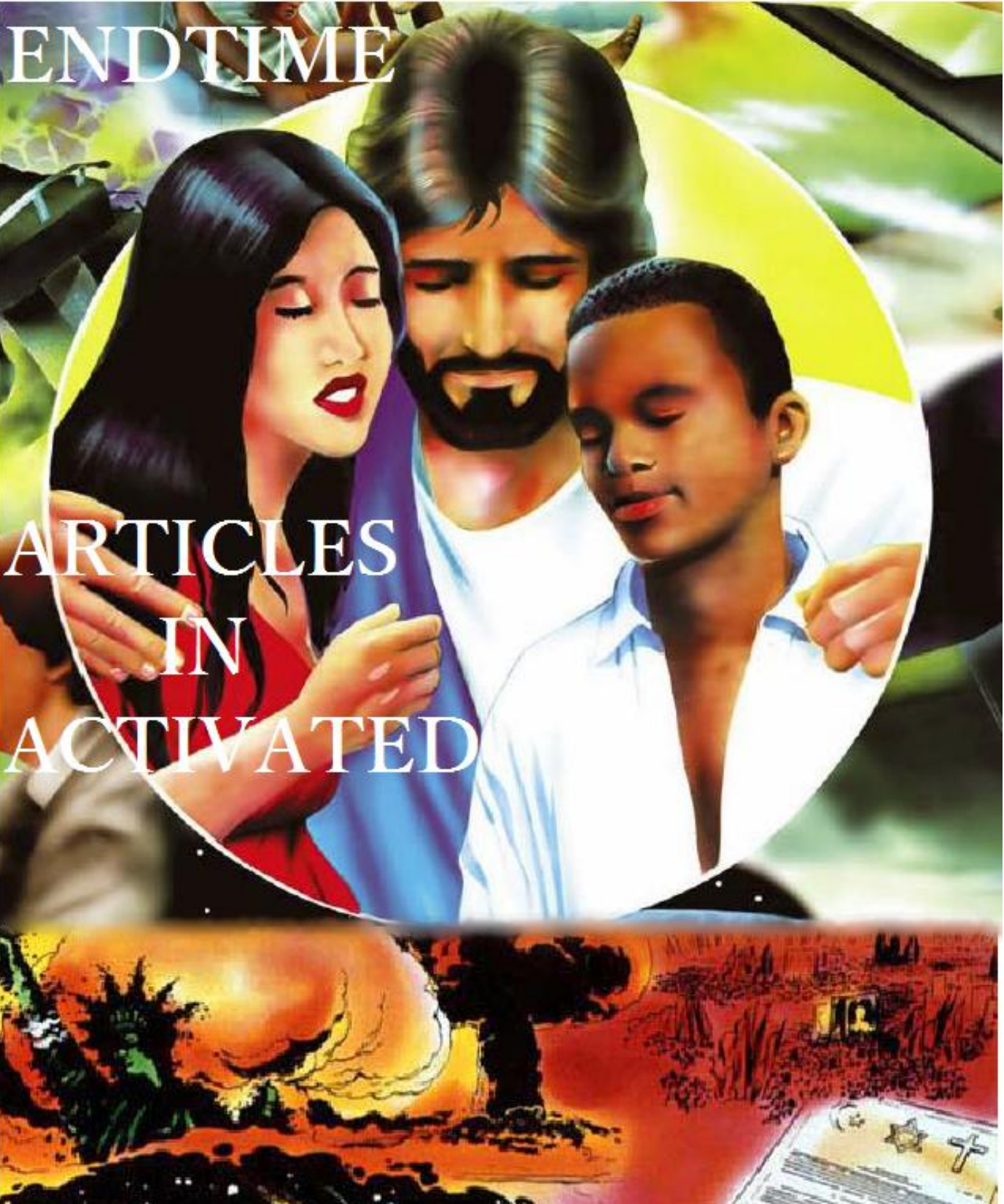




ENDTIME

ARTICLES
IN
ACTIVATED

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THE FUTURE FORETOLD

BY MICHAEL ROY AND SCOTT MACGREGOR

AS EVENTS UNFOLD in the third millennium, many of us can't help but wonder what the future holds for us and our planet. Are we on the threshold of a brave New World Order, with "peace and plenty for all"? Or are we tottering on the brink of unprecedented chaos and disaster?

Biblical prophets foretold many specifics about today's world. Their predictions, now two to three thousand years old, accurately depict conditions and events that have either already taken place or will soon—quite possibly during our lifetime.

Among those prophecies are descriptions of modern rapid transportation systems, today's unprecedented increase in world travel, the present explosion in knowledge of all kinds, technological advances such as

electronic banking, a soon-to-be-implemented global financial and identification system, the effects of global warming, and outbreaks of lethal epidemics.

Awareness of these predictions will give you a new perspective on the radical transformation the world is currently undergoing, as well as prepare you for the cataclysmic changes to come.

THE BIG QUESTION

Throughout the ages a number of seers have received special insight into the future. A discourse that is regarded by many as the most profound and comprehensive of its kind was given 2,000 years ago on a hillside outside the ancient city of Jerusalem. There a small band of truth-seekers gathered around their teacher—a carpenter-turned-

preacher, known as Jesus of Nazareth. The question they asked Him prompted a response that reaches across the centuries to the days in which we are now living.

As He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"¹

What His followers were asking Him about is often referred to as "the Second Coming," the dramatic return of Christ prior to His taking over the world and establishing the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus answered their question by revealing not one sign of "the end," but many. Outstanding predictions by a number of other biblical writers both before and after Jesus help fill in the picture.

¹Matthew 24:3

THE EVEN BIGGER ANSWERS

"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. ... Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."²

The Greek word that is translated as "sorrows" here is sometimes also translated "birth pangs," the painful muscle contractions that women experience during childbirth.

Wars, famines, plagues, and earthquakes were nothing new in Jesus' time, of course. The apostle Paul wrote, "We know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now."³

Labor pains become more frequent and intensify right up to the moment of birth, but eventually the ordeal comes to an end. The birth of the baby, which in this case symbolizes Jesus' return at the end of this age, is not going to wait forever. You may be surprised to learn just how far this "childbirth" has progressed in recent years.

A WORLD AT WAR

"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. ... Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."

War has been a scourge of mankind since time immemorial, but no period in history has witnessed a greater number of wars or greater destruction brought about by them than has the last hundred years.

Prior to 1914, war had never been universal, but in both World War I and World War II global war was waged. In the latter, all but 12 small nations of the world were militarily or technically involved, and 93 million people served in the armed forces of both sides. Of these, 25 million died. Civilian casualties were unprecedented: In the Soviet Union alone, over 20 million civilians died as a result of the war.

The Washington Post noted: "20th-century wars have been 'total wars' against combatants and civilians alike. ... The barbarian wars of centuries past were alley fights in comparison."⁴

ETHNIC CLEANSING AND TRIBAL TERROR

The Greek word for "nation" originally used in this prophecy—"nation shall rise against nation"—is *ethnos*, which is more accurately translated "a race" or "a tribe." In other words, Jesus was saying that ethnic groups would rise against each other. This has been tragically fulfilled in recent

times. Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Arthur Schlesinger (1917–2007) warned: The 20th century [was] a century of the warfare of ideologies: democracy vs. fascism, democracy vs. communism. But the end of the Cold War has released long-buried national, racial, ethnic, and linguistic antagonisms around the world. ... The 21st century promises to be a century of the warfare of ethnicities.⁵

Citing Stalin's purges, Mao's Cultural Revolution, Pol Pot's killing fields, the so-called ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, the horrors of Rwanda, etc., the *Associated Press* (AP) reports that during the 20th century the murders perpetrated by nations against their own people exceeded the deaths caused by wars with rivals outside their borders—170 million lives, by one estimate. That was the century that coined the term "genocide."⁶

Although the outlook may appear bleak, the day is soon coming when God Himself will intervene in this violent world, and war shall be forever abolished.⁷ ✠

(CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF *ACTIVATED*. EXCERPTED FROM THE BOOKLET *THE FUTURE FORETOLD*. 3RD ED. AURORA PRODUCTION AG, 2008.)

²Matthew 24:6–8

³Romans 8:22

⁴Richard Harwood, "Death in the 20th Century," *Washington Post*, 27 Apr 1995.

⁵"Unity, Multiculturalism and the American Creed," *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Issue 18.2, 31 Oct 1994.

⁶Arlene Levinson, "20th Century Awash in Blood," *AP*, 16 Sep 1995.

⁷Isaiah 2:4

Signs of the end

THE FUTURE FORETOLD, PART 2

BY MICHAEL ROY AND SCOTT MACGREGOR

WHEN JESUS' DISCIPLES asked Him what would be the sign of His return and the end of the world as we know it, He answered by revealing not one sign but many, including the four covered in this second of five installments of *The Future Foretold*.

“MOMMY, I’M HUNGRY!”
“And there will be famines...”¹

Extreme poverty remains a daily reality for more than 1 billion people who subsist on less than US\$1 a day. Hunger and malnutrition are almost equally pervasive: More than 800 million people have too little to eat to meet their daily energy needs.²

All of this is compounded by a profound climate change that is affecting every part of the world, or soon will. Sir John Houghton, a British climate expert and co-chair of the Scientific Assessment Working Group of the Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change, warns: “Forests will die, diseases like malaria will spread, and starving refugees will wander across borders as weather becomes more extreme.”³ The impacts of global warming are such that I have no hesitation in describing it as a ‘weapon of mass destruction.’”⁴

World population has more than doubled in the last 50 years and is expected to reach 8.5 billion by the year 2030. As the number of people increases, per capita availability of water and arable land decreases. The control of water resources is predicted to become a major cause of armed conflict in the future.⁵

A PLAGUED PLANET
“And there will be pestilences...”

The severity and frequency with which “pestilences” (epidemics of highly infectious diseases) now strike is also alarming.

A 1983 medical textbook declared infectious diseases “more easily prevented and more easily cured” than any other major group of disorders,⁶ but doctors now warn that the current emergence of drug-resistant bacteria strains could prove to be more deadly than AIDS.

Viral killers like AIDS and Ebola are also occurring more frequently than ever, and the threat from influenza might be the most dangerous of all. The influenza virus has developed the ability to circumvent the human body’s main defense against the disease, raising the prospect of a deadly new global outbreak, scientists have discovered.

The biggest threat comes from strains created when one form of the virus jumps from an animal species to a human already infected with a more common type of flu. Inside the human host, the two viruses combine to create a

¹Matthew 24:7

²*The Millennium Development Goals 2005 Report* FAO.

³Maggie Fox, “Global Warming Means Third-World Hardship,” *Reuters*, 15 Feb 1996.

⁴John Houghton, “Global warming is now a weapon of mass destruction” *The Guardian*, 28 Jul 2003.

⁵“Water Wars: Climate change may spark conflict,” *The Independent*, 9 Apr 2007.

⁶“The Infection Comeback,” *U.S. News & World Report*, 29 Jan 1996.



brand-new strain to which no one on the planet has any prior immunity. Scientists now think this is what happened during the “Spanish flu” pandemic of 1918 and 1919, which killed an estimated 50 million people worldwide.

Pandemics come in cycles and we’re overdue for one.⁷ “New diseases are emerging at the historically unprecedented rate of one per year,” the WHO’s director-general, Dr. Margaret Chan, said in an introduction to the *2007 World Health Report*. “It would be extremely naïve and complacent to assume that there will not be another disease like AIDS, another Ebola, or another SARS, sooner or later,” the report said.

Considering today’s high volume of high-speed international travel, an outbreak of a deadly disease in any part of the world is only a few hours away from becoming a dire threat elsewhere.⁸

THE BIG SHAKE-UP

“And there will be earthquakes, in various places...”

A 1995 top-level meeting of geologists and seismologists warned that the rise of big cities along seismic fault lines will cause unprecedented catastrophes in the near future. “It’s virtually certain there will be catastrophes in the coming decades, the likes of which we have never seen,” Roger Bilham told an International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics meeting. “Fatality counts exceeding one million are not an unreasonable projection given that 50 percent of an urban population can be lost in a single earthquake.”⁹

The energy released in the 2004 Asian tsunami was equivalent to the explosion of 475,000 kilotons of TNT, or 23,000 Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs. At least 226,000 were killed and over 500,000 were injured.¹⁰

The Bible’s book of Revelation mentions five times that massive quakes will occur in the Last Days.

OUR VIOLENT WORLD

“As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”¹¹

Another condition that Jesus indicated would be evident immediately prior to His return would be pervasive violence.

How were things in “the days of Noah?” The book of Genesis tells us “the earth was corrupt before God, and was filled with violence.”¹²

Political violence is the term currently being used to describe the violence perpetrated by governments on their own or conquered people, or violence committed by political and ideological groups. In the 20th century it is estimated that around 110 million people died as a result of wars, whereas over 170 million were killed in political violence during the same period.¹³ ❧

(CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF *ACTIVATED*. EXCERPTED FROM THE BOOKLET *THE FUTURE FORETOLD*. 3RD ED. AURORA PRODUCTION AG, 2008.)

⁷“Medical Pros Fear Flu Pandemic,” *Daily News*, 3 Oct 2004.

⁸“Diseases spreading faster with travel,” *AP*, 23 Aug 2007.

⁹“Deaths in quakes expected to rise as cities grow,” *Reuters*, Boulder, Colorado, 3 Jul 1995.

¹⁰“Facts and Figures: Asian Tsunami Disaster,” *New Scientist*, 20 Jan 2005.

¹¹Matthew 24:37

¹²Genesis 6:11

¹³R. J. Rummel, *Death by Government* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994.)

More signs of the end

THE FUTURE FORETOLD, PART 3

BY MICHAEL ROY AND
SCOTT MACGREGOR

WHEN JESUS' DISCIPLES asked Him what would be the sign of His return and the end of the world as we know it, He answered by revealing not one sign but many, including two of the five covered in this installment of *The Future Foretold*. The other three come from the Old Testament book of Daniel and the New Testament writings of Paul the apostle.

THE "ME GENERATION"

"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold."¹

This is how Jesus described the callous condition of people's hearts in the days before His return. In a related passage, the apostle Paul writes, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slander-

ers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."²

Selfishness and cold-heartedness seem to be prevalent almost everywhere we look.

THE GOOD NEWS GOES GLOBAL

"And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."³

Unlike wars, famine, plagues, and earthquakes, which Jesus called "the beginning of sorrows," He said that this particular sign—the Gospel being preached in all the world—was a specific sign that would indicate when the actual *end* of the age would be upon the world.

According to *The Almanac of the Christian World*, Christians and Christian churches now exist in every country of the world.⁴ Missiologists estimate that between 75 and 85 percent of the

world's population have heard the Gospel at least once.⁵ Over 50 million Bibles are distributed every year, as well as nearly 80 million New Testaments. Four billion gospel tracts are also printed each year.

According to the United Bible Societies, the entire Bible or parts thereof are now available to about 98 percent of the world's population, having been translated partially or entirely into some 2,303 languages and dialects.

Other Christian books are also proliferating. Books primarily about Jesus in today's libraries number 175,000 titles in 500 languages, increasing by four newly published books every day.⁶ The Gospel is also preached in 38,000 Christian magazines and on 4,050 radio and television stations.⁷ Ninety-nine percent of the world's population have the Gospel available to them via Christian radio stations.⁸

Meanwhile an innumerable number of Christian websites,

¹Matthew 24:12 KJV

²2 Timothy 3:1–4

³Matthew 24:14

⁴*The Almanac of the Christian World* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1990).

⁵DAWN Fridayfax (2001 #2), <http://www.jesus.org.uk/dawn/2001/dawn02.html>.

⁶DAWN Fridayfax (2003 #7), <http://www.jesus.org.uk/dawn/2003/dawn07.html>.

⁷DAWN Fridayfax (2002 #8), <http://www.jesus.org.uk/dawn/2002/dawn08.html>.

⁸DAWN Fridayfax (2001 #2), <http://www.jesus.org.uk/dawn/2001/dawn02.html>.

cyber churches, gospel webcasts and podcasts, and other Christian ministries evangelize, inform, and pastor via the Internet.

The story of Christ's sacrifice reached millions worldwide with Mel Gibson's retelling of *The Passion of Christ* (2004), but its viewing audience is dwarfed by the *Jesus* (1979) film. Shot on location in the Middle East, *Jesus* is a retelling of Luke's gospel. Starring a white British Jesus and with a mostly Jewish Yemenite cast, it is an unlikely candidate for the most watched or most translated film, but it is both.⁹ It has been translated into over 1,000 languages with over 200 more translations in progress (with over 58 million products, including film, video, and audio distributed), and it has had an estimated combined viewing and listening audience of over 6 billion.¹⁰

Never in the course of history has the Gospel been preached in all the world to all nations as it is right now by every means possible.

GLOBETROTTERS AND JETSETTERS

"Many shall run to and fro..."¹¹

In 534 BC, the prophet Daniel received an outstanding revelation, after which God told him that even though the prophecy was given through him, he wouldn't

understand it because it didn't pertain to him.

Amongst many other things, Daniel was told: "Seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."¹²

Many running to and fro literally means "speeding about, here and there," or as *The Living Bible* renders this verse, "travel shall be vastly increased."

Until about 100 years ago, people's means of transportation—horse and buggy, wagons, camels, boats, etc.—had not changed substantially for thousands of years.

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

"Knowledge shall increase."¹³

It is with good cause that the term "information overload" was coined in recent years. If the amount of information that is available is any indication of the knowledge available, knowledge has increased within our generation almost beyond imagination!

Global information increases about 30% per year, according to figures developed by the University of California at Berkeley.¹⁴

Each year around a million books are printed (that's titles, not copies), 25,276 newspapers are published (that's publications,

not issues), 40,000 scholarly journals, 80,000 mass-market periodicals, and 40,000 newsletters.¹⁵

PAGAN REVIVAL

"Now the [Holy] Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."¹⁶

Not only are many people unknowingly falling for Satan's deceptions, increasing numbers are following rank Satanism. The Bible tells us that if people willfully reject God's truth, they will be given "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."¹⁷ When we refuse the truth, there is nothing left to believe but a lie. This is why much of the world today is wide open for deceivers and false prophets.

Two fields in which paganism and Satanism have made tremendous inroads are the popular music business and the computer gaming industry.¹⁸ The most shameless acts of blasphemy and desecration are now socially acceptable in the name of audiovisual and multimedia entertainment and "freedom of expression."

(CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF *ACTIVATED*. EXCERPTED FROM THE BOOKLET *THE FUTURE FORETOLD*. 3RD ED. AURORA PRODUCTION AG, 2008.) ✠

⁹Giles Wilson, "The most watched film in history," *BBC News Online*, 21 Jul 2003.

¹⁰The Jesus Film Project, <http://www.jesusfilm.org/progress/statistics.html>, accessed 1 August 2008.

^{11, 12}Daniel 12:4

¹³Daniel 12:4

¹⁴Robert Malone, "Information Inundation," *Forbes*, 8 Nov 2005, http://www.forbes.com/2005/11/08/data-functions-coping-cx_rm_1107data.html.

¹⁵UNESCO 1996, ISSN 2001, *Ulrich's 2000, Oxbridge Directory 1997*.

¹⁶1 Timothy 4:1

¹⁷2 Thessalonians 2:10–11

¹⁸Steven L. Kent, "Cyberplay: Why do so many games have violence and devil imagery?" CNN, 30 May 1997, <http://www.cnn.com/SHOWBIZ/9705/29/cyber.lat/>.

THE FUTURE FORETOLD

PART 4

THE BEAST THAT IS TO COME

“The Antichrist is coming” (1 John 2:18).

One of the final signs of the end, which the Bible devotes numerous chapters to, is the rise of a world government headed by a Devil-possessed tyrant known as the Antichrist or “the Beast.” The 13th chapter of the book of Revelation says that the world is going to actually worship Satan, in the person of this bestial world leader. “So they worshiped the dragon [the Devil] who gave power to the beast [the Antichrist]; and they worshiped the beast” (Revelation 13:4).

The stage is rapidly being set for the world to accept global leadership. Famed British historian Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975) observed, “The nations are ready to give the kingdoms of the world to any one man who will offer us a solution to our world’s problems.” The first president of the United Nations General Assembly, Paul-Henri Spaak, who was also a prime minister of Belgium as well as a secretary-general of NATO, affirmed, “We do not want another committee, we have too many already. What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all the people and to lift us up out of the economic morass into which we are sinking. Send us such a man, and whether he be God or devil, we will receive him.”

THE NEW WORLD ORDER

We are hearing more and more about the “New World Order” or the “global community.” President George Bush, Sr., popularized the term when he said in a speech before the U.S. Congress during the 1991 Gulf War, “We stand today at a unique and extraordinary moment. ... Out of these troubled times a New World Order can emerge. ... Today that New World Order is struggling to be born.”¹

THE JERUSALEM PEACE ACCORD

It appears that this coming world leader will rise to power on a wave of global euphoria as he arrives on the scene to temporarily save the world from armed conflicts and desperate economic and political woes. Like Satan himself, who appears as an angel of light, this man will deceive most of the world into thinking that he is a great man of peace, a hero. The prophet Daniel wrote of the Antichrist that “he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue” (Daniel 11:21).

Whether this world government he heads is already in power or rises to power at the time the document known in the Bible as the Holy Covenant is signed or not, we don’t know for sure. What the Scriptures do state, though, is that this covenant will have a duration of seven years and will be pivotal to his claim to world leadership. This pact will resolve the Middle East crisis (at least temporarily), a seemingly impossible task that has eluded the best efforts by world leaders since the founding of Israel in 1948. He will do so by working out a compromise between the Israelis and the Palestinians regarding Jerusalem and its holy sites. A central issue will be Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, sacred to Jews (their temple stood there before being destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.), and sacred to Muslims (the Dome of the Rock, the third most revered shrine in Islam, stands there today). Scripture indicates that the

Antichrist's covenant will enable the Jews to rebuild their temple, where they will revive their ancient rituals of animal sacrifice (Daniel 8:23–25; 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–4). Much of the paraphernalia and building material for this temple have already been fabricated and stored, and the priests and temple attendants are already trained.

ENTER RUSSIA

The prophet Ezekiel calls the Antichrist “Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal” (Ezekiel 38:2). Scholars agree that the ancient land referred to as Magog would appear to be a powerful country or region of peoples to the north of Israel. Although there was no such land called Russia in Ezekiel's day, the term “Rosh” is amazingly similar to Ros (also spelled Rus), the name given to the people that settled along the major rivers of the land now known as Russia, circa 700–800 A.D., and from which the terms Russia and Russians derive. Meshech and Tubal could be renderings of Moscow and Tobolsk, cities that weren't to exist for one to two thousand years from when Ezekiel lived. Moscow is the capital of Russia, and Tobolsk, until recent times, was the most important city of Siberia. Since the cities didn't yet exist, it would be understandable that Ezekiel used names that were familiar to him and similar in sound. For these reasons many Bible students believe that the Antichrist will rise out of Russia.



There are also indications in Scripture that the Antichrist will have something to do with Egypt (Daniel 8:22–26). Scripture also points to Europe, indicating that it will be a key player in the Antichrist's world government, whose leaders will fully unite behind him. “These are of one mind, and they shall give their power and authority to the Beast” (Revelation 17:13).

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Although most of the world will initially hail the Beast as a political savior, three and a half years after the enactment of the seven-year covenant, he will revoke the peace pact and show his true colors. At this time he apparently will invade Israel and establish himself in Jerusalem, making that city his world capital (Daniel 11:45).

His government will then outlaw all religions, except the worship of the Antichrist and an image of himself that will somehow be empowered to speak and “cause as many as would not worship [it] to be killed” (Revelation 13:14–15). Jesus said that when you see this image, the “abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [temple] ... then there will be great tribulation such as has not been since the beginning of the world” (Matthew 24:15,21). Thus the name given to this period is the “Great Tribulation.” It will be a time when the Beast and his regime will institute a ruthless repression and persecution of believers in God (Daniel 7:21,25; 8:23–24; 11:31–35; 12:7,10; Revelation 13:5–7).

It is at this time that the Antichrist government tries to impose the infamous “666” financial system globally. ■

1. Johnston, Jerry. *The Last Days of Planet Earth*. Eugene, Or.: Harvest House Publishers, 1991, pp. 129–131.

THE FUTURE FORETOLD

PART 5

THE “MARK OF THE BEAST”

“He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [in] their right hand or on [in] their foreheads, that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666” (Revelation 13:16–18).

This prophecy is truly remarkable. Think about it: Nearly 2,000 years ago the apostle John, who prior to meeting Jesus had been a fisherman by trade and had been called an “uneducated and untrained” man (Acts 4:13), predicts that a global economic system will one day be instituted in which everyone will be forced to receive a number, without which they will not be able to buy or sell. It is only since the recent advent of computers, and now electronic banking, that this prophecy could be fulfilled.

There are currently a number of methods commonly used for purchasing items. You can use cash, you can write a check, you can use a credit card, or you can use a debit card to automatically deduct the amount from your bank account.

Smart cards take this several steps further. They look like an ordinary credit card, but there’s a big difference: They have a tiny computer chip embedded in their plastic. These electronic marvels not only give you instant access to your bank account, but they can also contain all your passport information, your medical record, driver’s license, photographs, welfare eligibility, and other data. Hundreds of millions of smart cards are in use across Europe in the form of health cards, SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) cards,¹ and ePurse cards. Smart cards are at the heart of the eEurope initiative. European Union officials have announced plans to introduce the electronic health card Europe-wide in June 2004. Over time the card could become a kind of medical passport entitling holders to medical care anywhere in the EU.²

We are well on the way to eliminating cash. Advocates of a cashless society have many compelling reasons for it. A primary one is that cash is the mother’s milk of drug smugglers, who often deal in cash a suitcase full at a time. With no cash, the sale of illegal drugs would be greatly hampered. In fact, law enforcement agencies say that to eliminate cash would eliminate many or even most kinds of criminal activity.

YOUR OWN PERSONAL

MICROCHIP IMPLANT

A cheap and workable solution would be to take a chip similar to those used in smart cards and place it under the skin of each man, woman, and child. In fact, the chip can be even smaller because it is not necessary for all your data to be stored on it, only a unique identifier such as a number sequence. All your data would be stored in gigantic networked databases and the number would access it. Once the chip is implanted, it could be read by an inexpensive scanner, similar in function to the ones that read bar codes in your local grocery store. You would then become your own smart card—and the very expensive problem of making sure the owner of the card is who he says he is has been solved!

A global cashless society is in the making. Fiber optics, satellites, and computer databases have the potential to control the world in a way that boggles the imagination. Many govern-

ments and private corporations world-wide are pursuing policies to eliminate cash and checks, while many other countries are testing various methods of doing business without physical currency. For the first time, the hi-tech means of fulfilling the chilling vision the apostle John received nearly 2,000 years ago is here.

THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

The coming world leader will demand the world's worship not merely because he has a severe ego problem.—He will be empowered or possessed by Satan himself. “The dragon [Satan] gave him his power, his throne, and great authority” (Revelation 13:2).

Satan has always wanted to be God. This is why he fell in the first place. The prophet Isaiah wrote, “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ... For you said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to heaven and rule the angels. I will take the highest throne. ... I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.’ But instead, you will be brought down to the pit of hell, down to its lowest depths” (Isaiah 14:12–15 TLB).

WATCH OUT FOR 666!

What Satan is really after when he causes the Antichrist government to set up the coming global financial system is to gain control over the people of the world and to get them to bow down and worship him. This is why the Bible warns, “If anyone worships the beast

and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God. ... [T]hey have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name” (Revelation 14:9–11).

Notice there are two components to being the objects of this damnation: worshiping the Beast and taking his mark. The book of Revelation mentions these two things in tandem leading to damnation six separate times. There is a definite link between the two, though at this point in time it is not clear exactly what that will be. At first glance, it would seem the Mark is simply an economic and identification system, but from what the Scriptures indicate, it leads to much more. Beware!

So when you see the world government arise and its leader demands your allegiance, your loyalty, and even your worship, don't fall for it. Regardless of the economic incentives offered or the retribution that threatens those who refuse his mark and number, give your love and worship to the true God, your Creator, who loves and cares for you, and who has promised He will see you through the days ahead if you put your trust in Him. The Bible says, “The people who know their God will be strong” (Daniel 11:32). (For more on this subject, see *The Rise and Fall of the Antichrist*, also from Aurora Production.) ■

¹ A chip card, the size of a first class postage stamp. It is a key element in over 600 million GSM (Global System for Mobile) mobile phones—representing about 70 percent of the mobile handset market. A SIM is actually a tiny computer in your phone.

² “Millions of people across Europe will be able to apply for a new EU medical smart card from next year.” BBC Web site, 21 Feb 2003.



THE THE AND THE LION DRAGON BEAST

By John Weaver

Dragons, beasts and creatures strange,
Are found within the pages
Of ancient script and holy writ,
From prophets, seers, and sages.

In shocking visions they beheld
The rise and fall of nations.
Yet few believe or can perceive
Their signs and revelations.

Though skeptics brush such words aside,
As myths and senseless stories,
Wise men attest the *future* rests
Within these allegories.

So hearken to the mystery
Of the Lion and His foes,
And you will see what soon shall be,
As time draws to its close.

A STARTLING PICTURE of our planet's future is presented in the Bible's *Book of Revelation* (also known as *The Apocalypse*), written 19 centuries ago. Even skeptics who have studied the ancient prophecies of Revelation admit that they are uncanny in their accurate depiction of a number of events and developments which have only become possible since the advent of the microprocessor.

What many people find unsettling is that Revelation warns that the fulfillment of its predictions will signify that the world as we now know it has entered its final era. This period is referred to in prophecy as the *Last Days* or the *Time of the End*.

A large number of prophecy scholars agree that the world stage is rapidly being set for the final showdown between the forces of good and evil, an awesome event known as *Armageddon*. The principal characters in this cosmic conflict are symbolically depicted by Saint John the Revelator as a Lion, a Dragon, and a Beast.



THE LION is introduced in Revelation as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah [who] has triumphed” (Revelation chapter five, verse five). This majestic heavenly figure is portrayed elsewhere in Revelation as the Lamb.

Although a lamb is usually considered one of the meekest and weakest of all creatures, this unique lionlike Lamb is the mighty Conqueror who ultimately vanquishes all evil. His power knows no limits. The mere mention of His name causes Hell and its minions to tremble. Though the Dragon and the Beast will array all of their forces against the Lamb and His followers, their efforts will prove futile and their defeat will be utter.

These [the armies of the Beast] will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them: for He [Jesus Christ] is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and those

who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful (Revelation 17:14).

THE DRAGON’S debut is described in Revelation. It reads as follows:

And there appeared another wonder in Heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. ... And there was war in Heaven: Michael [the archangel] and his angels fought against the dragon ... and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world ... and the dragon was wroth and went to make war with [those] who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:3,7–9,17).

The Dragon is the evil spiritual entity commonly

known as the Devil or Satan. Because he is a spirit, in order to effectively operate in Earth’s material realm, he works primarily through human agents. Throughout the ages he has energized and possessed individuals who yielded to his evil influence and power. Most of the tyrants and demagogues of history were instruments through whom the Dragon carried out his program of oppressing, enslaving, and destroying mankind.

THE BEAST was symbolically envisioned by St. John as an unearthly creature rising from the depths, a monster that derives his power from the Dragon:

I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which

I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority (Revelation 13:1-2).

According to numerous prophecies, the Beast is personified in a powerful political figure who will soon appear on the world scene. He will become the leader of a New World Order that will govern the globe and demand the allegiance of all nations. He is also known in Scripture as the *Antichrist* or the Son of Perdition. He will be fully possessed by Satan. Once he has secured his position as the head of the One World government, the Beast will demand his subjects' worship.

And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" ... All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb (Revelation 13:3,4,8).

The Beast will come to power with a seven-year agreement, a covenant (which could possibly be put into effect secretly). He will promise world peace and religious freedom, and will temporarily resolve the Middle East crisis,

working out a compromise between the Jews and the Arabs regarding Jerusalem and its holy sites. A focal point of this covenant will be Mount Moriah, Jerusalem, where the Jews' ancient temple stood before being destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., and where the Muslim Dome of the Rock and the Mosque of Omar stand today. Scripture indicates this covenant will enable the Jews to rebuild their temple on this hotly contested holy site. (See Daniel 8:23-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; Daniel 9:27.)

Initially, most of the world will hail the Beast as a political savior. But three and a half years after the enactment

He will promise world peace and religious freedom.

of the seven-year covenant, he will revoke it and forbid and abolish all traditional religious worship, declaring that he himself is God, and demanding that all the world worship *him!* (See Daniel 9:27; 8:9-12; 11:21-24, 28-31, 36; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 8, 9.)

At this time, an extraordinary idol, described in Revelation as the *image of the Beast*, will be erected, apparently in Jerusalem on the grounds of the rebuilt Jewish temple. Jesus referred to this image as the "Abomination of

Desolation" (Matthew 24:15). This image is likely to be an incredibly high-tech supercomputer, intrinsically linked to the New World Order's telecommunications network. Scripture says it will *speak* and somehow "cause those who refuse to worship it to be killed" (Revelation 13:14-15). Jesus said that when you see this image standing "in the holy place ... then shall be *Great Tribulation* such as the world has never known" (Matthew 24:15-21). It will be a time of ruthless repression and persecution of believers in God by the Beast and his regime. (See Daniel 11:31; Revelation 13:14-15.)

During this three-and-a-half-year Tribulation period, a universal credit system will be instituted, rendering paper money obsolete. Revelation says all those who submit to the Beast will receive a government credit number implanted in their right hand or forehead (probably in the form of a tiny microchip inserted under the skin, something quite feasible with today's technology). The number 666 will somehow be central to this system. Opponents of the Beast will be singled out, as no one will be allowed to legally buy or sell without this number, or mark of the Beast. But God's true children will refuse it, and will be supernaturally provided for by God Himself. (See Revelation 13:16-18; 12:6,14.)



EXACTLY 3-½ YEARS after the Beast breaks the covenant and begins his rampage against believers in God, the mighty “Lion of Judah,” Jesus Christ Himself, will suddenly “descend from Heaven with a shout,” returning “in the clouds, with power and great glory” to supernaturally rescue all of His people from the clutches of their bestial persecutors. Everyone who loves Jesus and has received Him in their hearts will instantly be transformed as they receive supernatural resurrection bodies, just like Jesus’ body after He was resurrected! They will sail up towards the sky in a climactic event commonly known as the Rapture, “to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord!” (Matthew 24:29–31; 1 Thessalonians 4:14–17). (See also 1 Corinthians 15:51–57; Philipians 3:21.)

Jesus will then whisk away His “Bride”—all those who love and follow Him—to the greatest, most thrilling

party that has ever been held, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in Heaven. During this time God will pour out fierce judgments and wrath upon the Beast and his evil forces on earth. God delivers the

It will be a time of ruthless repression and persecution.

final blow to the Dragon’s minions when the Beast’s armies gather together in Israel, near the site of the ancient town of Megiddo, in a place known as the Height of Megiddo, for which the Hebrew word is Armageddon. Then Jesus, along with His followers, will return to earth on supernatural flying horses to utterly defeat and destroy the forces of evil in the catastrophic Battle of Armageddon. (See Revelation 9:13–21; 19:11–21; 17:14; 16:12–21.)

Jesus and His followers will then take over the world and organize and rule and

run it the way it should have been run all along. Only then will all wars finally cease and the world will at last be governed fairly, with true justice, liberty, peace, plenty, and happiness for all. This amazing period will last for one thousand years, and is therefore known as the Millennium. (See Revelation 20:1–4; Daniel 2:44; 7:18, 26, 27; Isaiah 2:2–4; Psalm 22:27, 28; 47:2, 3, 7, 8.)

At the end of the Millennium, God will completely renew the face of the earth, resulting in a paradisiacal Garden-of-Eden-like New Earth. God’s great heavenly city, New Jerusalem, will then descend from above to settle on the re-created planet. This magnificent Space City is an astounding 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high! It will be inhabited only by the Lord’s saved children, who will enjoy unlimited heavenly happiness, pleasure, and paradise forever! (See Revelation chapters 21 and 22.) •



DANIEL TWO

A Picture of the
Past and Future

THE PROPHET DANIEL WAS A TEENAGER when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem for the first time in 605 B.C. Daniel and other Jews of royal blood were taken captive and brought to Babylon, where they were trained to become counselors of the king. "And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined [Daniel and his three friends, whom the king renamed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego], he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm" (Daniel 1:20).

Daniel chapter 2 recounts a prophetic dream and its interpretation, and in so doing gives a concise overview of the history and future of the world, from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the Second Coming of Jesus and beyond.

