When the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain filled their cups of iniquity to overflowing, God rained down fire and brimstone from heaven upon them and completely overthrew them and their civilization.

The seven nations that were in the land of Canaan at the time of the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt likewise had developed a very corrupt and debased civilization. When God entered into a special covenant with Abraham, He made it clear that the Hebrews could not go into the land at that time, but had to wait until the Amorites had filled the cup of their iniquity. When they filled it to the full, Joshua led the Hebrews, liberated from Egyptian bondage and slavery, into the land, with the instructions that they were not to form any alliances with the Canaanites, but were to exterminate them and destroy their civilization.

From time to time, God has had to punish His Chosen People very drastically on account of moral and spiritual delinquencies. He has had to do the same thing with those that claim to be Christians.

The Prophets and the New Testament writers are one in foretelling the awful days of wickedness and sin of the end time. The Psalmist, for instance, caught a glimpse of the Tribulation which will obtain throughout the earth in the end of the present dispensation:

- 6 A brutish man knoweth not;
Neither doth a fool understand this:
7 When the wicked spring as the grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;
It is that they shall be destroyed for ever.
8 But thou, O Jehovah, art on high for evermore.
9 For, lo, thine enemies, O Jehovah,
For, lo, thine enemies shall perish;
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered (Ps. 92: 6-9).

In this passage one sees a world given over to wickedness and violence.

The inspired Apostle Paul painted a most lurid and horrifying picture of the world of the end time:

3 But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. **2** For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, **3** without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, **4** traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; **5** holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away. **6** For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, **7** ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. **8** And even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth; men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith (II Tim. 3:1-8).

The picture presented in this passage is seen on every hand today. The same situation can be found in many parts of the world. According to those who are in a position to know, crime, lawlessness, and vice are increasing at an alarming rate. Our penal institutions are full to overflowing with offenders. Law-enforcing authorities state that the situation in this country is growing worse year by year, and they see nothing but a reign of terror—staged by juvenile delinquents; hoodlum gangs; organized crime groups; and irresponsible, irreligious, lawless individuals. Godless Communism throughout the world is endeavoring to destroy the foundations of our present-day society, to overthrow our civilization, and to establish a godless world order. Without doubt the world at the present time is on the toboggan of pleasure and godlessness, madly dashing toward the morass of sensuality and defilement.

But the all-seeing eye of the Almighty is observing the entire situation. He knows that the world is filling up its cup of iniquity. It is all but full. When it begins to run over, He will intervene. Everything is in readiness for the striking of the fateful hour, when God begins to pour out His judgments upon a pleasure-loving world. For seven years He will deal with the world drastically, but in righteousness—as He did with the antediluvian world in the days of Noah, and with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot. This period of judgment will culminate with mighty upheavals on the earth and the dissolution of some of the heavenly bodies, as described in the following prophecy:

3 This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; 2 that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: 3 knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, 4 and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; 6 by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

8 But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy living and godliness, 12 looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Pet. 3:1-13).

I. TERMS APPLIED TO THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Moses and the Prophets, together with the writers of the New Testament, speak of the period of judgment just mentioned, although they describe it differently. When, however, the facts of each context are studied carefully, it becomes evident that they are speaking of the same period of universal judgment.

A. *The Day of Jehovah*

Isaiah speaks of the day of Jehovah. "For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low . . ." (Isa. 2:12). An examination of the facts of this context shows that Isaiah was speaking of the entire world and the overthrow of everything that is exalted against God in this day of Jehovah. Again he speaks of the day of Jehovah in Isaiah 13:6-16. According to verse 9, it is "cruel, with wrath and fierce anger." At that time God will punish the entire world for its evil, as seen in verse 11. In Isaiah

24: 1-20 is a prophecy concerning the day of Jehovah, although the Prophet does not call it by that name.

The Prophet Joel also speaks of the day of Jehovah: "Alas for the day! for the day of Jehovah is at hand, and as destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel 1: 15). He also speaks of the day of Jehovah as "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Joel 2: 2). Zephaniah likewise speaks of "the great day of Jehovah" (Zeph. 1: 14). Malachi refers to "the great and terrible day of Jehovah" (Mal. 4: 5).

B. Israel's Calamity

In Deuteronomy, chapter 32, appears the song the words of which Moses spoke to Israel. It has properly been called Israel's national anthem. In this hymn the great lawgiver traces the meandering course of Jewish history from his own day through the centuries to the end time when Jehovah Himself will come to earth and champion the cause of Israel. In commenting upon Israel's situation in the day of Jehovah, and in speaking for God, Moses utters this prediction:

- 34 Is not this laid up in store with me,
Sealed up among my treasures?
35 Vengeance is mine, and recompense,
At the time when their foot shall slide:
For the day of their calamity is at hand,
And the things that are to come upon them shall make haste.
36 For Jehovah will judge his people,
And repent himself for his servants;
When he seeth that *their* power is gone,
And there is none *remaining*, shut up or left at large.

(Deut. 32: 34-36).

The Lord has noted the pogroms and the persecutions of His people through the centuries and declares, "Vengeance is mine, and recompense, At the time when their foot shall slide: For the day of their calamity is at hand. . . ." At that time He will judge His people. In this connection the word *judge* means "to vindicate." Thus in the Tribulation the Lord will champion the cause of His people and will vindicate them. The Tribulation in this passage is called Israel's calamity.

Obadiah, whose message was concerning Edom, likewise speaks of the Tribulation at the time of Israel's calamity.

12 But look not thou on the day of thy brother in the day of his disaster, and rejoice not over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction;

neither speak proudly in the day of distress. 13 Enter not into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, look not thou on their affliction in the day of their calamity, neither lay ye *hands* on their substance in the day of their calamity. 14 And stand thou not in the crossway, to cut off those of his that escape; and deliver not up those of his that remain in the day of distress (Obad. vv. 12-14).

That the period called Jacob's calamity is the Tribulation is confirmed by the fact that Obadiah, in speaking of this calamity, thinks of it as "the day of Jehovah," which at that time is near and will come upon all the nations (v. 15). In verse 12 he speaks of the Tribulation as Jacob's disaster. Then he warns the Edomites not to rejoice over Judah in the day of their destruction. In verse 13 the Prophet speaks of the Tribulation as it affects the Jews in the day of their calamity, emphasizing the word *calamity* three times.

C. *The Time of Jacob's Trouble*

30 The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, 2 Thus speaketh Jehovah, the God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. 3 For, lo, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will turn again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

4 And these are the words that Jehovah spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith Jehovah: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child: wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. 8 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds; and strangers shall no more make him their bondman; 9 but they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. 10 Therefore fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith Jehovah; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished (Jer. 30: 1-11).

Jeremiah speaks of the Tribulation as "the time of Jacob's trouble." Other nations will suffer at that time; but, because the Hebrew people will bear the brunt of the mighty strokes of judgment, the period is called the time of Jacob's trouble. But why

should the Hebrews suffer more than the other nations? In order to answer this question properly, one must recognize who is ruling and overruling in the affairs of men. The God of Israel, of course! He sits upon the throne of the universe, directing the course of events:

10 Wherefore David blessed Jehovah before all the assembly; and David said, Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. 11 Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth *is thine*; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou are exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all (I Chron, 29: 10-12).

Shall anyone challenge the justice and righteousness of God? With Abraham of old every right-thinking person asks this rhetorical question: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18: 25), implying that there could be no question in regard to God's righteousness and justice.

Why should a holy, righteous, and just God punish Israel more than other nations? The answer is that increased light, opportunities, and blessings bring added responsibilities. When Abraham and Sarah were past the age of parenthood, God performed a biological miracle of creation upon their bodies which made possible the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21: 1ff.; Isa. 43: 1; Rom. 4: 18-21). At that time the Lord injected into the blood stream of the Jewish race potentialities and powers such as are possessed by no other race. He revealed to them His holy and righteous law and divine services. In other words, He has lavished His goodness upon Israel as upon no other nation.

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

Since Israel received the revelation of God and since, according to this quotation, they have not known it in the sense of obeying it, God is forced to deal with them according to the merits of the case. Knowing this fundamental principle of God's dealing with His people, Jeremiah, therefore, speaks of the Great Tribulation as the time of Jacob's trouble.

II. CERTAIN PROPHECIES DESCRIBING THE GREAT TRIBULATION

There are many prophecies regarding the great Tribulation with which the present Christian Era closes. Only a few of the principal ones regarding it can be examined here. The comments on these passages must of necessity be very brief.

A. *Isaiah 2: 12-22*

12 For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low; 13 and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, 14 and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, 15 and upon every lofty tower, and upon every fortified wall, 16 and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant imagery. 17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day. 18 And the idols shall utterly pass away. 19 And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth. 20 In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver, and their idols of gold, which have been made for them to worship, to the moles and to the bats; 21 to go into the caverns of the rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth. 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? (Isa. 2: 12-22).

In verses 12-17 is a prophecy foretelling the overthrow of the things that are high and exalted in the eyes of men. This prediction is to be taken literally. Recognition, of course, must be made for any figures of speech and interpreted accordingly.

On account of the leveling-down processes, men will go into the caves of the rocks in an attempt to hide themselves from the Almighty (vv. 18, 19). In this connection read Revelation 6: 12-17.

Various passages of the prophets reveal that, in the first part of the Tribulation at least, idolatry will be the order of the day. When the judgments are falling on the earth thick and fast, vast hosts of men will cast their idols to the moles and the bats. They will see that an idol is nothing. On this point read Psalm 115: 1-8 and Isaiah 44: 12-20.

B. *Isaiah 13: 1-13*

13 The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. Set ye up an ensign upon the bare mountain, lift up the voice unto them, wave the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. 3 I have commanded

my consecrated ones, yea, I have called my mighty men for mine anger, even my proudly exulting ones. 4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, as of a great people! the noise of a tumult of the kingdoms of the nations gathered together! Jehovah of hosts is mustering the host for the battle. 5 They come from a far country, from the uttermost part of heaven, even Jehovah, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

6 Wail ye; for the day of Jehovah is at hand; as destruction from the Almighty shall it come. 7 Therefore shall all hands be feeble, and every heart of man shall melt: 8 and they shall be dismayed; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of *them*; they shall be in pain as a woman in travail: they shall look in amazement one at another; their faces *shall be* faces of flame. 9 Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. 10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine. 11 And I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity: and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. 12 I will make a man more rare than fine gold, even a man than the pure gold of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of its place, in the wrath of Jehovah of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger (Isa. 13: 1-13).

This prediction assumes that old Babylon will be rebuilt and will be a mighty power in the day of Jehovah. In connection with this prophecy one should study carefully Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51, and Revelation, chapter 18. When these passages are studied in the light of the facts of their contexts, one is forced to believe that literal Babylon will be rebuilt and will play a most important role in the end time.

Verses 2-5 foretell the siege of Babylon by the armies of the world. God, the Creator of the Universe, stands behind the scenes, as it were, directing the movements of armies from the ends of the earth preparatory to participation in the final siege and overthrow of Babylon.

The time of the events of this prophecy is "the day of Jehovah," the Great Tribulation (v. 6).

The intensity of the suffering of that time is set forth in verses 7-9. As in Isaiah 66:7-9, the Prophet compares the sufferings of the times to the labor pains of childbirth (vv. 7, 8). In verse 9 Isaiah speaks literally of that time as being "cruel with wrath and fierce anger." The wrath and indignation of Jehovah will be stirred to the very depths and will manifest themselves in the judgments of that time.

There will be upheavals and cosmic disturbances, as indicated

in verse 10, which will disrupt the regularity and stability of the heavenly bodies. In connection with this verse, study carefully Isaiah 34: 1-7, II Peter 3: 1-15, and Revelation 6: 12-17.

According to Isaiah 13: 11, 12, God will send the Tribulation upon men to punish "the world *for their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity": and He will "cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." He will "make a man more rare than fine gold, even a man than the pure gold of Ophir."

The final convulsions of nature, at the close of the Tribulation, are set forth in verse 13.

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

19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there. 22 And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged (Isa. 13: 19-22).

When the curse is lifted from the earth, the desert blossoms as the rose (Isaiah, chapter 35); and all peoples are jubilant, rejoicing in Jehovah, their Redeemer. The site of Babylon will be marked by the ruins of the overthrow, as were Sodom and Gomorrah. It, with Edom, will remain under the curse during the golden age of the future.

C. *Isaiah 24: 1-20*

24 Behold, Jehovah maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. 2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the creditor, so with the debtor; as with the taker of interest, so with the giver of interest to him. 3 The earth shall be utterly emptied, and utterly laid waste; for Jehovah hath spoken this word. 4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the lofty people of the earth do languish. 5 The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are found guilty: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh. 8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. 9 They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. 10 The waste city is broken down; every house is shut up, that no man may come in. 11 There is a crying in the streets because of the wine; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. 12 In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction. 13 For thus shall it be in the midst of the earth among the peoples, as the shaking of an olive-tree, as the gleanings when the vintage is done.

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

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

This passage is a comprehensive, yet brief, statement concerning the Tribulation. Verses 21-23 are a sparkling gem of the Messiah and His reign in Jerusalem.

That verses 1-20 are a prediction regarding the Tribulation is confirmed by the fact that this period of judgment is immediately followed by the glorious reign of the Messiah, as shown by other Messianic predictions.

Isaiah starts his prediction by using a word which points most emphatically toward the future, as Delitzsch shows, and which is translated "behold!" By the use of this interjection, Isaiah calls attention to the great importance of the oracle which it introduces.

Isaiah begins his oracle by foretelling the complete destruction of the civilization of the world, "Behold, Jehovah maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof." Note the fact that Jehovah is the one who does the wrecking. In the process He turns the earth upside down, causing the North Pole to be where the South Pole is now, and the South Pole to be where the North

Pole is. Moreover the population of the world will be scattered abroad.

In Chapter V of this volume it has been shown that the Rapture of the Church occurs before the Tribulation begins. The people who will be left on the earth at the time of the Rapture are the ones who are referred to in verse 2—all of whom, regardless of social, political, and economic standing, will suffer alike.

In verses 3 and 4, Isaiah re-emphasizes the wreckage of civilization and speaks of the world as if it were a person languishing and writhing in excruciating pain.

The reason for this destruction is that the earth is polluted under the inhabitants of the world who "have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant" (v. 5). The curse, therefore, asserts the Prophet, devours the earth; and the inhabitants thereof are burned and few men left (cf. Isa. 13:11, 12). The everlasting covenant mentioned in verse 5 is probably the everlasting covenant referred to in Genesis 9:1-17, especially in verses 5-7.

Conditions in all spheres of life and activity will be abnormal, according to verses 7-11. Even those who indulge in licentious living, visiting night clubs, dine and dance joints, and who are in the habit of drinking to great excess will spurn the most tantalizing drinks, virtually saying, "Take it away."

Signs of waste and destruction are on every hand throughout the whole earth (vv. 12, 13).