The dream

Nebuchadnezzar had a mysterious dream that left him troubled. When his magicians, astrologers, and others were not able to tell him both what he had dreamed and the interpretation, Nebuchadnezzar sentenced all of his counselors to death. But when the king's guard came for Daniel and his companions, Daniel said that he could tell the king his dream and its meaning. Daniel and his friends prayed, and "the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision" (verses 1–19).

"There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets," Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, "and He has made known to you what will be in the latter days" (verse 28). Daniel then told Nebuchadnezzar what the king had dreamed and what it meant.

"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ... And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (verses 31–35).

The interpretation

The head of gold: Babylon. "You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. ... You are this head of gold"

(verses 37–38). Babylon was also known as the “golden city” of ancient times, and is referred to as such in another Bible passage, Isaiah 14:1–4.

The chest and arms of silver: Medo-Persia. “After you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours” (verse 39a). We know from history that Medo-Persia conquered Babylon in 538 B.C. It is appropriate that the kingdom of Persia is depicted here by two arms because the Medes were the first nation to be incorporated into the Persian Empire, and many Medes held important positions in the Persian Empire.

The belly of bronze: Greece. “A third kingdom of bronze ... shall rule over all the earth” (verse 39b). Again, we know from history that in 333 B.C., over 200 years after this prophecy was given, Alexander the Great and the Greek army conquered the Persian Empire. It is interesting that Greece is symbolized here as the belly and thighs of the image, because the Greeks were known for being uninhibited about sex and nudity.

The legs of iron: Rome. “And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others” (verse 40). Rome conquered Greece and held iron rule over the entire known (western) world for nearly 500 years. It is appropriate that it was represented as two legs because it was often administered as two regions and in its decline was divided into the Western Roman Empire, with its capital in Rome, and the Eastern Roman Empire (later called the Byzantine Empire), with its capital at Constantinople. The Romans were also great on marching and were the first world empire to build an extensive

network of highways—important for deploying armies to quell revolts.

The feet and toes of iron and clay: *strong and weak governments of the End-time.* “Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. ... They will mingle ... but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay” (verses 41–43). Since the fall of the Roman Empire, no single empire has ruled the entire known world. Instead, there has been a mix of smaller nations and empires with both strong and weak governments. However, the soon-to-arise empire of the Devil-possessed dictator known as the Antichrist will, for a very brief period, unite all nations and rule the world in some kind of One World Order. The nations represented by the 10 toes will be united under the Antichrist.

The stone and the mountain: Jesus and the kingdom of God. The stone that was cut out of a mountain represents Jesus, and the great mountain that filled the whole earth is the soon-coming kingdom of God on earth. The rock striking the image on the feet, rather than on the head or elsewhere, signifies what time the kingdoms of man will be destroyed: the time in which we are now living, the “latter days” (verse 28), also known as the Endtime. “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (verse 44). •

The toes
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kingdom
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and partly
fragile.

WHEN YOU PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER, have you ever really thought about the part, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven"? (Luke 11:2). We who know and love the Lord already have Heaven in our hearts, thank God, but is there really much Heaven on Earth today? No, there is mostly confusion and selfishness and unhappiness and war and fighting and hell on every hand!

But one day soon, the Lord is going to change all that when He sets up His own kingdom of peace and goodness and fairness and mercy and love. Then His kingdom won't only be in our hearts, it will be all around us. God's kingdom really is going to come in all of its power and glory, right here on Earth!

in Heaven (Revelation 19:7–9), while the wicked Antichrist and his followers back on Earth suffer the horrific Wrath of God (Revelation chapter 16). Bloodied but unbowed, the Antichrist and his forces will be poised to try to crush their opponents—all the people left on Earth who have refused to worship the Antichrist or receive his Mark of the Beast (Revelation 13:16–18)—when Jesus and His children return to defeat the Antichrist and his forces at the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:14,16; 17:14; 19:11–15).

Then at last Jesus will put an end to man's cruel and destructive rule and set up the kingdom of God on Earth for 1,000 years. Jesus will rule in person, and all of His saved children will rule with Him (Jeremiah 23:5–6; Revelation 19:5; 20:6).

tomorrow's wonderful world

But before that can happen, some other things have to happen: The evil Antichrist world leader must come to power and rule for seven years, the second half of which will be a time of trouble called the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14), when the Antichrist and his forces will persecute but not completely overcome God's children (Revelation 13:7; 11:3–5). Then Jesus will supernaturally gather all of His saved children, dead and alive, and instantly give them all powerful new resurrection bodies (Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:51–52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). He will whisk them away to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

The surviving peoples of Earth will then have the blessing of living under the most perfect, righteous and fair government the world has ever known (Isaiah 11:1–5).

All wars will finally cease. Men will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4). Man will live in peace and plenty, like God planned for him to live in the beginning, and nothing will hurt nor destroy in all of God's kingdom (Isaiah 11:9).

There will be no carnivorous beasts or poisonous insects or serpents, or any such pests. Man

and beast will no longer need to eat meat, and all will be at peace with each other. Even a little child will be able to lead the formerly wild beasts around, playing with the lions and tigers and leopards and elephants as pets! “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den” (Isaiah 11:6–8).

Neither will there be any more of the thorns, thistles, weeds or poisonous plants that came as part of

horses, camels, wagons, sailing ships, etc.

There will also be no more smoke-belching factories or destructive modern machinery. The world is going to go back to those beautiful days when people took the time to appreciate the beautiful creation of God around them and the wonderful creatures of God to help them plow and harvest their food and provide transportation. It won’t be a primitive society, but it will certainly be a peaceful one!

There will also be very little, if any, disease or sickness, because the Bible says that if somebody dies at the age of 100, he will still be considered a child (Isaiah 65:20). People may again live nearly a thousand years, as they did in the days before the Flood.

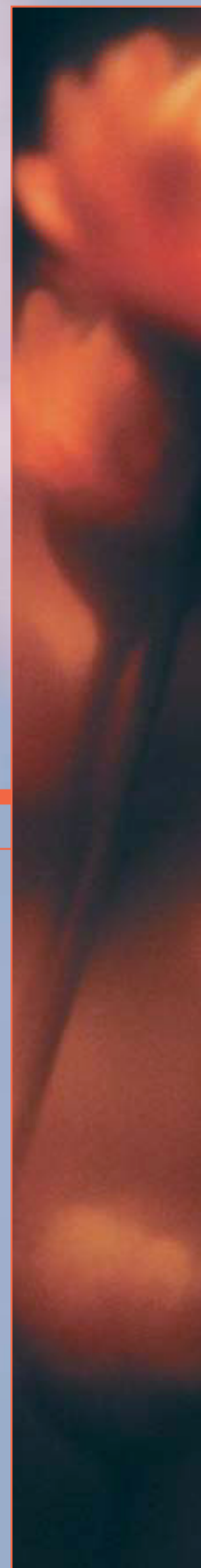
the Curse, because of the Fall of Man (Isaiah 55:13; Genesis 3:17–18).

Earth will be a beautiful, heavenly paradise—the restored Garden of Eden. In that day you’ll be able to enjoy all the pleasures of paradise to the full! What a wonderful place to live!

There will be no more gasoline-powered, pollution-spouting, environment-hurting and life-destroying transportation. We’ll be free from today’s rat race, where everything moves at such breakneck speed that there’s no time to even enjoy life anymore. Instead, the world will in large part return to God-created, God-ordained peaceful modes of transportation—

But remember that during this time, all of God’s saved children will already have received their new eternal super-bodies that will *never* die. And they will be helping Jesus teach God’s ways to the millions—perhaps even billions—of normal mortal, human beings during these 1,000 years. “Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

If you’ve received Jesus as your Savior, you can look forward to the brightest and happiest future you could ever imagine—ruling and reigning with Jesus as one of His supernatural supermen or superwomen during this wonderful time! •





HEAVENLY VICTORY

IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The Bible warns us that a powerful one-world government will arise in these final days of man's reign on Earth, led by a demonic dictator—the Antichrist—who will actually be possessed by Satan himself! The last three and a half years of his rule will be a time that the Bible calls the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14). This Antichrist government will use a universal electronic credit system to try to cause everybody to come under the control of the Antichrist, because no one will be able to buy or sell without a personal credit number, or “mark of the Beast” (Revelation 13:16–18). The Antichrist will also set up an idol, an image of himself, and somehow cause those who refuse to worship the image to be killed (Revelation 13:14–15).

But God's children will refuse to worship the Antichrist or receive his mark—and God will take care of them! (Revelation 12:6,14). Although some Christians will die as martyrs, the Antichrist will not be able to overcome them spiritually. The Lord

says, “And they”—the Christians—
“overcame *him* [the Antichrist] by
the blood of the Lamb [Jesus] and by
the word of their testimony; and they
did not love their lives to the death”
(Revelation 12:11).

**“If God is
for us, who
can be
against us?”**
(Romans 8:31)

God's Word also promises that during this time “the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits,” and that “those of the people who understand shall instruct many” (Daniel 11:32,33). In those days many will be seeking the truth and a way out of their desperate situations, and those who know the Lord and understand His Word will be able to explain to them what's happening. Those in the know will lead and encourage God's other children till the very end.

The Lord has also promised to come to His people's defense with mighty signs and wonders. When you read in Revelation chapters 8 and 9 about of the "trumpets of

The Lord is also going to give many of those who believe in Him miraculous powers ...

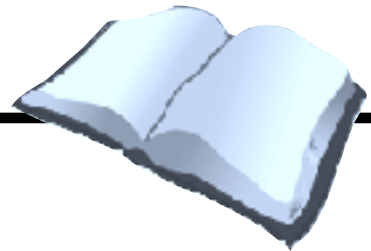
tribulation" and the horrific plagues that they herald, you need to remember that God is sending these plagues to torment the *wicked* and

ungodly. Those who have the "seal of God"—that is, those who believe in and love Jesus—have nothing to fear! (Revelation 7:2–3; 9:1–5). The Lord is also going to give many of those who believe in Him miraculous powers to defend themselves, survive, continue to proclaim the truth and lead others to Him right up till His return (Revelation 11:3–6).

So don't worry about the Great Tribulation! It's not going to be some kind of a lopsided, rampaging victory for the Devil! God's people are going to win supernatural victories over him and all of his powers!■

Feeding Reading

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW TRIALS AND TESTS?



To draw us closer to Him

Psalms 107:12–13

To see if we will remain true to Him

Deuteronomy 8:2
Deuteronomy 13:3–4
Jeremiah 17:10

To draw us closer to His Word

Psalms 94:12
Psalms 119:67,71

To make us more fruitful

John 15:2

To train us

Hebrews 5:8
1 Peter 4:1–2

To make us more useful vessels

Jeremiah 18:4
2 Timothy 2:21

To purify us

Psalms 66:10
Job 23:10
Isaiah 48:10
Daniel 11:35
1 Peter 1:7

To prepare us for the future

Deuteronomy 8:16
Psalms 105:17–22

To teach us patience

Romans 5:3
James 1:3–4

To teach us compassion towards others

Hebrews 4:15
2 Corinthians 1:4



Racing Toward the Mark

By Keith Phillips

During the last half of the reign of the Antichrist, the three-and-a-half-year period known as the Great Tribulation, those who refuse to worship him or accept his mark, or number, will not be able to buy or sell. We who worship God will be persecuted, but our faith in God will save us. At the end of this period, Jesus will come back to rescue us, destroy the Antichrist's worldwide economic, political and religious system, and set up His own kingdom here on Earth.

The technology needed to institute the mark of the Beast—technology unheard of only a few years ago—is rapidly developing. Consider the following:

Microchipped to Serve

At a time when conspiracy theories abound, perhaps no one is more outspoken than former TV sports commentator and spokesman for the British Green Party, David Icke, who has written 10 books supporting the same basic premise: The same few people, organizations and secret societies are taking over the world—and us. This Elite, according to Icke, creates

the news and then pipes it to us. They engineer events and set the trends—wars, revolutions, terrorist attacks, assassinations, political and economic upheavals, international drug trafficking—then form our perception of those things through the media that they also control. They are masters of collective and individual mind control, and their aim is to master *us*!

In an interview with the *Independent* newspaper of South Africa (Jan. 19, 1998), Icke stated, “The secret government of the world is manipulating the human mind to accept a centralized global tyranny, as we speak. This tyranny is called the New World Order, and unless we wake up it will manifest as a world government; a world central bank, currency and army and a microchipped population linked to a global computer.”

And we'd better wake up quick, because it's happening! Already pets are being microchipped, and human applications are either being discussed or are in the experimental stage—from microchipping pre-schoolers to thwart kidnappings and make it possible to track lost children, to microchipping parolees and inmates in “jail at home” programs.

“He [the False Prophet, top aide to the Antichrist, also known as the Beast] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:16-17).

Ultimately, Icke says, the plan includes the microchipping of all babies at birth. “The technology already exists, and all that remains is to persuade the public to accept it. One way this will be done is to highlight missing children stories, including the abduction of babies from maternity wards.”

On the financial front, coins and banknotes are being phased out in favor of credit and smart cards.

“Today if you go into a shop to buy anything and your credit card is refused by the computer, you can pay with cash,” Icke explains. “What happens when there is no cash? If the computer refuses your card or microchip, you have no means to buy anything. We will then be robots in every sense of the word, an extension of a computer program.”

Proponents of microchipping humans say there are other selling points: Passports could be done away with, and people could carry their medical records with them wherever they go, in case of accident. In the UK, people are already being microchipped with their medical records. “Even more frightening,” Icke says, “is that the microchip can be used to modify [human] behavior.”

Connecting Brain to Computer

According to an article in *The Sunday Times* (London, England, Nov. 7, 1997), the prospect of extending human intelligence by means of electronic implants in the brain has come two steps closer. Scientists have not only grown living nerves cells of a rat—cells that closely resemble their counterpart in humans—on a silicon chip, but have also transmitted electrical impulses along the nerves to trigger sensors within the chip.

“The findings are being hailed

as a crucial first step in developing direct connections between computers and the brain. This will lead to silicon-based enhancements for the body, ranging from memory devices inside the head to ‘bionic’ eyes that allow blind people to see,” states the *Sunday Times* article.

When asked about the latest research, Colin Humphreys, a professor at Cambridge University, said it raised the frightening prospect of one day being able to control people’s minds through silicon chip implants.

Chip Implants to Track Workers

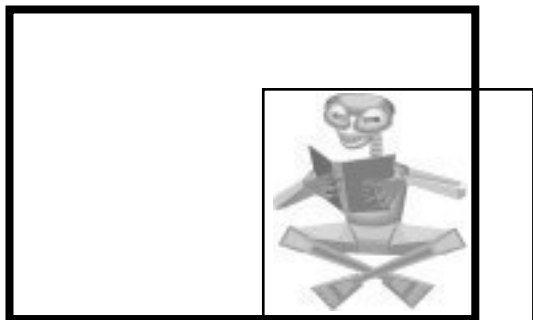
“Big Brother could soon be watching from the inside,” another *Sunday Times* article (May 9, 1999) warns. “Several international companies are consulting scientists on ways of developing microchip implants for their workers to measure their timekeeping and track their whereabouts.

“The technology, which has been proven on pets and human volunteers, would enable firms to track staff all around a building or complex. The data could enable them to draw up estimates of workers’ efficiency and productivity.

“The technology is likely to have a strong appeal to companies with high labor costs, for which small increases in staff productivity can have a big impact on profits. It is also relatively cheap—just a few [British] pounds for each person, according to Professor Kevin Warwick of Reading University.

“For a business the potential is obvious,” the article quotes Warwick. “You can tell when people clock into work and when they leave the building. You would know at all times exactly where they were and who they were with.” ■

SIGNS OF THE TIMES



WASHINGTON POST SERVICE

Institutions and individuals alike are coping with a deluge of books, journals, tapes, legal records, documents, electronic mail and torrents of raw data. The Library of Congress has 113 million items, and every morning 20,000 more pour into the loading dock. Every day, James Billington, the librarian of Congress, worries about issues such as shelving and preservation, but he also worries about broader philosophical matters, such as: Are we truly wiser with all this information?

**Is the
Information
Age Making
Us Any
Wiser?**

In 1472 the library at Queens' College in Cambridge, England, had 199 books. At the height of the Renaissance there were people who could claim plausibly to have read every important book ever written.

Today, no one can read everything. The world of knowledge is a vast ocean; the best you can do is occasionally go for a swim.

More than 50,000 books are published every year in America alone. The number of journals published globally is estimated at 400,000. Soon every home will have access to hundreds of television channels. The worldwide Web now has millions of sites.

"It's significant that we call it the Information Age," Mr. Billington said. "We don't talk about the Knowledge Age."

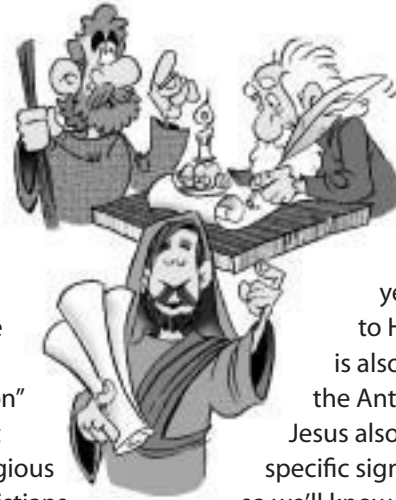
Mr. Billington subscribes to a formula: Raw data can be turned into information, which then, through much added effort and value, can rise to the level of knowledge, which is the foundation for wisdom. But he says that in this era of data overload, we may be going in the wrong direction. "Our society is basically motion without memory," Mr. Billington said. "Which, of course, is one of the clinical definitions of insanity."

(Activated editor:) The world is going insane because more and more people, especially in the West, are sometimes thoughtlessly embracing modern knowledge without at the same time retaining the wisdom of the past. They are forsaking righteousness, civility, godliness, love, concern, and care for their neighbor in their attempts to shape a "brave new world" based on technology.

There's nothing wrong with technology if it's used to the right ends, but when society is based only on technology and knowledge rather than godliness and God's wisdom, then the foundation of that society is built on sand. No matter how nice the resulting building looks, it won't last. Only those who've built their house on the rock Christ Jesus will endure (Matthew 7:24-27).

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COMPILED FROM THE WRITINGS OF DAVID BRANDT BERG



Matthew chapter 24 is quite clear on the subject of Jesus' Second Coming, when He is going to return to gather all those who have received Him as their Savior and take them with Him back to Heaven—an event commonly referred to as "the Rapture." The rest of the Bible is also clear on when this happens. That's why for nearly 1,800 years practically every Christian believed Jesus would come back *after* the period He refers to as "Great Tribulation"—three and a half years of intense persecution.

It's only in the last couple of hundred years that people like C.I. Scofield (1843–1921) came along with the false doctrine that Jesus would come *before* the Tribulation. "Don't worry, Jesus is going to come and take you out of this world before the trouble comes, so you won't have to suffer." Naturally that became a very popular doctrine because it was just what everybody had been waiting to hear.

From my experience, many Christians who say they believe in the pre-Tribulation Rapture just don't want to have to go through the Tribulation and aren't the least bit prepared for it, so they come up with their own interpretation of the Scriptures or latch onto someone

else's false teaching. But the Bible specifically says not to do that. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20). I don't care what other religious groups or other Christians say; what does the *Bible* say?

In Matthew 24, Jesus' disciples ask Him what will be the sign of His return, and Jesus answers with not one but a number of signs—wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecution of Christians, a proliferation of false prophets, lawlessness, a pervading lack of love, and the Gospel being preached in every nation. "Then," He says, "the end will come" (Matthew 24:4–14).

Beginning with the next verse, Jesus tells us what we can expect during the Great



Tribulation—the last three and a half years leading up to His return, which is also the last half of the Antichrist's reign.

Jesus also tells us what specific sign to watch for, so we'll know exactly when that period is beginning. "When you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ... then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:15,21). We find out in the book of Revelation that this "abomination of desolation" is an image of the Antichrist, or Beast (Revelation 13:14–15). Both Daniel and Revelation tell us that this image will be set up in the holy place at exactly the middle of the Antichrist's seven-year reign (Daniel 9:27; 12:11; Matthew 24:15–21; Revelation 13:5).

When does Jesus come back for us?—That's also plain as day: "Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days" Jesus returns (Matthew 24:29). Jesus doesn't say that when we see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place He's about to rescue us out of this world, away from the Antichrist

and the trouble to come. He warns us to head for the hills (Matthew 24:16). In other words, we will still be here.

And why did the Lord and the prophets go to so much trouble to tell us exactly how long the Great Tribulation would last—the exact time in terms of days, months, and years—if we didn't need to *know* these things, if we won't be here, counting the days and the weeks? (Daniel 7:25; 12:11; Revelation 13:5). Jesus told us these specifics because He wants us to be able to take heart in knowing that the Tribulation isn't going to last forever, and that every passing day is bringing us closer to the glorious end.

During the Tribulation, things will get so bad that many people will think it's time for Jesus to come, especially Christians who were taught that He was supposed to come *before* the Tribulation. They're going to expect Him to come any day. But Jesus warns us *not* to expect Him sooner than has been foretold. He also warns us to not be deceived by either false christs who will try to deceive us into thinking that *they* are Christ, or by false prophets who will try to tell us that Christ's coming is imminent or that

He's already here somewhere (Matthew 24:23–26). He tells us to not believe any of them, because when He comes, we will know it!

Some people who teach a pre-Tribulation Rapture go so far as to say that it's going to be a *secret* Rapture—that nobody is going to see Him except the saved. Nobody else is even going to know He came. All of a sudden a bunch of us are just going to disappear, and those who are left behind won't know what's happened to us.

If the Rapture is supposed to be a secret, why will the Lord make so much noise and put on such a show when He comes? His Word tells us that He's going to "come in the clouds with great power and glory." The sky will light up from one end to the other, and there will be such signs in the heavens that we

couldn't possibly mistake the fact that Jesus is coming. In fact, it says that "every eye shall see Him." Everyone



will also see the dead in Christ—all the saved people who have already died—rising to meet Him in the air as He comes. They'll hear Jesus, too, because He'll "descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and a great sound of the trumpet of God." And why are all of the unsaved going to mourn?—Because they're going to see and know what's happening (Matthew 24:27,30; Acts 1:9–11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:7). It will be the greatest spectacle the world has ever seen.

That doesn't sound like a secret coming or secret Rapture to me! Does it to you?

And there it is again, plain as day: *After* the dead rise to meet the Lord, "then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). If we got raptured *before*, then what are we doing still here? ○

(To be continued.)



behind"?

The Truth About the Rapture, Part 1

ONE OF THE DEVIL'S CLEVEREST TRICKS has been to deceive Christians into thinking that Jesus is going to rescue them out of this world before the three-and-a-half-year Great Tribulation, because those who believe that are going to be totally unprepared for the Tribulation, and it's going to shake the faith of some. A lot of Christians who are expecting to get "raptured" (gathered into Heaven at Jesus' Second Coming) *before* the Tribulation are going to get the shock of their lives, because that's not going to happen. Jesus said so Himself: "Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days ... they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29–31).

After the Tribulation shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens. *After* the Tribulation, then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. *After* the Tribulation they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. *After* the Tribulation He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather His elect. That's when Jesus is going to come for you and me—*after* the Tribulation, and not a day before!

Why is Jesus going to return?—To gather His "elect," the *eklektos* in Greek, the

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE RAPTURE PART 2

Left

chosen ones, the saved. Christians will have been preaching the Gospel and winning multitudes to the Lord in this time of tribulation. Why would He pull His laborers out before those few years when people will be the most desperate for salvation and there will be one of the greatest harvests of souls ever, when we'll be "doing exploits and instructing many"? (Matthew 9:37–38; Daniel 11:32–33). And if we're going to be doing exploits and instructing many *during* the Tribulation, we must still be here. He is going to need lots of us here to tell the world what's happening.

But if God loves saved Christians so much, some people reason, why would He let them go through the Tribulation?—To put them to the test. He's going to test their faith to see if they really believe. Will they be witnesses for Him, or will they be ashamed of Him and try to save their lives by not witnessing? He's going to purge them and refine them as by fire, His Word says, to make them white (Daniel 11:35).

I'm sorry if you're disappointed to hear that! I'm sorry if you thought you had it made being a Christian because He'd come and rescue you before anything terrible happened. Well, He's not going to! The Tribulation is going to put us through the refining fire, but those who have real faith are going to come through like pure gold.

We know the Tribulation is going to be difficult, or it

wouldn't be called the Tribulation. But still, we shouldn't look ahead to it with trepidation, expecting horrible defeat with nothing but persecution and suffering. It's going to be primarily a time of great victory over the forces of Satan and tremendous triumph over the anti-Christ wicked. It's going to be a time of terrible and awesome events, but we are going to have terrible and awesome powers to protect us and defend us and deliver us and keep us going right to the end (Daniel 11:32; Revelation 12:7–11; 17:14). We don't need to worry or fear, because God is going to take care of His own (Revelation 3:10; 7:1–3; 12:6).

Another false teaching about the Rapture is that it's only for the "best" Christians. When I was a boy I heard different preachers say, "Some day you'll come home and find all your loved ones have disappeared." And sure enough, one day I came home from school and nobody was home. I thought, "Oh my! The Rapture has occurred! My dear sweet mother and father have gone to be with the Lord! They and all the other dear Christians I knew and who helped take care of me were all ready. They loved the Lord and weren't naughty like me! They've already gone to be with the Lord and here I am, left behind and all alone in this big house"—and I practically cried!

What a terrible thing to teach little children (or anyone, for that matter), that even if they love Jesus and are saved, if they're not good enough, if they didn't

Behind?

go to church enough or if they commit another sin, they're not going to be ready for Jesus when He comes, and they're going to miss the Rapture! The preachers said, "They may be saved, but they'll be left behind in that terrible Tribulation, because in the Rapture Jesus is only going to take the *good* people."

Well, let me tell you, *nobody* is ever good enough! Nobody can ever love Him enough. Nobody can ever be perfect enough, clean enough, pure enough, or holy enough except by the blood of Jesus Christ, and that's done the instant you receive Jesus as your Savior. So you don't have to worry about whether or not you're good enough. If you belong to Jesus, He is going to take you to be with Him when He comes, no matter what.

Nobody who has received Jesus is going to be left behind. Jesus promised to send His angels out to gather us from everywhere, from the four winds, from all around the world, and He won't leave one behind! He won't forget one—not one! (Matthew 24:31). Isn't that wonderful?

So if you have the Lord, you're ready! Now help *others* get ready. Pass on the Good News of God's love and salvation in Jesus to as many as you can. Tell your friends and family and everybody else so they may also be ready for the wonderful event that is soon to take place, when Jesus comes to rescue us out of this world and take us to heavenly places with Him for eternity. Don't let one be left behind because you failed to tell them!♥

“BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY,” the apostle Paul wrote to a group of Christians in the Greek city of Corinth. “We shall not all sleep [be dead], but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we [who are alive] shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ... Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’” (1 Corinthians 15:51–55).

In this passage Paul is explaining the resurrection of the dead. It’s pretty hard to explain how a body that’s been in the grave for years—possibly even hundreds or thousands of years—is going to come to life and be perfectly whole, even better than it was before. How’re you going to explain that? Paul says it’s going to be like the difference between a seed and what the seed becomes once it has germinated and grown to maturity (1 Corinthians 15:36–44).

Our resurrection bodies are going to be new and different, and yet they’ll be close enough to the ones we have now that we’ll recognize each other: “Then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12). The disciples recognized Jesus after He was resurrected, but not always. He was different enough that sometimes they didn’t recognize Him (Luke 24:13–16, 31; John 20:14–16). That was either because He didn’t want to be recognized at the time, or because He was even more beautiful and more perfect, if that’s possible, because He had a

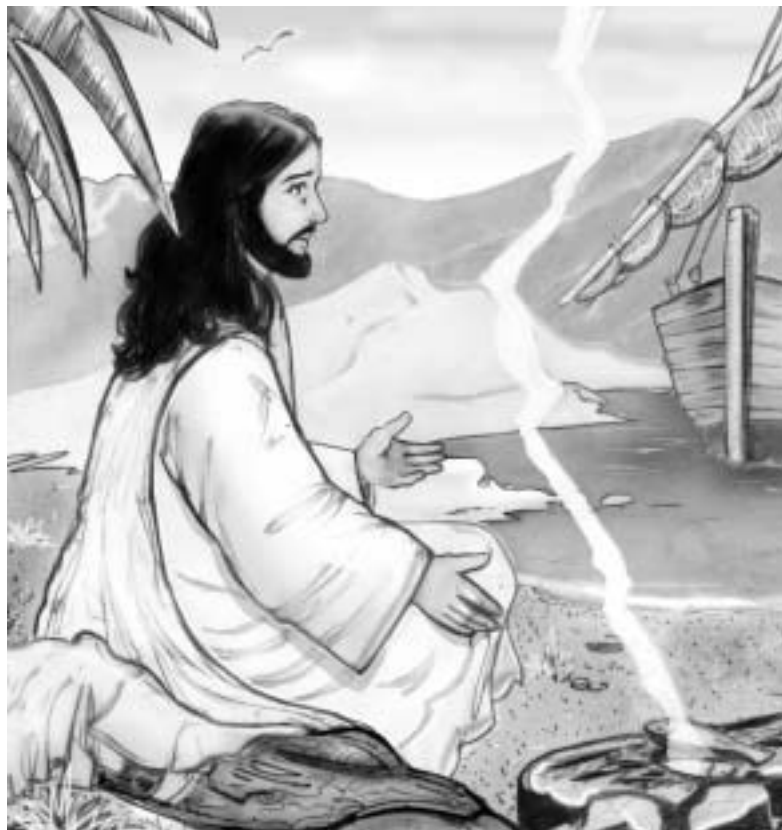
new spiritual body that would never die—and that’s the kind of body you’re going to have! You’re going to be like Jesus was and is now, since His resurrection. He “will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious [resurrection] body” (Philippians 3:21).

Were Jesus’ followers able to see Him after He was resurrected? Yes!

“WE SHALL BE CHANGED!”

WHAT YOUR RESURRECTION WILL BE LIKE

By David Brandt Berg



Were they able to usually recognize Him? Yes! Did He walk and talk with them? Yes! He even cooked for them and ate and drank with them (Luke 24:43; John 21:9–14). Jesus was able to do all these normal, natural things, and in your new resurrection body, so will you. Think of that!

But that's not all. You'll also be able to do some things you can't do in your natural body. When His followers were in a locked room with the door barred for fear of those who had crucified Him, Jesus walked right *through* the barred door (John 20:26). Another time, when He had finished talking with two of His followers on the road to Emmaus, He "vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:31). You'll be able to walk through walls and doors and appear and disappear, just like Jesus did. You'll also be able to travel from one place

to another not merely at the speed of sound or light, but at the speed of thought! Well, we're getting ahead of our story now.

"We shall all be changed!" The main thing that's going to be changed is your body, but if He's going to change your body, He's certainly going to change your clothes. Contrary to what some believe, He's not going to resurrect you stark naked. You'll be clothed in a robe of light, a robe of righteousness. Just think, no matter where you are or what you're doing, you're suddenly going to notice a wonderful change and look to see that you're

wearing a beautiful new robe of righteousness!

Actually, you may be so preoccupied with what's happening in the sky—lightning and thunder and Jesus appearing in the clouds—that you may not even notice what you're wearing. But you'll sure *feel* different because you'll "be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump" (1 Corinthians 15:52). At the sound of that trumpet you're going to be raised from the dead, if you are dead, or raised from the earth if you're still living.

In another epistle, Paul writes: "I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:13–14). That includes *you*, if you've received Him! It also includes all of your departed family members and friends who are saved. So don't worry that you'll never see them again; you'll meet in the air. What a family reunion—the biggest ever!

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).○

God became a man to turn creatures into sons; not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man.

—C.S. Lewis



Interpreting BIBLE PROPHECY

PART ONE

*"Rightly dividing
the Word of truth"
(2 Timothy 2: 15).*

By David Brandt Berg

Nothing about God's overall plan for the world, as revealed through Bible prophecy, is going to change. The major events of the Endtime, the major participants, and the final outcome—those are all settled. "Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in Heaven" (Psalm 119:89). "I am the Lord, I do not change" (Malachi 3:6). God doesn't change, His Word doesn't change, and His prophetic plans for the world are not going to change.

There are certain specifics that we can be sure of: We know that (1) Jesus is coming back, (2) that following His return all those who have received Jesus as their Savior are going to (3) receive their eternal bodies, (4) be transported to Heaven (the Rapture) where they will (5) enjoy the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in that gorgeous Heavenly City, while (6) there's hell on Earth and the Wrath of God is being poured out below on the defiant, rebellious, and wicked followers of the Antichrist. We know that is going to be followed by (7) the Battle of Armageddon (the total defeat of the Antichrist and his regime), which will be followed by (8) the Millennium (the thousand-year reign of Christ on Earth). We also know (9) the Millennium will end with the Battle of Gog and Magog (another war between the godly and the ungodly), and will be followed by (10) a total restoration of the earth's surface (the New Heaven and New Earth). All this is very clear and very definite. They cannot be doubted or denied, because it's all very clear right there in the Bible.

These are events we know, and the closer we get to these things, the more specific and exact our knowledge of these and related events will be. Many of the details regarding future events are not yet clear, but we *are* told what things to watch for, key points on the future timeline, from which we will then be able to accurately determine the sequence and timing of other major

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So what we need to know first as we study the Word of God are the things that are unchangeable—the established facts that are clearly stated in the Scriptures. These make up the foundation for further interpretation of Bible prophecy. You have to know these fundamentals of Bible prophecy before you can attempt to understand what *might* happen, and how and when. (*Editor's note: Most of these foundation facts of Bible prophecy are explained in the booklet The Future Foretold, also from Aurora Production.*)

Blessed Are Those Who Understand

Bible scholars are in general agreement on the interpretation of prophecies concerning past events. There can be little question about these because the events have already happened. Empires have come and gone and other events have happened, just like God said they would, sometimes hundreds of years beforehand. It's not hard to understand or teach *fulfilled* Bible prophecy; it's already happened, so the interpretation is obvious. But prophecies become a lot less obvious when they deal with events in the *future*. This is where most differences in doctrines and interpretations come up.

But just because some points are unclear or controversial is no reason to not try to figure them out. God's Word says of those reading the book of Revelation, "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it" (Revelation 1:3 NIV)—and the same goes for any other prophetic messages found in the Bible. It takes effort to try to understand Bible prophecy, to compare Scripture with Scripture till you arrive at the most plausible interpretations, but God says you will be blessed if you do.

You don't *have* to know all the prophetic details of the future; they'll

happen whether you know them or not, don't worry! But it's good to try to know as much as you can so you'll know what's going on and will be able to warn and instruct others.

Basic Guidelines

There are a few basic rules to interpreting God's Word. The first is: Interpret it literally, if possible. If it can mean exactly what it says, then it probably doesn't even have to be interpreted. Don't try to read into it some unusual, undercover significance or meaning. If a Bible verse or passage makes sense literally, take it literally.

But if it doesn't sound reasonable or logical, or it just seems like it's virtually impossible to interpret it literally, it may be symbolic. Study its context thoroughly to see if and how the symbolism is explained. Take the image and the beasts in the book of Daniel, for example: They are all interpreted by the angel or the man that appeared to Daniel, or by Daniel himself. We're told what each of these things represent, so those passages are obviously symbolic and we're given the interpretations.

If you can't find the explanation of a passage in its context, then try looking elsewhere in the Bible for where the same terms are used. See how they're used and what they mean in other places.

Most important, when you come across mysteries in the Word, let the Author Himself explain them to you. "Call to Me," He tells us in Jeremiah 33:3, "and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Ask God to lead you step by step to the right interpretation. Of course there will be some things that God *won't* reveal to you just yet, because they're not close enough that you need to know them. But keep asking and seeking and knocking, and when the time is right, He will help you understand. ○

Interpreting Bible prophecy

"Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

PART 2

By David Brandt Berg

God loves a mystery!

The prophets looked into the future and saw coming events like series of mountain ranges, one after the other. Only the mountaintops were clearly visible. The valleys in between were mostly hidden, and the prophets couldn't always distinguish between events, just like two or three mountain ranges lined up one after the other can look like one from a distance. At the time, the order and timing of future events usually weren't clear to the prophets, but they became clear to others as they came to pass—or they will yet.

God has many mysteries that He keeps from us until the appointed time. Many of the prophets who received the revelations now recorded in the Bible never even attempted to explain them, often because they didn't understand the prophecies or revelations themselves. For example, the prophet Daniel was so baffled one time about what the Lord had prophesied through him that he said thinking about it troubled him greatly (Daniel 7:28). He was really puzzled!

God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways

My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8–9). How could we possibly comprehend with our finite minds all the mysteries of God about the future?