A glorious light in the midst of the darkness of verses 1-20 shines forth marvelously from verses 14-16a. In these verses Isaiah is carried forward by the Spirit of God and is shown a vision of the world-wide revival which takes place during the Tribulation, as indicated by the position of his vision in the midst of the description of the Tribulation. One can visualize the Prophet in ecstasy, pointing to the vast throng, saying, "These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout; for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud from the sea" (v. 14). The people of the world will at that time be weeping and wailing in striking contrast with these (v. 11). From the standpoint of the Sea, which is west of Palestine, the Prophet calls upon those in the East to glorify Jehovah, the God of Israel—even those who are "in the isles of the sea," the nations. According to verse 16, suddenly there bursts forth praise from the uttermost parts of the earth, saying, "Glory to the righteous." Thus the revival which breaks

out in a country west of the Holy Land spreads eastward, and from there it fans out to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Seeing that a certain one whom he designates as the treacherous one has dealt treacherously, the Prophet says, "I pine away, I pine away, woe is me!" (v. 16b). When this verse is read in the light of related passages, one comes to the probable conclusion that Isaiah was speaking of the world ruler, who in the middle of the Tribulation breaks the covenant which he has made with the Jews for seven years. This treacherous act will unleash a reign of terror throughout Jewry, and probably throughout the world.

In verses 17 and 18 the paralyzing effect of this reign of terror is seen creeping all over the world. A person may escape one danger only to be ensnared by another.

Verses 19 and 20 foretell that the earth will be utterly broken and rent asunder and will be shaken violently. It will stagger like a drunken man and swing to and fro like a hammock. The reason for the Lord's acting thus is the transgression of the population of the world. The civilization of that day will fall and rise no more.

D. Zephaniah 1: 14-18

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

As already seen, the Great Tribulation is called the Great Day of Jehovah in Zephaniah 1: 14. Events of that time and of the days leading up to it will move with kaleidoscopic rapidity. Speaking figuratively, one would say that the world will shift into high gear. There will be hustle and bustle on every hand. The nerves of men will be frayed, and they will be brought to the point of exasperation, for "the mighty man crieth there bitterly."

The statements in verses 15 and 16 are to be understood literally. That day is a day of wrath—the wrath of God against

sin and wickedness. It will be a day of disaster and distress, because trouble of every indescribable character will be the order of the day. It will be a time of waste and desolation, because destructive forces will be operating on every hand. It will be a time of clouds and thick darkness. The seriousness of the times will be reflected by the gloominess of the weather. It will be a day of trumpet and alarm, a time of unprecedented war. From parallel passages of the Scriptures, one learns that there will be three world wars in the Tribulation and one local war which will affect one fourth of the world's surface. There may be even more wars, but they are not listed. The wars which have already taken place were sham battles compared with those of the Tribulation.

God is forced on account of the sins and degradation of men to bring these disasters and troubles upon them, whose "blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung" (v. 17).

The almighty dollar now speaks. In the Tribulation it will have no voice. For God hath said, "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's wrath . . ." (v. 18).

It is inconceivable at the present time for men to form any adequate idea of the destruction and suffering that will be the order of the day in the Tribulation. In the days of Noah men by their wickedness brought about destruction of all civilization. In the days of the Great Tribulation, men by their wickedness will bring about the destruction of their own civilization by means of the great judgments of the Almighty.

In the Olivet Discourse (Matthew, chapters 24 and 25,) the Lord Jesus Christ discusses the Tribulation, noting certain events that are not mentioned by any of the prophets. One should study carefully Matthew 24:9-28. Since this Olivet Discourse is discussed in *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*, pp. 296-314, and in Chapter III of this volume, pp. 67-83, it is not necessary to discuss this Scripture again. The reader, however, should by all means investigate what is said on this subject in these two references.

III. THE THREE PURPOSES OF THE TRIBULATION

God always has a good and sufficient reason for everything which He does. He has plans and purposes that began in eternity of the past, that are unfolding in time, and that will continue to unfold in eternity of the future. At the present time He is working all things according to the purpose of His will.

A. To Bring About the World-Wide Revival

That there is to be a world-wide revival in the Tribulation is clearly set forth in Isaiah 17:7, 8: "In that day shall men look unto their Maker, and their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel. 8 And they shall not look to the altars, the work of their hands; neither shall they have respect to that which their fingers have made, either the Asherim, or the sun-images." The expression "in that day" occurs three times in this chapter with the technical meaning of the day of Jehovah, or the Tribulation. A careful study of this chapter is convincing on this point.

In verses 7 and 8 quoted above, Isaiah foretells this mighty world-wide revival: "In that day [in the Tribulation] shall men look unto their Maker, and their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel." The King James Version renders verse 7 thus: "At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel." The American Standard Version, 1901 edition, renders this passage "In that day shall men look. . . ." Both renderings are correct because the word translated *man* in the King James Version and *men* in the American Standard Version may be interpreted as a singular noun referring to one individual, or as a collective noun referring to men in general. As to which meaning is to be accepted in a given case, the facts of the context must decide. In the sentence "In that day shall men look to *their* Maker," the antecedent of the pronoun *their* is *men*. The facts of this context, therefore, clearly point to *men* rather than *man* as the correct rendering.

From a number of passages of the prophets one learns that in the Tribulation—probably near the beginning—idolatry will be the order of the day. After the Church is raptured out of the world, as seen in Chapter V, mankind will take a mad plunge into idolatry. Satan, the god of this world, will momentarily have his heyday of glee. He will blind the eyes of men so that they will follow him whithersoever he leads. Thus Satan will gain a bulldog grip upon the entire world.

According to verse 8, men will turn away from idols and look unto their Maker, the Holy One of Israel (v. 7). What will cause them to do this? What will arouse them out of their deadly stupor caused by the opiate of Satan's deception and lies? The answers are found in Revelation 6:12-17:

12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon

became as blood; 13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. 14 And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?

In this passage we see that the leaders of the world will literally be shaken out of their stupor by the convulsions of nature. One has every reason to believe that mankind in general will likewise be aroused to the situation in which they find themselves. They will see that it is a case of life or death, and many of them will turn to God. When Isaiah, therefore, said that men will look unto their Maker, he undoubtedly meant the greater portion of the human family. In Isaiah, chapter 17, therefore, the Prophet foresees the world-wide revival.

As seen above in the discussion of Isaiah, chapter 24, the Prophet foresees a mighty turning to God and records the vision in these words: "These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout; for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud from the sea. 15 Wherefore glorify ye Jehovah in the east, even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea. 16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs: Glory to the righteous" (Isa. 24:14-16b). The setting in which this passage appears shows that this revival is in the first part of the Tribulation. The sufferings of the people of the world caused by the judgments of the Tribulation are contrasted with the joys and ecstasies of the new converts seen in the vision. From the facts of this context one sees that the judgments of the Tribulation are used of God in bringing about this mighty revival.

In Isaiah, chapter 26, appears a song that will be sung in the land of Israel in that day, in the Tribulation. The remnant of Israel who will sing this song will say,

8. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Jehovah, have we waited for thee; to thy name, even to thy memorial *name*, is the desire of our soul. 9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee earnestly: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. 10 Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of Jehovah (Isa. 26: 8-10).

Those singing this song will say to God, "In the way of thy judgments, O Jehovah, have we waited for thee. . . ." Echoed in this statement is the conviction that the judgments will have had a salutary effect upon the worshipers. The statement "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" confirms the conclusion just expressed. The judgments referred to can mean nothing but the judgments of the Great Tribulation. According to verse 9, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness when God's judgments are falling upon them. How many will then learn righteousness? The inhabitants of the world. This answer implies that the greater portion of humanity will learn righteousness during the Tribulation. Isaiah, therefore, sees and speaks of the world-wide revival.

The Lord Jesus Christ foretells that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24: 14). There is but one gospel (Gal. 1: 6-9). Sometimes it is called the gospel of the kingdom; at other times it is designated as the gospel of the grace of God; and it is also called the everlasting gospel. The Lord Jesus is talking about the first part of the Tribulation when He says that the gospel would be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations. He simply makes a prediction that the gospel will be preached in the Tribulation to all nations, but He does not tell what results will follow.

The Apostle Paul foretells that the gospel will be preached in its own times:

2 I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; 2 for the kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony *to be borne* in its own times; 7 whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth (I Tim. 2: 1-7).

In this passage the Apostle urges that prayer and intercessions be made for all men. Why? Because the One eternal God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Men can be saved only by the truth of God. "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony *to be*

borne in its own times . . ." (v. 5). The message of the truth of this gospel has been preached here and there at different times during the present dispensation. But a campaign, world-wide in its scope, has never been conducted thus far. The Apostle Paul, however, foretells that the complete testimony will be given in its own times. When do Jesus and the prophets say that the gospel will be preached unto all nations? As already seen, in the Tribulation. Why will it be preached then? Because God would have all men to be saved. But He saves men through the gospel message—"So belief *cometh* of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10: 17).

In Revelation, chapter 7, appears one of the most glorious prophecies regarding the world-wide revival found in the Scriptures:

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. **2** And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, **3** saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. **4** And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel:

5 Of the tribe of Judah *were* sealed twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand;

6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand;

7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand;

8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand;

Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

9 After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; **10** and they cry with a great voice, saying,

Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

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

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

Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in white robes, who are they, and whence came they? **14** And I say unto him,

My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: 17 for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes (Rev. 7: 1-17).

Revelation 6: 12-17 shows that forces will shake the world to its very foundation and cause men to realize that God is still supreme and in control of all things throughout the universe. Men will realize as never before that the cosmic upheavals throughout the universe and the catastrophes on the earth are the result of the wrath and the indignation of the Almighty, against whom mankind has sinned and has done that which is abominable in His sight. What a turning plow does in breaking up the soil preparatory to the sowing of seed, the convulsions throughout nature and the judgments upon earth will do in the hearts of men, preparing them for the sowing of the good seed of the Word of God in their hearts.¹ God never deviates from His foreannounced plans and purposes, but fulfills His predictions as written. When He called Abraham into His service (Gen. 12: 1-3 and related passages), He said He would bless the world through Abraham and his seed. In keeping with this announced purpose, the Almighty will call forth, equip, and prepare for service the 144,000 Jewish servants who will conduct the world-wide revival, as set forth in Revelation, chapter 7.²

That the 144,000 servants of God in this passage are Jews is evident. One is to take this language at its face value unless there is positive evidence indicating a departure from the literal meaning. One seeks in vain for such evidence. It is, therefore, logical to accept the literal meaning of the words.

¹ For further light on the world-wide revival, see my booklet *Sowing and Reaping a Bumper Crop*.

² God always uses men and means in carrying out His purposes. He has committed to men the word of reconciliation (II Cor. 5: 19). He will use men, therefore, in giving the truth to these 144,000 and at the same time use men in teaching and equipping these servants for their special mission in the world.

In order to help carry out this threefold purpose, the Biblical Research Society has prepared its Messianic Series of seven volumes and is distributing them throughout world-Jewry as the Lord enables.

The 144,000 Jews of Revelation, chapter 7, must not be confused with the 144,000 individuals in Revelation 14:1-5, who are taken from among men—that is, from among all nations:

4 These are they that were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These *are* they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, *to be* the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish (Rev. 14: 4, 5).

After giving the names of the twelve tribes of Israel from which the 144,000 of Revelation, chapter 7, are selected, the Apostle John, the writer of the Book of Revelation, records a vision of the world-wide revival in which he sees “a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9, 10). Upon the authority of this passage, one may believe that there will be multiplied millions of people from every nation and tongue who will come to the Lord during the Tribulation.

According to verse 13, one of the elders asks John, “These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?” John confesses his ignorance on this point. Then the elder replies, “These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (v. 14). This mighty throng of people come out of the Great Tribulation. John uses the strongest expression in referring to the Tribulation—“the Tribulation, the great one.” There can be no misunderstanding of the use of this special idiom. All those who live righteously shall suffer persecution, as Paul declares. Such tribulations are the experiences of individuals; but the Tribulation, the great one, is a period of seven years with which the present age closes.

This multitude that cannot be numbered comes out of the Great Tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. In this connection let one remember that the church, all born-again believers, will be raptured out of the world before the Tribulation begins. This innumerable host of saved people, hearing the gospel, accept Christ in the Tribulation. They are the tribulation saints.

When all the facts of this subject are studied, it is seen that the world-wide revival will occur in the Tribulation and will be conducted by the 144,000 Jewish servants of God, to whom the gospel is now being given.

B. To Purge the World of Wickedness

In 11 Samuel 23:1-7 is what has been called "David's Swan Song." Though it is thus named, it was inspired by the Spirit of God: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue" (v. 2). Continuing, David says that God is the one who is speaking. In this hymn appears one of the most glorious visions of King Messiah and His world-wide reign.

- One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,
4 *He shall be* as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds,
When the tender grass springeth out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain.
5 Verily my house is not so with God;
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things, and sure:
For it is all my salvation, and all my desire,
Although he maketh it not to grow (II Sam. 23:3c-5).

In order that there may be such a glorious, sinless, reign among men, the wicked will have to be purged from the earth:

- 6 But the ungodly shall be all of them as thorns to be thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken with the hand;
7 But the man that toucheth them
Must be armed with iron and the staff of a spear:
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place (vv. 6, 7).

According to this quotation, the ungodly are compared to thorns that will be thrust away: "And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place." The wicked ones must be thus purged from the earth in order that there might be the reign of righteousness.

The inspired writer in Psalm 92:6-9 foretells the prevalence of sin and iniquity in the time of the end. When this condition develops to a certain extent, the Lord will destroy the wicked from the face of the globe:

- 6 A brutish man knoweth not;
Neither doth a fool understand this:
7 When the wicked spring as the grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;
It is that they shall be destroyed for ever.

- 8 But thou, O Jehovah, art on high for evermore.
 9 For, lo, thine enemies, O Jehovah,
 For, lo, thine enemies shall perish;
 All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

Psalm 119: 126 states that "it is time for Jehovah to work; *For* they have made void thy law." The implication of this verse is that Jehovah will deal drastically with those who have made void His law.

Speaking for God in an oracle against Babylon, Isaiah says, "Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isa. 13:9). God declares, "I will make a man more rare than fine gold, even a man than the pure gold of Ophir" (Isa. 13:12).

From these two verses it is clear that God will purge the world of all sinners. Isaiah shows that comparatively few people will survive the destructive forces of the Tribulation: "Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are found guilty: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" (Isa. 24:6).

From these and other passages of Scripture which could be cited, one sees that the Lord will purge the world of all sinners and workers of iniquity.

C. To Bring the Remnant of Israel Back to God

In Daniel, chapter 12, the Prophet discusses the latter half of the Tribulation, stating that "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. 12:1).

Someone asked the angelic being who was present, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" (v. 6). The celestial being swore "by him that liveth forever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (Dan. 12:7). The drift of thought of this passage shows that the purpose of the judgments of the Tribulation—at least those of the latter half—are designed to bring the remnant of Israel to their knees; for when their power is utterly broken, the judgments cease.

A similar prediction is found in Psalm 60:1-3:

- 60** O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast broken us down;
 Thou hast been angry; oh restore us again.
2 Thou hast made the land to tremble; thou hast rent it:
 Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.
3 Thou hast showed thy people hard things:
 Thou hast made us to drink the wine of staggering.

According to this passage, the remnant of Israel acknowledge that God has cast them off and broken them down, but they plead to be restored. At that time they will acknowledge the national sin of rejecting their Messiah and plead for Him to return—the event for which He has been waiting through the centuries:

18 And therefore will Jehovah wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for Jehovah is a God of justice; blessed are all they that wait for him. 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more; he will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear, he will answer thee (Isa. 30:18, 19).