But, little by little, He *does* shed a little more light on Endtime events. The sun doesn't just pop up in the morning and—boom!—it's broad daylight. First there's a long period of dawn as it gets a little lighter and a little lighter, until finally the sun itself begins to show. Then it still takes a while longer before the entire sun is visible. That's the way God reveals interpretations of Bible prophecies to us: little by little.

Is it wise to theorize?

It doesn't pay to try to be too specific or to try to nail down all the whos, whens, wheres, and hows of things to come, but you should at least be familiar with the basic events of the Endtime. You should also put *some* thought and prayer into trying to figure out how and when they might come to pass, so you'll recognize them when they do.

Studying Bible prophecy is a bit

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like doing scientific experiments in a laboratory: You begin by asking questions. (If you don't have the questions in mind, how are you going to find the answers?) Then you try various possibilities in order to come to the right conclusions—or *probable* right conclusions—by the process of elimination. You can form theories regarding what various Bible prophecies mean by the processes of deduction and elimination. You may not get all the answers right, but you'll almost certainly be better off than if you never ask any questions or try to figure anything out.

How specific should you try to be?

I'm very leery about getting too specific, because too many preachers and Bible teachers have been called false prophets when their revelations or interpretations regarding specific events didn't prove true.

The only details that you can be absolutely sure of are the things that God has expressly said in the Word, such as the Great Tribulation lasting roughly three and a half years—or 42 months or 1260 days (Daniel 7:25, 9:27, 12:7; Revelation 11:2–3; 12:6; 13:5).

At this moment we don't know the exact time or place that most Endtime events will happen. We know generally, and when they begin to happen we'll know more specifically.

Some Bible prophecy buffs try to figure out the minute details—the days and hours and minutes—when it's too early for that. If you get bogged down with too many details of Bible prophecy, you're likely to make mistakes and waste a lot

of time. You'll know soon enough, when the time comes. Time will tell! Be patient, but be on the lookout for indications, hints, and signs.

How to know your interpretation is right

There's one thing about prophecy: When it happens, you'll know what it meant! Jesus said, "I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe" (John 14:29).

The Lord put each of those prophecies in the Bible for our edification. Some give us understanding of His plan for the future, so we can prepare accordingly. Others—those that we don't completely understand now—are to encourage our faith and instruct us later, when we see and recognize their fulfillments. When they come to pass, we'll be encouraged that everything is under the Lord's control and is happening just the way He said it would, and we'll know where we are on the Endtime timeline.

When I used to travel a lot by train, I tried to carry a train schedule so I could tell where I was at any time en route. The train wasn't always on time, of course, but whenever it came to a station I could tell if we were running late. The signs on the station platforms confirmed where we were, and I could adjust the schedule accordingly.

So if you become familiar with the main "stops" on the Lord's Endtime timeline, when you get to each one you'll know where you are and how much further you have to go. You'll see the "signs of the times" (Matthew 16:3), remember the Scriptures, and be encouraged.

(To be continued.) •

Interpreting Bible prophecy

"Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

PART 3
By David Brandt Berg

Leave yourself open!

Some people have taken my interpretations of Bible prophecy as gospel fact—incontrovertible and unchangeable—instead of the theories I intended them to be. That's why I try not to be dogmatic and say it has to be this way or that way, because my interpretations could be wrong.

When I teach classes on Bible prophecy, I often suggest possible interpretations other than the ones I believe to be right; then I say, "But I believe such and such." Presenting more than one interpretation helps people be better informed and causes them to think for themselves. Also, that way their faith will be less likely to be shaken if the interpretation I favored and taught turns out to be wrong.

Even if you think you can support your view by Scriptures that deal explicitly with a certain End-time event, and even if you've had a direct revelation from the Lord, you'd better always give Him room to clarify things as time goes on.

Don't get so dogmatic or so set on your interpretations that you can't change when the Lord shows you something different! You may later find out that your interpreta-

tion was wrong, as I have at times. If you don't leave yourself open for other interpretations—especially when the ones you hold to be right are merely somebody else's guess or theory, or your own—you are going to be stuck in a rut and resistant to any new idea or thought that God tries to give to you, and He'll have a mighty hard time getting through to you. Leave yourself open!

What if your interpretation turns out to be wrong?

When Jesus was telling His original disciples about the signs of His second coming, He said, "This generation"—meaning the people who would see the signs He had just finished telling them about come to pass, *us* who are seeing these things happen today—"this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place" (Matthew 24:34). Jesus' original disciples apparently thought He was talking about *them*, which shows how wrong people can be if they don't interpret things right! If they so easily got the wrong interpretation, it can happen to anyone.

So don't be discouraged if some interpretation you held to be true turns out to be wrong, and don't throw away your Bible or everything

Don't be discouraged if some interpretation you held to be true turns out to be wrong.

Children
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you've learned about Bible prophecy. When you find a brown spot on a piece of fruit, you don't throw away the whole thing; you just cut out the little bad spot and keep the rest that's good.

I'd much rather change when God shows me something than, through pride or fear of embarrassment, refuse to change my stance on some point of prophetic interpretation. I would rather suffer a blow to my ego and be right, than to refuse to admit I was wrong and *stay* wrong! A wise man is wiser tomorrow than he was yesterday!

Is Bible prophecy the most important thing?

It is not absolutely necessary that Christians see eye to eye on every detail of Bible prophecy. It is only important that we agree on salvation through Jesus, the basic authority of God's Word, and our obligation to witness His truth to others so they, too, may experience His love and receive His gift of salvation.

A lot of people have gone astray when they got more interested in splitting hairs over interpretations of Bible prophecy than they were in evangelizing the world. Don't be led away from the simplicity of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3). "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Children don't waste most of their time arguing over theological details!

Few people are won to the Lord through esoteric interpretations of

Bible prophecy, and those who are stand a much greater risk of losing faith if the interpretations they've been taught prove to be wrong. "Whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away" (1 Corinthians 13:8). You may have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, but without love it's nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2).

What is the greatest commandment?—To understand every detail of Bible prophecy?—No! The greatest commandment is to love God, and the next greatest is to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37–39). Bible prophecy is important, but if you don't have love, it's just cold, dead facts and figures. Bible prophecy is important, but love is the most important thing!

So don't ever get your eyes so much on the details, doctrines, and dogmas of Bible prophecy that you lose sight of the real goal: to reach the world with the message of God's love in Jesus!

Jesus Himself knew all about the future, but His main mission was to love the world and His main message was the Good News of God's love and salvation. And what was His last message to His disciples, just before He was arrested, beaten, and crucified?—He spoke to them all about love, that love was the most important thing (John 13:3–17, 34–35; 15:9–13, 17).

May God bless you and make you a blessing to others by helping you spread the Good News—and He will if *you* will. •



Compiled from the writings of David Brandt Berg

THE COMING HEAVENLY LIFE OF LOVE!

WHAT
HEAVEN
WILL
REALLY BE
LIKE

THE PLACE WHERE ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN ARE GOING to dwell with Him forever is not some fanciful dreamland way off in outer space somewhere, but an even more amazing dream city that's going to come down from God, out of space, to a new earth. And God is going to come down and live with us, and we with Him (Revelation 21:1–3). It's going to be such a literal down-to-earth Heaven that the last two chapters of the Bible, Revelation chapters 21 and 22, describe the heavenly city in detail—its exact measurements, design, colors, and materials.

But before God brings down His heavenly city, He is going to purify the surface of the earth with fire, destroy the atmospheric heavens, and re-create a beautiful new earth and new atmospheric heavens. It will be the same ball, the same planet, but with a beautiful renewed surface, like a beautiful Garden of Eden—the Paradise of God (Psalm 102:25–26; Isaiah 51:6; 2 Peter 3:7, 10, 12).

We don't know exactly how it is going to work or what everything is going to be like there, but we do know that it's going to be a better world than the present one. It will be a world without death, sorrow, pain, or any of the other problems of today (Revelation 21:4).

The inhabitants of Heaven are not going to be entirely different. They're even going to look much like they did in this life, just as Jesus still looked like Himself after His resurrection. In His supernatural body, after He was resurrected from the grave, Jesus could appear and disappear, walk through walls and locked doors, and move from place to place at the speed of thought. Yet He ate and drank, and His disciples could still see Him and touch Him (Luke 24:36–43; John 21:12–13). In Heaven, people are going to have new supernatural bodies like His, incorruptible, immortal. Their old, decaying, natural bodies will go back to the dust, and they will be given new resurrected bodies that will live forever

(Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

But if all there is to Heaven is sitting around on clouds and playing harps, it could get awfully boring! I'm convinced Heaven is not going to be like that at all. I believe it's going to include all the joys and beauties and pleasures of this life, but without the drawbacks—all the assets, and none of the liabilities. After all, why would God have created all this to abandon it? Heaven is going to be like the best of this world, only more so!

Due to the fall of man through sin when he was first placed on earth, we haven't really had a chance to enjoy life as God originally intended, but in Heaven we

In Heaven, people are
going to have new
supernatural bodies like
His, incorruptible, immortal.

will—and I think the Scriptures corroborate this. Heaven is going to be an amplification and eternal continuation of what we who know and love Jesus already have in our hearts. It's going to be perfect and wonderful, thrilling and exciting, marvelous and beautiful—everything we have now, only in perfection.

Everyone there is going to be good and honest and loving and kind—the perfect society, in perfect fellowship with the Lord and each other. There'll be no hate or jealousy or selfishness or cruelty. We'll never grow old and decrepit, or be bound

by time. It will be absolutely wonderful!

Within the great heavenly city, all of God's saved children will live with Him forever (Revelation 21:24, 27). But outside there will still be others in various situations, some better off than others, according to the lives they lived, how much they received God's truth and were loving to others. And because there will be "no more sea" (Revelation 21:1), unlike our present planet which is four-fifths covered with water, there will be plenty of room for those living outside the heavenly city.

The whole creation will be the way God intended for it to be originally, without sin, war, pollution, or destruction. In a sense, it will be heaven on earth for everybody, even the unregenerated people who don't have the right to enter the city or walk its golden streets.

Inside the city, the River of Life will flow out of the throne of God and of Jesus. The river will be lined on both sides with Trees of Life that bear twelve different kinds of fruit, and the "leaves are for the healing of the nations" outside (Revelation 22:1–2). Perhaps these healing leaves are symbolic of the words of God, His truth. Surely the inhabitants of Heaven will go out and be teachers amongst the nations. They will still have a job to do when they get to Heaven.

We who receive Jesus now are going to be the inner circle and live in the city, the charmed city, living charmed lives as eternal super-beings in supernatural bodies. Are you ready? And are you going to take as many others with you as you can?

God bless you with His love, salvation, and Heaven, now and forever!•

PROFILE OF A DESPOT

Characteristics of the
Coming World Dictator
and False Messiah,
the Antichrist



By Joseph Candel

The world is waiting for a superman to come and put an end to the wars and armed conflicts, religious squabbles, and political and economic instability. And according to the Bible, just such a superman will soon appear on the world scene—a man who will be the Devil incarnate, who the Bible calls the Beast and the Antichrist. Numerous Bible passages describe some of the Antichrist's personal characteristics. Pieced together like the criminologist's composite sketch of a suspect, they can help us recognize this man when he begins to rise to power, so we won't be duped into following him.

1. The Antichrist will be intrinsically evil, yet appear as a savior.

He is variously described in the Bible as “a vile person,” “the man of sin,” “the son of

perdition [Hell],” and “the wicked one.”

“[There] shall stand up a vile person ... he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries” (Daniel 11:21 KJV). Some versions use the word “intrigue” here, in place of or in addition to “flattery.”

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the Second Coming of Jesus Christ] shall not come, except ... that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3 KJV).

“Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall ... destroy with the brightness of His coming [at the Battle of Armageddon]” (2 Thessalonians 2:8 KJV).

“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers [such as the Antichrist] also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end

shall be according to their [evil] works” (2 Corinthians 11:14–15 KJV).

2. The Antichrist will be outspoken and have great speaking ability.

“He shall speak great [pompous] words against the Most High” (Daniel 7:25 KJV).

“He was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies” (Revelation 13:5).

3. The Antichrist will have a fierce countenance.

“In the latter time [the Endtime, just prior to Jesus' return] ... when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up” (Daniel 8:23 KJV).

The prophet Daniel also describes him as a man “whose appearance was

greater than his fellows” (Daniel 7:20). Other translations render this phrase “more stout than his fellows,” or “more imposing than his fellows.”

4. The Antichrist will be extremely proud.

“The king [the Antichrist] shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper” (Daniel 11:36).

He is going to be so proud, in fact, that he will eventually claim to be God Himself. “Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

5. The Antichrist will be a military genius.

The prophet Daniel describes several major wars that the Antichrist fights against those who oppose him during the last three and a half years of his reign. “He will be a master of deception, defeating many by catching them off guard as they bask in false security. Without warning he will destroy them” (Daniel 8:25 TLB).

“They worshiped the Beast, saying, ‘Who is like the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?’” (Revelation 13:4).

6. The Antichrist will not desire women.

“He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all” (Daniel 11:37). This verse could mean that the Antichrist will be either celibate or a homosexual.

7. The Antichrist will have supernatural powers, given him by the Devil.

“His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper” (Daniel 8:24 KJV).

The Antichrist will be a man of such force and perverse ways that throughout the book of Revelation he is referred to as “the Beast.” And by whose power will he prosper? Not by his own, and definitely not by God’s! He will be the Devil’s own man, the false messiah, and through devilry and witchcraft and all that is evil, he will take control of the world. “The Dragon [Devil] gave him his power, his throne, and great authority” (Revelation 13:2).

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9 KJV).

He will astonish the world with his devices. “I saw [the Antichrist] as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the Beast” (Revelation 13:3 KJV).

For a short time, through the Antichrist, the Devil is finally going to get what he’s been after all the time—kingship of the entire world—and he’s going to rule the world with tremendous power. “Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb [Jesus]” (Revelation 13:7–8 KJV).

God put these descriptions of the Antichrist and his reign in the Bible not to cause us to be fearful, but to help us to recognize him and be prepared. “You are all children of the light and of the day. ... So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Watch for His [Jesus’] return and stay sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:5–6 TLB). Knowing that the appearance of the Antichrist signals Jesus’ soon return to rescue His own will help carry us through! •

A MAJOR SOURCE OF CONTENTION in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a hilltop in Jerusalem that Jews call the Temple Mount and Muslims call Al-Haram al-Sharif, or “the Noble Sanctuary.” The site is sacred to Jews as the location of the former Jewish Temple, last destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., and never rebuilt since. It is also one of the three most important shrines in Islam.

Today, Al-Haram al-Sharif encloses over 35 acres—nearly one-sixth of the old walled city of Jerusalem. Al-Aqsa Mosque stands

“When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ... then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:15,21).

The prophecy Jesus was referring to says: “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation” (Daniel 11:31).



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Middle East Crisis

at its southernmost end, and the smaller Muslim shrine, the Dome of the Rock, at its center. Muslims regard the entire area as holy. The sovereignty of the site and the status of Jerusalem are two of the greatest obstacles to lasting peace in the region.

Recent evidence of this is how a September 2000 visit to the site by then opposition leader Ariel Sharon, accompanied by hundreds of Israeli troops and riot police, sparked the worst series of riots and clashes between Israelis and Palestinians in over a decade.

What will happen in Jerusalem—and on the Temple Mount, in particular—is also the subject of several key prophecies in the Bible about the days in which we are living. In order to understand current events and know what to expect next, it’s important to understand these prophecies that deal specifically with the Temple Mount.

The prophecies

When Jesus told His disciples what signs would lead up to His Second Coming, He referred to a prophecy in the Old Testament book of Daniel, written over 500 years earlier:

- What Jesus called the “holy place” and Daniel called the “sanctuary fortress” (or “sanctuary of strength,” as the King James Version words it) is the Jewish Temple area.
- The “him” in Daniel’s prophecy is the soon-coming world dictator known as the Antichrist (also called “the Beast” in the Bible’s book of Revelation).
- “Daily sacrifices” refers to the ritual of Jewish faith in which the blood or flesh of a specified animal is offered in the Temple to God as a substitute payment for sin. This primary ritual of the Jewish faith was suspended when the second Temple was destroyed.
- The “abomination of desolation” appears to be an image or large statue of the Antichrist.
- The “great tribulation” Jesus spoke of is the last three and a half years before His return, when the Antichrist will officially abolish all religions other than worship of himself and will persecute believers of all faiths. This will spark rebellions against his regime, which he will brutally attempt to suppress.

Obviously some things need to happen before these prophecies can be fulfilled.

The Jews have not sacrificed animals to God since their Temple was last destroyed in 70 A.D., and the only place where they would consider resuming sacrificial worship is on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—the site now occupied by the Muslims' Dome of the Rock.

Before the Antichrist can take away the daily sacrifices, sacrifices must resume. Before the sacrifices can resume, there must be a Jewish Temple. For the Temple to be rebuilt, something has got to give. Either

seem to get better. Apparently the Antichrist will also make Jerusalem the capital of his one-world government, because the Bible says that eventually he will run things from the Jewish Temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

"But in the middle of the week [seven years] he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering" (Daniel 9:27). Then, in that holy place, the Temple area, the world government will erect some kind of "living" image of the Antichrist (possibly a computer of some sort), the abomination of desolation,



By Joseph Candel

the Dome of the Rock must come down, or the Jews must agree to rebuild their Temple elsewhere—possibly on another part of the Temple Mount. With both sides refusing to budge on the issue of sovereignty over the Temple Mount, it would take a superman to broker a deal.

Enter the Antichrist

"This king [the Antichrist] will make a seven-year treaty with the people, but after half that time, he will break his pledge and stop the Jews from all their sacrifices and their offerings" (Daniel 9:27 TLB).

This seven-year treaty is referred to again in Daniel 11:28–31—the same passage that Jesus referred to—as a "holy covenant" because it has to do with religion. It will most likely be a pact between the Antichrist, the Jews, the Muslims, and the Christians by which Jerusalem is declared an international city, with free and equal access guaranteed to people of all faiths.

The Jews will finally be able to rebuild their Temple and reinstate sacrificial worship, and for three and a half years things will

and demand that the whole world worship the image or be killed (Revelation 13:14–15).

"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [the Second Coming of Jesus Christ] will not come unless ... the man of sin [the Antichrist] is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

The long-term forecast

The world situation—particularly in the Middle East—is going to continue to get worse until the Covenant is signed. Then things are going to appear to get better for a while under the false messiah, the Antichrist. Then things will get *much* worse during the Great Tribulation. But after the Tribulation, when Jesus returns to rescue His own and whisk them off to Heaven, things are going to be the best ever for those who have received Him as their Savior! That's what we will need to hold on to as things get worse—the promised happy ending! •

Cameras everywhere, national ID cards, global positioning satellites (GPS), microchips implanted under the skin. The latest sci-fi?—No, just topics that now routinely appear in the news. In fact, many of them are no longer news. One particular development, however, warrants keeping an eye on.

The VeriChip, unveiled by Florida-based Applied Digital Solutions (ADS) in December 2001, is being hailed as the first workable microchip implant for humans.

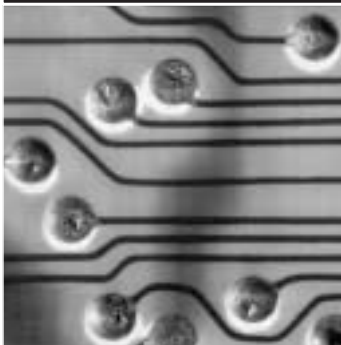
The chip is designed to carry a unique ID number and other personal data (up to 128 characters, or about 40 words), and acts like a personal bar code. About the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen, it is syringe-injectable. Once injected, an external scanner can activate the chip. By means of radio signals, the chip can then transmit the ID number and other stored information to a telephone, the Internet, or a data-storage site. The chip is similar to those implanted in about a million dogs and cats to enable owners to identify and reclaim lost pets. Already being test-marketed in some parts of the world, VeriChip comes with a handheld scanner and an injection kit.

VeriChip is stirring the public's imagination. Reactions range from teenagers who think the device is cool and can't wait to get chipped, to civil liberties advocates who worry that the device will someday come under the control of Big Brother.

ADS calls the chip a potential lifesaver for Alzheimer's patients who may get lost, and a godsend for emergency room medical personnel because it would provide instant

666 WATCH

By Joseph Candel



More on Human Chip Implants

foolproof identification and basic medical information for patients who are unconscious or in shock.

Peace of mind through enhanced personal security and safety is ADS's main selling point. In South America, for example, the chip is being promoted as a way to identify and track kidnap victims. For that market, the chip is being bundled with ADS's personal GPS device, Digital Angel. Other possible law enforcement uses include tracking parolees, people under house arrest, and individuals in witness protection programs.

Proponents tout Digital Angel as "an interface between the human and electronic networks." The microchip would last the bearer's lifetime, and recent ADS statements say the VeriChip is superior to biometric technologies because it is implanted and therefore virtually tamper-proof.

Let him who has
understanding
calculate the
number of the
Beast, for it
is the number
of a man: His
number is 666
(Revelation 13:18).

Critics of the chip express concerns over the specter of people being injected with the chip against their will, perhaps surreptitiously in conjunction with routine vaccinations. In addition, they are concerned about the possibility of such chips eventually being mandated by the government as a form of ID.

ADS CEO Richard Sullivan said he can see the chips being used in children, the elderly, prisoners, and by employers at facilities such as airports and nuclear plants. “Society in general could also use them instead of ATM or credit cards,” he added. Others in favor of human chip implants say they have nothing to hide, so wouldn’t mind having the chip for ID purposes. They already have an ID card, they argue, so why not a chip?

All of this is sounding more and more like the following prophecy from the Bible’s book of Revelation: “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads [the King James Version of the Bible renders this “*in* the right hand, or *in* the forehead”—not on], and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast [the Antichrist], or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666” (Revelation 13:16–18).

Regardless of who may be behind all the media attention being given the VeriChip—be it sinister spiritual forces preparing the way for the Antichrist or capitalists eager to create a new billion-dollar industry or both—the goal is the same: to get people used to the idea, so they

will buy it. This is standard advertising strategy. The more people see or hear a product being promoted, the more appealing it becomes. Eventually they are convinced they need it.

This side effect is just as predictable: As more and more people accept human microchip implants, objections from those who can see what it’s all leading to will be first discredited and then denounced as the irrational hysterics of society’s paranoid fringe elements.

While the VeriChip may not be the Antichrist’s “mark of the Beast,” it is a giant step in that direction.

Proponents say human chipping can make identification more secure, guarantee proper healthcare, reduce crime, expedite financial exchanges, and simplify everyday life. And these claims are probably true.

But there is more to it than that—or *will* be. The coming mark of the Beast will have spiritual ramifications as well as practical ones. “If anyone worships the Beast [Antichrist] and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead, or on his hand, he himself shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God” (Revelation 14:9–10). Receiving the mark of the Beast will not be merely an economic decision, but will also signify acceptance and worship of the Satan-possessed Antichrist and allegiance to his anti-God global regime. This is what the future of chipping holds, and what most of its advocates don’t realize or choose to ignore.

Will you refuse to accept the coming mark of the Beast because you belong to Jesus? The time to get ready for these events is now, and the way to get ready is by receiving Jesus as your Savior. •

TEN HORNS

EUROPE'S ROLE IN THE ENDTIME

By Joseph Candel

Ken and I had talked many times about Bible prophecy, so when Ken's old friend Dan had some questions Ken couldn't answer, Ken arranged for the three of us to meet.

It turned out that Dan, who is a Buddhist, had picked up a Gideon's Bible in a hotel room out of curiosity and came across a couple of mystifying passages in the Bible's final book, the book of Revelation.

Dan said he could see by world events that we were getting close to the end of the world. He had heard a little about the rise of the Antichrist and the coming one-world government, and wanted to know how that fit in with what he'd read. Specifically, he wanted to know what the "seven heads" and "ten horns"

mentioned in Revelation chapters 13 and 17 meant.

So we read parts of those two chapters, and this is how I explained them to him:

"I [John the Apostle] stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea"—the sea of humanity—"having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name" (Revelation 13:1).

If you read the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel, which was written about 700 years earlier, you'll again see this great beast in its other various forms. The beast represents various world empires.

In Revelation chapter 17, verses 9 and 10, we learn that the seven heads are seven kings or kingdoms. "Five have fallen"—when John wrote this in 90 A.D., five great empires centered in the Mideast, the empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece, had come and gone—"one is"—the Roman Empire was in power when John wrote this—"and the other"—the Antichrist's final world empire—"has not yet come." "And when he comes, he must continue a short time"—the Antichrist's seven-year reign. So these seven heads are six previous world empires, plus the Antichrist's empire that is rising *now*, but not yet in place.

"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour"—a very short time—"as kings with the

beast” (Revelation 17:12). Because these ten kings or powers had “received no kingdom as yet” during John’s day, the time of the sixth head, the Roman Empire, it is obvious that these ten horns are all on the seventh and final head, the Antichrist. “These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast” (Revelation 17:13).

These ten powers who help put the Antichrist in power and cooperate with him are described in further detail in Daniel 2:34, 41–43 and Daniel 7:7–8, 20–24. In Daniel 7:7, the ten-horned Antichrist kingdom grows out of the Roman beast. This seems to indicate that these ten kings, nations, or powers of the Endtime Antichrist Empire will come from the remains of the ancient Roman Empire, which ruled much of modern-day Europe. If this interpretation is correct, the European Union (EU) could have quite an important role to play in the Endtime.

For the first time since Rome united Europe under its power, Europe is coming together. In fact, Romano Prodi of Italy, the President of the European Commission, declared to the EU’s economic and social committee in 1999: “For the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire we are uniting Europe, and not by force of arms but on the basis of shared ideals and agreed common rules.”¹ For the first time since the Roman Empire, much of Europe now has adopted a common

currency, the euro, and is also moving forward to unite politically and militarily.

As Europe has become more united, so has the rest of the world. It has not yet been a political uniting, but rather a technological one. Distances have dissolved with the growth of telecommunications; the widespread use of the Internet; and the ease, rapidity, and low cost of travel. With the linking of many economies, financial barriers have also broken down, so that what happens in one corner of the world has a great effect on other parts.

The Antichrist will have much of the world under his control, but it appears likely that Europe will be his primary stronghold and that the “ten horns” will be the European nations that will cooperate with him the most.

“But the good news,” I explained to Dan, “is that at the end of the Antichrist’s seven-year reign, Jesus Christ will return ‘on the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory’ to rescue all His saved children, put a stop to the Antichrist’s evil empire, and set up His own kingdom on earth, where there will be righteousness and peace and plenty for all (Matthew 24:29–31; Revelation 14:14–16; 19:6–9, 11–21; 20:1–4). Your best preparation for these soon-coming events is to be on the side of the final victor, Jesus!”•

¹*The Sunday Times* [London], May 13, 2001.

FOR THE
FIRST TIME
SINCE ROME
UNITED
EUROPE
UNDER ITS
POWER,
EUROPE
IS COMING
TOGETHER.



the heavenly city and new the earth

Compiled from

the writings of David Brandt Berg

by Joseph Candel

As the world scene continues to grow darker, it's more important than ever to keep our minds on the happy ending. Yes, things *are* going to get worse before they get better, but what matters most is that they are going to get better—much better! The darkest night this world has ever known will be followed by the most glorious sunrise. Then at last God's kingdom will reign supreme, eternally.

During the three-and-a-half-year period known as the Great Tribulation, the soon-coming world dictator, the Antichrist, will persecute believers of all faiths. But at the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus will return “on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” and rescue His people and gather them to be with Him (Matthew 24:29–31).

All of God's saved children who have died through the ages will be miraculously resurrected and ascend to meet Jesus in the air. Then the saved that are still alive on earth will

also be instantly transformed and join them. Jesus will rescue His people from their anti-Christ persecutors and whisk them away to the grandest victory celebration that has ever been held, the marriage supper of the Lamb in Heaven (Revelation 14:14–16; 19:6–9).

Meanwhile, the horrific wrath of God will be poured out upon the Antichrist and his followers (Revelation 14:8–11, 17–20; 15:1, 7–8; 16:1–11).

The superhuman hosts of Heaven, led by Jesus, will then return to completely defeat and destroy the Antichrist and his forces in the cataclysmic battle known as Armageddon. This will mark the end of man's cruel rule, as Jesus Christ and His forces take over the world and rule in righteousness.

For the next one thousand years—a period known as the Millennium—there will be peace, plenty, and paradise on earth (Revelation 19:11–21; 20:1–6).

Then, at the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released from prison in the heart of the earth, where he has been held for those thousand years. He will be given his freedom just long enough to deceive the nations again, and the unconverted will join Satan and rebel against God's kingdom on earth. God will once again defeat the Devil and his followers—this time at a battle even more cataclysmic than Armageddon, the Battle of Gog and Magog—and will completely purge and purify the surface of the earth with a flood of fire (2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 20:7–9; 21:1).

After the Battle of Gog and Magog, God will rebuild a new world on the ashes of the old—"a new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13). It will be the same planet, but with a beautifully renewed surface. God is going to re-create the entire surface of the earth like a beautiful new Garden of Eden.

Then His great heavenly city will come down out of space to land on that beautiful new earth, and God is going to come down and live with us, and we with Him (Revelation 21:2–3).

It will be such a literal down-to-earth Heaven that Revelation chapters 21 and 22 describe it in detail—right down to the city's exact measurements, colors, materials, and more! It will be the grandest city ever built—far beyond the wildest dreams of man—covering an area of about 2.25 million square miles (about 5.83 million square kilometers), or large enough to cover most of Australia, over half of Europe or the United States, or one-fourth of Africa (Revelation 21:16).

"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb [Jesus] is its light" (Revelation 21:23). The sun and moon will continue to shine for the benefit of those outside the city, but those inside won't need them because the city will have its own light—the light of God, His Son, Jesus.

The entire city will be made of "pure gold, like clear glass" (Revelation 21:18). Imagine!

There will be a beautiful river of the water of life, flowing out of the throne of God and through the center of the city. Both sides of the river will be lined with trees of life that bear twelve kinds of fruit continuously, and the "leaves are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2). The resurrected saints in their supernatural bodies aren't going to need healing, so it's obvious that this healing is for the people and nations outside the city.

Another major difference in the new earth is that "there will be no more sea" (Revelation 21:1). Today most of the earth is covered by water, so when God remakes the earth's surface and the seas are gone, there will be four or five times as much land for all the people outside the heavenly city to live on and enjoy.

It will be a whole new earth, a whole new creation, with peaceful, friendly animals and birds and all the beautiful creations of God that are with us now. But there will be none of the harmful insects and pests and thorns and thistles we have now (Isaiah 11:6–9; 55:13). The whole creation will be just like God had planned for it to be in the beginning, like it was in the Garden of Eden. What a wonderful world it will be, with no more sin, war, destruction, death, sickness, tears, or pain!

And that's not all! "In My Father's House," Jesus said, "are many mansions. ... I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2–3). If you have received Jesus as your Savior, one of these days you're going to own a mansion that isn't going to cost you anything, because Jesus has already paid for it.

Are you ready for Heaven? Are you going to be able to walk the streets of that heavenly city? Only the saved shall walk therein (Revelation 21:24). You don't want to miss out on that, do you? All you have to do is receive Jesus as your Savior, if you haven't already! ■



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Coming Economic Crash

By Joseph Candel

A sudden
and drastic
downturn in
one major
financial
market could
create a
worldwide
panic.

Many analysts and respected economists warn that a devastating worldwide economic crash is coming. Although not specifically predicted in the Bible, such an event is in line with key prophecies regarding the Endtime and would almost certainly hasten their fulfillment—particularly the rise of the world dictator known as the Antichrist and the implementation of his universal credit system, the mark of the Beast (“666”).

Modern economies are built largely on faith. People have faith in their currencies, but it is misplaced faith. They don't realize that their currencies are not backed by any substantial amount of physical assets, such as gold or silver, and are issued by governments that are often deep in debt. When people do lose faith in their currency, its value plummets, stocks slump, and their country's entire economy crashes.

In this era of Internet trading and globally linked economies and stock markets, a sudden and drastic downturn in one major financial market could create a worldwide

panic that would send the global economy tumbling down like a house of cards.

In one possible scenario, if the American economy were to fail because of some international crisis like a major war in the Middle East or a severe oil shortage, the rest of the world could rapidly lose faith in the U.S. dollar. The dollar and other dollar-based currencies and international stocks would lose much of their value and, as a result, banks and financial markets worldwide would likely fail. Such an economic crash would also most likely lead to widespread political and civil chaos.

Another major factor is the international debt crisis. Nearly every nation in the world has been enticed by powerful international financiers, working through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to take out huge loans at interest rates that make it impossible for them to ever pay off their debts.

Why do you suppose the World Bank, the IMF, or anyone else would give out billions in

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Antichrist
as the
savior of
the world
when he
“rescues”
them
from the
economic
ruin he led
them into.

loans that they know can never be repaid?—Because when nations fall into bankruptcy and default on their loans, the lenders gain control of their economies. As the Bible says, “The borrower is servant to the lender” (Proverbs 22:7). That’s the real reason the international financiers loaned those countries the money in the first place, to gain control!

The World Bank and IMF are now dictating the economic and other internal policies of these nations—their governments, their industries, their banks, virtually everything. They are running these governments by proxy through financial pressure. Just look at the economic problems that have plagued Argentina and other countries in recent years and you can see where all of this is leading.

The world’s present economic woes are not accidental or merely the result of “basic market forces at work,” as we so often hear in the news. Through manipulation of the world’s money—cleverly choreographed crashes followed by temporary rebounds and more severe crashes—more and more of the world’s money is making its way into the hands of a few, while more nations are being pushed toward bankruptcy and forced to surrender control of their economies in return for foreign loans.

As time goes on and the situation worsens, there will be even more economic instability in the money markets of the world and unprecedented ups and downs in the major economies. When that happens, people are going to look for a savior. Paul Henri Spaak, first president of the General Assembly

of the United Nations, once said, “What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people and to lift us out of the economic morass into which we are sinking. Send us such a man and whether he be God or devil, we will receive him.”¹ And that’s exactly what the world is going to do!

The people of the world will look for a financial superman to bring stability and prosperity, and when the Antichrist comes on the world scene and appears to do just that, they will hail him as a hero and welcome his rule and new economic system. He will “rescue” them from the economic ruin he led them into, and his plan will have succeeded—for a time.

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The time to get ready for these soon-coming events is now, and the best place to start is by receiving Jesus as your Savior, if you haven’t already. Then learn to stay connected to Jesus in prayer so He can guide you and provide for you in the troublous times to come. Study what the Bible has to say about the coming Antichrist world dictatorship and other Endtime events so you won’t be caught by surprise when they happen, or duped into following the Antichrist. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Jesus has promised, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ... I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe” (John 14:27,29).

¹ Cartledge, D. n.d. Eschatology, p.132. Rhema Bible College, Townsville.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

BY JOSEPH CANDEL

Endtime Bible Prophecy



*The four
horsemen
of the
Apocalypse
set the stage
for what is
soon to come.*



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY WE HAVE WAR, or why there is such a disparity of wealth—why some people and whole nations are rich and overfed while others are starving and deprived of other basic necessities? Why do governments spend billions on wars that kill and maim while the poor continue to suffer?

I used to wonder why the world is the way it is, why there couldn't be more love and peace and cooperation among people and nations to make the world a better place. I found the answer to that in the Bible, beginning with Revelation chapter 6, about the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.

In Revelation chapter 6, Jesus opens the book of the future, the book of prophecy, which is sealed with seven seals, and shows the apostle John the future of the world from that time (about 90 AD) to the last days (the time in which we are now living) and beyond.

Another name for the book of Revelation is the Apocalypse, which means "a revelation concerning the future." The four horsemen of the Apocalypse reveal the truth about religion, war, and economics, and set the stage for what is soon to come.

The first seal

And I saw when the Lamb [Jesus] opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, "Come and see." And I saw, and behold, a white horse: and He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto Him: and He went forth conquering, and to conquer. (Revelation 6:1–2 KJV.)

The first horseman, who wears a crown and goes forth to conquer, is obviously Jesus. What was happening at this time in world history, in about 90 AD?—From the spiritual realm, the resur-

rected Jesus was going forth to "conquer" the world with the Gospel through His apostles and the early Christians—and they would eventually conquer the mighty Roman Empire. Jesus' message of the love and forgiveness of God would prove more powerful than all the legions of Rome! Jesus is this mighty Conqueror on the white horse.

We find another picture of a white horse in Revelation chapter 19: "And behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. ... His name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:11,13 KJV).

We know from John 1:14 that "The Word of God" is Jesus: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

And following Jesus are the armies of Heaven, the resurrected saints who are also riding white horses as they come down from Heaven to defeat the forces of the Antichrist and take over the world at the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:14).