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND COMING OF THE MESSIAH

IN CHAPTER II of this volume the entire redemptive career of the Messiah is set forth, which consists of the two comings of the one Messiah separated by the interval during which He is rejected by the Hebrew people, but is exalted at the right hand of God the Father, awaiting the time when Israel, having seen the fatal mistake of the centuries, pleads for Him to return and to take over the government of the world. As seen in the volume *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*, the Messiah came on scheduled time and performed many miraculous works, which proved that He was the God-man who came to make atonement for the sins of the race. Having been rejected by His people Israel, and having made atonement for the sins of the world, He accepted the invitation of God to ascend to heaven and to sit enthroned in majesty, awaiting Israel's repudiation of the national sin of rejecting Him. Whenever the people of Israel make this confession and plead for Him to return, He will speedily come back to earth and assume all authority and will reign from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. The next and last step in this investigation is to ascertain what the Scriptures say regarding His imminent coming.

I. MESSIAH'S SECOND COMING ACCORDING TO MOSES

In Deuteronomy 32: 1-43 appears a song which Moses taught the children of Israel just before his departure, and which might properly be called "Israel's National Anthem." In this song the entire course of Jewish history from Moses' day to the time when Israel will be brought back into fellowship with God is graphically set forth. This hymn, therefore, naturally concludes with a vivid description of the Second Coming of the Messiah:

- 39 See now that I, even I, am he,
And there is no god with me:
I kill, and I make alive;
I wound, and I heal;
And there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
- 40 For I lift up my hand to heaven,
And say, As I live for ever,
- 41 If I whet my glittering sword,
And my hand take hold on judgment;

- I will render vengeance to mine adversaries,
And will recompense them that hate me.
- 42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
And my sword shall devour flesh;
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the head of the leaders of the enemy.
- 43 Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people:
For he will avenge the blood of his servants,
And will render vengeance to his adversaries,
And will make expiation for his land, for his people
(Deut. 32: 39-43).

According to verse 39, Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the only true and living God. This truth is set forth in Israel's great confession of faith: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity" (literal translation). The facts demanding this interpretation are set forth in volume I of this series, *The God of Israel*.

There is no god along with the God of Israel. He is the One in whom we live and move and have our being (Acts 17: 28). He is the Creator of all things and beings; all are dependent on Him.

- 27 These wait all for thee,
That thou mayest give them their food in due season.
- 28 Thou givest unto them, they gather;
Thou openest thy hand, they are satisfied with good.
- 29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled;
Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.
- 30 Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created;
And thou renewest the face of the ground (Ps. 104: 27-30).

Not only does the Lord create and make alive; He also kills.

29 For, lo, I begin to work evil at the city which is called by my name; and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished; for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith Jehovah of hosts.

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

32 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest shall be raised up from the uttermost parts of the earth. 33 And the slain of Jehovah shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the face of the ground (Jer. 25: 29-33).

No one can deliver out of God's hand: "For I lift up my hand to heaven, And say, As I live forever, If I whet my glittering sword, . . . I will render vengeance to mine adversaries, And will recompense them that hate me" (Deut. 32: 40, 41).

According to verse 42, He goes into battle, His arrows taking a terrible toll of His enemies.

According to verse 43, when Messiah has won complete victory over all His foes, the Lord calls upon the nations surviving to rejoice with His people Israel. In this final war which is fought to stop all wars, Messiah avenges the blood of His servants and makes expiation for His land and for His people Israel.

Thus Moses in this national anthem foretells Messiah's coming to earth as a mighty warrior who conquers all foes and delivers Israel, solving the Jewish question once for all.

II. MESSIAH'S SECOND COMING ACCORDING TO DAVID

David, the king and sweet singer of Israel, was granted many visions of the future, especially the marvelous vision of the reign of King Messiah when the glory of God shall encircle the earth as the waters cover the sea. He was given the following revelation:

- 7 Then the earth shook and trembled;
The foundations also of the mountains quaked
And were shaken, because he was wroth.
- 8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,
And fire out of his mouth devoured:
Coals were kindled by it.
- 9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down;
And thick darkness was under his feet.
- 10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly;
Yea, he soared upon the wings of the wind.
- 11 He made darkness his hiding-place, his pavilion round about him,
Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.
- 12 At the brightness before him his thick clouds passed,
Hailstones and coals of fire.
- 13 Jehovah also thundered in the heavens,
And the Most High uttered his voice,
Hailstones and coals of fire.
- 14 And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them;
Yea, lightnings manifold, and discomfited them.
- 15 Then the channels of waters appeared,
And the foundations of the world were laid bare,
At thy rebuke, O Jehovah,
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

- 16 He sent from on high, he took me;
He drew me out of many waters.
- 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
And from them that hated me; for they were too mighty for me.
- 18 They came upon me in the day of my calamity;
But Jehovah was my stay.
- 19 He brought me forth also into a large place;
He delivered me, because he delighted in me (Ps. 18: 7-19).

Commentators and expositors are not unanimous in their interpretation of this passage. Some see in it a prediction of the coming of the Messiah at the end of the Tribulation; others see in it a statement by David of God's having answered his prayer for deliverance from his enemies. The king, being overjoyed by God's delivering him from his enemies, speaks in exalted terms of this miraculous experience, borrowing phraseology from some historical accounts of certain theophanies. How is one to determine the meaning of this passage? The answer is by looking at the facts of the context.

In verses 4-6 one sees the desperate condition in which the writer is ensnared. Or the expression "the floods of ungodliness made me afraid" possibly indicates a time when ungodliness is the order of the day. Verses 20-30 discuss various phases of God's character. In verse 27 the statement "thou wilt save the afflicted people" shows that a nation is afflicted. The reference in this connection probably points to the Jewish people who, according to other passages, will be in dire distress in the end time. Verses 31-45 are indeed illuminating and help to determine which of the interpretations is the correct one.

- 31 For who is God, save Jehovah?
And who is a rock, besides our God,
- 32 The God that girdeth me with strength,
And maketh my way perfect?
- 33 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet:
And setteth me upon my high places.
- 34 He teacheth my hands to war;
So that mine arms do bend a bow of brass.
- 35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation;
And thy right hand hath holden me up,
And thy gentleness hath made me great.
- 36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,
And my feet have not slipped.
- 37 I will pursue mine enemies, and overtake them;
Neither will I turn again till they are consumed.
- 38 I will smite them through, so that they shall not be able to rise:
They shall fall under my feet.

- 39 For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle:
 Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.
- 40 Thou hast also made mine enemies turn their backs unto me,
 That I might cut off them that hate me.
- 41 They cried, but there was none to save;
 Even unto Jehovah, but he answered them not.
- 42 Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind;
 I did cast them out as the mire of the streets.
- 43 Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people;
 Thou hast made me the head of the nations:
 A people whom I have not known shall serve me.
- 44 As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me;
 The foreigners shall submit themselves unto me.
- 45 The foreigners shall fade away,
 And shall come trembling out of their close places (Ps. 18: 31-45).

In these verses the Psalmist speaks of God's miraculously giving him wisdom, clear understanding, skill in the art of warring, power, and might. God girds the Psalmist with strength (v. 32), gives him speed in running (v. 33), supernaturally teaches him how to war (v. 34), and enables him to bend a bow of brass (v. 34). God's power holds him up (v. 35), gives him space to fight (v. 36), prevents his feet from slipping (v. 36), gives him complete victory over his enemies (vv. 37-42), and makes him the head of the nations (v. 43).

A careful study of Isaiah, chapter 40, shows that this message is to be given to Israel in the end time. It is a message that God commands believers to deliver to them. It concludes with the following promise of supernatural strength and endurance in the last war to those who await the appearance of King Messiah:

28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint (Isa. 40: 28-31).

A like promise of divine assistance is held out for the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah which will enable them to triumph over the nations in the war of the great day of God the Almighty, foretold in Zechariah, chapters 12-14.

7 Jehovah also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem be not magni-

fied above Judah. 8 In that day shall Jehovah defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them (Zech. 12: 7, 8).

The power of God will energize the feeblest ones in the ranks of the nation of Israel so that they will be as powerful as David, who was one of the greatest military geniuses of the centuries; and the leaders of the house of David will be supernaturally strengthened with power and endued with understanding, so that, relatively speaking, they will become as the Angel of Jehovah. That God does at times energize men by His Spirit in order to equip them for the task at hand is seen in the case of David, the shepherd lad, who, by the power of God, slew a bear and a lion that were attacking the flock of sheep which he was tending.

From Isaiah, chapter 40, and Zechariah, chapter 12, it is clear that God will supernaturally enable the forces of Israel in the last great war to withstand their foes. When Psalm 18: 31-45 is studied in the light of these chapters, one learns that these passages hold out the same promise of divine assistance and deliverance from Israel's enemies.

Throughout Psalm 18 the author speaks of himself as having had the various experiences narrated. This type of language frequently occurs in the prophetic Word. According to II Peter 1: 21 (literally rendered), the prophets were often borne along in vision by the Spirit of God across the centuries to a given time in the future and were, so to speak, let down in the midst of the scenes of the environment which they were to reveal. Obviously, in this Psalm David is carried forward in vision to the end time. He identifies himself with the remnant of the Hebrew people and speaks of himself as fighting along with them in their ranks. Further confirmation of this position is seen in the statement. "Thou hast made me the head of the nation . . ." (v. 43). In Deuteronomy 28: 13 the promise is made that Israel will become the head of the nations. The people of Israel are promised this exalted position if they will only be obedient to the Lord, according to Deuteronomy 28: 1ff. From these facts and others that might be adduced, it is clear that the coming of the Lord described in Psalm 18: 7-19 is a plain prediction of the Second Coming of the Messiah, when He will energize the forces of Israel, enter the field of battle, and conquer all foes.

III. MESSIAH'S SECOND COMING ACCORDING TO HABAKKUK

The caption of the prophecy in Habakkuk, chapter 3, is "A Prayer of Habakkuk the Prophet, set to Shigionoth." The Hebrew word translated *prayer* has a broader significance than is conveyed by the English word *prayer*. A study of the use of this word shows that sometimes it signifies praise; on other occasions, prophecy; and in other instances, prayer. In Habakkuk 3:1 it refers to a prophecy introduced by a short prayer (v. 2). This prediction was to be used in connection with the temple service, for it is dedicated to the Chief Musician, as stated in the last line of the chapter. It was set to a familiar tune called *Shigionoth* (v. 1).

A. O Jehovah, Revive Thy Work

O Jehovah, I have heard the report of thee, and am afraid:
 O Jehovah, revive thy work in the midst of the years;
 In the midst of the years make it known;
 In wrath remember mercy (Hab. 3:2).

Habakkuk, chapter 3, is cast in a mold of Hebrew poetry, the simplest form of which is known as Hebrew parallelism. A statement is made by the selection of certain words. This line is followed by another which is parallel to it, and which repeats the exact thought of the first line or adds a supplemental thought. In this way the second line is a comment on the first. Often the simple parallelism is expanded, as in the present case, and may be changed to an introversion. In the present case line one is supplemented by line four; and line two, by line three. Thus arranged, the verse reads as follows:

O Jehovah, I have heard the report of thee, and am afraid . . .
 In wrath remember mercy.
 O Jehovah, revive thy work in the midst of the years;
 In the midst of the years make it known.

In some way or from some prophet, Habakkuk had heard something about the Lord Jehovah which terrified him. What frightened him was that the Lord's wrath is stirred to the very depths. Though the Lord is a merciful, gracious Being, sometimes His wrath rises to white heat. The Prophet, therefore, prays that the Lord will remember mercy, though He is justly indignant. Since this prayer is followed by a prediction of the Coming of the Lord

in wrath (vv. 3-15), and since, as is learned from parallel passages, the Lord returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, the wrath of which Habakkuk speaks in lines one and four is the wrath of the Tribulation.

According to lines two and three, the work of God on the earth is brought to a standstill. The Prophet, therefore, prays for the Lord to revive His work in the midst of the years. Since the period of wrath is seven years, and since God's work is stopped in the middle of the period, there will be three and one-half years more for the pouring out of God's wrath. When these facts are viewed in the light of related passages, it is learned that the thing which stops the work of God "in the midst of the years" is the assumption of absolute power and control over all nations by the world dictator.

In answer to this prayer, and doubtless to the prayers of myriads of others, the Lord will revive His work in the middle of the Tribulation. It probably will go forward, but not with the same momentum which it has before it closes down. This work of God is that which is foretold in Revelation, chapter 7—a world-wide revival in which the greater portion of the human family will turn to God.

B. God's Coming from Edom

- 3 God came from Teman,
And the Holy One from mount Paran. [Selah
His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of his praise (Hab. 3:3).

The prayer of Habakkuk reminds one of Deuteronomy 33:2 and possibly is an echo of it:

- 2 And he said, Jehovah came from Sinai,
And rose from Seir unto them;
He shined forth from mount Paran,
And he came from the ten thousands of holy ones:
At his right hand was a fiery law for them.

Allied with these two verses is Judges 5:4, 5:

- 4 Jehovah, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
5 The mountains quaked at the presence of Jehovah,
Even yon Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

Though these three passages may point backward to the time of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, it is quite certain that Habakkuk is also looking forward to the Second Coming of Christ; for immediately he speaks of the Lord's glorious return to earth at the end of the Tribulation. Confirmation of this interpretation is found in Isaiah's prediction of the Lord's Coming in Isaiah 63: 1-6.

63 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with me: yea, I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. 4 For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my wrath, it upheld me. 6 And I trod down the peoples in mine anger, and made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.

In Habakkuk 3: 3, line one, the verb *came* appears in the text; but on this verb there is a footnote which reads "or, *cometh* (and similarly to the end of verse 15)." Grammatically, both renderings are possible. As is well known by all scholars, verbs in the original Hebrew and Aramaic languages do not express the time element. The action expressed by the verb is either completed or incompleting. Verbs in the perfect tense express actions which have been completed in the past, and which continue in the completed state; but the facts of each context must indicate definitely the exact meaning intended. Verbs in the imperfect tense always refer to incompleting action, but the facts of the context must likewise point to the exact meaning.

If one adopts the text reading of verses 3-15, he must understand the Prophet as speaking of the vision of the Coming of the Lord as an experience which he had enjoyed in the past. On the other hand, if one adopts the marginal rendering, he is to understand that the Prophet is relating what he sees at the time of the vision. If this second interpretation is adopted, the passage is a prediction of the Second Coming given in terms of the present tense, which has a future significance.

C. God's Coming as a Warrior

- 4 And his brightness was as the light;
He had rays *coming forth* from his hand;
And there was the hiding of his power.

- 5 Before him went the pestilence,
and fiery bolts went forth at his feet.
6 He stood, and measured the earth;
He beheld, and drove asunder the nations;
And the eternal mountains were scattered;
The everlasting hills did bow; His goings were as of old.
7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction;
The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble (Hab. 3: 4-7).

Habakkuk's description of the Lord's Coming reminds one of a similar prediction found in Psalm 18: 1-19. When the Lord returns at the conclusion of the Tribulation, midnight darkness will envelop the globe (Matt. 24: 29-31). Suddenly the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, which will burst forth with a brilliancy that will startle all tribes and peoples living at that time, who will mourn because of Him.

According to Habakkuk 3: 4, rays will flash forth from His hand. The word rendered *rays* means literally "horns," but *rays* seems to fit the context better than *horns*. Since it is said that in these rays is the hiding of His power, it is highly probable that they may be some kind of miraculous manifestation which may accurately be thought of as "death rays"—as has been suggested by some Bible students. If these rays do not slay men, they will in some way inflict injuries on the wicked.

Before the conquering Son of man, there will go forth pestilence and fiery bolts (v. 5). Without a doubt this passage is related to the one found in Jeremiah 25: 30-38. We see by an examination of Jeremiah's prediction that the slain of the Lord will be from one end of the earth to the other. These slain ones will be the wicked who spurn all offers of mercy and love.

As Messiah marches forth against His enemies, He stops and shakes the earth by His omnipotent power. Then He charges forward against the armies of the world, which are under the command of the world dictator. A passage related to this one is found in Revelation 19: 19-21. When the strong Son of God goes forth to battle against the armies of the nations, the carnage will be appalling.

According to Habakkuk 3: 6, the earth will tremble and quake under His mighty power. The mountains will be thrown down, and every city of the world will become a shamble. The inveterate enemies of God and of His people will then tremble through fear, as is seen in verse 7.

D. The Waters of the Earth Affected by the Second Coming of Messiah

- 8 Was Jehovah displeased with the rivers?
Was thine anger against the rivers,
Or thy wrath against the sea,
That thou didst ride upon thy horses,
Upon thy chariots of salvation?
- 9 Thy bow was made quite bare;
The oaths to the tribes were a *sure* word. [Selah
Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.
- 10 The mountains saw thee, and were afraid;
The tempest of waters passed by;
The deep uttered its voice,
And lifted up its hands on high (Hab. 3: 8-10).

The oceans and the seas cover three fourths of the earth's surface, but there are great reservoirs of water underneath the continents. That this statement is true is seen from the following quotation: "For he hath founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the floods" (Ps. 24: 2).

That the waters of the earth will be churned into a raging fury by the events connected with the Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ is seen from such a passage as Psalm 46: 1-3:

- 46** God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas;
- 3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains tremble with the swelling thereof. [Selah

The writer of Psalm 93 likewise speaks of the roaring of the sea:

- 3 The floods have lifted up, O Jehovah,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.
- 4 Above the voices of many waters,
The mighty breakers of the sea,
Jehovah on high is mighty (Ps. 93: 3, 4).

The Lord Jesus Himself, in speaking of the coming events of the end time which culminate with His Second Coming, refers to the roaring of the sea and the billows in connection with supernatural phenomena in sun, moon, and stars: "And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows" (Luke 21: 25).

From Habakkuk 3:8-10 one sees that the earth will be rent at the Second Coming of Messiah and that rivers and reservoirs beneath the surface of the earth will be exposed to human gaze.

In verse 8 the Lord is represented as riding upon horses, upon "chariots of salvation." This language reminds one of the description of the Lord's Coming found in Revelation 19:11-16.

In Habakkuk 3:9 the Lord is represented as a warrior with his bow rushing into battle. In the same verse the Prophet calls attention to the fact that God's oaths to His ancient people are sure. God will carry out every threat which He has made and will fulfill every promise.

In verse 10 one sees that the earth will be greatly rent (Ps. 60:2) and that new rivers will flow. In this verse the mountains are thought of as people who are terrified by the sights which they behold. The sea is likewise personified. It lifts up its voice on high—in surrender to the Lord of all the earth.

E. The Heavenly Bodies Affected by the Second Coming of Messiah

- 11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation,
At the light of thine arrows as they went,
At the shining of thy glittering spear (Hab. 3:11).

The sun, moon, and stars are likewise thought of as intelligent beings that in amazement stand in awe at the light of Jehovah's arrows speeding on their way and at the shining of His glorious spear.

F. Messiah's Marching Through the Land of Israel

- 12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation;
Thou didst thresh the nations in anger (Hab. 3:12).

According to this verse, Jehovah will thresh the nations of the world by His mighty power (cf. Zech. 14:1ff.).

G. The Last Great War

- 13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people,
For the salvation of thine anointed;
Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked man,
Laying bare the foundation even unto the neck. [Selah
14 Thou didst pierce with his own staves the head of his warriors:
They came as a whirlwind to scatter me;
Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly (Hab. 3:13, 14)

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh (Rev. 19: 19-21).

In this Scripture we learn that this last war is fought in order that Jehovah may deliver His people Israel. In this titanic struggle the Lord deals a death blow to the last ruler of this earth, the Antichrist. The generalissimo of the Antichrist in charge of the titanic struggle is slain. Those leading the armies of the enemy come with high expectation, but their hopes are blasted as they go down in defeat.

H. The Prophet's Depressed Spirit Comforted

- 16 I heard, and my body trembled,
My lips quivered at the voice;
Rottenness entereth into my bones, and I tremble in my place;
Because I must wait quietly for the day of trouble,
For the coming up of the people that invadeth us.
- 17 For though the fig-tree shall not flourish,
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
The labor of the olive shall fail,
And the fields shall yield no food;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
And there shall be no herd in the stalls:
- 18 Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.
- 19 Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength;
And he maketh my feet like hinds' feet,
And will make me to walk upon my high places (Hab. 3: 16-19).

The vision of the invasion of the State of Israel, first by the Chaldeans (Hab. 1: 5-11), and by the armies of the world in the end time, and the subsequent destruction of the country, caused the Prophet to be spiritually depressed. Since the whole land will be turned into a battleground, food throughout the country will be reduced to a minimum. There will be untold suffering, but the Prophet rises on the wings of faith and sees the glorious outcome of Messiah's appearance.

IV. MESSIAH'S SECOND COMING ACCORDING TO THE LORD JESUS

John the Baptist broke the silence of the interbiblical period of four hundred years by proclaiming, "Repent ye; for the kingdom

of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). About six months later the Lord Jesus began His public ministry, saying, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). Constantly He talked about the kingdom of heaven. In Matthew, chapter 13, appears the seven parables of the kingdom of heaven. After Jesus had risen from the dead, He appeared to the disciples during the period of forty days which intervened between His Resurrection and His Ascension, ". . . speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Jesus was a master teacher. His language is clear and understandable. Having so very much teaching on the subject of the kingdom, the disciples evidently had a clear-cut idea concerning it. Since Jesus laid such great emphasis upon it, obviously that doctrine is of paramount importance.

A. The Promise of Restoring the Kingdom to Israel

According to Luke 24:50-52, Jesus went with His disciples to a position over against Bethany and from there ascended to heaven. At the time of His departure, the apostles gathered around Him and asked Him this most important question, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). To this question He replies, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority" (Acts 1:7). According to this statement, God has set the times and seasons when He will restore the kingdom to Israel. Have we any scriptural proof to this effect? Yes. Amos, one of the earliest writing prophets, foretells that the people of Israel will be spued out of the land of their fathers, be scattered among the nations, and be regathered eventually to their own country. This prophecy is found in Amos 9:7-15:

7 Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? 8 Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah. 9 For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as *grain* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth. 10 All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, The evil shall not overtake nor meet us.

11 In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; 12 that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth

this. 13 Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. 14 And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.

Figuratively speaking, God has a blueprint of the nations and their territories throughout all time.

- 8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
 When he separated the children of men,
 He set the bounds of the peoples
 According to the number of the children of Israel.
 9 For Jehovah's portion is his people;
 Jacob is the lot of his inheritance (Deut. 32: 8, 9).

According to Paul's speech on Mars' Hill in Athens, God "made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: 28 for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17: 26-28).

According to the Deuteronomy verses, God places His people Israel in the center of the earth (Ezek. 38: 12) and makes them, figuratively speaking, the hub of the nations. All the nations and their activities revolve around Israel. According to the passage from Acts, God indicates on His blueprint the time of the rise, the expansion or contraction, or the fall of each nation.

According to Amos 9: 7, God shifts the nations whenever He chooses to do so in accordance with His plan. He, therefore, brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. He declares His purpose to destroy the kingdom of Israel, which He calls "the sinful kingdom," from the face of the earth (v. 8). This prediction was completely fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Jewish commonwealth was overthrown by the Romans. According to verse 9, He sifts the nation of Israel and scatters the people among the nations of the earth. This prophecy began its fulfillment in A.D. 70 and continues to the present time. According to verse 10, the Lord will by the sword destroy all the sinners of the Jewish people who say, "The evil shall not overtake nor meet us." This pre-

diction will be fulfilled in the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), the Tribulation.

According to verse 11, "In that day," declares God, "will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old." This prophecy obviously foretells the restoration of the Davidic dynasty and kingdom as in the days of old. The dynasty and the kingdom of David are thought of in terms of a tent, or tabernacle, that stood in its glory at one time. Later it is destroyed, but finally it will be raised up and restored in all its glory.

In Amos 9:13-15 is the prediction of the earth when the curse is lifted and all vegetation brings forth its full strength. Israel then will rebuild the waste places and inhabit the country, enjoying life to the fullest. In other words, this passage is a prediction of the Millennial Age, so far as Israel is concerned.

A second passage which foretells the restoration of the kingdom to Israel is Micah 4:1-8:

4 But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. **2** And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; **3** and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. **4** But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it. **5** For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever.

6 In that day, saith Jehovah, will I assemble that which is lame, and I will gather that which is driven away, and that which I have afflicted; **7** and I will make that which was lame a remnant, and that which was cast far off a strong nation: and Jehovah will reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth even for ever. **8** And thou, O tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, yea, the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.

In this prophecy Jerusalem is visualized as becoming the capital of a warless, sinless, sickless world. At that time the God of Jacob will reign in Zion. The peoples of the earth will make constant pilgrimages to Jerusalem as the capital of the world, in order

to hear Jehovah teach them His ways and the Word of God. From then on there will be no more wars. Peace will reign supremely over all nations.

According to verses 6 and 7, Jehovah will in that day regather the outcasts of Israel and restore His people to the land of their fathers. At that time "Jehovah will reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth even for ever" (v. 7). Jehovah personally will be in Mount Zion (Jerusalem) and will reign there over Israel, and, as we see in many other related passages, over the entire world. This same promise of Jehovah's reigning in Zion is most graphically set forth in Zephaniah 3:14-17:

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15 Jehovah hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even Jehovah, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not fear evil any more. 16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; O Zion, let not thy hands be slack. 17 Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing (Zeph. 3:14-17).

The same promise of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel found in these passages is likewise found in Jeremiah 3:16-18:

16 And it shall come to pass, when ye are multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith Jehovah, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they miss it; neither shall it be made any more. 17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart. 18 In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I gave for an inheritance unto your fathers.

At that day Jerusalem shall be called "the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem . . ." (v. 17).

Returning now to Micah 4:1-8, one sees that Jehovah, the Lord Jesus, who is God in human form, will reign in person in Mount Zion. At that time the outcasts of Israel will be gathered back to the land of their fathers. Then there will return to the tower of the flock, "the hill of the daughter of Zion," the former dominion, even "the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."

Thus, from Amos, Micah, and related passages, it is clear that the prophets teach that the kingdom will be restored to Israel. No

one can avoid this conclusion who will take the words of the prophets at their face value. That the former dominion shall be restored to Israel is beyond question. There is, however, one bit of information that is not supplied by the prophets, and that is the time when it will be restored. God willed to withhold this information from His people. The apostles were curious to know the times and the seasons when these prophecies will be fulfilled. They, therefore, at the last meeting with the risen Lord asked whether God was going to restore the kingdom to Israel at that time.

B. *The Gospel for All Nations*

At one of the appearances to the apostles the risen Messiah charged them saying,

All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28: 18-20).

At the last appearance of Jesus to the apostles when He ascended to glory, He charged them not "to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, *said he*, ye heard from me: 5 for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Acts 1: 4, 5). In Acts 1: 8 He explains why they were to remain at Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit: "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The work that is acceptable to God must be wrought by and in the power of the Spirit of God. Much work can be and doubtless is accomplished by men who are energized by the flesh. Such labor lacks the spiritual element, which alone gives value and worth in the sight of God. Many are engaged in Christian service and appear to be indeed successful. Concerning them, the Lord Jesus said,

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matt. 7: 21-23).

In giving the Great Commission to the apostles, the Lord has a world outlook: "make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28: 19). In Acts 1: 8 Jesus says that the apostles are to proclaim the gospel "unto the uttermost part of the earth." The apostles took the Lord seriously and, being energized by the Holy Spirit, they proclaimed the gospel to the entire world in one generation. In the Roman Epistle, which was probably written in A.D. 58, the Apostle Paul declares that the gospel had been preached in the whole world. "But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, And their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10: 18). In the Colossian Letter, written A.D. 63, the Apostle Paul, in speaking of the gospel, says that "it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing . . ." (Col. 1: 6). Again in Colossians 1: 23 he declares that it had been "preached in all creation under heaven. . . ." These two statements in the Colossian Letter must be taken at their face value, because there is nothing in either context pointing to a meaning other than the literal. One is, therefore, scriptural in saying that the apostles of the early church went everywhere preaching the Word, "in all creation under heaven."

In Acts 1: 8 Jesus gives them the plan of procedure: ". . . and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The Acts of the Apostles gives a brief account of the launching of the worldwide program of evangelizing all nations. An examination of this Book shows that the apostles followed the program made out for them by the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit writing through Luke briefly gives an account of the spreading of the gospel in the Mediterranean world. Tradition tells of the labors of certain of the apostles. Thomas, for instance, is reported to have gone to India; other disciples are said to have gone to China. It would indeed be interesting, from a historical standpoint, to have authentic records of the spreading of the gospel throughout the world. We shall have to be satisfied with the meager, uncertain traditions, and by faith accept the scriptural statements regarding the spreading of Christianity.

C. The Special Message of Angels Regarding the Second Coming of the Messiah

9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they were

looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven (Acts 1:9-11).

While the apostles were looking at the ascending Jesus, two men appeared to them, bringing the joyful news regarding the glorious return of Jesus: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." These two heavenly heralds are designated as men, because they were angels who assumed the form of men. In Genesis, chapters 18 and 19, is the account of a visit by three men paid to Abraham. One of these men was the Second Person of the Holy Trinity and is called Jehovah. The other two men were angels. In order that they might communicate with Abraham and others in a normal way, they assumed the form of men and are called men. The angels are ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14).

The two angels declared to the astounded apostles that this Jesus who had been taken up into heaven in a cloud would come in like manner as they had seen Him going into heaven. There seems to be echoed in this angelic announcement at least a part of the vision which was given to Daniel.

13 I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13, 14).

Without a doubt, the one who is like unto a son of man in Daniel's vision is Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of man, who, after His Resurrection, was caught up into a cloud as He returned to glory. Daniel was given a vision of the throne room of the universe. Seated upon the throne was God the Father, who is called the "ancient of days." This Son of man comes to the ancient of days, who invests Him with glory, power, and might, installing Him with regal splendor to reign over all nations of the earth. When He is thus crowned King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, He will come on the clouds of heaven to the earth and begin his Messianic reign of one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-5).

When Caiaphas, the high priest, put Jesus on oath to swear whether or not He was—and is—the Messiah of Israel, Jesus replied, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26: 64b). In this statement there is also echoed part of Daniel's vision regarding the crowning of King Messiah.

According to the assumption of Jesus in His statement to Caiaphas, He would be executed, but would rise from the dead and ascend to heaven, taking His seat at the right hand of the Almighty on High. Caiaphas would die and go to Sheol—the place of departed spirits. From that place Caiaphas has doubtless cast his gaze toward heaven many times during the two thousand years since the execution of Jesus and has seen Him seated at the right hand of the Almighty. When the set time arrives, the Lord Jesus will arise and come to earth on the clouds of heaven.

In Acts, chapter 3, appears the account of the second message preached by the Apostle Peter in Jerusalem after the Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord Jesus. The speaker calls upon all Israel to repent and to accept Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus: 21 whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old (Acts 3: 19-21).