The second seal

And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, "Come and see." And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. (Revelation 6:3–4 KJV.)

What takes "peace from the earth"?—War! This red horse symbolizes war, the military and their war machines.

The horse's color, red, is appropriate because it represents all the blood shed in man's hellish wars—wars for which God is not responsible, but which come from the pride, prejudices, and avarice of

man's heart. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James 4:1 KJV).

The "great sword" given to the rider of the red horse seems to suggest the great "improvements" in weapons of war and the vastly greater devastation bought on by war since this prophecy was given in John's day.

The third seal

And when He had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, "Come and see." And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, "A measure of wheat for a penny; and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." (Revelation 6:5–6 KJV.)

This black horse's rider with the pair of balances in his hand symbolizes the rich capitalists that have a major impact on world conditions through their manipulation of national economies. Only one other verse in the Bible pictures a man with balances, or scales: "The merchant uses dishonest scales; he loves to defraud" (Hosea 12:7 NIV).

Another prophet, Amos, also said that the merchants—the wealthy capitalists of his day who were robbing the poor instead of helping them—"set forth wheat, making the ephah [unit of measure] small, and the shekel [price] great, and falsifying the balances by deceit ... that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail" (Amos 8:4–6 KJV).

The black horse, then, represents famine and poverty perpetrated by the rich who refuse to share with those in need. This horse is largely responsible for today's economic situation. Oil and wine,

throughout the Scriptures, symbolize abundance or luxury. The fact that the oil and wine were "hurt not" indicates a situation where wealth and luxury exist alongside famine and poverty—and the gulf between rich and poor is only growing.

The fourth seal

And when He had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:7–8 KJV.)

The fourth and final horseman of the Apocalypse is death itself—death not only from war, but also from beasts and plagues and famine and death in every other conceivable form.

Death has always been with us, of course, but death by famine, natural disasters, new plagues such as AIDS, and new pestilences such as the Ebola virus have reached unprecedented levels, just like Jesus said they would immediately prior to His return: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places" (Matthew 24:7).

The fifth seal

And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was

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said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Revelation 6:9–11 KJV.)

First comes the white horse, the proclamation of its rider's message, and the "conquest" of many souls. Then comes the open rejection of that message by the unbelievers, those in league with the other three horsemen on the red, black, and pale horses, which crystallizes into persecution and the martyrdom of "them that were slain for the Word of God." This is the way it's been all throughout history. These martyrs, though, are actually the exception. Most of Jesus' followers have usually escaped martyrdom and lived on to help carry on His work.

War, greed, and death—the characters that were revealed when the second, third, and fourth seals were opened—are almost as old as the world itself, but the Biblical picture both here and elsewhere is that each of these forces has taken on greater power since the time of this revelation.

Again, Jesus predicted this in His famous Endtime discourse, Matthew chapter 24, and said that it would culminate in "great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:7, 21–22).

In other words, Jesus was saying, one day man would reach such an impasse that if God were to let him continue unchecked, he would annihilate himself. However, when man finally reaches that suicidal point, Jesus said that God would step in and stop man. And the way God will stop him is by Jesus' Second Coming,

when He returns to punish the evildoers, take over the world, and set up His righteous rule (Matthew 24:29–30; Isaiah 9:7; Jeremiah 23:5; Revelation 19:11–21).

Only within the last 50 or 60 years has the human race developed the potential to destroy itself. The military (red horse) now have their nuclear bombs, intercontinental missiles, chemical and biological weapons, and other lethal technologies.

The rich, on their black horse, were complicit in the last century's great wars, and their hoarding and misuse of their riches is threatening another one. The rich also, in their relentless pursuit of greater wealth, are finally succeeding in polluting the entire earth—a byproduct of modern technology.

And following the others comes the fourth horseman, on the pale horse—death in every form.

So there you have the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. They will continue to ride until the End, when Jesus returns to take us to heavenly places with Him, before pouring out His judgments on the perpetrators of the hell on earth below. Then He will come back once more—He and all the saints of God—to wipe out the Antichrist and all of his forces at the Battle of Armageddon. God will then cleanse and purify the earth and set up His eternal kingdom, ruled by Jesus Christ.

Which horse are you putting your money on? Bet on the sure winner—receive Jesus now! Then you will be sure to follow Him on a white horse of your own one day when He returns to right all wrongs. Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Follow Him, and "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). □

The Bible not only tells us about yesterday, it also tells us about tomorrow. It is full of thousands of detailed prophecies that describe specific people, places, times, situations, and events. Many of these prophecies are about the final period of man's kingdoms on earth, a period known as the Endtime—the time in which we are now living.

14 major points of the endtime

1. Signs of the times

The Bible gives us numerous “signs of the times,” signs and signals that we are to watch for so we can know exactly *how* close we are to Jesus’ return. These signs include drastic upsurges in the number and severity of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes (Matthew 24:7); the Gospel being preached in all the world (Matthew 24:14); dramatic increases in international travel and scientific knowledge (Daniel 12:4); a great “falling away” from the true God as “evil men and seducers grow worse and worse” and deceive many (2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Timothy 3:13 KJV); unprecedented selfishness and lack of natural affection (Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1–4). All this results in “distress of nations,” with “men’s hearts failing them from fear” (Luke 21:25–26)—signs that are all obviously being fulfilled today more than ever before.

2. Rise of the Antichrist

One of the most important signs of the Endtime is the rise of a totally godless anti-Christ world government led by a demonic dictator who will actually be fully possessed by Satan himself, the world leader known as the Antichrist. In desperation, the world will turn to this political superman, hoping that he will be able to solve pressing problems, cure economic ills, unite international politics, end religious squabbles, and defuse the nuclear time bomb (Daniel 8:23–25; 11:21,24; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

3. Signing of the covenant

The Antichrist will sign a seven-year covenant, or agreement, by which he will bring a measure of world peace by reconciling the world’s major religions (Daniel 9:27a). Through this cov-

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BERG >>

enant he will also somehow settle the current crisis in the Middle East by working out a compromise between the Arabs and the Jews, enabling the Jews to rebuild their Temple and resume their religious animal sacrifices (Daniel 8:11; 9: 27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4).

During the first half of the Antichrist's seven-year reign, people are going to think that he is wonderful because he will have brought some peace, restored the world's economy, redistributed the wealth, helped the poor, solved the Middle East crisis, and promised religious liberty (Daniel 11:21–24,39).

4. Breaking of the covenant

But suddenly, halfway through his seven-year reign, the Antichrist will break the covenant (Daniel 9:27b), invade Israel from the north (Daniel 11:28–31), abolish all traditional religious worship (Revelation 13: 7–8), declare that he himself is God (2 Thessalonians 2:4), and demand that all the world worship him and his “image,” which could be some kind of computerized robot.

The Tribulation will be like the last days of the children of Israel in Egypt, before Moses led them out.

The false prophet—the Antichrist's chief aide, who deceives the world—will make this image to the Antichrist (Revelation 13:11–14) and place it at the site of the rebuilt Jewish Temple (Daniel 11:31). This

image, which the prophet Daniel referred to as the “abomination of desolation,” will “speak” and somehow have power to cause those who refuse to worship it to be killed (Revelation 13:14–15). Jesus said that when we see this abomination of desolation standing at the Temple, we will know that the last three and a half years of man's rule on earth has begun—a time of “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:15,21).

5. Great tribulation

During this final three-and a-half-year period, the Antichrist will enact a mandatory one-world credit system, creating a cashless society. The Antichrist government will use this new credit system to try to force everybody to submit to and worship the Antichrist, because no one will be able to buy or sell without a personal credit number, the “mark of the Beast,” in their hands or foreheads (Revelation 13:16–18). But God's children and many others will refuse to worship the Antichrist or receive his mark, and the Lord will take care of them (Revelation 12:6,14).

While the Antichrist and his followers are persecuting and trying to kill their enemies, God is going to let loose pestilences and plagues that will attack the followers of the Antichrist (Revelation chapter 8; 9:1–11; 11:3–6). The Tribulation will be like the last days of the children of Israel in Egypt, before Moses led them out. God's prophets will do mighty signs, wonders, and miracles to defend the Gospel and God's children, while God sends plague after plague on their enemies (Revelation 11:3,5–6).

A number of wars and the Antichrist's worldwide persecution of all who refuse to worship him

will make the Tribulation a time of trouble “such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). But the Bible also tells us in several places and in several corroborating ways exactly how long the Tribulation will last—three and a half years, or 42 months, or 1,260 days¹ from when the Antichrist sets up his image at the Temple. God revealed this to encourage us to

***Just when the Antichrist thinks
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hang on and keep going for Jesus during what will be a very difficult period for Christians (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 13:5; 12:6,14; 11:3).

During this time, “the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many” (Daniel 11:32–33). The people of the world are going to be more desperate for the truth than ever, and those who know God’s Word and are faithful witnesses for the Lord are going to teach and encourage millions. In spite of all that the Devil’s forces will do to try to stop them, millions of God’s children will keep going for God till the very end.

6. Nuclear war

At some point, possibly toward the end of the Great Tribulation or even after the Rapture (point 7), 10 “kings” will join forces with the Antichrist and together they will destroy

with fire “Babylon, the great whore” in a final judgment. From a number of Scriptures, this sounds like 10 of the leading nations of Europe (or perhaps “10 kings” refers to the European Community as a whole) will unite with Russia and turn on the United States in a nuclear first strike that will destroy her in “one hour” (Revelation 17:12–13,16–17; 18:2,7–8). How and when all of this will play out is still unclear, but as the time draws nearer, we will see exactly how these verses will be fulfilled.

7. The Rapture

At the end of the final three and a half years—“immediately after the tribulation of those days”—just when the Antichrist thinks he has the world in his grasp, Jesus will return to rescue all of His children out of this world. The Antichrist’s forces will be shocked as they, too, see the Lord coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:29–31; Revelation 1:7).

When Jesus returns, all of God’s saved children will be gloriously resurrected in what is known as the Rapture. The apostle Paul writes: “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet” (1 Corinthians 15:51–52). The graves of all the Christians who have already died will burst open and they will receive new supernatural bodies, like Jesus’ body after He was resurrected. “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). □

(To be continued.)

¹In those times, months were precisely 30 days, and years were exactly 360 days.

14

MAJOR points of the ENDTIME

AN OVERVIEW OF BIBLE PROPHECY – PART 2



Part 1 of this article covered the first seven major stages or events of the Endtime: 1) various signs of the times, as described in Matthew 24 and other passages; 2) the rise of the world dictator known as the “Antichrist”; 3) the signing of a “covenant” that will usher in a brief period of stability and signal the beginning of the Antichrist’s seven-year reign; 4) the breaking of that covenant three and a half years later; 5) a time of unprecedented trouble and suffering known as the “Great Tribulation”; 6) a nuclear war that will destroy “Babylon, the great whore” in one hour; 7) the “Rapture,” when Jesus returns at the end of the Great Tribulation to rescue His children out of this world.

8. Marriage supper

In the Rapture, Jesus has come back to catch His bride, His Church, out of the evil clutches of the Antichrist and to whisk her away to unite with Him and each other in the grandest, most glorious and thrilling wedding party that’s ever been held, the great marriage supper of the Lamb in Heaven, where the Lord will reward all His faithful children with beautiful, eternal “crowns of life” (Revelation 19:7–9; 2:10).

9. Wrath of God

After the Lord rescues and raptures His children to be with Him, the horrific vials of the great “wrath of God” will be poured upon the Antichrist and his evil forces still remaining on earth—the most horrible plagues the

world has ever known! God's angels of judgment are going to give the Antichrist and his forces what they deserve (Revelation 11:18; 14:9–10; 16:1–11).

10. The Battle of Armageddon

On a plain in what is now northern Israel, the Antichrist will lead his armies in this major campaign against those who still oppose him. But Jesus and His army of saints—all of His born-again and now resurrected children from throughout the ages—will return to earth on majestic white horses to utterly defeat and destroy the Antichrist and his evil forces in the apocalyptic Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12–16; 19:11–21).

11. The Millennium

The earth will be restored to a perfect, Garden-of-Eden state (Isaiah 11:6–9; 14:7; 65:25; Hosea 2:18), and Jesus and His saints will set up the kingdom of Heaven on earth (Daniel 2:44; 7:18,22,27; Revelation 5:10). The Devil will be bound and cast as a prisoner into the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1–3), and the world's unsaved inhabitants—those who survived the Battle of Armageddon—will be *forced* to do what's right. Then and only then, under the righteous rule of Jesus and the saints, will all wars cease. The world will at last be governed fairly and well with true justice, liberty, peace, plenty, and happiness for all

(Isaiah 2:4; Revelation 2:26; 20:4–6). This thousand-year period is known as the “Millennium.”

During the Millennium, the resurrected saints will have new supernatural bodies with amazing powers like Jesus had after His resurrection (Philippians 3:20–21; Luke 20:36)—invincibility; complete freedom from pain, sickness, and death; abilities such as being able to fly, appear and disappear, change their appearance, read minds, communicate with each other telepathically, and stop wrongdoers with as little as a thought or a glance (1 John 3:2; John 20:19,26; Luke 24:31; Acts 10:40–41).

Those on earth will still be in natural bodies, like the ones we have now, and will have none of the saints' supernatural powers, so they will be fairly easy to rule over with the love, wisdom, and power of Jesus and His personal leadership. Because everyone will *see* God's glorious power and kingdom, there won't be any unbelievers in the Millennium (Hebrews 8:11; Habakkuk 2:14). But sad to say, there will still be some *unreceivers*—those who won't yield or obey, but rather choose to stubbornly and defiantly rebel when they get the chance, at the end of the Millennium (Isaiah 26:10).

12. The Battle of Gog and Magog

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released for a “little season” from the bottomless pit where he has been imprisoned—just

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FROM THE WRITINGS
OF DAVID BRANDT
BERG

During the Millennium, the resurrected saints will have new supernatural bodies with amazing powers like Jesus had after His resurrection.

long enough for him to deceive those unconverted rebels who will again follow Satan to the full, in open rebellion against the Lord and His government.

This rebellion will result in the catastrophic Battle of Gog and Magog, in which God will send down fire to devour them completely. In fact, it is such a horrible fire that it will completely burn up the surface of the planet, and the atmospheric heavens will roll back like a scroll and depart with a great noise (Revelation 6:14; 2 Peter 3:10). The entire surface of the planet will then be recreated into a beautiful new Earth with no more seas (though there will likely still be bodies of water), no more pollution, and no more Devil, for he will have been cast into “the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:7–10; 21:1).

13. The Great White Throne judgment

After the climactic Battle of Gog and Magog, the unsaved of all ages will be resurrected for the final Great White Throne judgment, where “the books are opened” and they will be given their final sentences according to their works and assigned to their places in the hereafter (Revelation 20:11–13). The worst and most cruel and wicked will be sent to Hell or Purgatory for punishment and purging, while those who tried to be good but were unsaved because they had not heard the Gospel, whose names will be found in the Book of Life, will be given a chance to receive Jesus and enjoy the marvelous new Earth (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4; 1 Peter 3:18–19).

14. The new Heaven and new Earth

God’s great heavenly city will then descend from above to the beautiful, re-created planet Earth, and God Himself will dwell *with* us, right here on earth (Revelation 21:1–3). The heavenly city will measure nearly 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers) long, 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high (Revelation 21:16).

The entire city is made of pure gold, like clear glass (Revelation 21:18), and through those transparent walls we will be able to see out onto a beautiful, fully restored and re-created earth, which will be populated by new nations who will truly have learned the righteousness, goodness, and love of God. And eventually, because of God’s mercy and justice, all punishment on earth and under the earth will end. Almost everyone who has ever lived will finally be reconciled to God and live either with the elect within the heavenly city or else outside the city. “For God is not willing that *any* should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). “Who desires *all* men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). “That at the name of Jesus *every* knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10–11).

Almost everyone who has ever lived will finally be reconciled to God and live either with the elect within the heavenly city or else outside the city.

Will you enjoy the Rapture, the wedding party, the millennial heaven-on-earth, and God’s eternal, heavenly city? Are you one of the *saved* who will be allowed to live in that great city? Receive Jesus as your Savior, if you haven’t already, and you’ll be granted instant, permanent citizenship to that great golden city and be given a foretaste of what Heaven and eternal life will be like, right here and now! ◇

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Playing God?—Facts and Thoughts on Human Cloning

BY JOSEPH CANDEL



REPORTS OF BREAKTHROUGHS in cloning are becoming more frequent in the news. Along with a sense of wonder at what science is now capable of, those reports also raise complex and troubling questions. Is cloning within acceptable moral and ethical bounds? Could the benefits ever outweigh the risks—the ends justify the means? How would cloning change what it means to be a human being? What does God think about all this?

Defining the cloning debate

The term “cloning” is widely used in science, and simply means making a copy of something. A scientist who makes a copy of a strand of DNA, for example, would describe that as cloning. There is nothing morally problematic about that. The

controversy is over the reproduction of advanced life forms through cloning, and especially research aimed at eventually cloning humans.

The cloning process

Cloning of humans would sidestep the traditional process of reproduction in which the male sperm fertilizes the female egg. Instead, it would create a person from an embryo by transplanting the DNA-containing nucleus of a cell from either a man or woman into a woman’s egg from which the nucleus has been removed. So instead of producing a child whose DNA makeup is a composite of his or her parents’, the clone’s DNA would be—at least in theory—an identical copy of the “original.” (In theory, because attempts to clone animals have so far shown a very high incidence of abnormalities.)

Cloning milestones to date

February 24, 1997: Scientists at Scotland’s Roslin Institute announce successful reproduction of a sheep named Dolly using DNA from a single adult sheep cell.

July 1997: The British scientists who made Dolly clone Polly the lamb, who carries human genes. They hope to clone herds of identical sheep that can produce human proteins for medical use.

December 1997: *Science* magazine proclaims the cloning of Dolly the leading scientific advance of the year.

February 2002: Japanese researchers who cloned a dozen mice report that virtually all the animals died early, casting doubts on the safety of cloning. The same month, scientists report that cloned mice have become obese.

February 2002: Scientists at U.S. Texas A&M University say they cloned a house cat and present a two-month-old kitten they call cc, short for carbon copy.

May 2002: A U.S. fertility expert, Pan-ajiotis Zavos, tells a congressional panel that “2002 will be the year of the clones” and says he is working to clone a human later in the year. He urges Congress to keep cloning legal so it can be regulated.

February 14, 2003: Six-year-old Dolly is euthanized after suffering from advanced lung disease usually seen in animals twice her age.

What the headlines don’t tell us

Despite attention-grabbing headlines and photographs of Dolly the sheep and cloned cows, pigs, goats, and mice, a high percentage of animal clones are stillborn with monstrous abnormalities. Since cloned fetuses are commonly twice the size of normal ones, bloated mothers often have laborious miscarriages and occasionally die themselves. Most clones that survive at birth die before reaching maturity, or develop serious health problems later in life. (Dolly the sheep suffered from severe arthritis, which may or may not have been a result of her being a clone, and was euthanized in February 2003 due to progressive lung disease.) There’s no reason to believe that similar problems will not arise in the cloning of a human child.

Three biblical perspectives

Some things we don’t need to know. In the very beginning, Satan tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden, saying, “If you eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you will be like gods!” (Genesis 3:1–6). To this day, that is still one of Satan’s most frequent and effective temptations. Science is sitting at the foot of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, plucking fruit. The trouble is, some of that fruit is good and some is bad, some is beneficial and some is

diabolically harmful.

Just as the technological advances of the past few decades have brought us closer to the brink of self-destruction with “bigger and better” bombs, missiles, and other weapons of war, advances in the fields of genetic engineering and cloning are a two-edged sword: One edge promises better quality of life, but the other edge creates problems that neither science nor society is prepared to deal with.

Life and the Life-giver: “God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27). In essence, proponents of cloning want to usurp God’s role and become creators and gods themselves, making offspring in *their* own images. We were created to love and respect our Creator, not to attempt to be creators ourselves. Those who would clone other humans are meddling in God’s business, but without His power and love. To think that they can improve on His design or plan is the ultimate in arrogance and audacity.

“God formed man ... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7 KJV). Only God has the right to create a new human soul, and only God has the power to grant eternal life. Life comes only from the Life-giver, and eternal life comes only through receiving Jesus as our Savior, not through attempts to immortalize ourselves by duplicating ourselves (John 3:16; 1:12, Revelation 3:20).

The Endtime connection: The Bible says that “in the Last Days perilous times shall come,” and that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” ... “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1,13,7 KJV). Each advance in cloning science takes us one step closer to becoming little gods and another step away from the truth of God. ◇

Genetic engineering and cloning are a two-edged sword: One edge promises better quality of life, but the other edge creates problems that neither science nor society is prepared to deal with.

The **Four BEASTS** and the **Little Horn**

FULFILLED BIBLE PROPHECY PROVES that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. It also gives us faith that prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled will also happen, and exactly as the Bible says they will. That's why the book of Daniel is so important: It contains prophecies that have very clearly and specifically been fulfilled, as well as ones about momentous events that many Bible scholars and other Christians believe will come to pass in our lifetime.

As recorded in Daniel chapter 2, in 602 BC King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a dream of a great image, which the prophet Daniel interpreted to represent

succeeding world empires, from his day right through to when Jesus returns to establish His kingdom on earth.

Nearly 50 years later, in 553 BC, Daniel himself had a dream in which four of the same empires were represented, as well as the soon-coming Antichrist world government.

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and



Behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.

brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. (Daniel 7:1–8 KJV)

The four beasts in Daniel's dream represent the first four empires that were represented by the image King Nebuchadnezzar had seen in a dream years earlier, as recorded in Daniel chapter 2.

"Behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea" (v.2). The four winds represent spiritual forces through which God has the final say as to who rules over the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:25). In the Bible, the sea often symbolizes the sea of humanity (Luke 21:25; Revelation 17:15).

"And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another" (v.3). Throughout history, nations have adopted animals, birds, or other creatures as national emblems—the American eagle, the Russian bear, the Chinese dragon, the British lion, and so on. Remarkable, isn't it, how accurately those emblems often personify the nations associated with them!

"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings" (v.4). Babylon is symbolized in the Bible by both a lion (Jeremiah 4:7) and an eagle (Jeremiah 49:22). The winged lion was also a common motif in Babylonian art. The king of beasts and king of birds—a picture of strength and swiftness.

"The wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and

a man's heart was given to it" (v.4). The mighty beast is brought low and then redeemed. This represents Nebuchadnezzar's seven-year period of insanity, his humbling through that, and the positive change that took place in him as a result, as recorded in Daniel chapter 4.

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear" (v.5). A bear is slow, awkward, and lumbering, and depends on brute force, and that is how Persia became a dominant empire—by brute force and strength of numbers. Modern historians estimate that the combined land and naval force of Xerxes, the fourth king of the Persian Empire, was between 200,000 and 300,000 warriors—huge for the sixth century BC.

"It raised up itself on one side" (v.5). This signifies how the Persians, who were once dominated by the Medes, gained the upper hand in their union after Cyrus the Great ascended to the Persian throne in 550 BC.

"It had three ribs in the mouth" (v.5). The three ribs symbolize the three previous world empires: Egypt (c. 2100 BC to 1481 BC), Assyria (c. 1100 BC to 606 BC), and Babylon (606 BC to 538 BC).

"Lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads" (v.6). The leopard, which represents the Greek Empire here, is the most agile of wild beasts and extremely fierce. Its four wings denote the swiftness with which Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia and the leader of the Greeks, conquered the Persian Empire. In eight years the Greeks marched and conquered from Greece to India. Its four heads represent the division of Alexander's empire after his sudden death from a fever in 323 BC, at age 32 and the height of his power (Daniel 8:1–8, 20–22; 11:1–4).

"Behold a fourth beast, dreadful and

terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns" (v.7). Babylon, Persia, Greece, and other empires had conquered and ruled by might, but the world had never seen anything like the Roman Empire!

We can tell from looking at history that Daniel correctly predicted the next three empires that would follow Babylon, the empire in power at the time of this dream. So what did God reveal to Daniel about *our* future?

"I considered the [ten] horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (v.8). This "little horn" with "eyes like a man" and "mouth speaking great things" is the soon-coming world dictator known as the Antichrist, the Devil incarnate (also called "the Beast" in Revelation chapter 13).

Verse 17 begins the interpretation: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings [representing kingdoms], which shall arise out of the earth."

"Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast ... and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows" (v.19–20). Here we are told more characteristics of the Antichrist, so we will recognize him when he comes on the world scene.

"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth. ... And the ten

horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise" (v.23–24). The 10 horns representing 10 kings also appear in the book of Revelation, in connection with the Antichrist (Revelation 17:12–13). One possible interpretation is that they are nations or powers of the Antichrist's Endtime empire that will come from the remains of the ancient Roman Empire, since the 10-horned Antichrist kingdom grows out of the Roman beast (Daniel 7:7) that ruled much of modern-day Europe. If this interpretation is correct, the European Union (EU) could fulfill the prophecy of the "ten horns" and play an important role in the Endtime.

"And another shall rise after them ... and he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws ... and they shall be given into his hand [for three and a half years]" (v.24–25). Again, this is a picture of the Antichrist's tyrannical rule. He will come to power "peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21 KJV), but halfway through his seven-year rule he will manifest his true evil character (Daniel 9:27) and persecute all those who oppose him. This three-and-a-half-year period is known as the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:15,21; Daniel 7:21; 11:31; Revelation 13:5–7).

But the Antichrist will fail in the end because Jesus will return and "the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom [after the Battle of Armageddon], and possess the kingdom for ever" (v.18). The happy ending!

This "little horn" with "eyes like a man" and "mouth speaking great things" is the soon-coming world dictator known as the Antichrist, the Devil incarnate.

Are you in tune with the times? Will you recognize the signs of the rise of the Antichrist and his tyrannical one-world government? Will you be prepared? If not, receive Jesus now and study His Word!

SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH, in 1949, George Orwell wrote his final work, the classic *1984*. It painted a picture of a chilling future in which the world had fallen under the rule of three great totalitarian governments. The government that controlled what had been Britain, and the United States was called Oceania and was ruled by Big Brother. In Oceania, the state was all important

being actualized. Poor Orwell! If he were to walk into the world today and see what it's like, he would probably die of fright. In his day it was all science fiction. Now it's reality—and one that's not going to go away.

In fact, one of the most alarming signs of the times is that people are no longer alarmed by the fact that their every move can be monitored and recorded. Someone can read



ENDTIME INSIGHTS

The Surveillance Society

BY JOSEPH CANDEL

and to be served with unthinkable loyalty. To achieve that end, its citizens had been divested of all privacy. Without privacy, there was no freedom.

News, books, plays, movies—everything was censored. History was rewritten to suit current propaganda needs. “Thought police” monitored behavior patterns to detect possibly deviant attitudes. Invasive listening devices tuned in to the most intimate conversations.

Perhaps the most effective means of control was the two-way television that looked into every room at offices, factories, and homes. The individual was never free from the surveillance of Oceania’s security forces.

Prophetic as *1984* was, George Orwell could not have imagined how advanced surveillance technology would become. His novel is now

every unencrypted e-mail we send. Monitoring agencies, using geostationary satellites and other means, can tune in to every phone call we make. Every purchase we make with a credit or debit card is stored in a database someplace under our name, which is linked to our address. These networked databases know exactly where we are and, to some extent, what we are doing. By studying spending patterns, others can learn about our tastes and habits.

Computer chip implants are being used to monitor children, prisoners, pets, Alzheimer’s patients, and others. The surveillance cameras that line our streets and monitor stores, parking lots, and private homes are becoming a routine part of daily life the world over. On the Internet our activities can be recorded down to the last mouse click. Big Brother is *here*.

Big Brother has not only arrived, but he is already tightening his grip on the world. From Australia to India, Canada, South America, the U.S., and even Afghanistan, the infrastructure for a One World Government that keeps an eye on people “for their own good and the good of society” is being put in place. Today’s surveillance tools are paving the way for the most monitored society imaginable.

It’s all about control. The Bible predicts that a One WorLd Government is coming, led by a Devil-possessed dictator known in the Bible as the Antichrist or the Beast (Daniel 11:21, 23–24; 8:23–25; Revelation 13:7). To rule the world, the Antichrist must first be able to control the people, and how can he control the people unless he knows what they’re doing?

As incredible as all of these technological advances are and as thought provoking as they may be to those who have read about Big Brother, we really shouldn’t be surprised. The Bible predicted just such a system more than 2,000 years ago.

“And he [the Antichrist’s chief aide, referred to in the Bible as the “false prophet” who “deceives the world”] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [in] their right hand or on [in] their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast [the Antichrist], or the number of his name. ... His number is 666” (Revelation 13:16–18).

Under this 666 system, no one on earth will be allowed to buy or sell anything unless he or she receives a mark in the forehead or right hand.

Technology is rapidly reaching the point where the coming Mark of the Beast 666 electronic credit system can take over.

Other changes are also taking place in the world that will facilitate the Antichrist’s rise to power. Jesus said that during the period of the Antichrist’s rise to power and seven-year rule, “lawlessness will abound, [and] the love of many will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12). The Bible also tells us that in those days “evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse” (2 Timothy 3:13). Who will “save” the world from the economic collapse, horrible wars, terrorism, etc.?—The Antichrist, of course.

With all this technology in the hands of increasingly ungodly men, the world is playing directly into the hands of the Antichrist and his authoritarian One World Government that promises “technology and security for all”—but surveillance and control as well, including oppression by brute force of those who step out of line and all-out war against those who refuse to bow down and worship him as God (Revelation 13:5–7, 14–18; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

The immediate future is not very bright, but to be forewarned is to be forearmed and ready to resist the Antichrist and his mark. And the not-too-distant future will be brighter than ever when Jesus returns (Matthew 24:29–31). Then we will enjoy the dawn of a wonderful new world, where the lion will lie down with the lamb and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:6–9). •

*Everything
is falling
into place
for the
New World
Order to
take off,
and it’s
happening
fast.*

The 70 Weeks of Daniel—Part 1

BY JOSEPH CANDEL

The ninth chapter of the book of Daniel contains one of the most outstanding prophecies in the Bible, as it deals with both the first and second comings of Jesus Christ.

The chapter opens with Daniel praying fervently on behalf of his people, the Israelites, who at that time (about 538 BC) were relocated captives of the Persian Empire. The archangel Gabriel appears and informs Daniel that he has come to give Daniel “skill and understanding.” Then Gabriel tells Daniel to “understand the matter, and consider the vision.”

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up [fulfill] vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy [Jesus] (Daniel 9:24).

The Hebrew word translated “weeks” in the King James Bible and some other versions is *shabuwa*, which literally means “seven.” *Strong’s Greek/Hebrew Dictionary* gives this definition: “literal, sevened, i.e. a week (specifically, of years).” So these 70 weeks are actually 70 times 7 years. Some modern versions of the Bible state this “70 weeks” in simplest terms: 490 years. As we read the rest of the prophecy and understand its fulfillment, it becomes obvious that “7 years” is the correct interpretation of “week” in this passage.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build

Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince [Jesus], there shall be seven weeks [49 years] and sixty-two weeks [434 years]; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself” (Daniel 9:25–26a).

Eighty-five years after Daniel received this prophecy, in 453 BC, Artaxerxes I Longimanus, king of Persia, gave his trusted Jewish servant Nehemiah permission to go to Judah to restore the fortunes of his people. Artaxerxes appointed Nehemiah governor of the province and gave him authority to rebuild the city walls (Nehemiah 2:1–9). This was the “command to restore and build Jerusalem.” Several other proclamations were made by Persian kings to release the Jews from captivity and let them return to Israel to rebuild the temple, but the principal proclamation to rebuild the city of Jerusalem itself was made by Artaxerxes I in 453 BC.

According to the prophecy, from the time of that proclamation until the Messiah would be “cut off” would be 69 times 7 years, or 483 years. Counting from 453 BC, this brings us to 30 AD—the exact year that Jesus Christ was crucified!

It is also significant that the total number of years is given in two figures: 7 “weeks” (49 years) and 62 “weeks” (434 years) because it took 49 years to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and from the time that work was completed until Jesus was “cut off” was 434 years.

The prophet Isaiah, writing in



*Not one stone
shall be left
here upon
another*

about 700 BC, explains how it would be that the Messiah would be cut off [killed], but not for Himself: “For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. ... When You make His soul an offering for sin. ... My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53:8,10–11). Jesus died for us, to atone for the sins of the whole world, not because He Himself was guilty of any sin or crime.

Returning to Daniel’s revelation, the angel continues:

And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined (Daniel 9:26b).

Forty years after Jesus was crucified, in 70 AD, the Roman legions

under general (and future emperor) Titus—a “flood of ungodly men” (Psalm 18:4)—burned Jerusalem and took the Temple apart stone by stone to get the gold leaf that had melted and run into the cracks, just as Jesus had prophesied of the Temple in 30 AD: “Not one stone shall be left here upon another” (Matthew 24:1–2).

There seems to be a discrepancy, however, between the figures given in Daniel 9:24 (490 years) and the verse that immediately follows (483 years). Where are the missing 7 years?

One pivotal clause in verse 24 was *not* fulfilled when Jesus was crucified: “to bring in everlasting righteousness.” One look at the world today and it is obvious that everlasting righteousness has not arrived. When Jesus died on the cross He made “an end to sin” for those who believe and receive Him as their Savior, but everlasting righteousness will not reign on earth until after Jesus returns, beginning with His initial 1,000-year reign known as the Millennium. The last of the 70 “weeks” of Daniel, the last 7 years (also known as the 70th week), is yet to be fulfilled, and will be soon. Don’t be left in darkness or caught unprepared—find out when and how! •

(TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF
ACTIVATED.)



The 70 Weeks of Daniel, Part 2

THE NINTH CHAPTER OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL contains one of the most outstanding prophecies in the Bible, and was received by Daniel in about 538 BC. What makes this prophecy so remarkable is that it is a specific time prophecy that deals with both the first and second comings of Jesus Christ. As explained in Part 1 of this series, the portion of that prophecy that had to do with Jesus' first coming (69 of the 70 "weeks") was fulfilled with absolute accuracy. This part explains the portion that has to do with His second coming—specifically the last seven years before His return. All but one of the 70 "weeks" of Daniel's prophecy had to do with Jesus' first coming. The "week" mentioned twice in verse 27 is the remaining "week"—the remaining seven years.

He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and

in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation [offering] to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (Daniel 9:27 KJV).

The word "he" refers to "the prince who is to come" (verse 26), and since the Antichrist is also referred to as "the prince of the covenant" in Daniel 11:22, we know that the "he" in this verse is the Antichrist.

What is a "covenant"?—It's a pact, a solemn agreement. The signing of this covenant will mark the start of the Antichrist's seven-year reign and the last seven years before Jesus returns.

This covenant is mentioned several other times in the Scriptures. Because it is called a "holy covenant" in Daniel 11:28,30, it appears to be some sort of religious pact, at least in part—quite possibly one that tackles the thorny issue of religious coexistence between Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and by which Jerusalem will be declared an international city with free and equal access guar-

anteed to people of all faiths. It appears that this will also clear the way for the Jews to finally be able to rebuild their Temple on Jerusalem's Mount Moriah and reinstitute animal sacrifices on its altar.

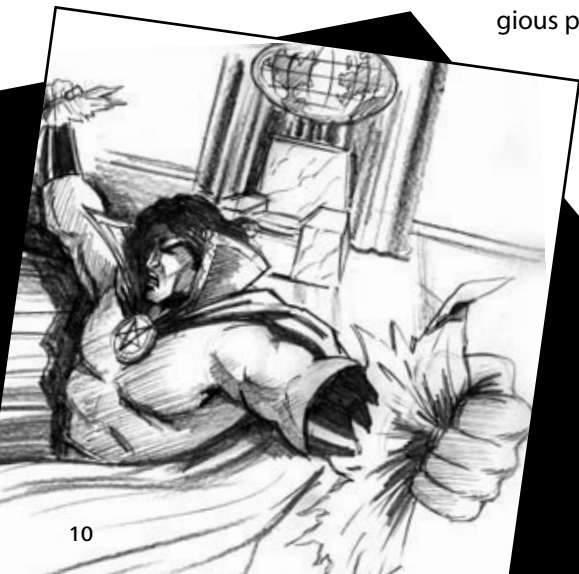
But in the "midst of the week"—or three and a half years into the seven-year covenant period—the Antichrist will renege on the agreement:

And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate (Daniel 11:31 KJV).

This is a key Scripture because it tells us that at this point, three and a half years after confirming the seven-year covenant, the Antichrist will forcibly enter the Jewish Temple (the "sanctuary of strength"), which would have to have been built by then, as it does not exist now. He will put an end to the daily sacrifice and place in the Temple area something called the "abomination of desolation."

Over 500 years after Daniel gave this prophecy, Jesus referred to it in His dissertation on the signs of His second coming and of the end of the world as we know it:

When you see the "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy



place [the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem] ... then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be (Matthew 24:15,21).

So what exactly is this “abomination of desolation”?—Jesus said we would see it “standing” in the Jewish Temple. Daniel 11:31 says the Antichrist’s forces will “place” it there. Daniel 12:11 says that it will be “set up.” We find out in the book of Revelation that the abomination of desolation is an image of the Antichrist himself (Revelation 13:15), who the Bible also refers to as “the Beast” (Revelation 13:1–7).

The Antichrist’s chief aide, the “false prophet,” will be behind the making of this image, which will be able to “speak” and somehow have power to cause those who refuse to worship it to be killed (Revelation 13:11–15). This power will be through the electronic monetary system that the Antichrist government will enact. People will be forced to submit to and worship the Antichrist, because under this system no one will be able to buy or sell without a personal account number, the “mark of the Beast,” in their right hands or foreheads (Revelation 13:16–18). But some will refuse to worship the Antichrist or receive his mark, and the Lord will take care of them (Revelation 12:6,14).

Back to Daniel 9:27: The Antichrist will rule “even until the consummation.” The Hebrew word that is translated “consummation” here comes from the root *kalah*,

which can mean either “complete” or “consume, destroy utterly.” It is unclear which meaning is intended—whether it refers to the last

aspect of the prophecy being fulfilled or the utter destruction of the Antichrist and his forces—but both fit because they happen at the same time. The prophecy will be completed and the Antichrist destroyed shortly after the second coming of Christ, in the wrath of God and the Battle of Armageddon. Verse 27 continues: “and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” The wrath of God will be poured upon the Antichrist and his followers, but meanwhile God’s saved children will be safely home in Heaven, enjoying the marriage

feast of the Lamb, who is Jesus (Daniel 12:11–12; Revelation 14:9–10; chapters 15–16; 19).

The first 69 “weeks” happened just as Daniel’s prophecy said they would. We have no reason to doubt that the last “week”—the last seven years before Jesus’ return to earth—will not also happen as predicted here in this amazing passage.

Are you ready for Jesus’ return? If not, you’d better *get* ready. Things are really moving! Take Jesus now! •



The Hebrew word translated “weeks” in the King James Version and some other Bible versions is *shabuwa*, for which *Strong’s Greek/Hebrew Dictionary* gives this definition: “literal, sevens, i.e., a week (specifically, of years).” So the 70 weeks of Daniel’s prophecy are actually 70 times 7 years. The fulfillment of the first part of the prophecy, which predicted the exact year of Jesus’ crucifixion, confirms that “seven years” is the correct interpretation of “week” in this passage.

THE RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST

OFTEN WHEN I TALK WITH SOMEONE about current events, the conversation turns to the Endtime and the rise to power of the would-be world dictator known as the Antichrist. That's because the news often contains reports of happenings that Jesus said would be signs of His soon return, such as those listed in Matthew chapter 24. We also know that Jesus' return will be immediately preceded by the seven-year rule of the Antichrist; therefore it can't be long before the Antichrist arises.

Two questions that come up frequently are: "Who is the Antichrist?" and, "What is his present agenda?"

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"Who is the Antichrist?" and, "What is his present agenda?"

Although the Antichrist is probably living now, we don't yet know who he is. The Bible does tell us quite a bit about him, however, so we won't be deceived when he comes to the forefront of the international scene.

At first the Antichrist will appear to be the political superman the world has been waiting for, because he will bring about world peace and economic stability. Most people will see him as a peacemaker and a wise and winsome popular leader. "He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places" (Daniel 11:24 KJV) and "obtain the kingdom by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21 KJV).

But don't be fooled! Behind this benevolent façade is a sinister goal: world domination. To achieve that end, the Anti-



christ will receive his power directly from the Devil, and in the end will become Devil-possessed—the Devil incarnate (Daniel 8:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:2–4, 7–8).

The Bible also tells us that the Antichrist is not working alone. Just as God works through heavenly forces and His children on earth to accomplish His purposes, the Devil works through his demons and people on earth who are under his control. So even though the Antichrist hasn't yet taken personal

control, there are many indications that the spiritual forces behind him are steadily gaining power and are busy influencing people's thinking and actions in order to further his agenda.

Those who serve the Antichrist, either consciously or unwittingly, are lining things up for the grand entrance of this false savior. Whether it's through economic upheavals, war, ecological disasters brought on by the mishandling of the world's resources, or technological advances, it's all heading in the same direction and furthering the same evil purpose: to cause chaos and the "distress of nations" (Luke 21:25) and set the stage for the Antichrist's takeover.

Even now we can see the powers behind the Antichrist working to bring about a one-world government. One method is globalization, which many people view as a natural course of events. But it's *not* happening naturally; there is a definite plan and powerful forces are behind it. For years the Antichrist's agents in the financial sector have been destabilizing national economies one by one, then allowing them to revive, and in the process taking control behind the scenes. With the economic markets more closely linked through globalization they are now in a position to pull the plug on any or all of them at the same time.

People are reluctant to give up their personal freedoms and countries are reluctant to give up their sovereignty. Before they accept a one-world government, the situation will have to be pretty desperate. That's why, when the time is right, those backing the Antichrist will push the world over the brink into economic collapse.

Then, once the world is in economic

ruin, the Antichrist's agents will call for their superman, the Antichrist, to put a stop to the chaos he and his have staged. They will offer to bail out the world and thus bring about a brief period of world peace and stability.

Many of the initiatives toward a one-world government will be done under the guise of altruism, but in reality those who do the Antichrist's bidding only do what suits their purpose, which is to gain more control. They don't give help without some very tight strings attached, and when the time is right they will pull the strings to usher in their man, the Antichrist.

Although the immediate outlook is pretty grim, it is possible to prepare for what's ahead by staying close to Jesus and studying and following His Word. We can also take heart in knowing that a brighter day is coming when Jesus Christ returns to rescue His children out of the Antichrist's clutches and put an end to his reign.

Are *you* ready for the events of the End-time? If not, the best way to prepare is by diligently studying God's Word and doing what He tells you, both through His written Word and during your times of prayer when He speaks directly to your heart. Then you won't be duped by the Antichrist. Instead, you will follow the true Savior, Jesus Christ, who will lead you straight through the troubled days ahead and on to a wonderful new life with Him in Heaven forever! •

(An upcoming Endtime Insights column explores in more detail how current events and technology are helping to prepare the way for the Antichrist.)

*Even now we
can see the
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The MARRIAGE SUPPER of the LAMB

This is one party you don't want to miss!

BY JOSEPH CANDEL

How would you like to attend the grandest, most glorious and thrilling wedding party that's ever been held? Believe it or not, you're already invited—*everybody* is invited—but you have to accept the invitation. Before explaining how to do that, here's when and where this great party will be held and what you can expect:

Jesus said that immediately after the second half of the Antichrist's seven-year reign—the terrible three-and-a-half-year period known as the Great Tribulation—He, Jesus, will return “on the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory” to rescue and resurrect all of those who have received Him as their Savior (Matthew 24:29–31).

When He does, all those who accepted Jesus as their Savior before they died will receive

new bodies and rise up out of their graves. All those who have accepted Him and are still alive will likewise be suddenly changed. Then, in the same instant, all of them will fly up to meet the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:51–52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

Then Jesus is going to take them all to a great big party—the biggest, happiest, most exciting party they've ever been to or even imagined! They'll see Jesus face to face and get to meet all of the great saints and apostles of the Bible, as well as all of the other wonderful folks who loved and received the Lord during their lifetime.

This wonderful party, the marriage supper of the Lamb, will be held in God's heavenly city—the greatest, most beautiful and wonderful place ever created—and is described in

Revelation 19:6–9:

And I [the apostle John, describing his vision] heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he [the angel that showed John this vision] said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

There will be plenty of laughter and singing and music and dancing and love for everyone! And if that's not enough, the saved will really appreciate how blessed they are to be with the Lord in this great marriage supper when they consider what's happening on earth at this time!

Right after the Lord rescues His own out of the Great Tribulation, the horrific vials of the great "wrath of God" are going to be poured out upon the Antichrist and his people in the form of horrible plagues, such as the world has never known (Revelation chapter 16). While the saved are having a wild party and lots of fun upstairs—a heaven of a time in Heaven—it's going to be hell on earth downstairs!

Like an invitation from above, Jesus calls, "Come, My people, enter your chambers,

*... the biggest, happiest,
most exciting party you've
ever been to or even
imagined!*

and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isaiah 26:20–21). The Bridegroom comes for His Bride, takes her safely away into the bridal chamber, shuts the door, and we have the marriage

celebration with Him, while the wicked, Christ-rejecting forces and followers of the Antichrist partake of the wrath of God.

At this time the saved will not only meet the Lord and enjoy the wonderful marriage supper of the Lamb, but they will also face the "judgment seat of Christ," in which they will be judged and rewarded or chastised individually according to their deeds and faithfulness, and will enter into the particular places that Jesus has seen fit for them to occupy in His kingdom on earth (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10,12).



Their first order of business will be to help Jesus to destroy the Antichrist and his forces at the great battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11–21; 17:14; 16:12–21). Then they will assist Him in His rule over the human survivors of Armageddon, who will remain here for the 1,000-

year period known as the Millennium (Revelation 20:6; 2:26; Daniel 7:18).

Jesus said, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12). Every saved Christian will be rewarded at the throne of Christ according to his works. Don't get this judgment and rewarding of the *saved* mixed up with the final judgment of the *unsaved*, which is an entirely different event and will take place 1,000 years later, after the Millennium, when the unsaved are all raised from the dead to meet God at the "great white throne judgment," as described in Revelation chapter 20.

Do you want to accept that invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb?—Then simply ask Jesus into your heart, if you haven't already.

Do you want to also receive commendations and rewards?—Then "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind ... [and] love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37–39). It says in the Bible that God will not forget anything you do out of love (Hebrews 6:10). He has a big book and is writing it all down (Malachi 3:16–17). Even when nobody else seems to see or appreciate the good you do, God sees and will remember.

See you at the grandest, most glorious and thrilling wedding party that's ever been or ever will be!

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST, the future world dictator whose coming is foretold in the Bible? Is he living now?—Probably. And what about his new world order? Is the Antichrist already working behind the scenes to bring about his plan for world economic and political domination?—It seems so.

From all indications, the Antichrist's satanic, technology-based system is already being set in place—"satanic" in that the Antichrist will be Satan-possessed (Daniel 8:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:2–4; 12:9), and "technology based" in that he will use technology to achieve and enforce his near total control of the world and its people. A key Bible passage about this is Revelation 13:16–17:

He [the Antichrist's right-hand man, the False Prophet] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [or "in"] their right hand or on [in] their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Imagine what the apostle John must have thought when, in about 90 AD, he saw a vision of this taking place in a futuristic world. People ever since have been baffled as to how any such universal, totalitarian economic system could be established or policed. But now the age of technology has arrived. With electronic commerce rapidly replacing cash and virtually everything that is bought and sold being identified and tracked by bar codes and other means, it is no longer inconceivable that the financial transactions of everyone in the world could one day be monitored by a centralized agency.

Most of the technology already exists, but before the Antichrist's plan can work, it needs to be more powerful and widespread. It stands to reason, then, that the Antichrist would get behind research and development in such fields as microchip technology, biotechnology, and the Internet.

Also, the technology is not enough in itself. The Antichrist also needs to sell the world on it. It appears that he is busy at that, too, and he is not alone.

He works through others—mostly unwitting accomplices who are helping to further his agenda by developing and marketing the technology, including some of the world's brightest minds and biggest financial powers. A scripture that goes along with that point is Daniel 11:21b KJV:

He shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

Some versions of the Bible translate this as "seize the kingdom by intrigue"—by secret scheming or plotting. Either way, it sounds as though the Antichrist is going to rise to power through cunning salesmanship rather than solely the strong-arm tactics that the leaders of most past empires depended on.

Through the various forms of mass media, the Antichrist is doing everything he can to convince the world that these new technologies are beneficial and necessary. What he is not saying, of course, is that he will eventually use them to suit his evil purposes. Consider these developments.

SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES

Video cameras now monitor and record our faces and movements in many stores and public places. We have learned to accept this intrusion into our lives because of the benefits: It discourages crime and helps apprehend criminals. Likewise, the monitoring of Internet communications helps curtail child pornographers, terrorists, and other threats to our common good.

As electronic databases replace filing cabinets, more and more data about us is being collected, stored, cross-referenced, and shared. Now that nearly everything we do leaves behind a “data trail,” combining information from different sources can re-create a person’s activities with astonishing accuracy and detail. This reservoir of personal information is especially helpful to marketers, and it is big business. Financial privacy has become a thing of the past, as financial institutions and others now routinely put the details of their clients’ lives up for sale.

Other data-gathering technologies help complete the mosaic of information that can be collected on individuals. For example, computerized “black boxes” are being built into cars, and location-tracking chips into cell phones and other electronic devices—innovations that consumers are being told are for their own good. Similarly, microchips are being implanted under the skin of pets for ID and tracking purposes, and pilot

programs are already being done for Alzheimer’s patients and children.

BIOMETRICS

Biometrics is the technology of collecting, processing, and storing details of a person’s physical characteristics through such means as fingerprinting, thumb scans, retina scans, hand geometry, face recognition, voice recognition, and digital macrophotography. Biometric identification has caught the interest of both governments and the commercial sector because it is far more foolproof than more primitive forms of ID, such as photo ID cards or signatures.

CASHLESS COMMERCE

The shift from cash to electronic commerce helps curtail drug trafficking, counterfeiting, and theft, not to mention the greater convenience and security that electronic commerce affords. So-called smart cards now contain microchips that store not only the owner’s financial information, but also medical records and other personal information. The logical next step would be to eliminate the plastic card and embed the chip directly into the owner, say “on their right hand or on their foreheads.”

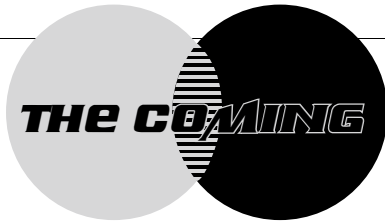
GLOBAL NETWORKING

As amazing as these new technologies are, the Antichrist will not be able to fully set up his new world order until it’s all pulled together into an integrated network with uni-

versal standards—an obstacle that might *not* be an obstacle much longer. Governments and industry are setting international standards and expanding their electronic networking by sharing information, services, and technology. As more countries turn to the latest technology to help solve their particular social and economic problems, they expand the network’s reach and capabilities. The level of technological development now varies greatly from nation to nation, but the whole system could be “online” in a relatively short time.

Proponents of these new technologies and cooperative efforts always point out the positive aspects, such as convenience, security, lower costs, and improved quality, speed, and efficiency in the delivery of goods and services. Little is said about the negative aspects of this public intrusion into what were once private personal affairs. Under the banner of science and technology, and more recently “the war against terrorism,” the governments of the world are rushing to complete the Antichrist’s economic and political system for him—the very system the Bible warns against.

Don’t be duped into following this false messiah or receiving his mark! Follow the true Messiah, Jesus Christ. Then you’ll be on the right side, the winning side, when Jesus returns to put a stop to the Antichrist’s wickedness and set things right (Revelation 14:9–11; 19:11–21). •



CASHLESS SOCIETY

NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR A CASHLESS SOCIETY IS MARCHING right in step with other moves toward the coming Antichrist world government. We often hear about the “New World Order” and the “global community”—buzzwords that are helping prepare the world for a new international financial and political system, a society controlled by networked computers containing a database of information on nearly everyone—as Revelation chapter 13 appears to have predicted nearly 2,000 years ago!

The switch to electronic commerce has been slow and gradual. People like the speed and convenience of electronic commerce, but they are also comfortable with the way things have been all their lives. For hundreds of years, the world has operated on cash—bills and coins that are tangible

and give people a sense of truly possessing. In that respect, the world hasn’t changed much in thousands of years, since coins were first minted. Many people are still uneasy with the idea of a computerized card or chip linking them to their invisible wealth. Cash is still the way.

As the time draws nearer, the Antichrist must speed up the move toward a cashless economy by proving to the world that it needs his “mark of the Beast” or “666” financial system (Revelation 13:16–18). To do that, he will use crisis after crisis in the nations of the world. One will be a near-global economic crash—the recession of all recessions. He will use this crash to overcome the inertia of the status quo. Without such radical intervention, people change their ways too slowly to suit his purposes and fit

his time frame.

Other factors and developments will also make this new economic system seem necessary. Governments will embrace it as a means of cracking down on crime and cutting government spending by cutting bureaucracy. Businesses will embrace it as a means of instant payment and automated inventory and accounting, cutting their expenses and thereby increasing their profits. The masses will embrace it for its speed, convenience, security, and ease. There will be many apparent advantages.

The Antichrist will also prepare the world for it in other ways—through wars, civil disorders, and fears of such things as terrorism and epidemics of new, incurable diseases. All these happenings will make people desperate for change. Eventually they will be ready to toss out the old and embrace the new. It’s already happened in a big way in the area of technology, and is now happening with commerce.

The Antichrist will introduce a new monetary system, whereby he will profess to fix the world’s economic woes. Those who want to be a part of his new economy and society will be compelled to receive the “mark of

the Beast” in their hand or forehead—probably in the form of a tiny computerized chip bearing all their personal, financial, and medical information. Big Brother and the New World Order will thereby be able to monitor everyone’s every move.

In fact, a few people have already taken the step of receiving computer chip implants. Chipping of people began quietly in the U.S. in May 2002, with the chipping of the Jacobs family. This otherwise normal family of four and several other volunteers had unique identifier chips—VeriChips— injected under their skin. The VeriChip, produced and marketed by Applied Digital Solutions, is about the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen and can be read by a handheld VeriChip scanner. How long will it be till this chipping of people becomes the norm and widely used to facilitate daily business such as shopping and banking?

One thing is certain: A global cashless economy and a totally monitored and controlled society are in the making. Fiber optics, satellites, and computer databases have the potential to control the world in a way that boggles the imagination.

Many governments

All these happenings will make people desperate for change. Eventually they will be ready to toss out the old and embrace the new.

and private corporations worldwide are already pursuing policies to eliminate cash and checks, while many other countries are testing various methods of doing business without physical currency.

The town of Swindon, England, started to go cashless in July 1995. In a joint venture, the National Westminster and Midland banks and British Telecommunications test-marketed a plastic/silicon cash substitute. This system uses Mondex cards that are similar to ATM cards, but contain sophisticated computer chips. Monetary transfers can be done by phone or a small wireless device called a “wallet.”

France moved one step closer to a cashless future with a nationwide launch in 2003 of computerized “smart cards,” dubbed Moneo. The idea behind this new breed of microchip-embedded plastic card is simple—to dispense with pocket change and speed smaller transactions.

In Japan, 650,000 electronic purses known as Edy cards are in circulation and can be used at about 2,100 stores, mainly in the Tokyo area. The plan is for these cards, which store the bearer’s financial information, to eventually be used

anywhere. What makes these different from credit or debit cards is that they do not need to be swiped through a card reader and the bearer’s identity doesn’t need to be verified by a cashier. All the bearer has to do is hold the card up to a sensor that reads the information.

Prosperous Singapore is planning to do away with “old-fashioned money” by 2008.

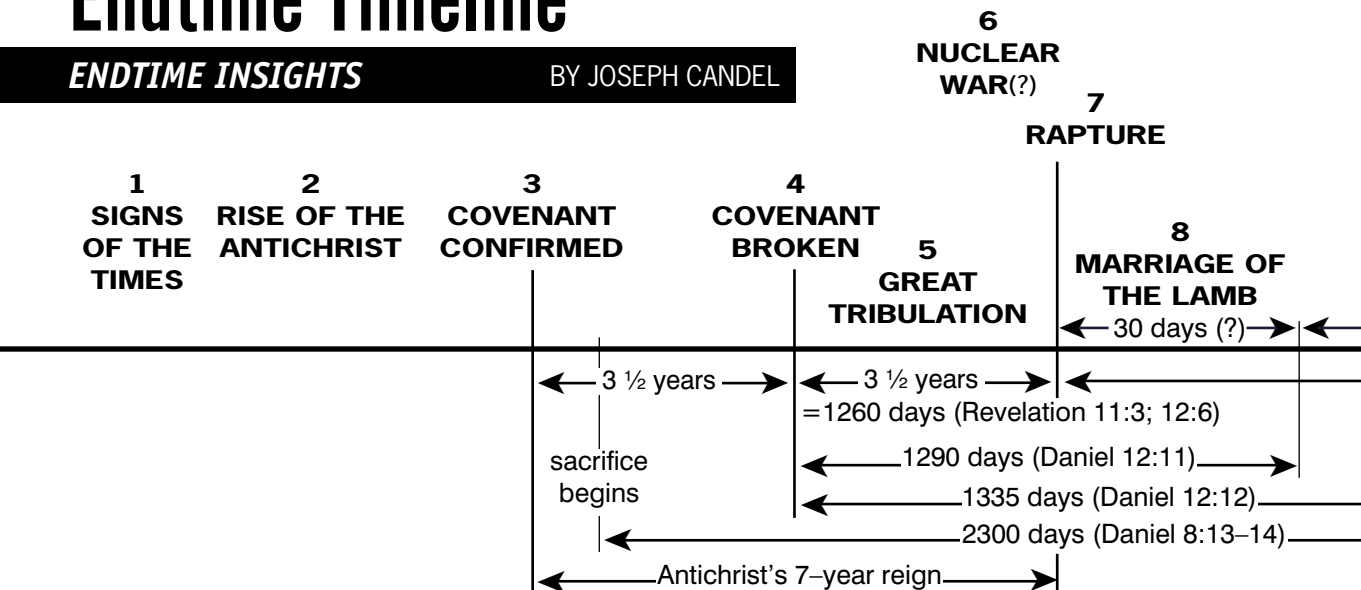
“[The Antichrist’s government] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [or in] their right hand or on [in] their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:16–17). For the first time, the hi-tech means of fulfilling the chilling vision the apostle John received nearly 2000 years ago is here!

Are you ready for these great and final events of the end? You can get ready now by receiving Jesus into your heart and taking time to study what the Bible has to say about Endtime events, including the coming Antichrist world dictatorship. Then you won’t be caught by surprise when they happen, or duped into following the Antichrist. •

Endtime Timeline

ENDTIME INSIGHTS

BY JOSEPH CANDEL



1. SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Happenings that Jesus said would signal His return and the end of the world as we know it are taking place today (Matthew chapter 24).

2. RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST

A Devil-possessed man known as the Antichrist conspires to lead an anti-God world government (Daniel 8:23–25; 11:21,24; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

3. CONFIRMING OF THE COVENANT

The Antichrist is welcomed as a savior when he initiates a seven-year agreement, or covenant, that temporarily brings a measure of peace and security to the world (Daniel 9:27a). This signals the start of the last seven years of man's rule on earth.

4. BREAKING OF THE COVENANT

Halfway through his seven-year

reign, the Antichrist breaks the covenant (Daniel 9:27b), abolishes all religious worship (Revelation 13:7–8), and declares himself God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

5. GREAT TRIBULATION

The final three and a half years of his reign is the time of greatest trouble the world has ever experienced (Matthew 24:21). The Antichrist government demands that the entire world worship the Antichrist and his "image"—which could be a computerized robot—and persecutes those who refuse (Revelation 13:11–15). A mandatory economic system is put in place, by which everyone is compelled to receive the "mark of the Beast" (Revelation 13:16–18). Meanwhile, God lets loose pestilences and plagues on the Antichrist and his followers (Revelation chapter 8; 9:1–11; 11:3–6), and God's two special Endtime prophets lead the believers in performing miracles and defying

6. NUCLEAR WAR(?)

7. RAPTURE

8. MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

the Antichrist, even as martyrs (Revelation 11:3,5–6; 12:11).

6. NUCLEAR WAR

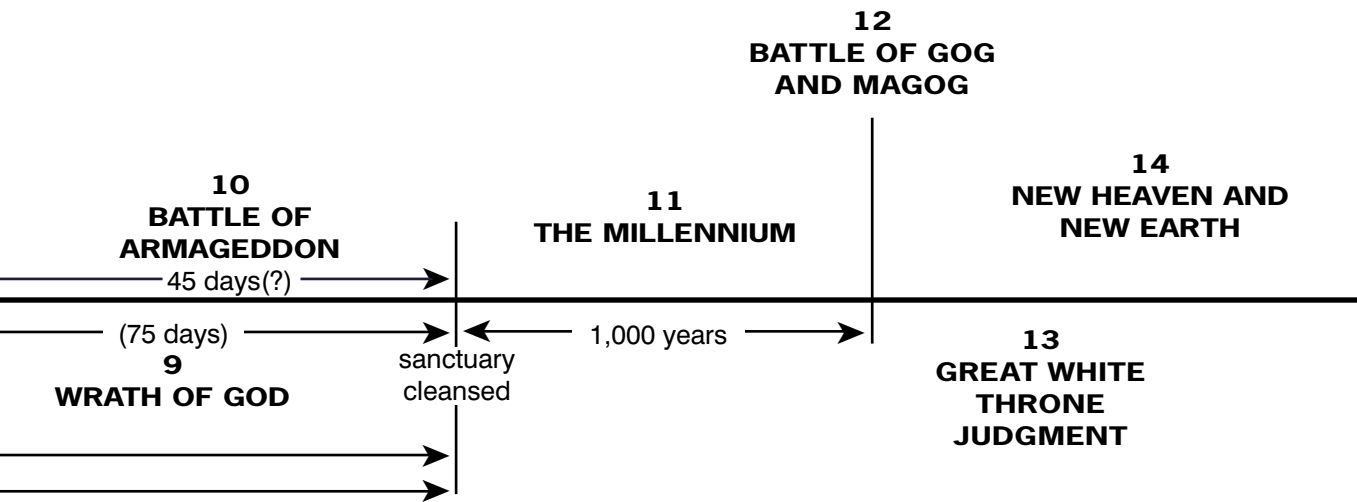
At some point, possibly toward the end of the Great Tribulation, the Antichrist and 10 "kings" who have joined forces with him will destroy "Babylon, the great whore" in a final judgment (Revelation 17:12–13,16–17; 18:2,7–8).

7. THE RAPTURE

At the end of the final three and a half years, Jesus returns to rescue His children out of this world and they receive new immortal bodies (Matthew 24:29–31; Revelation 1:7).

8. MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

In Heaven, Jesus unites with those He rescued in the Rapture, and at the Judgment Seat of Christ rewards His faithful children with eternal "crowns of life" (Revelation 19:7–9; 2:10).



9. WRATH OF GOD

The horrific plagues of the great “wrath of God” are poured upon the Antichrist and his forces (Revelation 11:18; 14:9–10; 16:1–11).

10. THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

On a plain in northern Israel, the Antichrist musters his armies for his greatest campaign against the nations that still oppose him, but Jesus and His heavenly army, including the resurrected believers from throughout the ages, return to earth to utterly destroy the Antichrist and his forces (Revelation 16:12–16; 19:11–21).

11. THE MILLENNIUM

The earth is restored (Isaiah 11:6–9; 14:7; 65:25; Hosea 2:18), and Jesus and His saints set up the kingdom of Heaven on earth, where they rule for 1,000 years (Daniel 2:44; 7:18, 22, 27; Revelation 5:10).

During this time the Devil, who plagued humankind throughout history and possessed the Antichrist, is bound and cast into the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1–3), while those who survive the cataclysms surrounding Armageddon live on in a simpler but righteous world ruled by love (Isaiah 2:4; Revelation 2:26; 20:4–6).

12. THE BATTLE OF GOG AND MAGOG

At the end of the Millennium, Satan is released from the bottomless pit for a “little season” and recruits followers who form an open rebellion against Jesus and His government—a rebellion that is obliterated in the Battle of Gog and Magog. The entire surface of the earth is re-created, and the Devil, along with death and Hell, is cast into “the lake of fire” (Revelation 6:14; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 20:7–10; 21:1).

13. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

The unsaved of all ages are resurrected, stand in judgment before God’s throne, are rewarded or punished according to their works, and assigned to their places in the hereafter (Revelation 20:11–13; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4;).

14. THE HEAVENLY CITY AND THE NEW EARTH

God’s great heavenly city descends to the re-created earth, and God and Jesus dwell in the city with the saved (Revelation chapters 21–22).

*For more detailed explanations of soon coming Endtime events, order *The Future Foretold from the Activated desk nearest you* (addresses on page 2), or visit the Activated Web site: www.activated.org.*

The Battle of Armageddon



WHERE IT FITS IN ENDTIME EVENTS

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, the struggle between the forces of good and evil will climax in a cataclysmic battle known as Armageddon. Some scholars speculate that the Battle of Armageddon will involve nuclear weapons.

The word “Armageddon” comes from the Hebrew *har megiddôn*, “hill (or height) of Megiddo,” a reference to a site in northern Israel, east of Haifa. This mount overlooks the Valley of Jezreel and the Plain of Esdraelon.

Events leading up to the Battle of Armageddon will involve an empire headed by a powerful Devil-possessed dictator known as the Antichrist, who will arise and take over much of the world (Daniel

8:23–25; 11:21–24). After the first three and a half years of the Antichrist’s seven-year reign, he will declare himself God and demand that the whole world worship him (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4). The Antichrist’s chief minister, referred to in the Bible’s book of Revelation as the “False Prophet,” will erect an image of the Antichrist, an image referred to as the “abomination of desolation,” which will “both speak and cause as many as would not worship the

image of the beast to be killed” (Revelation 13:15). The False Prophet will also enforce the “mark of the Beast” economic system, under which no one will be able to buy or sell unless they receive a personalized mark in their forehead or right hand (Revelation 13:16–17).

This will bring on three and a half years of “great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew

24:15–21). Nevertheless, some nations will rebel and war against the Antichrist government, refusing to bow down to its satanic leader or receive his mark (Daniel 11:40–44).

Immediately after this last three and a half years, Jesus Christ will return “in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29–31) to rescue and resurrect all of those who love Him! His people will then rise from the earth in powerful, immortal resurrection bodies and join Jesus in Heaven for a great victory celebration, the “marriage supper of the Lamb” (1 Corinthians 15:51–52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Revelation 19:7–9).

Meanwhile, the wicked forces of the Antichrist will suffer hell on earth as God pours out His judgments on those who cruelly persecuted His people and brought such destruction to others (Revelation 16:1–11). But even after suffering God’s judgments, the wicked of the world will refuse to repent or turn to God, but rather curse Him all the more (Revelation 16:8–11).

The armies of the Antichrist will gather in the Valley of Jezreel, around the height of Megiddo,

Armageddon, to war against the armies of the nations that oppose him (Revelation 16:12–16). The course of the battle will run from Megiddo to the very gates of Jerusalem (Joel 3:10–14; Zechariah 14:1–5).

At this time the Lord and all His resurrected saints from all the ages will come flying down on powerful heavenly white horses to destroy the Antichrist forces and rescue the opposing armies (Revelation 19:11–21; Zechariah 14:1–5; Ezekiel 39:17–22). So horrible will be the carnage that it will take seven months to bury the dead in Israel alone, and seven years to remove all the wreckage of the battle (Ezekiel 39:9–16).

The Antichrist and the False Prophet will be captured and taken from the Battle of Armageddon and tossed directly into the lake of fire—Hell (Revelation 19:20; Daniel 7:11). Satan, who possessed the Antichrist, will be imprisoned in the “bottomless pit” for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1–3).

The Lord and His resurrected saints, His saved people of all ages, will then work together with those on earth who survived the Battle of Armageddon to rebuild

a new and better world, setting up the kingdom of God on earth (Daniel 7:18,27; Revelation 2:26; 20:4,6). Only then, under the supreme rule and reign of Christ, will all wars finally cease and the world at last be governed fairly and well with true justice, liberty, peace, plenty, and happiness for all. Jesus “shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4). Complete disarmament at last!

This period will last for 1,000 years and is therefore known as the Millennium. The curse that came upon the earth when man fell into sin will be removed, and the earth will be restored to its original Garden of Eden state. “The lion will lie down with the lamb and the leopard with the baby goat, and a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6–7).

Are you ready for these coming events? If not, you can get ready now by receiving Jesus into your heart and studying His Word. •

*The Lord
and all His
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all the ages
will come
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on powerful
heavenly
white
horses.*

NEW TECHNOLOGY AND THE COMING “MARK OF THE BEAST”

CAN YOU IMAGINE A WORLD in which any store, restaurant, or other business you enter is able to identify you, make note of what you're wearing, and even detect how much money you have in your wallet? Science fiction?—Not for long! Believe it or not, one day soon radio frequency identification (RFID) technology could be identifying, screening, and tracking us all.

RFID “tags” use radio frequencies to transmit a code that uniquely identifies the tag. The silicon chips that hold RFID tags—some no bigger than a grain of salt—are small enough that they could be placed in clothing, razor blades, library books, and even currency.

RFID readers within 15 or 20 feet of some tags can pick up their signals. Global databases will let businesses keep track of every location where an RFID signal has been read.

How might the tags identify you? If, for example, you buy a sweater using a credit card, your name could be forever linked with that particular item of clothing.

That's what worries privacy advocates—the ease with which companies can read the tags and keep logs, identifying and profiling consumers

long after the tagged products those consumers bought leave the store. Privacy advocates and civil libertarians also say the technology designed for tracking clothing items at a very short range can easily be adapted to tracking and spying on people, just as software “cookies” now track computer users' movements online.

With little public fanfare, this new RFID technology is rolling out on a massive scale. Alien Technology, an RFID tag maker, projects that within three years the company will sell 10 billion RFID tags a year, and that the cost of a single tag will drop below US\$0.05—cheap enough that they may start to appear in most products. Wal-Mart, the world largest retailer, has mandated the use of the RFID tagging by its suppliers on all their products by 2005, and many other large retail outfits are expected to follow Wal-Mart's lead.

Another technology to keep an eye on is the new Electronic Product Code (EPC). Hailed as the next-generation product code system, EPC could someday replace with a microchip the bar code (Universal Product Code, or UPC) found on most merchandise today.

Whereas bar codes only identify *groups* of products, the EPC is designed

to provide a unique serial number for every *item* in the system. For example, at present all cans of Coke produced at a certain bottling plant or within a certain country have the same bar code. Under EPC, each and every bottle or can of Coke would have its own unique identifier. Impossible, you say? The EPC is built around a 96-bit format that is large enough to generate a unique code for every grain of rice on the planet.

Retailers and manufacturers think a

a store, pick up the items you want, stroll through the reader on your way out of the store, and the cost of the items would automatically be charged to your credit account. Not only that, but all the information regarding your purchases would be beamed to the manufacturers, who would be ever so happy to send you special offers on future purchases, or even to stock you up on their products at prearranged times, billing you automatically.

one-of-a-kind product code could help reduce theft and counterfeit goods, and simplify the inventory process.

The way it's been designed, an EPC can be linked to databases that can store far more information about a particular product than is possible with the current bar code system. In addition to the basic information provided by UPC—item, price, and manufacturer—the EPC could link to information about the buyer and location of the item based on a complex system of microchip tags and microchip readers that communicate via radio frequency (RFID).

And RFID tags aren't just for goods found in supermarkets and malls. Applied Digital Solutions (ADS) of Palm Beach, Florida, is hoping that Americans can be persuaded to implant RFID chips under their skin to identify themselves when going to a cash machine or in place of using a credit card. The surgical procedure, which is performed with local anesthetic, embeds a 12-by-2 mm RFID tag in the flesh of a human arm. ADS even ran a special promotion urging Americans to "get chipped." The first 100,000 people to sign up were offered a \$50 discount.

And why shouldn't you get chipped? That way you could simply walk into

The system would also put an end to shoplifting and other forms of theft and fraud, as there would be no cash or credit cards to steal and every item would be linked to its rightful owner. There would be far fewer criminals and drug dealers (again, no cash), and society would be much better off.—Or would it? It seems benign—even beneficial—but what about its potential to track your every physical and financial move?

The new technology is preparing the public, and it won't be long till the mother of all silicon chips is ready for its debut—the mark of the Beast, as predicted in the Bible. "He [the False Prophet, top minister in the Antichrist's government] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [or 'in'] their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast [the Antichrist], or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666" (Revelation 13:16–18).

When the mark of the Beast comes, don't be duped into taking it! •

PRIVACY
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AND CIVIL
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DESIGNED FOR
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TRACKING AND
SPYING ON
PEOPLE.

Here's Heaven!