The ascended Lord Jesus is being received in heaven, awaiting the time of restoration of all things as foretold by the prophets. God rules and overrules all events, even the free acts of men, and works them into a fabric of providential occurrences, timing and synchronizing events so that each element will be in its proper place at the psychological moment—the set time when Messiah, invited by the penitent people of Israel to return and to become their King, rends the heavens and returns to earth. When He does come, every eye shall see Him. "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1: 7).

V. MESSIAH'S SECOND COMING ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLE PAUL

Frequently one hears the expression "the two phases of the Second Coming." Those using this term refer to the Rapture of

the Church as the first phase and the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus after the Tribulation as the second phase. As has been shown in Chapter V of this volume, the Rapture of believers occurs before the Tribulation begins; and, as was seen in that discussion, the Scriptures bearing upon this point and studied in the light of their context demand this interpretation.

In the Pauline Epistles there appear a number of passages which sound a prophetic note. These are precious gems of truth that thrill one's heart. In the first Epistle to the Thessalonian Church the Apostle laid emphasis upon the Rapture (I Thess. 1: 9, 10; 4: 13—5: 11). In II Thessalonians, chapters 1 and 2, he discusses the second phase of the Lord's Coming, the glorious appearing at the end of the Tribulation. In Romans 8: 18-25 is found a marvelous prediction concerning the lifting of the curse and the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

While in certain passages it is seen that the Rapture of the church saints occurs before the Tribulation begins, in certain other passages there are statements showing conclusively that there are believers here upon earth during the Tribulation—even to the end of it, at the glorious Second Coming of Christ. The Olivet Discourse, Matthew, chapter 24, is conclusive on this point. It foretells the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, which occurred in A.D. 70. Thinking that Jesus was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem in the end of the age, the disciples asked Him, "What *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (v. 3).

In verses 4 and 5 Jesus warns the disciples against being led astray by false messiahs. In verse 6 He speaks of the Christian Dispensation as being characterized by wars and rumors of wars, and speaks of the disciples as being present throughout the dispensation. In verses 9-28 He discusses the Tribulation with which the Christian Age closes. In verse 9, still talking to the apostles, He says that they will be hated of all nations for His Name's sake. In verse 15, which is speaking of the events in the middle of the Tribulation, Jesus, still addressing the disciples, answers, "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation. . . ." From this language it would appear that there will be disciples on earth in the middle of the Tribulation. According to verse 20, Jesus, still talking to the disciples, says, "And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. . . ."

A careful perusal of the first twenty-eight verses of Matthew,

chapter 24, shows that the apostles to whom Jesus is talking are spoken of as if they would be here upon earth from the time He is speaking to them until the end of the Tribulation. Is this interpretation reasonable? To take it literally is out of the question. All the apostles passed on to be with the Lord during the first century of the Christian Era, although throughout the passage, which covers the entire Christian Dispensation and the Tribulation, the Lord speaks as though they would be present on earth all during this time. From all the facts involved, it is clear that in the mind of Jesus He is speaking of believers in Him who would be living at the various stages of the period. Thus the believers living in the first century could understand the message thoroughly and could apply it to themselves. Those believers in Him in our day can read the message and act accordingly. Finally, the tribulation saints—those who turn to the Lord during the Tribulation—will also be able to understand the message and act thereupon.

We find the same situation in the Olivet Discourse as recorded in Luke, chapter 21. In verse 11 Jesus speaks about supernatural events of the end time. In verse 12 He says, "But before all these things, they shall lay their hands on you, and shall persecute you. . . ." From the immediate context it is clear that in verses 12-19 He is speaking about the experiences through which the apostles would pass, living normal lives. But in verses 20-24 He is speaking about the events of A.D. 70—the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth. The pronoun "you" refers to the disciples who would be living at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. In verses 25-28 Jesus moves forward in His thinking and speaks about the events of the end time and concludes His special remarks by saying, "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh."

It is clear from the facts of the immediate context that Jesus is talking about the believers in Him who will be living in the end time, although He does use the same pronoun which He uses throughout the Discourse.

Thus, in the New Testament, as well as in the Old Testament, the people of God are thought of as constituting a unit; and the messages addressed to Christians of the first century are applicable to Christians living at any time, even in the end of the age. Principal and basic facts are true, regardless of time and circumstances. The New Testament Epistles were addressed to indi-

viduals and groups then in existence; for instance, the Thessalonian Letters were written to the Church at Thessalonica of Paul's day. What he said to them is just as true now as if it were addressed to Christians today for the first time.

In II Thessalonians 1:3-10 is a very comprehensive and clear statement of the coming of the Lord and of His dealings with both saint and sinner. To expound this passage adequately involves too much space—because of its many ramifications. If the reader will study carefully each word in its relation to others, he can get a fairly accurate idea of the teaching of the passage. God causes His people to pass through various experiences designed for their good and for their spiritual development. God is righteous indeed in thus dealing with His people. He acts "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 6 if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, 7 and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, 8 rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus . . ." (vv. 5b-8). When the Lord Jesus comes in fulfillment of this prediction, He will deal with two classes of people: the saints, "you that are afflicted," and sinners, "them that afflict you." He will recompense rest to the saints, but affliction to the sinners.

When will He thus reward or deal with the saints and the sinners, as here foretold? The answer is "at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven . . . rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus." Beyond question, the Apostle is speaking about the Second Coming of Christ, which occurs at the end of the Tribulation. The saints and the sinners with whom God will deal at that time are the saints and the sinners who will be living in that day. Saints will be living on the earth during the Tribulation who will survive to the end of that era of judgments. The saints then to whom the Lord at His Coming will recompense rest are indeed the tribulation saints. Of these one reads in Matthew 24:31: "And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." The sinners to whom God will recompense affliction, as stated in this passage, are the sinners who will be persecuting the tribulation saints. The strokes of

judgment will fall upon them and will wipe them out of the land of the living. They will be incarcerated in the pit of the abyss, where they will be during the millennial reign of Christ—only to be brought before the judgment of the Great White Throne at the conclusion of the Millennium. At this final judgment they will suffer punishment, “*even* eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might. . . .”

The second prophecy relating to the Lord’s return and events connected therewith is found in II Thessalonians, chapter 2.

2 Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; 2 to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; 3 let no man beguile you in any wise: for *it will not be*, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, 4 he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only *there is* one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming; 9 *even he*, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: 12 that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (II Thess. 2: 1-12).

This passage, II Thessalonians 2: 1-12, like the one to which we have just looked in chapter 1, is very profound and comprehensive, reaching its tentacles out in many ramifications. At the time of the Apostle’s writing this letter, persecution had broken out against the Thessalonian Church. Some in this church misunderstood the situation and interpreted the persecution and the suffering through which they were passing as the judgments and sufferings of the Great Tribulation. Having been taught that the Rapture of the Church would precede the Tribulation, and interpreting their suffering as the judgments of the Tribulation, the Thessalonian Church concluded that the Rapture had already occurred and that they had been left. Paul assured them that they had been misinformed, and that the day of the Lord, the Tribulation, would not be except the great apostasy would take place and the man of sin—the Antichrist of the end time—be revealed.

Paul speaks of the world dictator in terms of the willful king whose coming and arrogancies are foretold in Daniel 11: 36ff. The Apostle speaks of him as the man of sin, the son of perdition, who in the end time will arrogate to himself divine honors and oppose the worship of God and all that is called God. He will have a great celebration in the Jewish Temple that will be built at Jerusalem. On that notable occasion he will set himself forth as God and demand the worship of all mankind.

According to Daniel, chapter 7, this world dictator, represented as the little horn, will come forth into prominence and become associated with the ten dictators of the end time before the Tribulation begins. Thus, when he becomes associated with them, those who know the Scriptures will be able to point to him as the future world dictator. Before the Tribulation this man of sin will be revealed as to his identity, but in the middle of the Tribulation he will play the role foretold by Daniel in chapter 11 and by Paul in II Thessalonians 2: 1-12. In so doing, he will reveal his true character. Hence, there are two revealings of the man of sin: one before the Tribulation as to identity, the other in the middle of the Tribulation as to his true character.

In the latter half of the Tribulation, as is taught in a number of passages, he will reign with a high hand. At the conclusion of the Tribulation, the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven and will slay this dictator by the brightness of His Coming.

A third passage from the Pauline writings to which attention should be called in this connection is Romans 8: 18-25.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for *our* adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? 25 But if we hope for that which we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for it.

In writing the Roman Letter, Paul had occasion to speak of his sufferings for Christ's sake. He mentioned them not in a spirit of complaint, but in a spirit of abounding joy. The reason for this

attitude was his knowledge that any and all sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to those who suffer joyfully for Christ's sake. In verse 19 he personifies all creation and thinks of it as earnestly waiting to behold the marvelous glory that is to be revealed to suffering servants of Christ. In harmony with this thought is the one found in II Corinthians 4: 16-18.

16 Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

According to verses 20 and 21, the curse with all its blighting effects fell upon the entire world when man sinned against God, who was, humanly speaking, forced to allow sin with its evil effects to run its course. At the same time God, who works all things together for good for those who love Him, allowed the creation to be subjected to vanity, but changed the darkness into light by the promise of a world Redeemer who would triumph over Satan and the forces of evil. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3: 15). Paul, taking his stand upon this promise, sees the entire creation delivered from the bondage of corruption (the curse) into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. By faith we look for this final and complete deliverance, even though at the present time "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (v. 22).

Not only is the creation represented as groaning and suffering under the curse, but also all who have the firstfruits of the Spirit are likewise suffering as a result of the curse. Christians, regardless of how consecrated and devoted they are to the Lord, often suffer from sickness, accidents, and misfortune, the same as others who make no pretense to Christianity. The Apostle, therefore, declares that "we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body" (v. 23).

What is the significance of *adoption*? It was a Roman legal term. In the educational system of Rome it corresponded in a way to our graduation exercises. Among the wealthy classes of Roman citizens, the father frequently turned his son over to a

tutor, who assumed all responsibility for the education and training of the child—physically, mentally, morally, culturally, and religiously. The tutor accompanied his pupil everywhere he went, reminding one of the Siamese twins. When the boy reached his majority, his training and education were supposed to have been completed. A day therefore was appointed for the ceremony of adoption (graduation exercises). At this time the father received the young man back into the family circle, relieving the tutor of all responsibility. The young man, in reality, began a new life. Thus, when one becomes a Christian, he is turned over to the Lord Jesus as his teacher, who providentially assumes all responsibility of his training and spiritual development. That one enters the school of Christ when he becomes a child of God is echoed in the Great Commission given by Matthew: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 19, 20).

The expression "make disciples of all the nations" can be rendered "enroll disciples in my school." The Lord Jesus uses various experiences through which we pass to teach us lessons and to train us in preparing us for the future. He is working at all times in our interest, getting us ready for our adoption—our spiritual graduation.

When do we graduate spiritually? The answer is: when we experience the redemption of our bodies. But when do we have this experience? When our bodies are fashioned anew according to the body of Christ's glory. "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, *that it may be* conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself" (Phil. 3: 20, 21).

Since we experience the redemption of our spirits at the time of our accepting Christ and of our being regenerated, and since we receive the redemption of our bodies when they are fashioned anew according to the body of Christ's glory, we shall be completely redeemed, entering into a new period of experience.

But when do we experience the redemption of our bodies? The members of the body of Christ have this experience when Jesus

descends from heaven to the air, raises the dead in Christ, and catches up the living saints in the Rapture (I Thess. 4: 13—5: 11). The Rapture of believers, as shown in Chapter V of this volume occurs before the Tribulation begins. The Rapture of the tribulation saints occurs at the end of the Tribulation.

29 But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24: 29-31).

Thus one sees that all believers will experience redemption of their bodies.

3 Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is (I John 3: 1, 2).

VI. MESSIAH'S SECOND COMING ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLE JOHN

The last witness regarding the Second Coming of Christ to be examined in this series is the Apostle John.

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

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come *and* be gathered together unto the great supper of God; 18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (Rev. 19: 11—20: 6).

In a very vivid manner John sets forth the Second Coming of Messiah at the end of the Tribulation, when He comes as a warrior to put down all opposition and to establish a reign of righteousness throughout the world. That this rider on the white horse of Revelation, chapter 19, is Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, is beyond question because His name is called "the Word of God"—the living Word. There is also written on His garment and on His thigh the name KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (v. 16). In this vision He is represented as a warrior and reminds one of the prediction regarding the Second Coming of Messiah according to Moses (Deut. 32: 39-43).

John simply tells that the Lord Jesus comes to make war against the nations of the world, that will be led by the Antichrist, the false messiah (v. 19). From Isaiah 63: 1-6 one learns that, when the Messiah returns as a warrior, He comes first to Edom and accomplishes a crushing defeat over His foes. Then, as a conqueror, He marches in the greatness of His strength to Jerusalem, which is being besieged by the armies of the world. There He enters into mortal combat with the forces of evil. The world dictator and the false prophet will be captured and cast alive into

the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, where they will spend eternity.

Satan, the great adversary of God and man, will be captured and cast into the pit of the abyss, where he will be incarcerated for a thousand years. According to Isaiah's prediction, the hosts of the high ones on high, together with the kings of the earth on earth, will be incarcerated during this thousand-year period.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. 22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days shall they be visited. 23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for Jehovah of hosts will reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; and before his elders shall be glory (Isa. 24:21-23).

Satan and his hosts, therefore, will be confined in the nether parts of the earth so that they cannot cause any trouble during the reign of King Messiah which will continue for one thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6).

The saints of God, who are represented as the armies of heaven, and who follow Christ at His Second Coming (Rev. 19:14), will mount thrones and reign with Him over the earth, which at that time will be delivered from the curse that fell upon creation when man sinned.

Six times in Revelation, chapter 20, Christ is said to reign one thousand years upon the earth. Each statement should be taken at its face value, unless there is positive evidence in the immediate context showing that the expression *one thousand years* is not to be taken literally, but symbolically. One seeks in vain for such evidence. When the Lord told the people of Israel that they would have to wander in the wilderness for forty years, He meant exactly what He said. History confirms this interpretation. Jeremiah's statement that the Babylonian captivity would continue seventy years must be taken literally, because history shows that seventy years meant seventy years. According to logic, reason, and revelation, the Messiah will reign one thousand years on the earth when He returns. Since Satan and all evil spirits will be confined in the nether parts of the earth and since the curse will be lifted from the earth, there will be a period of joy, peace, plenty, and prosperity during the personal reign of King Messiah in Jerusalem and over all the earth.

After His thousand-year reign, the judgment of the Great White

Throne will be set, before which all the unsaved will be brought and be judged. At that time the present material universe will pass out of existence. Then will be created the Eternal Order consisting of the eternal heaven; the eternal earth; and the eternal Jerusalem, which will come down out of the new eternal heaven and be located on this eternal earth, and which will be the everlasting home, the eternal abiding place of all the saved. Great things are in store for those who will only believe and trust God, following Him whithersoever He leads.

The title of this volume is *Messiah: His Glorious Appearance Imminent*. In Chapter III the sign of the end of the age is discussed and the evidence presented which shows that we are living, without a doubt, in the end of the age. This evidence is presented in Matthew, chapter 24. The disciples on this occasion asked the Lord Jesus, "What *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [consummation of the age]?" They understood that some sign would indicate the nearness of His coming and the consummation of the age. The Lord answered this question, telling them that local wars would characterize the Christian Dispensation, and that such wars would have no prophetic significance with reference to the closing of the age. Matthew 24:7 shows that a world war, attended by famine, pestilences, and earthquakes, constitutes the infallible sign of His coming and of the consummation of the age. Without a doubt, we have had that sign in the form of World War I and the events connected therewith. Prior to World War I, no one had a Biblical right to say that we are in the very end of the age; but since the sign which Jesus gave as indicative of His return at the close of the age has come to pass, those who accept the Saviour's statement know that we are now in the end time.