ENDTIME INSIGHTS

BY JOSEPH CANDEL

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME, people have speculated, theorized, and fantasized about what it would be like and where their spirit would go when they die. Speculate, theorize, and fantasize no more! God's Word, the Bible, answers those questions very clearly and specifically.

God lifted some of His prophets into the spiritual realm and gave them a guided tour of Heaven—and they lived to tell about it. Here are parts of the apostle John's firsthand account:

I saw a new [atmospheric] heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

...

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Then He who sat on the throne [Jesus] said, "Behold, I make all things new."

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ... And the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

Revelation 21:1–5, 10–11, 18

John goes on to say that the base of this great city from space is 2,220 kilo-

meters (1,380 miles) square. Its peak is equal to its length and width, reaching 2,220 km into the sky (Revelation 21:16). Just think how beautiful it will be—a gigantic, pyramid-shaped city of clear crystal gold, standing on the earth 250 times taller than the world's tallest mountain, Mt. Everest.

Also [the city] had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates.

Revelation 21:12

An angel guards each gate. The fact that the city has a tall wall and gates guarded by angels shows that there will obviously be people or spirit beings who will not be allowed to enter the city.

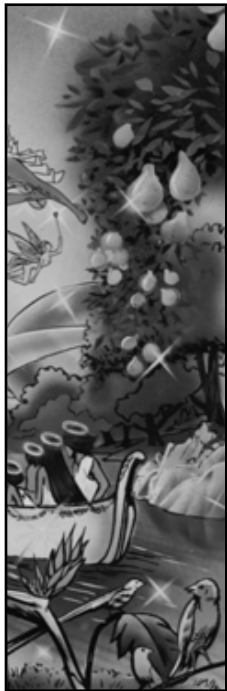
Names [were] written on [the gates], which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ... And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every gate was one pearl.

Revelation 21:12–14, 21

On each of the gates is the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, which is God's way of honoring the Israelites who believed in and followed Him. He also honors the original twelve apostles for their great work of starting His Church by putting their names on the twelve layers of the wall.

An angel measured the wall for John, and it was 66 meters (216 feet) high. Its twelve 5.5-meter (18-foot) high levels are each made of a different kind of precious or semiprecious stone—diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and so

The leaves
of the tree
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healing of
the nations.



on (Revelation 21:17–20). Because this wall runs all the way around the base of the city, its total length is nearly 9,000 km (5,600 miles). Just imagine 9,000 km of gigantic diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and other gems! No one living has ever seen such beauty or riches!

And the gates! Can you imagine the gates for such a city, whose wall is 65 meters high? They would be gigantic—pearls such as this world has never seen!

And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

Revelation 21:24

Inside the great heavenly city is where all of God's saved children will be free to live with Him forever. Outside the city there will be multitudes of previously unsaved people who have been raised from the dead, have stood before God's great judgment throne, and have been allowed by Him to live on the beautifully remade Garden-of-Eden-like earth (Revelation 21:24–26).

Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).

Revelation 21:25

This wonderful heavenly city will always be open. Its citizens need no sleep.

There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Revelation 21:27

Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be allowed to enter through those pearly gates. There will be nothing unclean there—no dirty city streets, no violence, no crime. Everything will be spotless and clean, sinless and beautiful! What a wonderful place—literally Heaven on earth!

And he [the angel who was giving John the tour] showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

PRAISE BRINGS HEAVEN CLOSER

Praise is very important in Heaven because in Heaven, everyone is praiseful all the time. It's part of being there. And when you praise the Lord, it takes you there in the spirit and you partake of that praiseful atmosphere. "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise" (Psalm 100:4).

Praise is one of the greatest powers of Heaven. When you praise the Lord, you open yourself to the healing balm of Heaven and it clears your mind, relieves stress, and refreshes your spirit. Strength and power lie in praise—not only power

that lifts your spirit, but power to draw more power from the heavenly realm. Praise opens a channel to the heavnlies that allows the heavenly blessings to pour down. You don't just praise your way to victory, you also praise down the blessings of God.

Praise is a form of love. It's you telling the Lord how much you love Him and how thankful you are for all He does for you. As you praise and love Him, He loves you in return and pours His blessings on you. So sing those praises, pray those praises, pour forth those praises to the Lord. The blessings come down as the praises go up!

—DAVID BRANDT BERG

ENDTIME INSIGHTS

IN 552 BC, LONG BEFORE MACEDONIA-LED GREEK CITY-STATES BECAME THE DOMINANT POWER in the Western world, the Hebrew prophet Daniel foretold of war between Greece and Persia, and its outcome. Over 200 years later, in 333 BC, Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled exactly as he predicted!

This remarkable prophecy is recorded in the eighth chapter of the Bible's book of Daniel. (The vision is recounted in

verses 1 through 14, and interpretation is given in verses 15 through 27.) Then, in the same chapter, the prophet takes us far into the future, to events of the Endtime, the time in which we are now living.

Vision: "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar [552 BC] a vision appeared to me [Daniel]. ... There, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one

was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward" (Daniel 8:1-4).

Interpretation: "Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice [saying], 'Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.'



DANIEL CHAPTER 8—A VISION OF THE FUTURE!

And he said ... “The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia” (Daniel 8:15–16,19–20).

The Medes ruled an empire that included a tribe known as the Persians. In 552 BC, Cyrus (later Cyrus the Great) was ruler of the Persian district of Anshan. Cyrus rebelled with the help of many disaffected Medes and overthrew the Median Empire in 550 BC. Cyrus then established the Persian Empire. Because Medes had helped

Cyrus rise to power, a Mede traditionally held the second most important position in the kingdom—“two horns [but] one was higher than the other.”

Vision: “And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no

power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. Therefore the male goat grew very great” (Daniel 8:5–8a).

Interpretation: “The male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king” (Daniel 8:21).

Here we have the male goat, with its “large horn” [Alexander the Great] furiously attacking the ram [Persia]. At the battles of Issus in 333 BC (in which Alexander himself led the cavalry charge across the Pinarus River) and Gaugamela in 331 BC, Alexander the Great’s forces soundly defeated the army of the Persian king, Darius III, ushering in the rule of Alexander the Great over the Persian Empire.

Vision: “The male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken” (Daniel 8:8a).

Interpretation: Alexander began his military campaign when he was 20 years old and conquered all the known world that he considered important—from Greece to India and southern Russia to northern Africa—in only eight years. No doubt this swift conquest

is why the Lord pictured his kingdom as a winged leopard in the vision of Daniel 7:6, and here as a goat that moved so fast it didn’t touch the ground. But at the height of his power—“when he was strong”—Alexander died at the age of 33.

Vision: “In place of it [the large horn] four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven” (Daniel 8:8b).

Interpretation: “As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power” (Daniel 8:22).

When Alexander died, his generals (called collectively the Diadochi) fought over his empire, dividing it to “the four winds.” These weaker successor kingdoms were depicted as a four-headed leopard in Daniel 7:6.

Beginning with Daniel 8:9, the prophecy suddenly jumps far into the future, to events of the Endtime. “Out of one of them [the four notable horns] came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land [Israel].” •

TO BE CONTINUED.





We are also given the **assurance** that during the Great Tribulation “the people who **know their God** shall be **strong**, and carry out great **exploits**.”



A VISION OF THE FUTURE

BY JOSEPH CANDEL

In 552 BC, the HEBREW PROPHET DANIEL foretold a war between the Greeks and Persians, and its outcome. Part 1 of this article, which appeared in last month's *Activated* magazine, explained how that prophecy was fulfilled in 333 BC, exactly as predicted.

Other parts of this same vision received by Daniel foretold other events farther in the future, events of the Endtime, the time in which we are now living. This is where we now resume our study of Daniel chapter 8.

Vision: “Out of one of them [the kingdoms into which Alexander the Great's empire fractured after his death] came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land” (Daniel 8:9).

Interpretation: The angelic messenger who showed Daniel this vision made it unmistakably clear that this “little horn” was to arise in the time of the end by saying so three times—in verses 17, 19, and 23.

We know from a number of other scriptures, such as Daniel 7:8, that this “little horn” is the soon coming world dictator known as the Antichrist. There is much in the Bible describing this man and his rule and reign, even though his reign is short—only seven years (Daniel 9:27).

“In the latter time of their kingdom [the Endtime, just prior to Jesus' return], when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes” (Daniel 8:23).

At this point,
where the
Antichrist comes
from is one of the
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keep a watch
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Here Daniel refers to the Antichrist as “a king having fierce features,” and in Daniel 11:21 as a “vile person.” In 2 Thessalonians 2:3,8, the apostle Paul calls him the “son of perdition” and “the lawless one” (or “the wicked one,” in other translations). In the book of Revelation he is the final embodiment of “the Beast.”

It's not exactly clear in this passage or other scriptures which geographical part of Alexander's empire the Antichrist will come from. Some people have speculated that he will come out of Egypt because of the three directions of his expansion—“toward the south [Africa], toward the east [the Mideast and possibly Asia], and toward the Glorious Land.” To Jewish prophets like Daniel, the Glorious Land could only mean Israel. The Scriptures also make it clear that the Antichrist will eventually invade Israel (Ezekiel chapter 38; Daniel 11:40–43).

In other passages of scripture, however, the Antichrist is referred to as “the king of the north” (Ezekiel 38:14–16; Daniel 11:40–43). In Ezekiel 38:2, the Antichrist is called “Gog” of the land of Magog. He is the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and the place called Tubal, where he is said to come from. “Ros” or “Rus” is the name of the people who settled around the Volga River and from which the word “Russia” is derived.

How can the Antichrist possibly come from Egypt, yet eventually come from the north—Russia? Perhaps he comes from Egypt or has some strong connection to Egypt, but rises to power in Russia.

At this point, where the Antichrist comes from is one of the great Endtime mysteries. Now we can see only the shadows and shapes of things to come, but keep a watch on Egypt and Russia.

Vision: “And it [the little horn, the Antichrist] grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them” (Daniel 8:10).

Interpretation: Because of the context and what we know from other scriptures, it's clear that this is talking about the Antichrist's campaign to wipe out true believers in God—the “holy people” of verse 24—during the last half of his rule, the 3½-year period known as the Great Tribulation.

“His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people” (Daniel 8:24).

In Revelation 12:9 and 13:2 we find out that the Antichrist gets his power from Satan. We also know from other scriptures that the Antichrist will speak “great things and blasphemies” (Revelation 13:5), try to change times and laws (Daniel 7:25), officially abolish all religion except worship of himself, persecute believers of all faiths (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4), corrupt with flattery (Daniel 11:32), and make war with the people of God and overcome them for 3½ years (Revelation 13:7).

It's not *all* bad news for the followers of God, though. We are also given the assurance that during the Great Tribulation “the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits, and those of the people who understand shall instruct many” (Daniel 11:32–33). The people of the world who hate the Antichrist's dictatorship are going to be desperate for the truth, and those who know God's Word are going to teach and encourage millions. In spite of all that the Devil's forces will do to try to stop them, millions of God's children will keep going for God till the very end (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

Vision: “He [the Antichrist] even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down” (Daniel 8:11).

Interpretation: The Prince of the host (and the Prince of princes in verse 25) is either God or Jesus. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 confirms this where it says that the Antichrist “exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped.”

“By him [the Antichrist] the daily sacrifice was taken away.” “Daily sacrifice” refers to ritual animal sacrifices carried out in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, a practice that has been suspended since the second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. It appears, however, that some time between now and the Great Tribulation, the Jews will finally be able to rebuild their Temple on Jerusalem’s Mount Moriah and reinstitute animal sacrifices on its altar. But in the middle of the Antichrist’s seven-year reign, when he exalts himself above all religions, he will bring an end to this practice (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; Matthew 24:15,21).

Then, in that holy place, the Temple area, the world government will erect some kind of “living” (probably computer-controlled) image of the Antichrist. This is the “abomination of desolation” that both Daniel and Jesus spoke of (Daniel 11:31; 12:11; Matthew 24:15). The Antichrist will then demand that the whole world worship his image or be killed (Revelation 13:14–18).

“The place of His sanctuary was cast down.” It doesn’t seem that the Antichrist is going to destroy the Temple, but rather occupy it himself, because we are told in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 that he “sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” So “cast down” apparently means that the Temple will no longer be sacred; it will be desecrated or “polluted” (Daniel 11:31) by the abominable Image of the Beast.

**The Antichrist
and his
forces will be
vanquished
once and for all
in the Battle of
Armageddon.**

Vision: “Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered” (Daniel 8:12).

Interpretation: “Army” (or “host,” as the King James Version [KJV] renders it) may refer to the Antichrist’s followers in general, not only his army or police force (Daniel 11:31).

“And he cast truth down to the ground.” The ultimate fulfillment of this will be when the Antichrist demands that the whole world worship him as God, but anti-God, anti-Christ propaganda is already rampant in the world today, particularly in the mass media. “As you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour [Endtime]” (1 John 2:18).

“Through his cunning he shall cause deceit (or “craft” in the KJV) to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means” (Daniel 8:25).

The Antichrist is going to be full of pride and try to exalt himself above every other world leader that ever lived, even claiming to be God (Daniel 11:36–37; 2 Thessalonians 2:4).

“He shall even rise against the Prince of princes: but he shall be broken without human means.” The Antichrist is even going to try to fight God, Jesus Christ, and the army of Heaven (Revelation 17:12–14), but the Antichrist and his forces will be totally vanquished in the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12–16; 19:11–21). That will be the unhappy end of them, but the happy beginning for all who have received and sided with Jesus! •

If you haven’t yet met Jesus or received His forgiveness and gift of eternal life, you can do so right now by praying the following:

Thank You, Jesus, for paying the price for my mistakes and wrongs, so I can be forgiven. I ask You now, dear Jesus, to please come into my heart, forgive me, and give me Your gift of eternal life. Amen.

MORE ON HUMAN CHIP IMPLANTS

MICROCHIP IMPLANTS ARE NOW BEING USED to monitor children, convicts, pets, Alzheimer's patients, and others. A few otherwise ordinary people have also taken the step of receiving computer chip implants as pioneers of what they expect will one day be the worldwide norm.

Chipping of people began in the U.S. in May 2002, when several volunteers had 12-by-2.1 mm radio frequency identification (RFID) "VeriChips" inserted under the skin of their arms.

More recently, at the Baja Beach Club in Barcelona, Spain, customers began paying for drinks with the wave of their hand, having each received a microchip implant for ID and payment purposes. Chipped members are able to breeze past a "reader" that verifies their identity and links it to their current credit balance, and even automatically opens doors to exclusive areas of the club for them. They can then buy food and drinks with a wave of their hand and don't need to worry about losing a credit card or wallet.

Palm Beach-based Applied Digital Solutions (ADS) touts this application of the chip implant as an advance over credit cards and smart cards, which, without biometrics and appropriate safeguard technologies, are subject to theft resulting in identity fraud.

Conrad K. Chase, director of the Baja Beach Club, calls the chip implant the wave of the future. "The objective of this technology is to bring an ID system to a global level that will destroy the need to carry ID documents and credit cards." According to Chase, ADS's goal is to market the VeriChip as a global implantable identification system.

The significance of this latest development is that the chips being used in Spain are a fraction of the size of the original VeriChip—small enough to be syringe-injected—and they are not being implanted in the arm, but the *hand*.

And at least one national government is now sanctioning microchip implants. Mexico's top federal prosecutors and investigators began receiving microchip implants in their arms in November 2003. Since then, Mexico's attorney general, at least 160 people in his office, and a large number of the Mexico police force have been chipped. Antonio Aceves, general director of Solusat, the company that distributes the microchips in Mexico, says key members of the Mexican military and the office of President Vicente Fox may be next.

The Bible's book of Revelation states that the regime of the coming world dictator known as the Antichrist "causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:16–17).

The hi-tech means of fulfilling this chilling vision that the apostle John received nearly 2000 years ago is rapidly developing! Now the question is how soon the Antichrist's "666" credit system will become universal and mandatory.

Are you in tune with the times—the signs of the End? Read the news and study Bible prophecy, and you will see how current events confirm we are living in the Endtime. ▀

AT FIRST READING, the book of Revelation is not only mysterious but also confusing. Understanding how the book is structured helps it become clearer.

Revelation can be divided into three sections of seven chapters each, with chapter 22 (which is basically a continuation of chapter 21) added to the last section.

The first section begins with an introduction, followed by letters of correction and commendation from the apostle John to seven “churches” of his day—communities of believers (Acts 2:44–47). Then, beginning with chapter 4, John relates his experience of being taken to God’s throne room in Heaven, where he witnesses Jesus opening a mysterious scroll that is sealed with seven seals. As each one is opened, a spiritual entity or an Endtime event is revealed.

In the following seven chapters, the Lord zooms in to give a more detailed look at the coming three-and-a-half years of worldwide trouble known as the “Great Tribulation” (Matthew 24:15–21). Here we learn of the spiritual struggle between good and evil, and of the rise of the Antichrist, who is depicted as “the Beast.” These events culminate in the Second Coming of Jesus and the gathering to Him of all believers.

The last section begins with events on earth immediately after Jesus’ return. The chronological order of events is interrupted by a two-chapter description of “Babylon the Great,” symbolizing the brazen materialism of this day and age, and more information on the Beast. It then returns to the chronological account of future events, beginning with a great celebration in Heaven with Jesus and those He has gathered to Him from earth at the Second Coming of Christ. This is followed by the Battle of Armageddon, where Jesus and His followers defeat the Antichrist, and continues through the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth to the happy ending when the Heavenly City, New Jerusalem, comes down to its eternal resting place on the newly recreated planet Earth and God Himself dwells with the saved (Revelation 21:2–3).

One question nearly everyone has is whether John’s descriptions are literal or symbolic. Undoubtedly there are some of each. Another thing to bear in mind is that he was seeing in a vision things he had never seen before—things of *our* day—so he had to describe them in the terms of his own experience and in language that the people of his day could understand. For example, John had never seen tanks or planes or guns or bombs or heard their roar. So if he was watching modern warfare, he might describe tanks as chariots or warplanes flying at then incomprehensible altitudes as locusts.

Many things in the book of Revelation remain mysteries or topics of speculation. As future events unfold, Jesus will help us understand more. □

A woman with dark hair is looking upwards with a contemplative expression. Overlaid on her image is a large, glowing orange handprint with the number '666' on the palm. In the lower right background, there are soldiers in military gear, some with '666' on their helmets, and a figure on a winged creature amidst flames.

an Overview

ENDTIME INSIGHTS

of the



THE BOTTOM LINE The forces of evil will never be able to completely overcome God's people. In spite of all the wrath and atrocities that bestial man will bring against God's children during the Great Tribulation—the coming three-and-a-half-year worldwide reign of terror against people of all faiths by the devilish dictatorship of the Antichrist and his regime—multitudes of us Christians will still be here to joyously welcome Christ's triumphant re-entry into the earth's atmosphere (Matthew 24:21, 29–31). Jesus is the only One who can stop us, and He will stop us then for a little while to take us home for a party, the marriage supper of the Lamb in Heaven! Then we'll come back here and put a stop to the reign of the wicked! (Revelation chapter 19).
D.B.B.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John" (Revelation 1:1).

What » The Revelation of Jesus Christ—"things which must shortly take place."

Who » The divine author was God Himself, who gave the vision to Jesus Christ "to show His servants."

How » Jesus relayed the vision through a heavenly messenger to the apostle John—also known as John the Beloved, one of Jesus' original 12 disciples and the author of the Gospel of John—who wrote it down and sent it to the Christians (referred to collectively in the book of Revelation as churches) in seven cities in the region that roughly corresponds with modern-day Turkey.

Where » John received the vision on the Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, where he had been banished during the persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperor Domitian "for [spreading] the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9). It is believed that about a year after receiving the vision, John was released and permitted to return to Ephesus (in modern-day Turkey).

When » It is believed that John received this vision in 95 AD and wrote it down the following year, in 96 AD.

Why » Ultimately so that we who are living today would understand the events of the Endtime as they unfold. "You, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day [Jesus' return] should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:4).

Book of Revelation



WHY You're in God's hands! WORRY?

GOD LOVES YOU! He is your kind and loving heavenly Father who personally loves you, His own dear child, and you are in His hands. He has made this beautiful world as a home for you to live in and enjoy, and He has lovingly given you a wonderful body, mind, and heart with which to enjoy it.

Sad to say, some people have gotten the idea that God is some kind of monster who follows them around with a big stick, always ready to clobber them! But the Bible says that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). He is loving and forgiving, and the only reason He follows anyone around is in hopes that they will turn around to meet Him, so He can receive them in His open arms!

Others say they don't believe in God because they can't understand Him. Well, no one can ever really understand God. It's impossible! He says, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8–9). But even though we don't really understand Him, we can look at the beautiful world He has made—the trees, the flowers, the mountains, the sea, the sky—and feel His love in His wonderful creation.

You don't have to understand God in order to love Him, any more than a little baby needs to understand everything about his mother and father in order to know their love. This is why Jesus said that you have to be like a little child to enter the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:3). There are certain things that you just have to accept by faith.

Jesus also said that “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24). He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere-present. Even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him (1 Kings 8:27). He is not confined to Earth or our solar system or the Milky Way galaxy or even the entire universe. He is all and in all—far beyond the limited mind of man and our human understanding!

But because He loves us and wanted to show us His love, He sent His own Son in the form of a man, Jesus Christ. Jesus was like a picture of God, “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), to show us what God is like—and all He did was love. He talked about love and showed love and lived love, and finally, in love, laid down His life for us, to bring life, forgiveness, and eternal joy to all who would receive Him.

So if you feel that God is far from you, maybe it's because you haven't received His love. There is an empty place, which God created in each of our hearts, that only He can fill. Nothing else can truly satisfy. If

you would like for Him to fill that empty spot in you, all you have to do is open your heart to Him. He will give you His love that will change your whole outlook on life.

This is one of the wonderful things about God's love: When we know that God loves us, we know that everything in our lives is going to work out in the end because He will take care of us. This is faith, and it's faith in His love that keeps out worry and fear. "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). Receiving God's love into your heart is like turning on a light in a dark room—the darkness has to flee!

Then you won't need to worry anymore. You'll know your heavenly Father loves you and that you and yours—your future, your health, your family—are in His hands. "Do not worry about your life. Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matthew 6:25–26). He will care for His own!

Do you have God's love in your heart? If not, all you have to do is pray and ask Jesus to come into your life! He says, "Behold, I stand at the door [of your heart] and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). He loves you and will come in right now if you will sincerely pray this prayer:

Jesus, please forgive me for all my sins. I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died for me. I now open the door of my heart and I ask You to come in and give me Your gift of eternal life. Then help me to love You and to love others with Your love. Amen. □

Receiving God's love into your heart is like turning on a light in a dark room

FEEDING READING CARNAL REASONING

When the terms "carnal mind," "carnal-mindedness," "carnal thinking," or "carnal reasoning" are used in the Bible, the intended meaning of "carnal" is not the most common modern meaning of "sensual or sexual," but "of the flesh" as opposed to "of the spirit."

**Secret of success:
Trust the Lord for His
leading and guidance.**

2 Chronicles 26:5
Psalm 37:23
Psalm 118:8
Proverbs 3:5–7
Isaiah 48:17

**We cannot find our
way through life with-
out the Lord's direct
guidance.**

Jeremiah 10:23
Proverbs 16:9
John 15:5

**If we depend on
carnal reasoning,
we're doomed to dis-
appointment and final
failure.**

Psalm 127:1a
Proverbs 14:12
Jeremiah 17:5
Galatians 6:3

**Carnal reasoning is
foolish and displeas-
ing to God.**

Proverbs 26:12
Proverbs 28:26a
Isaiah 47:10

Jeremiah 8:9
Romans 1:21–22
Romans 8:6–8
1 Corinthians 3:18–20
1 Corinthians 8:1b–3

**Only by seeking the
Lord's solutions can
we understand situa-
tions as He does.**

Proverbs 16:2
Ecclesiastes 2:26a
Isaiah 42:16
Isaiah 55:8–9

**God's Word shows us
the way by shedding
light on the subject.**

Psalm 37:31
Psalm 119:105
Psalm 119:130
Proverbs 6:22–23
2 Peter 1:19

**God has all the
answers and delights
to give them to us, so
pray.**

Proverbs 16:3
Isaiah 30:21
Jeremiah 33:3
James 1:5

BY SCOTT MACGREGOR

pre-tribulation or post-tribulation Rapture?

ONE OF THE MAJOR CONTROVERSIES regarding Endtime Bible prophecy concerns when Jesus will return to “rapture” all those who have received Him as their Savior. Will it be before or after the coming three-and-a-half-year period of worldwide trouble known as the “Great Tribulation”?

Those who believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture contend that Jesus will return in secret to whisk all born-again (saved) Christians out of this world and into Heaven. Depending on when they believe the Tribulation starts, this would be either at the beginning of the Antichrist’s seven-year rule or at its midpoint.

Central to this pre-Tribulation doctrine are several Bible passages that liken Jesus’ Second Coming to a thief in the night, and also the supposition that the Second Coming and the Rapture are two different events.

Regarding His return, Jesus told His disciples: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven, but My Father only.

... Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matthew 24:36, 40–44).

Here we have Jesus coming like a thief and people going up to Heaven in the Rapture at the same time. There is no indication that these are separate events.

In another “thief” passage, the apostle Paul states: “Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord

The term “Rapture” is not found in English-language Bibles, but made its way into Christian terminology as a transliteration of *rapiemur* (from *rapio*, or *raptio*), the Latin word used by Saint Jerome in his Latin Vulgate translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, which describes how the saved from all ages, both dead and living, will be “caught up” to meet Jesus in the air at His Second Coming.



so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape” (1 Thessalonians 5:1–3).

“Sudden destruction” and the labor pain analogy make it clear that Jesus’ return will be a shocking, woeful experience for those not taken—certainly not the secret, stealthy Rapture of pre-Tribulation doctrine.

The point that both of these “thief” passages are making is that Jesus’ return will be sudden and unexpected, so we need to watch the signs of the times and keep our hearts right with Him so we’ll be ready.

A third “thief” passage that is often applied to the Rapture is, in context, a specific warning to Christians in the city of Sardis, in Western Asia Minor (modern Turkey) who lived in the apostle John’s day. Jesus says, “Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you” (Revelation 3:3).

There is a lesson in this passage for us too, of course, and it is the same one that the previously quoted “thief” passages make: We need to keep our hearts right with Jesus so we’ll be ready to face Him when we die or are caught up with Him in the Rapture.

A fourth “thief” passage that is sometimes added to the mix isn’t referring to the Rapture at all, but rather the destruction and re-creation of Earth’s surface and its atmospheric heavens about 1,000 years later, at the end of the Millennium: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

Now let’s look at some of the passages that support the post-Tribulation Rapture theory.

Just prior to His “thief” analogy, Jesus told His disciples: “Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29–31).

HE WILL
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HIS ELECT





THE
PEOPLE
WHO
KNOW
THEIR GOD
SHALL BE
STRONG,
AND
CARRY
OUT
GREAT
EXPLOITS.

Jesus placed His return *after* the Tribulation period—*then* His angels will gather His elect, all those who have received Him as their Savior, in the Rapture. He couldn't have made that point clearer!

In addition, the apostle Paul explains that the Antichrist will already be in power and “sitting in the temple of God” when the Rapture happens, and we know from other passages that this happens *after* the Antichrist breaks the “holy covenant,” which triggers the Great Tribulation: “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [Jesus’ return] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [the Antichrist] is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

Paul also states that it will happen when the last trumpet sounds—the same trumpet Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:31: “The Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we [saved] who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the

twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51–52).

And finally, it is clear from the prophecies in the books of Daniel (c. 538 BC) and Revelation (c. 90 AD) that the saints—all those who have been born again—will be around in the Tribulation, because the Antichrist will war against them. In fact, several passages are even very specific about the length of this period.

“I was watching; and the [Antichrist] was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days [God] came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. ... He [the Antichrist] shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time [three and a half years]” (Daniel 7:21–22, 25).

Yes, the Great Tribulation is going to be a trying time, but God will turn it to our good and help us come through it victoriously. Concerning that time, Daniel writes: “The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many” (Daniel 11:32–33).

The Great Tribulation will also be a time when many people will turn to the Lord, as those who know their God and understand what’s happening will manifest great powers and win to God’s eternal kingdom many of those who are disaffected with the Antichrist and his regime. The Tribulation trumpets will signal judgments on the *wicked*—not the *just*, who will be under God’s seal of protection during this time.

“These [the great multitude standing before the throne of God and Jesus] are the ones who come out of the Great Tribulation” (Revelation 7:14). In other words, they were there during it. God will deliver His own *out* of trouble, not *from* it! •

THE RISE, REIGN, AND WARS OF THE ANTICHRIST

Daniel 11, Part 1

■ The prophecies of Daniel chapter 11 cover events that span more than 2,000 years—all the way from Alexander the Great to the coming would-be world dictator known as the Antichrist. Much of this chapter is very clear, such as its descriptions of certain characteristics of the Antichrist and his government, but other parts, such as the descriptions of the wars the Antichrist will wage to try to seize and hold power, are still mysteries. As with some other passages of Bible prophecy concerning the Endtime, we may not fully understand these until the events happen or are about to happen. We can speculate now, but we need to be careful to not get dogmatic. We need to leave ourselves open to other interpretations, as the Lord reveals them.

Daniel chapter 10 sets the stage for chapter 11. In about 538 BC, during the reign of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, Daniel had been fasting for three weeks when an angelic messenger appeared to him (Daniel 10:1–6). “I have come”—the messenger is speaking—“to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days”—the Endtime—“for the vision refers to many days yet to come” (Daniel 10:14).

The part of the vision that has to do with the Endtime begins at Daniel 11:21: “[There] shall

arise a vile person, to whom they [the predecessors of the coming world government] will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.”

The Antichrist is described here as a “vile person” because that is how God sees him. At this point, however, he will have the people of the world duped into believing that he is wonderful—their savior. What “they will not give [him] the honor of royalty” means is unclear, but it could be that he will exercise absolute rule in the style of ancient kings, but without the title. He rises to power peaceably, by means of intrigue—clever plotting and politics. The King James Version of the Bible uses the term “flatteries” in the place of “intrigue.” This would seem to indicate that he will use diplomacy and charm to weasel his way to power.

DANIEL 11:22—THE FIRST ANTICHRIST WAR?

Verse 22: “With the force of a flood they [the Antichrist’s adversaries] shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant.”

The Antichrist rises to power peaceably, but then uses force to crush his opposition and strengthen his position. This could be war, the threat of war, or the preponderance of arms,

but “the force of a flood” sounds a lot like war.

The phrase “and also the prince of the covenant” means that the Antichrist is also the prince of the covenant, *not* that the prince of the covenant is also broken. We know from Daniel 9:26–27 that the Antichrist makes a peace covenant (see below), and therefore the prince of the covenant is clearly the Antichrist.

Verse 23: “After the league [covenant, pact, or treaty] is made with him [the Antichrist, the prince of the covenant] he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people.”

The Antichrist is also referred to as the prince of the covenant earlier, in Daniel 9:26–27: “The prince who is to come ... shall confirm a covenant with many for one week [one seven-year period].” The signing of this covenant signals the start of the last seven years before Jesus’ Second Coming and the Rapture.

This league or covenant appears to be a peace accord, as well as some sort of religious pact—possibly one that tackles the thorny issue of coexistence between Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the Mideast, and by which Jerusalem could be declared an international city with free and equal access

guaranteed to people of all faiths. This covenant could also clear the way for the Jews to finally be able to rebuild their Temple on Jerusalem's Mount Moriah and resume animal sacrifices on its altar—something that hasn't happened since the last Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. (In Daniel 11:31, the Antichrist puts a stop to the daily sacrifices, so obviously they must be resumed between now and then, and the signing of the covenant seems a likely time for that.)

Although the first war of the Antichrist appears to take place before the seven-year covenant is signed (verses 22–23), it does not specify who the Antichrist is warring against. If this war is centered in the Mideast, as some speculate, it is likely to involve Israel and the large U.S. military presence in the region.

“He [the Antichrist] shall act deceitfully.” He will be very clever and deceptive, “for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people”—or “a small people,” as the Hebrew *ma'at* is translated in the King James Version. This could mean that the Antichrist rises to power through his popularity with the “small” or poor people of the world, the masses, due to his political and economic policies, or that he does it with the help of a “small” elite group of insiders.

Verse 24: “He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he

shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time.”

“He shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches” sounds like he will distribute the wealth to win the support of the poor in the countries he conquers. So does the phrase found in verse 39, where it says he will “divide the land for gain”—possibly meaning political gain. “He shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers.” Throughout history, very few conquerors have distributed the wealth or divided the land among the poor. The notable exception is communism. Perhaps he will ride the wave of a resurrected move toward world communism.

DANIEL 11:25–26—THE SECOND ANTICHRIST WAR?

The Antichrist's military adversary comes into the picture in verse 25: “He [the Antichrist] shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for they [the Antichrist and his forces] shall devise plans against him.”

It sounds like the king of the South has an even greater force than the Antichrist at this point. Again, if this war is centered in the Mideast, it is likely to involve Israel and the U.S. forces in the region.

Verse 26: “Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain.”

The tide of battle turns when the king of the South is betrayed by some of his own people, perhaps as a result of the Antichrist's plans mentioned in the previous verse.

This war probably takes place after the signing of the covenant (verses 22–23), but before it is broken and the Great Tribulation begins (three and a half years after the covenant is signed), since those events don't happen in this account until verse 31.

Verse 27: “Both these kings' hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time.”

Apparently the Antichrist fights one war to get into power and makes the covenant (verses 22–23), fights another war with the king of the South (verses 25–26), and then the two sides go through the motions of making peace—possibly reaffirming allegiance to the covenant.

Verse 28: “While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage [“exploits” in KJV] and return to his own land.”

The Antichrist doesn't break the seven-year covenant at this point, but he is about to, ostensibly because others aren't keeping it.

(To be continued)

THE RISE, REIGN, AND WARS OF THE ANTICHRIST

Daniel 11, Part 2

■ *In Part 1 of this article, the prophet Daniel (circa 538 BC) began to recount a vision concerning the “latter days”—the Endtime, in which we are now living. The first part of the vision describes in some detail the coming world dictator known as the Antichrist, as well as the first two wars he will wage to seize and try to hold on to power. But there is more to come. ...*

DANIEL 11:29–31—THE THIRD ANTICHRIST WAR?

Verse 29: “At the appointed time he [the Antichrist] shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter.”

It’s somehow going to be different this time, but again it sounds like war because it says in the next verse...

Verse 30: “Ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.”

“From Cyprus” could mean “from the *direction* of

Cyprus”—from the west, in other words.

Verse 31: “Forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.”

This is a key verse because, together with Daniel 9:27, it tells us that three and a half years after confirming the seven-year covenant, the Antichrist will break it when he forcibly enters the Jewish Temple (soon to be rebuilt on Mount Moriah, Jerusalem), “takes away the daily sacrifice,” and places there something called the “abomination of desolation” (also referred to in Revelation chapter 13 as the “image of the Beast”).

Five hundred years after Daniel gave this prophecy, when Jesus’ disciples asked Him what would be the signs of His return and of the end of the world, He cited this development. “When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ... then there will be great tribulation, such



as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:3,15,21).

It seems that three wars precede the breaking of the seven-year covenant—one before it is made, one at some point during the first three and a half years, and one that ends with the breaking of the covenant.

TRIBULATION TYRANNY AND TRIUMPHS

Verses 32 through 35 deal with the next three and a half years—*after* the covenant is broken: “Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for

many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.”

Although much of the world will continue to follow the Antichrist, some people are going to be desperate for the truth, and those who know God’s Word and are faithful witnesses for the Lord are going to teach and encourage millions.

“The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.” In spite of all that the Devil’s forces will do to try to stop them, mil-



“THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEIR GOD SHALL BE STRONG, AND CARRY OUT GREAT EXPLOITS.”

lions of God’s children will keep going for Him till the very end.

Verses 36 and 37: “Then the king [Antichrist] shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.”

The Antichrist is going to be so full of pride that he will try to exalt himself above everyone and every “god”—even the one true God Himself. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 says the Antichrist will oppose and exalt himself “above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

The Antichrist “shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall

be done.” Revelation 13:5 parallels this statement, and also tells us how long this will go on: “And he [the Beast, or Antichrist] was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months [three and a half years].”

Verse 38: “But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses [or “god of forces,” as the Hebrew *ma'owz* is translated in the King James Version]; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.”