To those living after the sign of the end of the age occurs, Jesus says that they will not know the day nor the hour: therefore, they should not set a date, but should look daily for His return. According to Jesus, on a day and at an hour when people will least expect Him, He will come; therefore all are urged to be ready and waiting, being busily engaged in snatching souls from an eternal hell.

Since scripturally we know that the coming of the Lord is close at hand, the Bible-taught Christian declares that the Second Coming is now imminent. "Therefore be ye also ready; for in an

hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

How may an individual make ready for the coming of the Lord? This question is most important. We are in this life for only a short time—then we have to move out into the great beyond, from which there is no return. All questions that may arise fade into insignificance compared with the question of one's eternal salvation.

One of the members of the Sanhedrin of the first century—the time of Jesus of Nazareth—apparently was greatly perturbed. He therefore came to Jesus by night to interview Him concerning this most important question. The account of this interview is found in John 3:1-8:

3 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: **2** the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him. **3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. **4** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? **5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. **8** The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

During the dispensation of the Law of Moses, the Kingdom of God in its earthly aspect was coextensive with the kingdom of Israel. This fact is seen by a study of I Chronicles 28:4, 5. In this passage the throne of David is called the throne of Jehovah. Every person born of Jewish parents was, by virtue of this fact, born into the Kingdom of God, as it then existed. If any Gentile wished to worship the true God and to enjoy the privileges of the Kingdom of God, he had to become a Jewish proselyte. Obviously, Nicodemus, being a teacher in Israel, believed and accepted these tenets. He was, therefore, depending upon his natural birth and his membership in the Kingdom of God as the basis of being acceptable in God's sight. Jesus disabused his mind concerning these matters, saying in substance, "Nicodemus, your natural birth put you into the Kingdom of God as it now exists upon earth, but one must have a second birth, the spiritual experience of regeneration, if he is to enter the Kingdom of God, the coming of which

both John the Baptist and I have been announcing as at hand." "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). In harmony with these statements is the one made by the inspired Apostle Paul, ". . . it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed" (Rom. 9:8). Those who believe and receive Jesus as Lord, Saviour, and Messiah are the ones who are reckoned as children of God. Abraham "believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). Like Abraham of old, every one now who believes is saved. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The risen and glorified Messiah of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, proclaimed the gospel message in the following words: ". . . Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46, 47). Man has sinned against God. According to these verses, he must repent of his sins. The Apostle Paul declared by the Spirit of God that he testified "both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). The Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (Acts 16:30, 31).

When one, in the depths of his heart, believes that Jesus was and is the Jewish Messiah, the redeemer of mankind, and desires to be saved, he must repent of his sins toward God, for salvation is conditioned upon repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

19 For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted *for it*, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: 24 who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (I Pet. 2:19-25).

The First Gospel Sermon

In Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 30, the Holy Spirit came in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus to the Apostles. The Spirit of God infallibly inspired them to proclaim the message of salvation. On this occasion the Apostle Peter was the main speaker. A great multitude came together to whom the Apostle gave the sermon recorded in Acts 2: 14-39. I herewith give the sermon in the setting in which it appears in Acts, chapter 2:

And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, 10 in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day; 16 but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 And it shall be in the last days, saith God,

I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh:

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

And your young men shall see visions,

And your old men shall dream dreams:

18 Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days

Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show wonders in the heaven above,

And signs on the earth beneath;

Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness,

And the moon into blood,

Before the day of the Lord come,

That great and notable day:

21 And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on
The name of the Lord shall be saved.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; 23 him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. 25 For David saith concerning him,

I beheld the Lord always before my face;

For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

26 Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;

Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades,

Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou madest known unto me the ways of life;

Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance.

29 Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set *one* upon his throne; 31 he foreseeing *this* spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. 34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself,

The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, *this* Jesus whom ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart; and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? 38 And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. 40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. 41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. 46 And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved (Acts, chapter 2).

TABLE OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS

OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS

- 1, pp. vii, 53
 1, 2, pp. 53
 1: 26-31, p. 53
 2, p. 53
 2: 7-25, p. 53
 2: 17, p. 49
 3, p. 134
 3: 15, pp. 55, 57, 62, 183
 5: 21-24, p. 118
 6: 1-4, p. 100
 6: 1-8, 11, 12, p. 134
 6: 5, p. 93
 9, p. 100
 9: 1-17, p. 145
 9: 5-7, p. 145
 11: 1-9, p. 104
 12: 1-3, pp. 112, 117, 152
 13: 14, 15, p. 112
 14: 17-24, p. 113
 15: 1, p. 113
 15: 6, p. 190
 15: 18-21, p. 113
 18, 19, p. 176
 18: 25, p. 140
 21: 1ff., p. 140
 49: 10, pp. 55, 57
 49: 24, p. 30

EXODUS

- 4: 22, 23, p. 14

NUMBERS

- 12: 6-8, p. 1
 24: 17, p. 13

DEUTERONOMY

- 4: 2, p. 103
 6: 4, p. 158 (lit. trans.)
 8: 3, p. 19
 18: 18, p. 55
 27: 21, p. 101
 28: 1 ff., p. 162
 28: 13, p. 162
 32, p. 138
 32: 1-43, p. 157
 32: 8, 9, p. 171
 32: 21, p. 65
 32: 34-36, p. 138
 32: 35, p. 138
 32: 39, p. 158
 32: 39-43, pp. 60, 158, 186
 32: 40, 41, p. 159
 32: 42, p. 159
 32: 43, p. 159
 33: 2, p. 164

JUDGES

- 5: 4, 5, p. 164

II SAMUEL

- 23: 1-7, p. 154
 23: 2, p. 154
 23: 3c-5, p. 154
 23: 6, 7, p. 154

II KINGS

- 2: 9b, p. 118
 2: 10-12, p. 118

I CHRONICLES

- 28: 4, 5, p. 189
 28: 5, p. 32
 29: 10-12, pp. 45, 89, 140

II CHRONICLES

- 14: 9-15, p. 73
 15: 1-7, p. 73
 15: 2b-7, p. 73
 15: 5, 6, p. 73
 16: 9, p. 117

JOB

- 25, p. 134
 38: 7, p. 100

PSALMS

- 2, pp. 41, 55
 2: 1-3, p. 41
 7: 6, pp. 119, 120, 121
 7: 6, 7, pp. 119, 121, 122
 7: 7, p. 122
 16: 8-11, pp. 39, 55
 18, p. 162
 18: 1-19, pp. 60, 166
 18: 4-6, p. 160
 18: 7-19, pp. 159, 162
 18: 20-30, p. 160
 18: 27, p. 160
 18: 31-45, pp. 160, 162
 18: 32, p. 161
 18: 33, p. 161
 18: 34, p. 161
 18: 35, p. 161
 18: 36, p. 161
 18: 37-42, p. 161
 18: 43, pp. 161, 162
 22, p. 55
 22: 1-21, p. 34
 24: 2, p. 167
 33: 10, 11, p. 42
 39: 4-6, p. 117
 40: 6-10, p. 55
 46: 1-3, p. 167
 46: 9, p. 17
 48, p. 55
 60: 1-3, p. 167
 60: 2, p. 168
 69: 25, p. 35
 72, p. 55
 78: 2, p. 28
 80: 1-3, p. 120
 80: 17, p. 120
 83: 3, p. 125
 89: 25-28, p. 14
 89: 27, p. 14
 91, p. 20
 91: 1, p. 20
 91: 3-8, pp. 20, 21
 91: 3, 4, p. 20
 91: 4, 5, p. 20

- 91: 5, p. 20
 91: 6, p. 20
 91: 7, p. 20
 91: 8, p. 20
 91: 9-13, p. 21
 91: 10-12, p. 21
 91: 11, 12, p. 20
 92: 6-9, pp. 92, 135, 154
 93: 3, 4, p. 167
 104: 27-30, p. 158
 109: 8, p. 35
 110, pp. 33, 55, 57
 110: 1, pp. 56, 119, 120
 110: 1-4, p. 55
 110: 1, 2, p. 60
 110: 2, p. 56
 110: 3, p. 56
 113: 4-9, p. 90
 115: 1-8, p. 141
 115: 16, p. 126
 118, pp. 28, 29, 30
 118: 19, p. 29
 118: 20, p. 29
 118: 21, p. 29
 118: 22, pp. 29, 31
 118: 23, p. 29
 118: 24, p. 29
 118: 25, p. 29
 118: 26, 27, p. 29
 118: 28, 29, p. 30
 119: 89, p. 102
 119: 126, pp. 93, 155
 132, p. 55
 139, p. 134
 140: 10, p. 134
 147: 19, 20, p. 140

PROVERBS

- 1: 7a, p. 90
 1: 7, p. 89

ECCLESIASTES

- 7: 29, p. 91

ISAIAH

- 1, p. 3
 1: 18, p. iii
 2: 1-4, pp. 9, 55
 2: 12, p. 137
 2: 12-17, p. 141
 2: 12-22, p. 141
 2: 18, 19, p. 141
 6, pp. 27, 49
 6: 9, 10, p. 49
 7, p. 12
 7: 11, p. 12
 7: 13, 14, p. 12
 7: 14, pp. 2, 12, 13, 55, 57,
 58, 62, 119
 9: 1, 2, p. 24
 9: 5-7, p. 55
 9: 6, pp. 57, 119
 11: 1-12: 6, p. 55
 11: 6-9, pp. 6, 37
 13, p. 105
 13: 1-13, p. 141

- 13: 2-5, p. 142
 13: 6, p. 142
 13: 6-16, p. 137
 13: 7-9, p. 142
 13: 7, 8, p. 142
 13: 9, pp. 137, 142, 155
 13: 10, p. 143
 13: 11, p. 137
 13: 11, 12, pp. 143, 145
 13: 12, p. 155
 13: 13, p. 143
 13: 19-22, p. 143
 17, p. 149
 17: 7, 8, p. 148
 19: 1-4, p. 74
 19: 2, p. 74
 24, pp. 55, 149
 24: 1, p. 144
 24: 1-20, pp. 137, 143, 144, 145
 24: 2, pp. 99, 145
 24: 3, p. 145
 24: 4, p. 145
 24: 5, p. 145
 24: 6, p. 155
 24: 7-11, p. 145
 24: 11, p. 145
 24: 12, 13, p. 145
 24: 14, p. 145
 24: 14-16a, p. 145
 24: 16, p. 145
 24: 16a, p. 149
 24: 16b, p. 146
 24: 17, p. 146
 24: 18, p. 146
 24: 19, p. 146
 24: 20, p. 146
 24: 21-23, pp. 144, 187
 24: 23, p. 131
 25: 6, p. 131
 25: 6-8, pp. 131, 132
 25: 6, 7, p. 132
 25: 7, p. 131
 25: 8, pp. 131, 132, 133
 26, p. 149
 26: 8, p. 150
 26: 8-10, p. 149
 26: 9, pp. 79, 150
 26: 9b, p. 98
 29, p. 28
 30: 18, 19, p. 156
 32, p. 55
 33, p. 55
 34: 1-7, p. 143
 55: pp. 55, 143
 40, pp. 161, 162
 40: 1-5, pp. 18, 26
 40: 1, 2, pp. 17, 18
 40: 3, pp. 16, 18
 40: 3-5, p. 18
 40: 28-31, p. 161
 41: 8-20, p. 115
 42: 1-4, pp. 26, 55, 60
 43: 1, p. 140
 44: 12-20, p. 141
 52: 13-53: 12, p. 34
 53, p. 43
 53: 4, p. 25
 53: 7, 8, p. 43
 57: 15, p. 89
 60, p. 55
 60: 8, p. 95
 61, p. 59
 61: 1, p. 58
 61: 1-3, pp. 55, 58, 60
 61: 2, p. 127
 61: 3, p. 60
 63: 1-6, pp. 60, 165, 186
 65: 1, p. 65
 65: 20, pp. 6, 132
 66: 1 ff., p. 42
 66: 1-4, p. 79
 66: 7-9, pp. 77, 142
 66: 8, pp. 77, 78
 66: 18-21, p. 124
- JEREMIAH**
 1: 11, 12, pp. 102, 115
 3: 11-18, p. 55
 3: 16-18, p. 173
 3: 17, p. 173
 5: 1-3, p. 125
 17: 9, p. 91
 23: 7, 8, p. 58
 25: 29-33, p. 158
 25: 30-38, p. 166
 30: 1-11, p. 139
 30: 4-7, p. 78
 30: 7, p. 172
 31: 15, p. 15
 50, 51, pp. 105, 142
- EZEKIEL**
 Book of Ezekiel, p. 3
 9, p. 99
 14, 1-5, p. 76
 28: 11-19, pp. 72, 134
 37, pp. 113, 124
 37: 1-10, p. 113
 37: 1-14, p. 3
 37: 3, p. 3
 37: 4-6, p. 3
 37: 7, p. 3
 37: 9, p. 3
 37: 11, p. 4
 37: 11-14, p. 4
 37: 12-14, p. 4
 38, p. 53
 38: 9, p. 95
 38: 12, p. 171
 38, 39, p. 53
 39: 1-16, p. 53
- DANIEL**
 Book of Daniel, pp. 3, 94
 2, pp. 33, 94, 107, 110, 112
 2, 7, 9, 10-12, p. 94
 2: 35, p. 33
 2: 36-45, p. 33
 2: 44, p. 108
 7, pp. 94, 105, 107, 110, 112, 182
 7: 7, p. 106
 7: 9, p. 107
 7: 13, 14, pp. 61, 176
 7: 17, p. 106
 7: 23, pp. 106, 110, 111
 7: 23-27, p. 110
 7: 24, p. 111
 7: 24, 25, p. 112
 9: p. 94
 10-12, p. 94
 11, p. 182
 11: 36 ff., p. 182
 11: 36-45, pp. 94, 112
 12, pp. 97, 155
 12: 1, pp. 94, 155
 12: 1-4, p. 94
 12: 3, pp. 97, 98
- 12: 3, 4, p. 97
 12: 4, p. 94
 12: 4b, p. 94
 12: 6, p. 155
 12: 7, p. 155
- HOSEA**
 6: 1-3, p. 78
 11: 1, p. 14
- JOEL**
 1: 1-7, p. 37
 1: 15, p. 138
 2, p. 38
 2: 1-11, p. 96
 2: 2, p. 138
 2: 21, p. 36
 2: 21-27, pp. 35, 37
 2: 21-28a, p. 38
 2: 22, p. 36
 2: 23, p. 36
 2: 25, p. 37
 2: 28-32, pp. 35, 122
 2: 28b-32, p. 38
 2: 28, 29, p. 122
 2: 30, 31, pp. 38, 122
 2: 32, pp. 38, 123
 3: 1-8, p. 114
- AMOS**
 9, pp. 46, 48
 9: 7-15, pp. 47, 170
 9: 7, pp. 47, 171
 9: 8, pp. 47, 171
 9: 9, pp. 47, 171
 9: 10, pp. 47, 171
 9: 11, pp. 48, 172
 9: 13-15, p. 172
- OBADIAH**
 v. 12, p. 139
 vv. 12-14, p. 139
 v. 13, p. 139
 v. 15, 139
- MICAH**
 4: 1-8, pp. 8, 172, 173
 4: 6, 7, p. 173
 4: 8, pp. 8, 47
 5: 2, pp. 13, 57
- NAHUM**
 2: 4, p. 95
- HABAKKUK**
 1: 5, pp. 44, 45, 46
 1: 5-11, p. 169
 2: 14, p. 66
 3, p. 163
 3: 1, p. 163
 3: 1-15, p. 61
 3: 2, pp. 163, 164
 3: 3, p. 164
 3: 3-15, pp. 164, 165
 3: 4, p. 166
 3: 4-7, p. 165
 3: 5, p. 166
 3: 6, p. 166
 3: 7, p. 166
 3: 8-10, pp. 167, 168
 3: 8, p. 168
 3: 9, p. 168