This “god of forces” could be armaments, and the fact that the Antichrist will honor this god with “gold and silver” could refer to his military spending. That’s nothing new, because even the empires of Daniel’s day made a “god” of power and spent much of their empires’ revenue on armaments and maintaining their armies. What *is* new in the last couple of generations is nuclear arms—“a god which his fathers did not know.” □
(To be continued)

THE RISE, REIGN, AND WARS OF THE ANTICHRIST

Daniel 11, Part 3

■ *In Parts 1 and 2 of this article, the prophet Daniel (circa 538 BC) recounted a vision concerning the “latter days,” also known as the End-time—the time in which we are living. In verses 21 through 38, Daniel described in some detail the coming world dictator known as the Antichrist, as well as the first three wars he will wage to seize and try to hold on to power. But there is still more. ...*

VERSE 39: “Thus he [the Antichrist] shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.”

This “foreign god” could turn out to be the image of the Beast, which is described in Revelation 13:14–15: “He [the Antichrist’s false prophet] deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the Beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the Beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was

granted power to give breath to the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the Beast to be killed.”

This image is likely to be an incredibly high-tech supercomputer accessing massive unified databases containing detailed personal information on most of the world’s population and linked to the Antichrist’s telecommunications network. Through the image of the Beast, a universal economic and financial system will be instituted. The number 666 will somehow be central to this system.

Revelation 13:16–18: “He [again, the Antichrist’s false prophet] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.”

DANIEL 11:40–42—THE FOURTH ANTICHRIST WAR?

Verse 40: “At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.”

This war takes place during the three-and-a-half-year Great Tribulation—probably near the end because the Antichrist meets *his* end just a few verses later—and is once again fought between the king of the North (the Antichrist) and the enigmatic king of the South (possibly U.S.-backed Israel). Daniel could only use terms he was familiar with to describe the modern warfare he saw in this vision—tanks and personnel carriers as chariots, massive air strikes as a whirlwind, and so on.

Verse 41: “He [the Antichrist] shall also enter the Glorious Land [Israel], and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.”

Edom, Moab, and Ammon are contained in modern-day Jordan.

Verse 42: “He shall stretch out his hand against the countries [that sided with the king of the South], and the land of Egypt shall not escape.”

Verse 43: “He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels.

“He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver” indicates that the Antichrist will hold economic control, which we also know to be the case from Revelation 13:16–18 and other passages. “The Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels” means that these countries will be subservient to the Antichrist.

DANIEL 11:44—THE FIFTH ANTICHRIST WAR?

Verse 44: “But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.”

That sounds like either another war, or a continuation of the war described in verses 40 through 42, and probably happens near the end of the Tribulation. If this is another war—the fifth war of the Antichrist—it seems it

is against eastern nations.

“News from the north” could mean a threatened coup or other problems of dissent in his own country, or possibly troubling developments in North America.

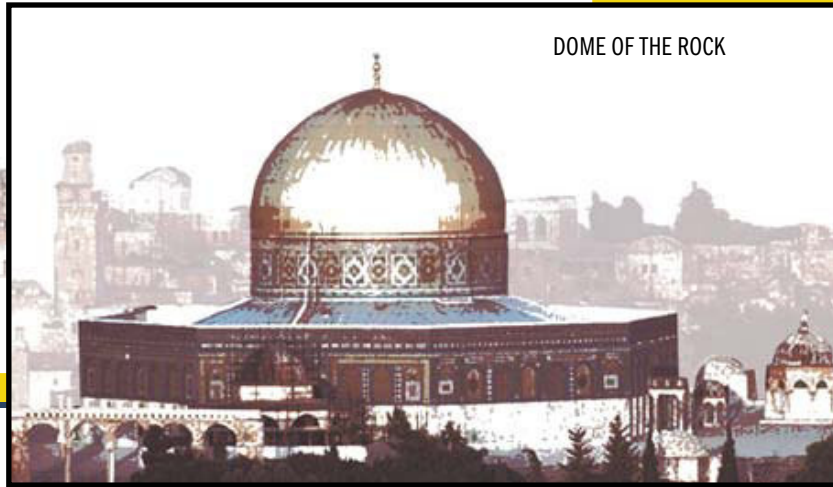
“He shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.” This could be the war—possibly nuclear—in which the Antichrist and his allies obliterate “Babylon,” as described in Revelation 14:8; 17:16; and chapter 18. This war probably takes place not long before Jesus’ return and the Rapture.

Verse 45: “And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.”

The “glorious holy mountain” is Jerusalem’s Mount Moriah. That doesn’t necessarily mean that the Antichrist waits until this point to set up his headquarters on Mount Moriah; it’s just an acknowledgment of what he most likely did three and a half years earlier when he broke the covenant, placed the image of the Beast in the Temple area (Daniel 11:30–31), sat in the Temple claiming to be God, and abolished all religions other than worship of himself (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4)—these events triggering the Great Tribulation.



“Yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.” At Megiddo, overlooking the plains of Armageddon in northern Israel, the Antichrist musters his armies for his greatest campaign against the nations that still oppose him, but Jesus and His heavenly army, including the resurrected believers from throughout the ages, intercede by returning to earth and utterly destroying the Antichrist and his forces at the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty (Revelation 16:12–16; 19:11–21). He then ushers in 1,000 years of peace on earth—a period known as the Millennium. The happy beginning! ■

ENDTIME
INSIGHTS

ACCORDING TO BIBLE PROPHECY, the event that will clearly mark the start of the Antichrist's seven-year reign is the signing of a pact or "covenant": "He [the Antichrist] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week [seven years]" (Daniel 9:27a). Because the pact is called a "holy covenant" in Daniel 11:28–30, it appears to have something to do with religion or religious rights.

One widely held view is that the covenant will, in part, make it possible for the Jews to rebuild their Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. The rebuilding of the Temple is an important Endtime event because it is crucial to the fulfillment of other key Bible prophecies, some of which also involve the ancient Jewish practice of blood offerings, which can only be carried out in the Temple in Jerusalem. (Blood offerings ceased in 70 AD, when the Romans razed the last Temple.)

There is now a drive in Israel and among Jews worldwide, spearheaded by the Temple Institute situated in Old Jerusalem, to rebuild the Temple. There have even been

reports that much of the Temple has already been prefabricated and is waiting to be assembled. The Temple Institute has also already fabricated the sacred vessels and garments to be used in the Temple, and has these on display in their headquarters. Photographs of some of these can be viewed on the Temple Institute Web site: <http://www.templeinstitute.org/main.html>.

The first Temple was built under the direction of King Solomon and dedicated in 960 BC (1 Chronicles 22:1–19; 1 Kings, chapters 5–7). To facilitate the building of the first Temple, a retaining wall was built around the summit of Mount Moriah, and the area inside the wall leveled. Part of this retaining wall—referred to in recent centuries as the Wailing Wall—remains today. The foundation of the ancient Temple's altar was the rock upon which Abraham started to sacrifice Isaac. After looting the Temple during his first attack (2 Kings 24:13), Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar burned it to the ground in 586 BC (2 Kings 25:9,13–17).

Cyrus, king of Persia (which conquered Babylon), authorized the return of the Jewish captives, the return of the Temple vessels Nebuchadnezzar had looted, and the reconstruction of the Temple, which was finished in 516 BC (Ezra, chapter 1).

In 19 BC, Herod the Great, the Rome-appointed client-king of Judea, began enlarging and beautifying the Temple complex. The project was completed in 64 AD, during the rule of Agrippa II. The Temple was razed by the Romans only six years later, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24:2: "Do you not see all these [temple buildings]?"

THE TEMPLE AND THE LAST SEVEN YEARS

BY SCOTT MACGREGOR AND JOSEPH CANDEL

Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

In 687 AD, Abd al-Malik, the fifth Caliph of the Arab Umayyad dynasty, built a shrine called the Dome of the Rock over the rock that he believed was previously the altar rock in the Jewish Temple—a site that is also sacred to Muslims because it is from here that the prophet Muhammad is believed to have made his *miraaj*, or night journey, into the heavens. The Dome of the Rock still stands—and this is the crux of the problem: The Muslims would never agree to the destruction of the Dome of the Rock so the Jewish Temple can be rebuilt on this site, and it is extremely unlikely that the Jews would ever consider rebuilding their Temple anywhere else.

We don’t yet know how this conflict will be resolved, but it could happen with the Antichrist’s seven-year covenant. And because Jerusalem is the most holy city to the Jews, as well as the third most holy city to the Muslims (after Mecca and Medina), and also holy to Christians, it’s possible that the covenant will declare Jerusalem an international city and assure free and equal access and worship to people of all faiths.

Two recent developments are particularly significant to Bible prophecy, and both are related to the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple: In January 2005, the Sanhedrin—the highest ruling body and court of justice among the Jewish people in the time of Jesus—convened for the first time in 1,600 years. Two weeks later, on February 9, 2005, the Sanhedrin began to

consider the rebuilding of the Temple and reinstitution of ancient animal sacrifices as commanded in the Law of Moses.

The most difficult problem is to determine exactly where the previous Temple’s foundations are. The Sanhedrin determined that there are only two viable theories. One

Not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

holds that the Temple stood where the Dome of the Rock now stands. The second theory holds that the Temple stood north of the Dome of the Rock. Dr. Asher Kaufman developed this second theory, based on certain archeological findings. If the second theory proves true, that means the Temple can be rebuilt alongside the Dome of the Rock, without disturbing it.

The fact that a reestablished Sanhedrin is now considering the rebuilding of the Temple after 2,000 years is extremely important to Bible prophecy. Are we nearing the final events that will lead up to the Second Coming of Jesus? It certainly seems so! •

> MORE ON THE COMING ECONOMIC CRASH



MORE AND MORE
ECONOMISTS ARE SAYING
THAT AN ECONOMIC CRASH
IS INEVITABLE.

TODAY'S NEWS HEADLINES OUGHT TO READ "JESUS IS COMING!" BECAUSE THAT'S THE REAL STORY BEHIND WHAT'S HAPPENING. Wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes—"distress of nations"—and dramatic increases in technology and scientific knowledge are all among the signs that Old Testament prophets and Jesus Himself said would herald His return (Matthew 24:3–12; Daniel 12:4; Luke 21:25).

One of the next world-changing events that we can expect is an economic crash far worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s. You can hear the first rumblings in the news all the time.

The total federal U.S. debt is quickly approaching \$8 trillion. In 1981, when the federal debt first topped \$1 trillion, then President Ronald Reagan declared that sum "incomprehensible" and likened it to a stack of \$1,000 bills 67 miles high. Today the stack would be over 500 miles high. To finance its current account deficit with the rest of the world, the U.S. has to import or borrow about \$2.6 billion every working day.

More and more economists are saying that an economic crash is inevitable. Stephen Roach, chief economist at the international investment firm Morgan Stanley, has long warned that America's increasing reliance on foreign lending puts it at risk of a major economic crisis. A sudden drop in the value of the dollar could

trigger, among other things, a stock market crash, a plunge in the real estate market, a deep recession, or all of the above. “The funding of America is an accident waiting to happen,” Roach wrote in a report. The International Monetary Fund warned that the colossal U.S. trade deficit was like “a noose around the neck of the economy,” emphasizing that the once-mighty dollar could collapse at any moment. Alan Greenspan, head of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board, has warned that the deficit in U.S. trade with the rest of the world can’t be sustained indefinitely.

The U.S. can’t go on living on borrowed money forever, saying, “I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow” (Revelation 18:7). As economist Paul Krugman put it, “Things that can’t go on forever, don’t.” America’s financial preeminence is based on the dollar’s role as reserve currency, a role threatened by the dollar’s long downward slide in value as the result of trade and budget deficits. The dollar’s 30 percent tumble over the past few years has stirred concern about a potential dollar rout that could destabilize the global economy.

This is much more serious than a simple decline in the value of the dollar. Any decision by Asian central banks to move significant parts of their foreign exchange reserves out of the

dollar and into the euro or other currencies in order to protect themselves from dollar depreciation will likely produce a melt-down of the American economy. Already reports indicate that two-thirds of the world’s 65 central banks have “begun to move from dollars to euros.” A falling dollar also causes global investors to get nervous. After all, who wants to be stuck with investments in a currency worth less and less? If major global investors start pulling out of dollars, there could be a run on the dollar. Accordingly, most economists agree that a severe economic downturn in the United States would drag the rest of the world down with it. Economist Josh Bivens says, “If a country as big as the U.S. gets sick, *everybody’s gonna get sick.*”

Another problem is that if the major oil producers convert from the dollar to the euro as the currency of payment, the American economy will sink almost overnight. If oil is traded in euros, then central banks around the world would be compelled to follow and America will be required to pay off its enormous \$8 trillion debt. That, of course, would be doomsday for the American economy, and the economies of other nations would fall like dominos.

When the crash happens, it could be the ideal opportunity for the coming Antichrist world government to take power.

The world will be in such dire financial straits that they will welcome the Antichrist rule and hail him as a hero, since he will cunningly persuade the nations to cooperate with his plan for solving the economic situation (Daniel 11:21,24).

Eventually the world’s present cash-based economic system will be replaced by the “mark of the Beast” economic system, under which no one will be able to buy or sell unless they receive the enigmatic mark of the Beast in their forehead or right hand (Revelation 13:16–17). This will be made mandatory halfway through the Antichrist’s seven-year reign (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; Matthew 24:15,21). Then, after the next three and a half years under the Antichrist’s oppressive rule—a period known as the Great Tribulation—Jesus will come “on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” to rescue His own out of this world (Matthew 24:29–31; Revelation 1:7), and return a short while later with His army of saints to destroy the Antichrist and his evil forces in the great Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12–16; 19:11–21). Jesus will then set up His kingdom on Earth, and there will be truth, love, joy, peace, and plenty for all in a world without money and without marks (Daniel 7:18; Revelation 20:6; Isaiah 2:4; 11:6–9; 14:7; Habakkuk 2:14). ■

MORE ON THE RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST

WITH EACH
CRISIS THE
WORLD
POPULATION
IS MORE AND
MORE READY
TO SCREAM,
“WHO WILL
SAVE US
FROM THIS
MESS?”

AT FIRST THE ANTICHRIST WILL APPEAR TO BE THE POLITICAL SUPERMAN THE WORLD HAS BEEN WAITING FOR, BECAUSE HE WILL BRING ABOUT WORLD PEACE AND ECONOMIC STABILITY. Most people will see him as a peacemaker and a wise and winsome popular leader. “He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest [richest] places” and “obtain the kingdom by flatteries”—or “intrigue,” as the Hebrew *chalaqlaqqah* is sometimes translated (Daniel 11:24,21 KJV).

But before the world will accept a one-world government and supreme leader, the world situation will have to be pretty desperate—and peace and safety don’t make people desperate. War, terrorism, economic collapse, and disasters will all help create the climate for the Antichrist’s “peaceful” takeover.

The Antichrist and his agents are working to bring chaos on the world, lining things up for the grand entrance of the false savior, the Antichrist. By capitalizing on the effects of economic, political, and natural disasters, they keep pushing things in that direction.

Why can’t someone put a stop to the suffering and war in Africa—starvation and massacres in Sudan, Somalia, the Congo (DRC), Uganda, and other places? Why does Haiti stagger from one catastrophe to the next? Why are the rich so very rich and the poor so very poor? How can nations get away

with oppressing their own people or wantonly attacking other nations without consequences? Will there ever be a solution to the continual carnage in the Mideast? How can the religions of the world work together and put a stop to their followers killing each other?

Through nonstop media coverage, the people of the world are constantly confronted with these questions. And in all of these matters the nations of the world, as well as the United Nations, have proved ineffective.

When the world teeters on the edge of another global war or catastrophic economic collapse, what then? With each crisis the world population is more and more ready to scream, “Who will save us from this mess?”

When the time is right, the Antichrist will offer the solutions. “We need to come together more,” he will declare, “and I have just the plan to make it happen!”

The Asian tsunami of December 2004 was one of many signs of the End, as foretold by Jesus in His explanation of events leading up to His second coming:

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various

places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:6–8).

“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:25–26).

Like other disasters that grab the world’s attention, the tsunami also helped to prepare the way for the Antichrist through widespread cries for better warning systems and greater monitoring of the environment. While often helpful to that end, systems are also being put into place that can accomplish dual purposes. Those who seek to unite the world under one government have no problem with using technology to more closely monitor the world, and what serves can also enslave. Little by little, the Antichrist is readying himself for the inevitable day when he will be revealed.

“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [the Antichrist] is revealed. ... The coming of the lawless one [the Antichrist] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:1,3,9).

“When the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king [the Antichrist] shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. Through his cun-



ning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes [Jesus]; but he shall be broken without human means” (Daniel 8:23–25).

In the meantime, anything that causes widespread fear and concern plays into the hands of the Antichrist and his cohorts. People who believe they are about to drown will accept any lifesaver they are offered—even if it’s in the form of a world government and demigod leader.

Current events, tragic and terrifying as they may be, are all part of God’s Endtime plan, and the sooner they play out the sooner Jesus will be able to return to put an end to all suffering, sorrow, pain, and evil. Then and only then will truth and justice prevail, and then at last “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). ■

THE KING'S RETURN

**THIS TIME
HE'S NOT
COMING
AS A MEEK
AND MILD
BABE IN A
MANGER,
BUT AS THE
ALMIGHTY
KING OF
KINGS.**

When He came to our world nearly 2,000 years ago, He and His message of love and salvation were rejected by the leaders of His own people. Yes, they wanted a savior, a messiah, a great king, but not one born in a barn and raised as a poor carpenter, who chose humble fishermen, tax collectors, drunks, and prostitutes as His friends and followers. Few of the rich and powerful of His day were interested in the freedom of spirit He offered to those who would receive the truth He spoke. They only wanted freedom from Rome and Roman taxes. Nor did they desire the eternal treasures and rewards He promised to all who would believe in and follow Him. They wanted a messiah, a king who could make them a wealthy and powerful material kingdom there and then.

This man, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Creator of the universe, said, "All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). He could have taken over the world and made Himself king in one day! He told the Roman governor before whom He was tried, "You could have no power over Me at all, unless it was given to you by My Father" (John 19:11). And He told Peter, "Do you think that I cannot now pray to My

Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53).

When He hung dying on the cross where He was crucified, and the religious leaders taunted, "You saved others. If You're really the Son of God, save Yourself" (Mark 15:29–32), He could have done that. But He chose to die for you and me!

After He rose from the grave, He could have shown Himself to the high priests, the governor, or Caesar himself. He could have proved to them and the world that He was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah, and He could have forced them all to worship Him. Instead He appeared only to those who already believed in Him and loved Him, in order to comfort them and encourage their faith.

For 2,000 years He and His Kingdom have remained unseen to this world, manifested only in the hearts and lives of those who love and receive Him by faith. This is the mystery that many of His own people in His day couldn't understand, and that many today cannot seem to grasp: He offers each of us a choice to receive or reject Him. This is still the Age of Grace, of choice, when we must believe His Word and receive Him by faith.

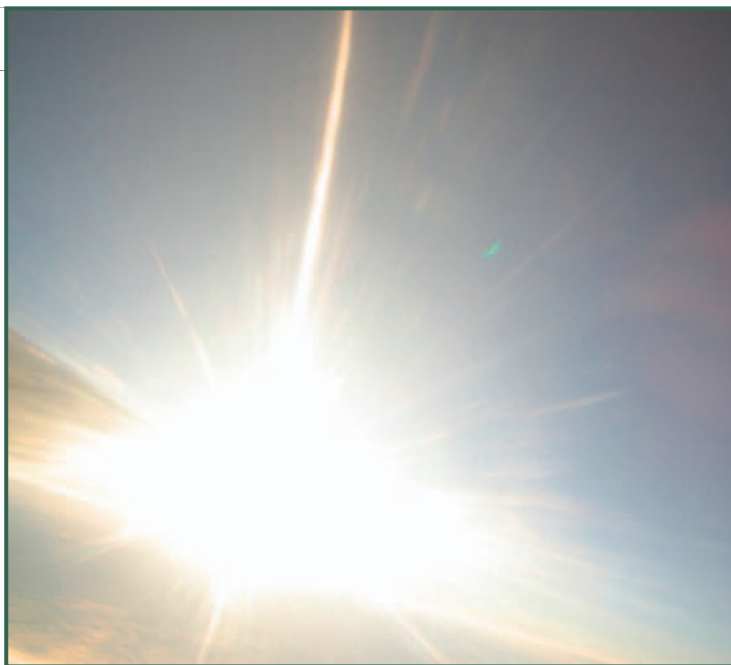
But the day is coming very soon when this present age will be over and all the

world will “see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29–31). For He has promised to come again, and according to numerous fulfilled prophecies describing world conditions immediately before Jesus returns, the time is at hand. We are now living in the final “Last Days” of man’s cruel and destructive rule on earth.

In fact, from all indications, the last seven years of man’s rule are almost upon us. This period will begin with the rise of a totally godless one-world government that will be led by a Devil-possessed dictator, the Antichrist. This imitation messiah will at first bring peace—but peace at a price: enforced worship of himself during the final three and a half years of his reign. This time is known as the “Great Tribulation” (Daniel 8:23–25; 9:27; 11:21–45; Matthew 24:15,21; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12; Revelation chapter 13).

Jesus said, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days ... the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the [wicked] will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29–30). This time He’s not coming as a meek and mild babe in a manger, God in the hands of man, but as the almighty King of kings, and it will be man in the hands of God.

The trumpets of God will sound and Jesus’ mighty voice will thunder from the heavens, “Come up!” and all of His saved children will be caught up together with Him in the clouds, rising in immortal victory over the forces of the satanic Antichrist. When Jesus returns, a tremendous miracle takes place: the resurrection of believers.



The bodies of all of the saved people who have ever died will be instantly resurrected and come bursting out of their graves, and all of us believers who are still alive will be raised with them to meet Jesus in the air (Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:51–57; Philippians 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Revelation 11:12).

Then we will all fly away with the Lord to the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in Heaven (Revelation 19:6–9). It will be the greatest party ever held—a wonderful reunion with the Lord and all of our loved ones, our victory celebration. Meanwhile, the Antichrist and his followers will be left to suffer the wrath of God, hell on earth, until we return with the Lord to finally take over the world at the Battle of Armageddon and set up His Kingdom of love on earth—the happy new beginning!

Will you be ready to meet Jesus when He soon returns? The way to enter the Kingdom of Heaven is to let the King of Heaven, Jesus, enter you. You can have Jesus and His heavenly love in your heart right now by simply praying this little prayer:

Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died for me. Please forgive me for all my sins and give me Your gift of eternal life. Amen. ■

(Since John Weaver wrote this article for the Family International in 1985, nearly two million copies in poster format have been distributed worldwide.)

THE TECHNOLOGY NEEDED TO INSTITUTE THE COMING “MARK OF THE BEAST” ECONOMIC SYSTEM, as foretold in the Bible, is progressing rapidly. So is the media campaign that will help put it in place. As governments worldwide debate the use of microchips in national ID cards and passports, as RFID (radio frequency ID) chips gain more widespread use commercially, and as microchip implants in pets and even humans become more common, new questions are being asked and old debates are being reopened. This month’s question:

ANSWERS TO YOUR endtime QUESTIONS

By Joseph Candel

Could national ID cards be the mark of the Beast?

The British government has begun issuing passports containing biometric identifiers (such as iris patterns or fingerprints), and Parliament is debating a bill that would make national ID cards compulsory in 2008. Lawmakers in the U.S. and other countries may follow suit. These ID cards are not the mark of the Beast, as the Bible plainly states that bearers will receive the mark of the Beast in their right hands or on their foreheads.

“He [the Antichrist’s government] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [or “in”] their right hand or on [in] their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666” (Revelation 13:16–18).

These ID cards are, however, preparing the way. The more people get used to some new government regulation, restriction, or provision, the more they tolerate it and eventually just learn to live with it. What may at first seem unthinkable and raise howls of protest, later becomes accepted by a few, then many, then most. And that’s how the Antichrist and his agents will capitalize on these compulsory ID cards to prepare the world for what’s next.

Once national ID cards become the norm in parts of the world where they were previously unknown, the next step will be to sell the public on the advantages of microchip implants over plastic cards—convenience, security, cost effectiveness, better law enforcement, and so on—and that it’s time to switch to the Verichip¹ or something similar. Once the Antichrist’s government makes the mark of the Beast mandatory (Daniel 11:31; Matthew 24:15,21; Revelation 13:14–18), what better way to carry it out than microchip implants? Our present currency-based economic system will then be obsolete, because the chip will be capable of linking electronically to everyone’s personal financial records.

As far as we know, national ID cards are not the mark of the Beast. Neither is the Verichip. Both of these are, however, precursors of the mark of the Beast. ■

¹ VerichipTM is a rice-size injectable microchip. It is a product of the U.S. company Applied Digital Solutions, and is already being used to monitor pets, convicts, Alzheimer’s patients, and children, and by the military, police, and fire departments for ID purposes. It is also being used in place of membership cards at some trendy nightclubs and resorts. These applications will be expanded, and other applications are sure to follow.



RELIEF

for the Developing World

BY JOHN WEAVER

ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS MANY POOR NATIONS FACE TODAY is the so-called “debt crisis.” They unwisely borrowed billions of dollars from the richer nations, thinking that these loans would enable them to produce more goods and make more money and then they’d pay back their debts, but the rich who loaned them all of this money surely must have known that the poor countries would never be able to pay them back. The Bible says, “The borrower is servant to the lender” (Proverbs 22:7), and that’s the real reason why the rich loaned them the money in the first place—to make slaves out of the poor.

Even though some of this borrowed money has helped the

poor nations to produce more goods from their factories and farms, the rich countries have selfishly refused to pay fair prices for these goods, forcing the debtor nations deeper into debt. This heavy burden of debt is crushing many of the poor nations, causing more people to be without jobs, more people without enough food, and more disease, misery, and unhappiness than ever.

But thank God, relief is on the way in the form of God’s love and salvation! After Jesus’ return (the “Second Coming”), Heaven will come to Earth, literally. The great golden city foretold in the Bible—a city over 2,000 km (nearly 1,500 miles) wide, high, and long—will descend from God to Earth, and at last there will be peace and plenty for all.

But before this can happen, the Bible tells us that there must first arise a Devil-possessed dictator, the Antichrist, who will set up an anti-God world empire and rule for seven years (2 Thessalonians 2:1–9; Revelation chapter 13).

Then, at the end of the Antichrist's reign, Jesus Christ will return "in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory" to rescue the "saved"—all those who have received Him as their Savior (Matthew 24:29–31). The bodies of the saved who have died will be resurrected, and the saved who are still alive will be instantly changed and rise up to meet Jesus in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:15–18). Then all the saved will go with Him to a great victory celebration in Heaven.

Meanwhile, the armies of the Antichrist will gather in Israel to fight the armies of the nations who have refused to yield to his government. But Jesus will return again—this time with the armies of Heaven—to conquer and destroy the Antichrist's worldwide kingdom and to rescue all those who are fighting against him in the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:13–17; 19:11–21).

The Lord and His heavenly forces—His angels and the resurrected saved—will then work together with those on Earth who survive the Battle

of Armageddon to build a wonderful new world, the Kingdom of God on Earth. At last, "Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven" will be a living reality (Matthew 6:10). This period will last for 1,000 years, and is therefore known as "the Millennium."

It will truly be one world, ruled in love by the King of kings, Jesus Christ Himself. There will be no more war, no more poor, no more cruel and unjust governments, and no more oppressed developing world then—only a beautiful, glorious, just, and merciful reign of Heaven on Earth by Jesus and His angelic and saintly servants who will police and govern the Earth's people.

Would you like to be one of the supernatural, resurrected citizens of God's Kingdom who will rule with Jesus over all the Earth in that day? Well, you can be! All you have to do is receive Jesus, God's Son, as your personal Savior by asking Him to come into your heart. You can do it right now by praying the following prayer:

Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died for me. Please forgive me for all my sins. I now open the door of my heart and I ask You to come in and give me Your gift of eternal life. Amen. ■

When does the mark of the Beast begin?

BY JOSEPH CANDEL

T

he book of Revelation predicts that before Jesus' return a world dictator known as the Antichrist will rise to power and rule for seven years. He will abolish all religions and insist that the world worship him. He and his chief minister, whom the book of Revelation refers to as the "false prophet," will also institute the "mark of the Beast" in an effort to exercise total economic and political control.

The mark of the Beast will begin to be enforced halfway through the Antichrist's seven-year rule, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. That conclusion is based on the following Bible passages:

"He [the false prophet] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [or "in," as in the King James translation] their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or

sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666" (Revelation 13:16–18).

We also know that the Antichrist will sign a seven-year pact or covenant, which he will break at the halfway mark: "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week [seven years]; but in the middle of the week [3½ years] he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering" (Daniel 9:27).

Next, we know that after the Antichrist breaks the covenant his false prophet will erect something called the "abomination of desolation" in the "holy place"—presumably in or near the soon-to-be-rebuilt Jewish temple on Mount Moriah, in Jerusalem. "Forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation" (Daniel 11:31).

Five hundred years after Daniel gave that prophecy, Jesus' disciples asked Him what would be the sign of His return and of the end of the world, and Jesus cited this development, among others. "When you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ... then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ... Immediately after the tribulation of those

days ... they will see the Son of Man [Jesus] coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:15,21,29–30).

This brings us back to our opening passage, Revelation 13:16–18, about the false prophet enforcing the mark of the Beast economic system, under which no one will be able to buy or sell without the mark. Again, it seems fairly certain that this will begin to be enforced halfway through the Antichrist’s seven-year rule, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

At this point we can only speculate what form this mark will take, but it could very well be a tiny computer chip or radio frequency identification tag (RFID) that is implanted under the skin and linked to a database containing the bearer’s personal and financial information.

How far away is this? It’s impossible to say just yet, but considering the present rate at which technology is advancing, it could happen soon. For nearly 2,000 years, ever since the apostle John wrote this passage about the Antichrist’s worldwide economic system, such a thing had been inconceivable. Now, with computers and the Internet, electronic banking, and the increasing globalization of the world’s markets and economies, it’s not so inconceivable after all! In fact, it looks like the logical next step—and that’s what the Antichrist is counting on.

With the VeriChip¹ and RFIDs receiving more widespread use and publicity, the campaign to sell the world on the chip implant idea is underway. The technology needed to carry out the Antichrist’s plan for worldwide economic control, however, is not yet in place. He cannot control the buying and selling of the entire world until there is an integrated electronic banking network with common, universal standards. That’s in the future, but considering how rapidly things are moving in that direction, it may be the relatively near future. □

¹ VeriChip is a rice-size injectable microchip. It is a product of the U.S.-based company Applied Digital Solutions, and is already being used to monitor children, convicts, pets, Alzheimer’s patients, and others, as well as to provide ID in government agencies and trendy nightclubs and resorts. Other applications are sure to follow.

NIGHT & DAY

After the darkest night in world history, we are going to have the brightest dawn! The fast-approaching night is going to be the nightmare of the Great Tribulation, and the day, the coming of Christ.

Things have got to get worse before they can get better, but in spite of the horrors of the growing darkness of this world, we know that it’s all going to work out right in the end. The darkest hour is just before dawn!—And the faster it gets worse, the sooner it’s going to get better! So keep looking up!

We have to go through a dark place of trials and tribulations, but then we’re going to come out into the sunshine on the other side and all these things will be blotted out like an evil dream! One of these days Jesus is going to stop the world and we’re going to get off, away from all this worldly confusion and into the peace and the quiet and the beauty and the love and the wonder of that wonderland beyond in heavenly places with Him! Just a little longer, then dawns His glorious morning!

—DAVID BRANDT BERG

Tribulation Triumphs

The Great Tribulation, the last three and a half years of the Antichrist's rule that immediately precedes the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, is sadly misunderstood by many people. They envision the Tribulation as a time of complete defeat and a terrifying time of hell on earth for all believers in the true God. But I can prove from the Bible that this is *not* the case, thank God!

FIRST, HERE IS THE APOSTLE MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT of what Jesus told His disciples about the Tribulation and the events leading up to it.

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation' [the image of the Beast—an idol of the Antichrist], spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand). ... then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."

—Matthew 24:3–15, 21

Yes, it's going to be a time of awesome and terrible events, but God's people are going to have even more awesome powers to protect and defend and deliver and keep them going right to the End! Yes, it's going to be a time of great persecution and great battles, but we don't need to fear the Tribulation, because if we're God's, He's going to take care of us somehow.

He's also going to use mighty men and women, His prophets and prophetesses, to lead His people and, with supernatural help from Heaven, protect them from the Antichrist and his forces as they continue to proclaim the truth until the day that Jesus returns, when "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up ... to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

"The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits" (Daniel 11:32). The people who truly know Jesus are going to be strong, in spite of the Antichrist and in spite of persecution! The worse things get, the more God's Spirit is going to be poured out from on high to help us withstand the evil forces that will be warring against us. "As your days, so shall your strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25).

All through the Bible there are stories about how the Lord miraculously empowered and protected His prophets and people, so I'm sure our power is going to be tremendously increased and magnified and multiplied during the End-time. God is going to give supernatural powers to those who believe in, know, and follow Him, so that they will be able

By David Brandt Berg

**ALTHOUGH THEY WILL BE DIFFICULT DAYS, GOD'S
PEOPLE ARE GOING TO SHINE BRIGHTER WITH THE
TRUTH THAN THEY HAVE EVER SHONE BEFORE.**

not only to defend themselves, but even to attack the forces of the Antichrist.

Revelation chapter 11 describes two of God's Endtime witnesses who will have power to bring curses and plagues upon the wicked and to actually call down fire from God to devour their enemies. What a picture of mighty men and women of God fighting victorious battles over the minions of Hell! The Antichrist won't be able to stop these two until just three and a half days before Jesus returns. The Antichrist will finally be allowed to kill them, but as the wicked are rejoicing over the two witnesses' deaths, suddenly Jesus will return in His glory to resurrect and rapture them and the rest of the "dead in Christ," the saved from all ages (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:51–54). It will be a mighty triumph for God's people, showing that He holds power over death itself.

I think these two witnesses of Revelation chapter 11 are also symbolic of all those who know and side with God. I believe they'll all have "power for the hour" in that day to help them survive as long as possible. The apostle Paul wrote, "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Romans 5:20). And where satanic power is going to abound, God's power is going to abound much more to protect His own. God's purpose is not going to be defeated. He's going to have millions of witnesses right up to the End.

God's Word makes it very clear that He will defend His own during those last three and a half years, not only by

means of the mighty powers He will give them, but also by means of monsters and plagues that He will send to afflict their enemies. In Revelation chapters 8 and 9, we read about the "trumpets of Tribulation" and the mighty judgments that they unleash—horrible monsters released from the "bottomless pit," sent by God to torment the wicked—but He commands them not to hurt those who have the seal of God in their forehead (Revelation 9:4). When God lets loose those pestilences and plagues and monsters on the people of the Devil, the wicked, the wicked will be so busy in their futile attempts to defend themselves that they won't have much time to persecute the righteous. They may catch up with and kill some of God's people, as they are sworn to do so to those who refuse to take the mark of the Beast and worship the Antichrist—some will suffer martyrdom, even as some do today—but a host of God's people are going to march triumphant, protected by God, straight through the Tribulation!

So don't look ahead to the Tribulation as a horrible defeat with nothing but persecution and suffering. There will be some of that, but I'm convinced from both Scripture and the nature of God and His dealings with man that it's going to be primarily a time of great victory over the forces of Satan—a tremendous triumph over the anti-Christ wicked. Although they will be difficult days, God's people are going to shine brighter with the truth than they have ever shone before.

If you belong to Jesus and are following Him closely, you'll have what it takes when the time comes. You'll have power for the hour and every hour—the supernatural, miraculous power of God. The forces of God cannot be defeated, and the plan of God cannot be frustrated. If you're on God's side, you're bound to win. You *can't* lose. God's going to take care of you and use you like you've never been used before! ■



BIG

change coming

AN INTERVIEW WITH GOD ON THE ENDTIME

INTERVIEWER: *Here we are in the third millennium since Jesus was on Earth. People have been going on about the end of the world for around 2,000 years, and probably longer. Yet this old world just keeps plugging along. I think people have gotten a little tired of hearing about the end of the world.*

GOD: Just because they are tired of it doesn't mean it won't happen.

I think people picture the stereotypical doomsayer, someone a bit off his rocker, wearing a sandwich board sign that says, "The End Is Near." I think people can be excused if they disregard this kind of thing. Just because a kook or two says this, it doesn't mean that what they are saying isn't fairly close to the truth.

So You are saying that the end is near?

The end of the world as you know it, yes!

Please elaborate on the "as you know it." What is going to happen?

Do you want the good news or the bad news?

I am relieved to hear there are both. Perhaps if You just listed it sequentially, that would be best. Very well. There is a lot of detail, but for clarity and simplicity I'll just hit the highlights. As many would agree, the Earth has gotten into pretty bad shape. Its resources, especially water, are being used up at a rate that is not sustainable. So even if things were not heading for a climax according to the timetable that I set up at the beginning, something would have to be done. But because there is global disaster looming, not just ecologically but economically and militarily—a fact acknowledged in many quarters—these factors will help propel humanity into forming a united world government.