3: 10, p. 168
 3: 11, p. 168
 3: 12, p. 168
 3: 13, 14, p. 168
 3: 16-19, p. 169

ZEPHANIAH

1: 14, pp. 138, 146
 1: 14-16, p. 123
 1: 14-18, pp. 38, 124, 146
 1: 15, pp. 127, 146
 1: 16, p. 146
 1: 17, p. 147
 1: 18, p. 147
 2: 1-3, pp. 114, 123

2: 3, pp. 124, 125
 3: 14-17, p. 173

HAGGAI

2: 21, 22, p. 122

ZECHARIAH

Book of Zechariah, pp. 3, 70
 3: 9, p. 77
 6: 9-15, p. 55
 9: 9, p. 61
 9: 9, 10, p. 55
 9: 10, pp. 17, 33
 12-14, p. 161

12, p. 162
 12: 7, 8, p. 161
 13: 8, 9, p. 78
 14, p. 70
 14: 1 ff., p. 168
 14: 1, 2, p. 70
 14: 3, 4, p. 70
 14: 9 ff., p. 70
 14: 11, p. 6

MALACHI

3: 1, p. 26
 4: 1, p. 127
 4: 1-6, p. 123
 4: 5, pp. 18, 38, 119, 138

NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW

Book of Matthew, pp. 11, 34

1, 2, p. 85
 1: 18-25, p. 63
 1: 23, pp. 12, 16
 2, p. 16
 2: 5, p. 13
 2: 6, pp. 12, 13, 16, 50
 2: 15, pp. 13, 14, 16, 50
 2: 17, 18, pp. 15, 16
 2: 18, p. 50
 2: 22, p. 15
 2: 23, pp. 15, 16, 50
 3: 1-12, p. 86
 3: 2, p. 170
 3: 3, pp. 16, 18
 3: 5, 6, p. 87
 3: 13-17, p. 11
 3: 16, 17, p. 88
 3: 17, p. 19
 4: 1-11, pp. 11, 19
 4: 4, p. 19
 4: 5, 6, p. 20
 4: 7, p. 22
 4: 8-11, p. 22
 4: 10, 11, p. 24
 4: 12-16, p. 24
 4: 17, p. 170
 4: 23-25, p. 88
 5, 6, 7, p. 91
 5: 17, p. 102
 7: 6, p. 27
 7: 12, p. 51
 7: 21-23, p. 174
 8: 14-17, p. 25
 11: 10, p. 26
 12: 15-21, p. 26
 12: 39, 40, p. 84
 13, pp. 27, 65, 170
 13: 13-15, p. 27
 13: 33, p. 7
 13: 35, p. 27
 15: 2, p. 28
 16: 1-4, p. 84
 16: 4, p. 84
 21: 42, pp. 28, 30
 21: 43, 44, p. 32
 22: 1-14, p. 33
 22: 29, pp. 31, 75
 22: 44, p. 33
 23, p. 67
 24, 25, pp. 34, 147
 24, pp. 178, 188
 24: 1-28, p. 178
 24: 1-31, p. 80

24: 1-35, p. 67
 24: 1, 2, p. 67
 24: 2, p. 69
 24: 3, pp. 69, 70, 178
 24: 3-31, p. 67
 24: 4, pp. 70, 71, 178
 24: 4-31, p. 70
 24: 5, pp. 70, 71, 178
 24: 6, pp. 70, 71, 72, 178
 24: 7, pp. 70, 72, 74, 188
 24: 8, pp. 70, 72, 74, 77, 79, 83

24: 9, pp. 79, 178
 24: 9-14, pp. 70, 79
 24: 9-28, pp. 78, 147, 178
 24: 14, pp. 79, 150
 24: 15, p. 178
 24: 15-28, pp. 70, 79, 83
 24: 19-23, p. 79
 24: 20, p. 178
 24: 23-28, p. 79
 24: 29, p. 80
 24: 29-31, pp. 70, 166, 185
 24: 30a, p. 80
 24: 30, 31, p. 133
 24: 31, p. 180
 24: 32, p. 83
 24: 32-25: 30, p. 67
 24: 32-25: 46, p. 80
 24: 33, p. 83
 24: 37-39, pp. 93, 100
 24: 44, p. 189
 25: 31-46, p. 67
 26-28, p. 34
 26, 27, p. 34
 26: 64, p. 177
 28: 18-20, p. 174
 28: 19, p. 175
 28: 19, 20, pp. 65, 184

MARK

13. p. 34

LUKE

Book of Luke, p. 34

1, 2, p. 85
 1: 1-4, pp. 11, 63
 1: 26-38, p. 64
 2: 1-7, p. 34
 2: 1-20, p. 64
 2: 46-49, p. 90
 2: 50-52, p. 91
 3: 1-6, p. 34
 4: 5-9, p. 22

21, pp. 34, 179
 21: 11, p. 179
 21: 12, p. 179
 21: 12-19, p. 179
 21: 20-24, pp. 70, 179
 21: 25, p. 167
 21: 25-28, pp. viii, 179
 21: 28, p. 116, 179
 21: 29, p. 83
 21: 46, 47, p. 190
 24: 50-52, p. 170

JOHN

1: 1, p. 19
 1: 45, 46, p. 15
 2: 13-25, p. 85
 2: 23, 24, p. 85
 3: 1-8, p. 189
 3: 3, p. 190
 3: 16, pp. 65, 190
 7: 1-10:21, p. 85
 7: 17, pp. 27, 75
 7: 44-46, p. 89
 8: 31b, 32, p. 85
 8: 33-47, p. 85
 8: 41, p. 86
 12: 31, p. 72
 13: 27b, p. 125
 13: 33, p. 125
 13: 37, p. 126
 14: 1-7, p. 126
 14: 6, p. 126
 14: 30, pp. 23, 72
 16: 7-16, p. 102
 16: 33, p. 72

ACTS

Book of Acts, pp. 34, 175

1, p. 120
 1: 3, pp. 9, 170, 177
 1: 4, 5, p. 174
 1: 6, p. 170
 1: 6, 7, pp. 8, 47
 1: 7, pp. 9, 170
 1: 8, pp. 174, 175
 1: 9-11, p. 175
 1: 11, p. 176
 1: 20, p. 35
 2, pp. 32, 38, 191
 2: 14-21, p. 38
 2: 14-39, p. 191
 2: 17-21, p. 35
 2: 22-28, p. 39
 3: 19-21, pp. 9, 32, 177

- 4: 24-26, p. 40
 4: 27, p. 41
 7: 5, p. 113
 7: 49, 50, p. 42
 8: 32, 33, p. 43
 13, p. 44
 13: 27-34, p. 44
 13: 40, 41, p. 44
 13: 41, p. 45
 15, p. 46
 15: 7-11, p. 46
 15: 11, p. 46
 15: 12, p. 46
 15: 13b, 14, p. 121
 15: 13b-18, p. 47
 15: 14, p. 121
 15: 14-18, pp. 10, 32, 66
 15: 16, p. 48
 15: 17a, p. 48
 16: 30, 31, p. 190
 17: 28, pp. 89, 158
 20: 21, p. 190
 28: 25b-27, p. 49
 28: 26, 27, p. 49
- ROMANS**
 1: 18-32, p. 91
 4: 18-21, p. 140
 8: 18-25, pp. 6, 25, 37, 178, 182
 8: 19, p. 183
 8: 20, p. 183
 8: 21, pp. 75, 183
 8: 22, p. 183
 8: 23, p. 183
 8: 28, p. 43
 9: 8, p. 190
 10: 17, p. 151
 10: 18, p. 175
- I CORINTHIANS**
 15, p. 133
 15: 50-58, p. 130
 15: 51, p. 130
 15: 54, p. 132
- II CORINTHIANS**
 4: 3, 4, p. 131
 4: 4, p. 23
 4: 16-18, p. 183
 5: 19, p. 152
- GALATIANS**
 1: 6-9, p. 150
 1: 6-10, p. 79
- EPHESIANS**
 1: 11, p. 45
- 2: 1-3, p. 72
 2: 8-10, p. 127
- PHILIPPIANS**
 2: 5-11, p. 21
 3: 20, 21, p. 184
- COLOSSIANS**
 1: 6, p. 175
 1: 19, 20, p. 25
 1: 23, p. 175
- I THESSALONIANS**
 Epistle to Thessalonians, p. 180
 1: 9b, 10, p. 127
 1: 9, 10, p. 178
 1: 10, pp. 125, 128
 4: 13, p. 130
 4: 13—5: 11, pp. 128, 178, 185
 4: 13-18, p. 129
 5: 3, p. 129
 5: 4, p. 129
 5: 9, p. 129
- II THESSALONIANS**
 Epistle to Thessalonians, p. 180
 1, 2, p. 178
 1: 3-10, p. 180
 1: 5b-8, p. 180
 1: 7, 8, p. 180
 2, p. 181
 2: 1-4, p. 103
 2: 1-12, pp. 181, 182
 2: 3, p. 104
- I TIMOTHY**
 2: 1-7, p. 150
 2: 4, p. 89
 2: 5, 6, p. 150
 4: 1, 2, p. 99
 4: 1-5, p. 99
- II TIMOTHY**
 1: 10, p. 40
 3: 1-7, p. 93
 3: 1-8, p. 136
 3: 16, 17, p. 102
 4: 1-5, p. 103
- HEBREWS**
 1:14, pp. 122, 176
 2: 1-4, p. 101
 11, p. 112
 11: 5, p. 118
 11: 13-16, p. 117
- JAMES**
 1: 17, p. 20
 4: 1, p. 72
- I PETER**
 2: 19-25, p. 190
- II PETER**
 1: 19, 20, p. 129
 1: 21, p. 162 (lit. trans.)
 1: 21, p. 2
 2: 1, 2, p. 104
 3: 1-13, p. 137
 3: 1-15, p. 143
 3: 8, p. 10
 3: 9, p. 48
- I JOHN**
 2: 18, 19, p. 104
 3: 1, 2, p. 133, 185
- JUDE**
 v. 3, p. 102
 vv. 6, 7, p. 101
- REVELATION**
 Book of Revelation, pp. 3, 94, 130, 131, 153
 1: 7, p. 177
 6: 12-17, pp. 143, 148, 152
 7, pp. 97, 151, 152, 153, 164
 7: 1-4, p. 98
 7: 1-17, pp. 79, 152
 7: 9, p. 97
 7: 9, 10, p. 153
 7: 13, p. 153
 7: 14, pp. 98, 153
 9, p. 101
 14: 1-5, p. 153
 14: 4, 5, p. 153
 16, p. 54
 17, p. 54
 17, 18, 19, p. 54
 18, pp. 54, 105, 142
 19, pp. 5, 54, 186
 19, 20, pp. 5, 6, 8
 19: 11-16, p. 168
 19: 11-21, pp. 5, 61
 19: 11—20: 6, p. 186
 19: 14, p. 187
 19: 16, p. 186
 19: 19, p. 186
 19: 19-21, pp. 166, 169
 20, p. 187
 20: 1-3, p. 72
 20: 1-5, pp. 131, 132, 176
 20: 1-6, p. 5
 20: 4-6, p. 187
 20: 7-10, p. 6

SUBJECT INDEX

A

- A. D. 70 (Anno Domini), 69, 70, 178
 Abraham
 and Sarah, 140; and seed, channel
 of world blessing, 152; call of,
 112; promise of land to, 113
 Adam, death of, 49
 Adoption (redemption of the body),
 183, 184
 Age
 Golden, 143; millennial, 66; of
 grace, 60
 Ahaz, King of Judah, 12
 Akiba, Rabbi, 71
 America
 history of, 109, 110; imaginary
 supplement true to, 109
American Standard Version, 128, 148
 Amillennialism, 5, 7, 8
 Ancient of Days, 176
 Angels, 176
 Antichrist, 10
 Anti-Christianity, 41
 Antioch in Pisidia, 44
 Anti-Semitism, 31, 132
 Aorist tense, 121
 Apostles
 arrested, 40; taking gospel to
 whole world, 175
 Armageddon (*see* War of Great Day
 of God the Almighty)
 Archelaus reigning over Judaea, 15
 Ascension of Christ, 170
 Atheism, 41
 Atonement
 for sin, 157; healing in, 25, 26

B

- Babes of Bethlehem, slaughter of, 14
 Babylon
 capital of civilization in end time,
 105; destroyed, 143; rebuilt,
 142; siege of, 142
 Baptism of Jesus, 11n, 19, 88
 Bar Cochba, a false Messiah, 71
 Battle of the Mississippi, 109
 Beasts, symbolism of, 106
 Bethlehem
 of Galilee, 13; of Judaea, 13
 Birth pain (warning of Tribulation),
 74, 77, 78
 Blessing, world, 152
 Body of Christ, 121, 123

- Book of Isaiah (ch. 53), 25, 43
 Breaking the Power of the Holy
 People, 155
 Budding
 of fig tree, 80; and all trees, 82,
 83

C

- Caiaphas, 177
 Calamity of Jacob (Tribulation),
 139, 140, 172
 Calvary, 23
 Capernaum, 24, 25
 Captives, release of, 59
 Captivity, Babylonian, 15, 187
 Child, Christ, 13
 Children of God, 190
 Christians
 not appointed unto wrath, 130; of
 end time, 17; Paul's word to
 those of today, 180; those who
 claim to be, 135
 Church
 calling forth of, 10; of Christ, 65
 Coming of Messiah
 First coming
 liberated captives in Sheol at, 59,
 60; Genesis 3:15 "Seed of
 woman," 57; Genesis 49:10
 "Until Shiloh come," 57
 Second coming
 according to: angels, 176;
 David, 159; Habakkuk, 163;
 Isaiah, 165; Moses, 157;
 Peter, 177; after calling be-
 lievers from all nations, 66;
 at end of Tribulation, 186;
 certain signs in 20th century
 of, 91; dealing with saints and
 sinners at, 180; "death is
 swallowed up" at, 132, 133;
 events connected with, 1; Ha-
 bakkuk, chapter 3, 61; heav-
 ens emblazoned at, 79, 80;
 Isaiah, chapter 40, 16-19;
 judgments of living saints at,
 67; local wars not sign of, 72;
 passages presenting, 60; prom-
 ised in John, chapter 14, 126;
 prophets constantly speak of,
 55; raises tabernacle of David
 at, 48; two phases of, 177;
 waters affected by, 167; wel-
 comed at, 31

Two comings
 blended in one prophecy, 55;
 false interpretation of, 61
 Commission, great, 65, 174, 175
 "Congregation of the peoples," 121
 Convention, international, 41
 Convulsions of Nature, 143, 149
 Cornerstone
 Chief, 31; of Temple, 30
 Covenant, everlasting, 145
 Creation of Man, 171
 Cross, Roman, 23
 Cults, 99
 Curse
 devouring earth, 145; lifting of, 6,
 25, 36, 143, 172, 183

D

Daniel
 speculators regarding Book of, 94;
 writings of, 3
 "Daughters of men" (Gen. ch. 6),
 100
 David
 Dynasty of, 172; house of, 12;
 Swan's song of, 154; Tabernacle
 of, 172
 Day of Jehovah (Tribulation)
 Babylon destroyed in, 105; day of
 wrath, trouble, distress, destruction,
 127, 137-139, 146; days of
 Noah typical of, 93; destruction
 of Jerusalem in, 70; Joel, chapter
 2, fulfillment of, 39; occur-
 rences prior to, 123; other terms
 used for, 59; seducing spirits in,
 99; siege of Babylon in, 142;
 will send Elijah before, 18, 38;
 world-wide revival in, 148
 Death
 abolished, 132; power over, 132
 Demons, activity of, 99, 101
 Devil (*see* Satan)
 appearance to Jesus, 19, 20, 22, 23,
 75; cause of war, 72
 Dictator
 last, 111; world, 146, 182
 Disciples, 184
 Dispensation, Christian, 32, 47, 56,
 59, 65, 67, 70, 71, 72, 75, 127, 178
 Division of Roman Empire—East and
 West, 108

E

Earthquake (Ezek. ch. 37), 3
 Edom

Messiah coming to, 60; Messiah
 leaving, 164
 Egypt, entrance of Holy family into,
 13
 Elect (tribulation saints), 80, 180
 Elijah
 future ministry of, 18, 19, 38, 119;
 translation of, 118
 Elisha, receives double portion of
 Holy Spirit, 118
 Enoch, translation of, 118
 Equipment of war, mechanized, 96
 Eunuch, the Ethiopian, 43
 Exile, Babylonian, 42
 Exodus from Egypt, 135
 Ezekiel, writings of, 3

F

Fall of man, 134
 Falling Away (apostasy), 104
 Fear of Jehovah, 89-91
 Feasts
 of tabernacle, 85; of Jews, set, 31,
 85
 Figures of speech, 50
 Flood, 135
 Foreknowledge of God, 40
 Freedom of will, 134

G

Gabriel, 64
 Gentiles, a people taken out for His
 name, 32, 66
 God
 ruler over all, 140; the Father, 56;
 working in human affairs, 45
 God-man
 assumed human limitations, 21; at
 right hand of God the Father,
 120; equipped by Holy Spirit
 for earthly mission, 58; miracles
 proved His identity, 157; obeyed
 fundamental principles, 90;
 Satan acknowledged title of, 19
 Gospel
 one only, 150; preached in Trib-
 ulation, 151; preached in whole
 world, 175; records of, 65; ser-
 mon, first, 191
 Government
 four types of (Book of Daniel),
 107, 109-111; world, 112
 Governments, four world, 106, 107
 Greeks, Luke writing for, 34
 Groups of God's people, Two (Isa.
 40: 1-5), 17

H

- Healing by the Lord, 25
 Hell, eternal, 188
 Herod, King, 13
 Hitler, Adolph, 10
 Holy Spirit
 apostles wait for baptism of, 174;
 at baptism of Jesus, 88; Ezekiel's vision (ch. 37), 3; Luke led by, 64; on day of Pentecost, 39; strife and wars caused by absence of, 72; upon Messiah (Isa. ch. 61), 58

I

- Idolatry in Tribulation, 141, 148
 Image, metallic, 33
 Imperialism, 111
 Inspiration
 of Scriptures, 22, 94, 102, 162
 Insurrection against God's government, 134
 Interpretation
 allegorical method of, 51; by Golden rule, 24, 28, 50, 52, 76, 83, 131; off brands of, 10; of prophecy, 11; literal, 13, 14; literal plus application, 15, 18, 39; literal plus summation, 16; literal plus typical significance, 14
 Intervention
 divine, 162; supernatural, 161
 Isaiah
 Book of (ch. 53), 25, 43; date of ministry, 2
 Israel
 calamity of, 138; chosen people, 135; courts of, 65; dispersion of, 170; hub of nations, 171; misunderstands ministry of Messiah, 23; national anthem of, 60, 138, 157, 159; national sin of, 156, 157; in plan of God, 18; persecution of, 31; regathering of, 114, 124; remnant of, 114, 120, 123, 155; repentance of, 9, 32, 190; restoration of, 8, 9, 124, 170, 172, 173, 174; return of Israel to God, 30

J

- Jerusalem
 capital of world, 172; conference at, 46, 121; Jehovah will reign in, 173; temptation of Jesus in,

- 22; throne of Jehovah in, 173; warfare of, 17
 Jesus (*see Messiah*)
 at age twelve, 90; baptism of, 11, 19, 88; Galilean ministry of, 88; great teacher, 89; plot against, 26; temptation of, 11, 19, 20, 22, 75
 Jews, Yemenite, 95
 John the Baptist, 18, 19, 86-88
 Joseph, husband of Mary, 12
 Josephus, Flavius, 87
 Joshua, successor of Moses, 135
 Judas, the betrayer, 125
 Judgments of God in Tribulation, 136, 149

K

- Kaiser, Wilhelm, 10
 King James Version, 128
 King of Kings, 186
 King, willful, 182
 Kingdom
 Babylonian, 33; co-extensive with Israel, 32, 189; Davidic, 48; established on earth, 10, 18; fourth world, 110; Grecian, 33; Medo-Persian, 33; Munster, 10; Roman, 33; Ten in end time, 111
 Kingdoms of end time, Ten, 111
 Knowledge and travel, increase of, 94, 96, 97, 99

L

- Lake of fire, 6, 187
 Land of Israel to be divided, 115
 Language
 used by prophets, 2; relative and absolute, 17
 Laws of interpretation
 Golden rule of, 50, 52; of double reference, 52, 133; of recurrence, 38, 53, 80
 Lawlessness and violence, 136
 Leaven
 parable of, 7; of dictatorship, 111
 Literacy increasing, 96
 Longevity in the millennium, 6
 Lot
 in days of, 136; chooses best of land, 112
 Luke
 historian of first magnitude, 63, 64; in light of research, 64

M

- Machen, J. Gresham, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* by, 57
 Magi (wise men), 13
 Mansions in Father's house, 126
 Marriage
 forbidding, 100; Supper of the Lamb, 54
 Materialism in Noah's day, 93
 Matthew
 an eyewitness, 11; interpreter of prophecy, 11
 Meal, paschal, 125
 Meats, eating, 100
 Messiah
 accurate account of life of, 11; attitude of, 43; called first-born, 14; combat with nations, 166; convention (Ps. 2) opposed to, 41; Daniel's vision of crowning, 177; false teaching concerning, 61, 71, 79; foretells Resurrection (Ps. 16), 55; herald of, 18; Jesus proclaimed true Messiah by Moses and Prophets, 63; personal, 4; portrait of, 62; proclamation of risen and glorified, 190; Virgin Birth of, 58; will be in midst of Israel, 37
 Messianic Speculations in Israel, by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, 71
 Millennialism, 5
 Millennium, 69, 70, 144, 159, 176, 177, 187
 Millerites, 10
 Miracle, biological, 140
 Miracles
 at first and second coming of Christ, 58; throughout nature, 167
 Modernism, 4
 Money worthless in Tribulation, 147
 Moses
 days of, 2; and the Prophets, 1, 11, 15, 23, 63
 Mount of Olives, 69, 70
 Movement, youth, 6
 Mystery, meaning of, 130
 Mussolini, Benito, 10

N

- Nathanael, 15
 "Nation rising against nation," 73, 74, 76
 Nations, shifting of, 171

- Nazarene, the Lord Jesus, 15, 16
 Nazareth, 15, 16, 24, 25
 Neoplatonism, 51
 Nephelimi, 100
 New Testament, 179
 Nicodemus, visit of, 189
 Nineveh, 95
 Noah, in days of, 93, 100, 136, 147

O

- Old Testament, 179
 Olivet Discourse, 67, 74, 147, 178, 179
 144,000 Jews of Revelation, chapter 7, sealing of, 98, 99; confused with 144,000 of chapter 14, 153
 Order, eternal, 188
 Origen, an early church father, 51

P

- Parables
 of kingdom of heaven, 27, 170; purpose of, 27
 Passover
 Jesus at, 85n, 90; worship, 29-31
 Paul at Rome, 49
 Peace
 false, 129; reign of, 173
 Pentecost, 38
 People
 ancient, 168; chosen, 135
 Persecution
 of Thessalonian church, 181; of Israel, 31
 Peter
 desire to follow Jesus, 126; healing of wife's mother, 25; weakness of, 126
 Pharisees, 28, 67
 Pharaoh (Ex. 4:22, 23), 14
 Philip, 15
 Pit of the Abyss, 131, 132
 Plans of God, 147
 Poetry, Hebrew parallelism, 163
 Pogroms launched against the Hebrews, 138
 Pollution, worldly, 145
 Postmillennialism, 5, 7
 Post-Resurrection appearance of Christ, 8
 Preaching, street, 26
 Premillennialism, 5, 7
 Prophecy
 double or manifold fulfillment of, 18; four types of, 50; meaning of, 1; off-brands of, 10; predictive, 10

- Proselyte, 189
 Providence, divine, 180
 Psalms, Hallel, 29
 Punishment, everlasting, 134
 Purging the world, 154
- Q
- Quarries, Solomon's, 30
- R
- Race, Jewish, 140
 Rachel, 15
 Rain, early and latter, 36
 Rapture
 all believers included in, 79; before
 the Tribulation, 133, 145, 153,
 185; events prior to, 179; first
 phase of Second Coming, 177;
 in I Corinthians, chapter 15, 130;
 in I Thessalonians 1:9, 10, 127-
 129, 178; in Joel 2:28-32, 122;
 in John, chapter 14, 125; of
 church, 117; of tribulation
 saints, 80
 Rationalism, 4, 93, 103
 Rays, death, 166
 Redeemer of mankind, 190
 Redemptive career of Messiah, 1,
 56-58, 157
 Regeneration of the believer, 92, 121,
 189
 Reign
 of Christ, 5, 173; of peace, 173
 Research, scientific, 64
 Resurrection, 130, 131
 Revelings of Man of Sin, Two, 182;
 (Dan., ch. 11; II Thess., ch. 2)
 Revelation concerning Israel's return
 to God, 28
 Revival, world-wide
 chief purpose of Tribulation, 97;
 Isaiah prophesies of, 145, 146,
 148-150; judgments in earth
 bring about, 98; multiplied mil-
 lions saved during, 133, 164;
 through seed of Abraham, 152;
 tribulation saints of, 79
 "Revive thy work," 163
 Rewards, 127
 Rome, Jewish nation subdued by, 32
 Rule of Interpretation, Golden, 24,
 28, 50, 52, 76, 83, 131
 Russia's invasion of Israel, 95
- S
- Saints
 living, 131; tribulation, 180
- Salvation
 by faith, 46; by grace, 127; eter-
 nal, 189; from Tribulation, 129
 Sanhedrin, the Great, 41, 42
 Satan (see devil)
 blinding eyes of men, 148; bound,
 6; god of this world, 23; Jesus
 resisting, 24; power of, 111
 Scribes, 13, 67
 Scriptures, ignorance of, 120
 Sealing of the 144,000 Jewish evan-
 gelists, 98, 99
 Sealing of the Book (Daniel 12:1-
 4), 94
 Seed of the Woman, 62
 Sermon on the Mount, 91
 Service, Christian, 174
 Set Feasts of the Jews (see Feasts),
 85
 Sheol, Caiaphas in, 177
 Shiloh, 57
 Sign
 of end of Age, 67; of Jonah, 84;
 of Second Coming, 69, 70, 178,
 188
 Signs
 of the Times, 84; and Wonders, 38
 Sinai, 42
 Sinners, the Lord's dealing with, 180
 Sleep (meaning death), 130
 Sodom and Gomorrah, 135, 136
 Solution of the Jewish question, 159
 Son of Man
 in Psalm 80:17, 120; in Daniel,
 chapter 7, 176
 Song of Triumph, by David, 154
 "Sons of God" (Genesis 6:1ff), 100
 Soul-winning, 97, 98
 Speculators interpreting prophecy, 11
 Spirits, evil, 72
 Stone (Messiah), 28-32, 33
 Sufferings of all peoples in Great
 Tribulation, 145
 Supper, The Lord's, 125
 Symbolism
 of beasts, 106; use of, 3
 Synagogue of Nazareth, 59
- T
- Temptation of Jesus, 11, 19, 20, 22,
 75
 Tempter, 19
 Temple
 choir of, 29; desecration of, 182;
 destruction of, 67, 70; in Trib-
 ulation, 79; Jesus calls atten-

- tion to, 69; millennial, 42; second, 42
- Theory, year-day, 10, 11
- Throne
of Jehovah, 173; room of God, 176; the Great White, 181, 187
- Titus, Roman general, 69
- Toynbee, Professor, 105
- Traditions, 28, 175
- Translation
of Elijah, 118; of saints at Rapture, 131
- Travel
air, 95; outer space, 96
- Tribulation
believers delivered from, 125; cause of Israel championed in, 138; Christian era closes with, 141; coming suddenly upon people of world, 129; comprehensive statement of (Isa. 24: 1-20), 143, 144; day of trouble (Zeph. 1: 15), 127; gospel preached in, 151; "the great one," 124, 134, 153; in Psalm 7, 122; in Zephaniah 1: 14-18, 124; Israel purged by the Lord in, 48; Jacob's disaster, 139; Jewish Temple standing in, 79; period between two comings of Messiah, 60; sent to punish world, 143; saints of, 80, 153, 179, 180; sufferings compared to labor pains, 142; terms applied to "great," 134, 137; three purposes of, 147; saints on earth in middle of, 178; two-thirds of Israel die during, 78; wicked destroyed, remnant protected in, 21; will come upon all nations, 139
- Trinity, 21, 176
- Trumpet at Resurrection, 130
- Trumpets of Revelation, chapter 8, 131
- Truth, 27, 66, 75, 124
- Types of prophecy, four, 55
- V
- Valley of Dry Bones, 113
- Vengeance, day of (tribulation period), 59
- Victory assured to people of God, 168
- Virgin Birth, 2, 12, 21, 57, 84, 86, 119, 126
- W
- War of Great Day of God the Almighty, 161, 168
- Was Christ Born at Bethlehem*, by Sir Wm. Ramsey, 34
- Way, "I am the way," 126
- Warrior, Jehovah victorious, 159, 165
- Waters, subterranean, 167, 168
- Wicked, destruction of, 21, 154
- Wrath
of God, 127, 142, 146, 163; of Tribulation, 164; to come, 123, 128, 130
- Wrecking of the earth (in Tribulation), 144
- Word, the Living, 186
- Works by David L. Cooper
Messiah: His Final Call to Israel, 26, 37
Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled, 11
Messiah: His Historical Appearance, 33, 74, 147, 157
Messiah: His Nature and Person, 12
When Gog's Armies Meet the Almighty, 53
The World's Greatest Library, Graphically Illustrated, 50
- World
converted, 37; warless, 172; wars, 76
- World War
I, 10, 188; II, 10; II in Tribulation, 94; III in Tribulation, 161, 168
- Worship, vain, 28
- Y
- Year of Jehovah's favor, 59
- Z
- Zechariah, writings of, 3
- Zion
daughter of, 173; people of, 56