Like the United Nations.

No. The United Nations is just an organization with representatives from all nations but with little real authority—more or less a glorified debating society. What I am saying is that the nations will come together to form a world government that has the power to implement what it decides worldwide.

This sounds a bit far-fetched. Nations are not going to be that ready to surrender their sovereignty.

Nations already are. Many surrendered sovereignty over their economies long ago when they had to implement economic plans dictated to them by supranational institutions such as the IMF. Others, such as the nations of Europe, have surrendered parts of their sovereignty in order to form regional unions with other nations. So that bridge has been crossed.

Okay, say they do this. A united world government doesn't sound like a bad idea. At least it could put an end to wars, allow for equal distribution of resources, etc.

Don't kid yourself. Most wars in the world today are wars within nations, civil wars, and there is not a nation on Earth that doesn't exhibit great disparity between rich and poor. So all that talk about peace and equality being instituted if the nations of the world were united under one government of man is just hot air.

But we'll still get a united world government according to what You just said.

Yes, you will.

Every government, even a world government, has its head.

Exactly, and do you know who is going to be at the head of this one?

You?

Ha! No, not yet. The world is going to turn the reins of government over to a brilliant man who will command respect and allegiance from all.

A good leader for a change. Sounds like just the ticket.

That is what everyone—well, almost everyone—is going to say at first. But this man has a sinister secret. He is known by many names, but the one that is the most well known is “the Antichrist.”

That doesn't sound very flattering. Why would he want to call himself the Antichrist?

He doesn't. But I have called him that, and the many millions of Christians who are aware of his imminent arrival on the world stage will recognize him for who he is and will so label him.

With a name like the Antichrist, I suppose he must be the antithesis of the real Christ.

Exactly! And it doesn't take a lot to conclude that if he is the Antichrist, he must therefore be getting his signals from a very different direction than Jesus did. As Jesus was God in human flesh, so, in parody, the Antichrist will be the Devil in the flesh.

Why would we choose the Devil in the flesh to be our world leader?

Because humanity will be both duped and desperate. Most will not recognize him for who he is, but will rather see in him someone with the ability and clout to rescue the world from its desperate situation. He will have already proven his worth by sorting out some very difficult issues and will already be acknowledged as the most astute politician and able problem-solver of the day.

Why will we be that desperate?

Because the world's economic and political conditions will be in turmoil. A worldwide economic crash will not just result in economic hard times, but also the disintegration of stable government. The world will be calling out for strong leadership, and in this man they will get it.

—To be continued in the next issue of Activated

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HERE COMES THE

ANTICHRIST

PART 2 OF AN INTERVIEW WITH GOD ON THE ENDTIME

Interviewer: *What role will the Antichrist play in future world events?*

GOD: The Antichrist becomes the leader of the coming world government. By his initiative, several measures are introduced. One is a comprehensive settlement governing the Middle East, primarily centered on the relationship of Israel with its neighbors.

What kind of agreement will this be?

This pact will have a seven-year term with the intention of it being reviewed and renegotiated at the end of that period. The pact, among other things, will deal with the issue of Jerusalem, particularly with regards to the coexistence of and access to the shrines and places of worship of the major monotheistic religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. It will therefore earn the label “the Holy Covenant,” a name by which it is known in the Bible.

So You're saying that the Antichrist starts off doing this really great thing in order to gain favor with the world, even the Christians? He's certainly going to win a lot of public admiration if he actually succeeds where so many have tried and failed before. That's part of his plan.

But since these events are referred to in the Bible, shouldn't that set alarm bells ringing in the heads of Christians?

Many unfortunately don't know the Bible well enough to realize this. But for those who do, these events should and they will try to warn others. But by this time events will be rolling and the program of world government will have gained such momentum that protest will not be brooked.

You mentioned other measures instituted by this world leader. What are these?

As most astute observers will notice, even though a majority of people might disagree with a

government on many issues, as long as the economy remains good, they will usually put up with what they have. So the world government's number one priority will be the economy. Today, an enormous amount of capital flows electronically throughout the world. Nations are no longer alone in deciding their fates. These are now in the hands of international investors and speculators. Speculation on a nation's currency or a sudden withdrawal of investments can bring a nation to ruin in days. This tactic will be used to trigger a global economic collapse.

Won't people be ready to toss this Antichrist and his government out then?

To the contrary, people will demand that he intervene. To achieve recovery, the world government will bring to its ultimate conclusion the present digital trend in the world's economy.

Electronic commerce.

Not just electronic commerce, a total electronic economy! In the new economy it will not be efficient to mint coins or paper currency or use other paper securities. The swiftness with which transactions are made on an institutional level will need to be able to be utilized by the smallest entity in the economy, the individual. In order to do this, everyone will need a unique identity number by which his transactions will be logged. To assure that the number remains unique to that person and can be used by no one else, the number will be encoded in a microchip implant along with other vital statistics and data on the individual and then inserted under the skin on the right hand.

Like the implants now used in pets.

Yes, similar to those. This implant will go through many upgrades as further, more sinister uses are found for it. Eventually models will be produced to be inserted in the frontal lobe of the brain. You can only imagine what purposes that will be put to. This is the famous Mark of the Beast, the number 666 being associated with each individual's unique personal identity number.

This system will coexist for a while with current financial systems, even cash, but eventually all who wish to buy or sell or

transact any business whatsoever will need to convert to this Mark-of-the-Beast system.

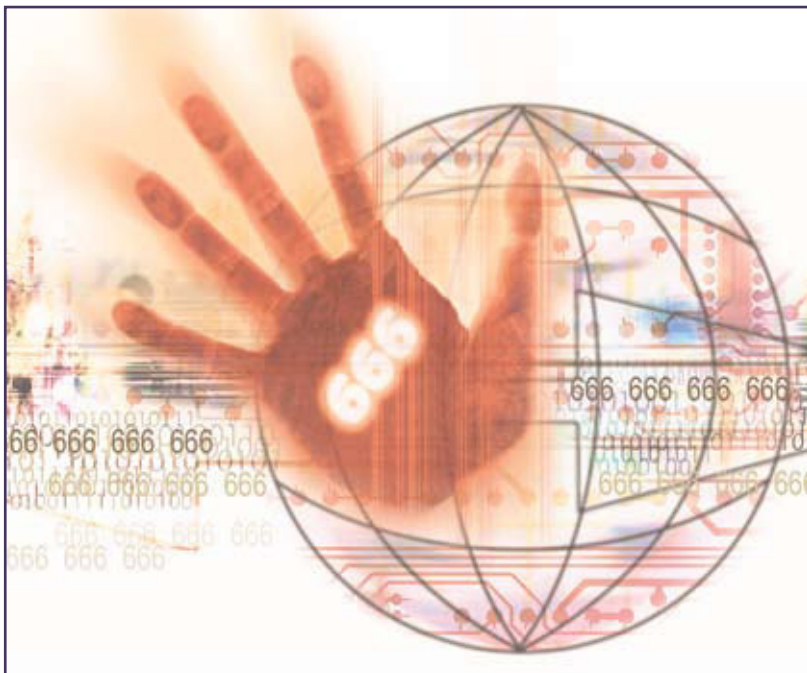
Aside from Your obvious inference that this is bad, there seems to me to be lots of advantages to just such a system.

If there weren't obvious advantages, people would not buy into it. There are a lot of advantages as far as convenience and ease of purchasing and conducting other financial transactions, and that is why people will be willing to sacrifice their privacy. But that is the candy coating. The Mark will not just be for financial purposes, but it will be integrated into every aspect of life,

so it will be made increasingly difficult to survive without this official registration. Then this world government will curtail personal freedoms in the interest of the "overall well-being of the masses" and will demand complete compliance to its rules and dictates, and eventually even worship of its leader. ■

—To be continued in the next issue of *Activated*

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WORLD FORECAST:

TROUBLE AND TRIUMPH OUT OF TRIBULATION

PART 3 OF AN INTERVIEW WITH GOD ON THE ENDTIME

Interviewer: *At what point will the coming Antichrist's world government curtail personal freedoms and demand complete compliance to its rules and dictates, and eventually even worship of the Antichrist?*

GOD: Three and a half years after the signing of the Holy Covenant. The continuing squabbles and even wars between its signatory nations and entities will provide the pretext for the Antichrist, the arbiter, to declare the Covenant void and declare a type of international martial law. At that point, he will proclaim himself free from any constitutional restraints and assume dictatorial power. The Mark of the Beast will be declared mandatory, and anyone not receiving it will be regarded as an outlaw. It is at this point that the period called the Great Tribulation will begin.

Will that be a time of enormous trouble for everyone, or just these "outlaws"?

It will be a time of trouble for everyone. The Christians by now would have wised up to what is happening, but many of them will be in quite a state of shock. Many people of other religious persuasions will also be in active opposition to the Antichrist, as will libertarians who don't want to have anything to do with his system. Whole nations will rebel, and there will be wars between the armies of the world government and these nations. There will also be an increase in natural disasters and plagues, as some of man's genetic engineering projects go awry and produce mega-insects and other biological freaks. It will be a world in chaos and confusion.

But why let it happen?

Man will have achieved his ultimate civilization: a united world government and economy based on his technological wonders. Yet it will lead the world to the brink of ultimate disaster. It is man at his pinnacle, but it will show just what a lousy job he does. It is the ultimate demonstration that, left to his own devices, man will make a terrible mess out of things.

But this isn't man on his own, right? I mean, we end up with the Devil for our leader. No wonder it is such a disaster.

Humanity as a whole chooses the Devil to be its leader.

But won't humanity be forced into it?

Manipulated, but not forced. Each individual will have a choice, and many will choose not to follow him.

Well, there You go. Not everyone goes down the merry path to destruction, so the world is not all bad.

I didn't say the world was all bad. I said that humanity as a whole, when left to its own devices, will make a hash of it. But there are those who will remain in resistance to the Antichrist and his government.

How will they survive if the regime is so totalitarian and the economy so controlled that they can't buy or sell?

In some areas the situation will be looser than others. It is a big world, and the Antichrist and his government will have a hard time controlling it all.

Am I right in supposing that Your sympathies are with the rebels?
Exactly. I will be helping them and will eventually rescue them.

Why "eventually" and not right away? You mentioned earlier that many Christians don't expect to be in the middle of all of this.

Why leave them in it?

For the same reasons there are Christians in the world today. Their purpose is to be an example of their faith, to tell others about Jesus and to bring them into My kingdom. During the Great Tribulation, this will be needed more than ever.

But a lot of them aren't exactly good examples of their faith now.

Unfortunately not, but they really won't have much choice then. They will have to either stand up for what they believe or become part of the Antichrist's system. They will soon find out that the Antichrist won't tolerate them, so they will have to cast their lot in with the rebels.

Okay, we have the Great Tribulation happening. What next? I hope there is a bit of an upswing.

The Great Tribulation will last for approximately three and a half years; one thousand two hundred and sixty days, to be precise. Then Jesus will return in the clouds with all the host of Heaven. Everyone will see Him as He circles the globe calling all His people to come to Him. Then will be the great Rapture I spoke of earlier, when all those who have received Jesus into their hearts, dead and alive, will rise to meet Him in the air.

I even have a bit of trouble flying in an airplane, but here You have people flying up to meet Jesus. I hope You do a number on me, otherwise I'm going to have to keep my eyes closed the whole time.

Don't worry! You'll find that you will have a new, transformed, superhuman body, similar in style to what you have now, but greatly improved and enhanced and impervious to harm. In these new and eternal bodies, all who believe will rise up into the sky in a mighty wave.

They will then be taken to the centerpiece of Heaven, the Heavenly City, where they will join with all those in Heaven to celebrate this great deliverance and victory in an event known as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. It will truly be the most



wonderful occasion to date held in Heaven.

Meanwhile on Earth, the troubles will intensify and multiply dramatically. Many people will die and still more will wish to die to get away from the horrible plagues and disasters that will be occurring.

What about those who were in the rebel resistance who were not Christians? It hardly sounds fair if they get caught up in all this too.

I will protect them during this time. It is during this period that the Antichrist will amass his forces to try to annihilate the main force of the remaining rebels. Battle will be joined on the plain of Megiddo in Israel. This is the famous Battle of Armageddon, a battle so fierce and terrible as to dwarf all other battles in its ferocity and carnage. It is in the midst of this battle that the forces of Heaven, under the leadership of Jesus Himself, will intervene and annihilate the Antichrist and his forces. The Antichrist himself will be captured and cast alive into the very depths of Hell. The Devil also will be imprisoned in his own special jail known as the Bottomless Pit.

Gripping stuff! With those two baddies out of the way, I guess we all go back to Heaven and live happily ever after.

We live happily ever after, but not just confined to Heaven.

How so?

It is at this point that Earth is given over to the personal rule of Jesus and those who follow and love Him. For the next thousand years, it will be run the best way. There will be much to do to restore its damaged environment and to try and turn the world back into the Edenic state that it was in the beginning.

I suppose the cities will need a lot of repair as well, after all that they would have gone through.

As a matter of fact, I am not so keen on fixing up the cities. At least the major ones. I think the world is better off without them.

Without them? Where will we live? Uh oh! I sense that the answer is obvious. We are not all going back to the farm, are we, for goodness sake?

You don't like the farm?

Farm life is okay once in a while on a weekend maybe, but living there?

Don't get too excited. There will still be urban centers, but they won't be the huge, overcrowded cities of today. They will be smaller, more intimate, more humane, and I assure you much more pleasant to live in. If farm life really isn't your cup of tea, there will be lots of alternatives.

And this lasts for a thousand years.

That's right.



So this is the good news You talked about at the beginning? The beginning of it.

There is more?

Goodness gracious, yes! A thousand years is a drop in the bucket of eternity. This thousand years of peace and plenty and love and happiness is only the prelude.

I assume things only get better from then on.

Yes. There is a minor hiccup at the end of the thousand years, but that is all in the plan.

A hiccup?

It's all under control, so don't worry.

But a hiccup? Want to elaborate on this? What happens after the thousand years?

Let's just say the best is yet to come.

—To be continued in the next issue of *Activated*

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“WE SHALL BE CHANGED!”

What Your Resurrection Will Be Like

By David Brandt Berg



BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY,”

the apostle Paul wrote to a group of Christians in the Greek city of Corinth. “We shall not all sleep [be dead], but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet [Jesus’ Second Coming]. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we [who are alive] shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ... Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’” (1 Corinthians 15:51–55).

Paul also said that our spirits are immediately present with the Lord when we die (2 Corinthians 5:8), so in this passage he is explaining the bodily resurrection of the dead.

It’s pretty hard to explain how a spirit can rejoin a body that’s been in the grave for years—possibly even hundreds or thousands of years—and come to life and be perfectly whole, even better than it was before. Paul says it’s going to be like the difference between a seed and what the seed becomes once it has germinated and grown to maturity (1 Corinthians 15:36–44). How are you going to explain that transformation?

Our resurrection bodies are going to be new and different, and yet they’ll be close enough to the ones we have now that we’ll recognize each other: “Then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12). The disciples recognized Jesus after He was resurrected, but not always. He was different enough that sometimes they didn’t recognize Him (Luke 24:13–16, 31; John 20:14–16). That was either because He didn’t want to be recognized at the time, or because

He was more beautiful and more perfect, because He had a new spiritual body that would never die—and that’s the kind of body you’re going to have! You’re going to be like Jesus was and is now, since His resurrection. He “will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious [resurrection] body” (Philippians 3:21).

Were Jesus’ followers able to see Him after He was resurrected? Yes! Were they able to usually recognize Him? Yes! Did He walk and talk with them? Yes! He even cooked for them and ate and drank with them (Luke 24:43; John 21:9–14). Jesus was able to do all these normal, natural things, and in your new resurrection body, so will you. Think of that!

But that’s not all. You’ll also be able to do some things you can’t do in your natural body. When His followers were in a locked room for fear of those who had crucified Him, Jesus



walked right *through* the locked door (John 20:26). Another time, when He had finished talking with two of His followers on the road to Emmaus, He “vanished from their sight” (Luke 24:31). You’ll be able to walk through walls and doors and appear and disappear, just like Jesus did. You’ll also be able to travel from

or what you’re doing, you’re suddenly going to notice a wonderful change and look to see that you’re wearing a beautiful new robe of righteousness!

Actually, you may be so preoccupied with what’s happening in the sky—lightning and thunder and Jesus appearing in the clouds—that you may not even

ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 4:13–14). That includes *you*, if you’ve received Him! It also includes all of your departed family members and friends who are saved. So don’t worry that you’ll never see them again; you’ll meet in the air. What a family reunion—the biggest ever!

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). □

YOU’LL BE ABLE TO WALK THROUGH WALLS AND DOORS AND APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR

one place to another, not merely at the speed of sound or light, but at the speed of *thought*.

“We shall all be changed!” The main thing that’s going to be changed is your body, but if He’s going to change your body, He’s certainly going to change your clothes. You’ll be clothed in a robe of light, a robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). Just think, no matter where you are

notice what you’re wearing. But you’ll sure *feel* different because you’ll “be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump” (1 Corinthians 15:52). At the sound of that trumpet you’re going to be raised from the dead, if you are dead, or raised from the earth if you’re still living.

In another epistle, Paul writes: “I do not want you to be



BEYOND

THE HICCUP

AN INTERVIEW WITH GOD ON THE ENDTIME
LAST OF A FOUR-PART SERIES

INTERVIEWER: *You were saying that after the Millennium—the thousand years of peace on Earth that will follow Jesus’ return—there will be a minor “hiccup,” but that it’s all in the plan. Please explain.*

GOD: At the end of those thousand years, the Devil is then freed from his prison in the bottomless pit and we have somewhat of a reprise of the Battle of Armageddon.

What! We go through all that again? Why does the Devil get released, for goodness sake? For the same reason that I let him hang around in the world today. He provides an alternative, and the people of this new world will once again have the freedom to choose which way they want to go.

So what happens? The Devil and his forces are again defeated—this time permanently. The Earth then gets a

complete makeover. The surface is burned up and recreated anew, becoming an even better and more splendid world.

So why not do this at the beginning of the thousand years? Seems like we work for all that time, or at least some do, and then it all goes down the tubes.

It got as good as it could get under the prevailing conditions. Don’t you want to see it improved?

Yes, without question, but why not do it right after the Battle of Armageddon? Why wait till this reprise, as You put it? It once again has to do with the training program for humanity. It is practice for the ultimate home I have for you.

Must be quite a place if we need to practice for a thousand years. You’re a bit hung up on that, aren’t you?

Well, it doesn’t seem to be that logical. I would think a hundred years max would be all we would need to practice. Besides, all those who started off at the beginning would be dead even before a hundred years are up, let alone a thousand. Doesn’t seem much point to it if you are still practicing when you die and never get to live out what you learned.

Who said you would die?

Common sense dictates that not a lot of people are going to live to be a hundred.

In the thousand-year period, things will change so much that people will think that you are still a child when you are a hundred.

Oh boy, that’s a big one to swallow. I am talking about normal people here, not the ones with the new super bodies You talked about earlier. Normal people won’t be able to live that long, will they?

If I work it out so they can, they can.

But the body naturally ages. The rigors of the environment take their toll also.

The environment does take a pretty bad beating before Armageddon and there is a lot of fix-up to be done. But all that is going to be taken care of during the thousand-year period, and the environment is going to get back into pretty good shape. Besides, you keep leaving Me and My power out of the equation. I am going to do a miraculous number on the human body, and it is not going to age like it does now.

So if I have things right, we've got the people who went up in the Rapture with new super bodies but then we also have the people who survive Armageddon getting a makeover too?

That's right. There will be those who survive on Earth through Armageddon. Those survivors will not necessarily get a makeover, as you called it, but with a few changes in the environment, the aging process will decelerate markedly. So although the initial survivors will benefit marginally, the real beneficiaries will be their children and their children's children.

What are all these survivors going to do? It sounds a bit like they all go back to the Stone Age.

(chuckles) That's not a very nice way to describe the nearly paradisiacal lifestyle that they will eventually enjoy.

I don't think a lot of people are chomping at the bit to go rural. Too boring?

Yes. I think many will think so. Got a better idea?

Most people go for the urban lifestyle.

Millions of people being lonely together? That is a better idea?

Not everyone is lonely. I admit that apparently a lot are, but most have some friends, at least.

Man was not designed to be an urban creature. Believe it or not, he was designed with a rural or at least semi-rural lifestyle in mind. Okay, I see the wheels turning in there, and you are going to say that I, knowing the future and all, should have been able to anticipate cities. Of course I did. But I still didn't design man for that. He functions best in a more quiet, peaceful, but regular life. Modern urban stress is a killer that is doing more damage than most people realize.

But You said earlier that the centerpiece of Heaven is a giant



city. Isn't this contradictory—that Your idea of Heaven is a city, but those on Earth need to live as country bumpkins?

“City” is perhaps not the best way to describe it, but it comes closest in your understanding. It is huge. Almost unimaginably huge. It is in the shape of pyramid, with a base of nearly five million square kilometers and an apex over 2000 kilometers high. Now I admit some of it might have the appearance of being urban, but there is a lot of parkland and open space in an area that big. And I assure you the lifestyle will be relaxed. Even though much work will still be done there, it takes place at a relaxed pace. But back to your apparent critique of My plan for Earth during those thousand years, I can assure you that people will enjoy life there—or at least most of them will.

Most, but not all?

There will be those who will not be satisfied. Just like Adam and Eve were not satisfied with what I had for them in Eden, so some people will not be satisfied in a world that will closely resemble Eden.

You would think we'd learn.

You would, wouldn't you? But take heart—those who have problems with it don't cause the whole thing to be lost to everyone.

So these are the ones that are involved in the “hiccup”?

Yes. When the Devil comes along at the end of the thousand years, they gladly follow him into another rebellion.

What then?

Well, I put an end to it pretty quickly.

I guess You sort of run out of patience with the bad guys.

You could say that. There is always a limit, and they will have reached it by then.

This brings up an aspect of Your nature that we haven't touched on in these interviews, the lightning-bolts-and-thunder side. There are accounts in the Bible of You causing the Earth to open up and swallow the wicked, raining fire and brimstone on cities, even flooding the Earth and killing all but a handful. This is all pretty terrifying for us mortals. How are we to reconcile this side of You with the kind and gentle side?

If I had sat back and not intervened so harshly, the results would have been far worse. The people involved had caused so much harm and hurt and suffering to others. I have to judge evil, else I would not be just.

This side of You is most evident in the Old Testament. Have You changed over time so that You don't do things so violently now?

I have changed My tactics, but My nature remains constant.

Tactics? That almost sounds like You are waging a war.

I am. There is a very big and violent war being waged for the hearts and souls of men. But this violence is in the spiritual realm. My battle is with My ancient adversary for the souls of humanity—and that battle is conducted person by person.

So You don't do these big cataclysmic things like You did in days past?

Man does a pretty good job of that all by himself.

But what about the Battle of Armageddon, or this hiccup [1000 years later], where the Devil starts a war all over again? That's pretty physical, isn't it?

Man initiates these conflicts by choosing to follow the Devil in the flesh, in the form of the Antichrist, or by choosing to rebel with the Devil in the hiccup we are talking about. When man has stepped so far out of line as to destroy himself, the planet, and many other people, I must step in to put things back in line. These wars only occur because of the choices of man.

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THE *woman,* THE **PRINCE,** *and* THE **DRAGON!**

By Scott MacGregor

A MYSTERIOUS WOMAN, A CHILD DESTINED TO BE A KING, and a hideous hydra-headed dragon. These are the principals in the mysterious book of Revelation, chapter 12. It reads like one of those fabulous mythological stories from antiquity. But it is not a myth. It is a true allegory of the past and the near future.

The apostle John, the author of Revelation, sees a beautiful woman in the heavens, clothed with the sun, wearing stars in her hair, and with the moon at her feet. She gives birth to a royal child as a dreadful fiery red dragon lies in wait to slay and devour. But before he can pounce, the child is whisked away into Heaven.

We are soon told that the dragon is Satan, the Devil, the notorious serpent from the Garden of Eden, and it becomes clear that the child who ascends into Heaven is Jesus. But who is the woman?

The first thing that comes to most people's minds is that she is Mary, Jesus' earthly mother, who gave birth to Him in a Bethlehem stable. Mary was, as said the angel who told her she had been chosen to bear God's Son, "highly favored" and "blessed among women" (Luke 1:28). But as we read further, it becomes clear that Mary does not fit the description of this woman. This heavenly woman is someone else.

The dragon tried to kill the child at birth. The Gospel of Luke tells us that King Herod, no doubt inspired by this Devil

dragon, tried to do just that. His assassination attempt was thwarted and he died a few years later, but not before he had shed the blood of many innocent children in his maniacal quest to kill the child who was foretold to become "King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:16–19). Jesus eventually did die so that we could all be saved, but He was resurrected three days later and spent another forty days on Earth being seen by hundreds of people before being "caught up into Heaven" (Acts 1:1–9; 1 Corinthians 15:4–7). He will return soon, after the

few remaining Endtime prophecies are fulfilled, to rule the world.

As John continues to describe his vision, he tells us that he saw a war in the spirit world. The great archangel Michael, who the prophet Daniel said would stand up for God's people in the last days (Daniel 12:1), led an army of angels in war with the Devil dragon. The dragon loses, and he and his army of fallen angels—the “third of the stars” that he had drawn out of the heavenly host—are cast down to the earth.

The Devil has always been the great accuser. He stands even today before God like a prosecutor before a judge and accuses humanity, especially those who have accepted Jesus' atonement for their sins, of crimes against God. The Bible's ancient book of Job confirms that he has been doing this since time immemorial.

“There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’ Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant

Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!’” (Job 1:6–12).

The Devil was right in his assessment of the vast majority of humankind. When extreme hardship hits, many of us have been guilty of waving our fists in the air and blaming God for our troubles. We are all sinners, but the Great Judge has already forgiven our sins. Still, the Devil hasn't given up trying to have us condemned. However, one day soon that will end.

After losing the cosmic battle to the forces of good, the Devil is cast down on the earth and can no longer accuse us to God. Heaven rejoices! But it is woe to the inhabitants of the earth because when the Devil is cast down he starts the 1260-day reign of terror that is called the Great Tribulation. The Devil can no longer tell God to condemn us, but he can

do everything in his power to hurt us. He knows his time is short, so he does his damndest. But he is damned, and just as he lost the fight in the heavenlies, he will also lose the war on Earth. Have no doubt about that! Good and God will prevail.

So who is the woman? The answer may surprise you! •

(Continued in the next issue of *Activated*)

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.”

—Revelation 12:1–10



PART

THE

Woman

THE PRINCE

and THE DRAGON!

By Scott MacGregor

The story so far...

A mysterious woman in the heavens gave birth to a child who was destined to rule the world—a child we soon realized was Jesus. The seven-headed dragon (also referred to as “the serpent”) was soon identified as Satan. The dragon tried to kill the child, but was prevented from doing so when the child was taken up to Heaven.

The dragon and the fallen angels who follow him were then cast down to the earth, after losing a great war in the spirit world. Satan was now on earth, no longer able to have access to the courts of Heaven where he had previously been the great accuser, and he was extremely wrath because the time that he would be

allowed to cause hell on earth was very limited.

While in the heavenlies, he was pictured as a seven-headed fiery red dragon. On each head was a diadem, or crown, symbolizing that each head was a king or kingdom. In the next chapter of Revelation we are told of a dreadful beast that also has seven heads, and in chapter 17 we are told plainly that these heads represent seven kings or kingdoms. At the time of John, five of these kingdoms had already fallen—that is, they had already come and gone—

one was existing in his time, and the last was yet to come (Revelation 17:10).

When we correlate this information with the book of Daniel, we can draw the conclusion that the five kingdoms denoted as “fallen” were, in chronological order, Egypt, Assyria, Neo-Babylonia, Persia, and the empire of Alexander the Great. All these had at times enslaved or conquered or been otherwise the masters of the Hebrews (later called the Jews), who were the people God chose to work through during the Old Testament era. The empire that was in power when John received this vision and wrote the book of Revelation was Rome, which had dominion over both Christians and Jews.

The one that “is to come” will be the final empire of the Antichrist.

From Rome until now, no empire has had dominion over all the world. (Of course, neither Rome nor its five predecessors had dominion over the entire world, but rather the known Western world or what was, from the Jewish perspective, considered civilized or important enough to be conquered.) This final empire of the Antichrist, however, seems to be global. “Authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation” (Revelation 13:7). So for one last time all or nearly all of God’s people will initially be under the dragon’s authority in the person of the Antichrist, but not necessarily under his dominion.

We also find out that the beast of Revelation 13 receives its power from the dragon (Revelation 13:2). So the seven heads of the dragon can be understood to correspond on a spiritual plane to the seven heads of the beast. And we are further told that the dragon, when he is cast down to earth, will inhabit the body of the man who will lead the final empire.

The dragon, through the Devil-possessed

Antichrist, turns upon the woman and she is given wings to escape into the wilderness, where she is fed and protected for three and a half “times.” Repeatedly we are told in Revelation and elsewhere in the Bible that the period of Great Tribulation will be 1260 days. We were told this in verse 6 of chapter 12, and we are told it more cryptically in verse 14. When 1260 is divided by $3\frac{1}{2}$, it comes to 360, which was the length of the ancient Hebrew year. So “times” means “years.”

The story resumes...

(Starting with Revelation 12:15.) The dragon spews out a flood to try to drown the woman, but the earth opens up and swallows the flood, and the woman is saved for now. What could this flood be? We know the Devil is a liar. In fact, Jesus called him the *father* of lying. “There is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). So if the Devil is living up to his reputation, then this flood could well be a flood of lies and propaganda against the woman. But, as so often happens with bad publicity, it is in one ear and out the other for the jaded public, who have heard it all before. It falls to the ground and is soon forgotten.

And they [God’s Endtime believers] overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.

Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

—Revelation 12:11–17

Even in the midst of this terrible time, the woman is fed and kept safe and away from the Devil in some place called “the wilderness.” What is the wilderness? It is a place, apparently, where the Antichrist can’t get to her, where his authority doesn’t seem to extend. It could be a literal wilderness—a place away from civilization—but it is more likely symbolic of any place beyond his effective reach, such as in developing countries where the lack of technological advancements would prevent full-fledged adoption of the Antichrist’s “mark” and global credit system.

There are some others, however, who keep God’s commandments and believe in Jesus who are a little more in reach. These are those who have remained in the Antichrist’s strongholds to carry out the important job of bringing twin truths—salvation in Jesus and the damnation of the Antichrist and his fanatical followers—to those who still want to know where the truth lies. The Antichrist will declare such people to be subversives, outlaws, and enemies of the state because they refuse to kowtow to his devilish tyrannical rule, and he will unleash persecution against them.

But the so-called subversives will win and the Antichrist will lose. As history has shown, though Christians have been viciously persecuted time and again, they have always emerged victorious in the end, while the regimes of their persecutors have been consigned to the dustbin of history. God cares for His people, and they will come through victorious, despite a difficult three and a half years and the most monstrous of enemies.

Who is she?

Who is this mystery woman? We know that she is persecuted during the Great Tribulation, so obviously she has to be alive then. And yet she was alive back in the day when Jesus was born. Therefore the woman is not one mere mortal, but something much greater.

Jesus was, in a sense, born from the body of believers. This body still lives today and will live right on through the Great Tribulation. She is a wonderful woman, clothed in sunlight and with stars in her hair. If you have received Jesus as your Savior, then you are a part of this woman, the True Church, the body of believers! ⇐

QUOTES ON MEDITATIVE PRAYER

The quieter the mind, the more powerful, the worthier, the deeper, the more telling and more perfect the prayer is.

—Meister Eckhart

How often do I come to God not with consumer requests, but simply with a desire to spend time with Him, to discern what He wants from me and not vice versa?

—Philip Yancey

Though my needs may drive me to prayer, it is there I come face to face with my greatest need: an encounter with God Himself.

—Philip Yancey

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

—Philippians 4:8

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow
strangely dim, In the light of His
glory and grace.

—Helen H. Lemmel



Heavenly Victory in the Great Tribulation

THE BIBLE WARNS US that a powerful world government will arise in the final days of man's dominion on Earth, led by a demonic dictator—the Antichrist—who will be possessed by Satan. The last three and a half years of his rule will be a time that the Bible calls the “Great Tribulation” (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14). This Antichrist government will use a universal electronic monetary system to try to cause everybody to come under the control of the Antichrist, because no one will be able to buy or sell without a personal account number, which the Bible calls the “mark of the Beast” (Revelation 13:16–18), on his hand or forehead. An image (idol) of the Antichrist will also be set up, and those who refuse to worship the image will be killed (Revelation 13:14–15).

But God's people will refuse to worship the Antichrist or receive his mark, and God will take care of them! (Revelation 12:6,14). Although some Christians will die as martyrs, the Antichrist will not be able to overcome them spiritually. The Lord says, “And they”—the Christians—“overcame him [the Antichrist] by the blood of the Lamb [Jesus] and by the word of their testimony; and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelation 12:11).

God's Word also promises that during this time “the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits,” and that “those of the people who

understand shall instruct many” (Daniel 11:32–33). In those days many will be seeking the truth and a way out of their desperate situations, and those who know the Lord and understand His Word will be able to explain to them what's happening. Those in the know will lead others to God till the very end.

The Lord has also promised to come to His people's defense. Revelation chapters 8 and 9 talk about horrific plagues that God will send to punish the wicked and thwart most of their attempts to hurt His people. The Lord is also going to give many of those who believe in Him miraculous powers to defend themselves, survive, proclaim the truth, and lead others to Him right up till His return (Revelation 11:3–6).

So don't worry about the Great Tribulation! It's not going to be some kind of a lopsided, rampaging victory for the Devil. God's people are going to win supernatural victories over the Antichrist and all of his powers. ⇐

SUPERNATURAL POWERS

By Scott MacGregor

IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

JUST THE THOUGHT OF LIVING THROUGH THE TRAUMATIC ERA REFERRED TO IN THE BIBLE AS THE GREAT TRIBULATION, the “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time” (Daniel 12:1), is enough to make most of us uneasy, to say the least. And if we didn’t have God on our side, it would be a most frightening prospect. But the fact of the matter is that if you are a believer, then you *do* have God on your side. Knowing that you have the biggest guy on the block on your team is comforting, even when the other side that is lined up against you looks nearly invincible. The book of Revelation calls the Antichrist “the Beast” and explains, “All the world marveled and followed the Beast, saying, ‘Who is like the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?’” (Revelation 13:3–4).

But looks can be deceiving, and in this case we are dealing with the arch-deceiver himself, Satan, the power behind and ultimately *in* the Antichrist. Both Satan and the Antichrist, fortunately for us, have Achilles heels. Their doom is already sealed and they are the ultimate losers—a destiny they cannot escape, no matter how much they pretend otherwise. “The Beast was captured, and ... cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20). The Devil will be similarly disposed of, first for a thousand years and then permanently (Revelation 20:2–3,10). We can definitely take comfort in knowing that they will lose in the end and we will win.

There are some dark days ahead for believers in Jesus and for the world in general, but even in those trying times we will not be left to fend for ourselves.

The Bible makes it clear that we will be given a great deal of protection and that even the horrible plagues and monsters described in the book of Revelation will actually be directed against and torment the Antichrist and his followers, *not* those who love and serve God. Jesus' Endtime followers will be divinely protected (Revelation 7:2–3; 9:4).

Revelation chapter 11 talks about the exploits of two prophets of God who live in this Endtime period. An angel tells John, who wrote down the book of Revelation: “I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth” (Revelation 11:3).

And John continues:

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

Now when they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our

Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. (Revelation 11:4–12)

The angel is initially clearing up some of the mystery that surrounded a passage in the Bible that was written some 500 years earlier by the prophet Zechariah:

I answered and said to [the angel], “What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?” ... Then he answered me and said, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” So he said, “These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.” (Zechariah 4:11,13–14)

Ironically, John's mother had once asked Jesus if her sons James and John could have the honor of sitting on either side of Him in His kingdom:

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons [James and John], kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father." (Matthew 20:20–23)

So John was finally learning from this angel who the two people would be on either side of Jesus' throne in His kingdom. But what is more important to note, especially for those of us who could be alive during the time of these two prophets, is the *supernatural powers* they will manifest. These two defiantly stand up against the Antichrist and his forces, and the prophets' enemies will not be able to harm them until their mission is accomplished—and their very public mission will take place right in Jerusalem, the apparent capital city of the Antichrist government.

Will these powers be limited to these two prophets, or will Christians in general be able to avail themselves of similar if not identical powers when they need them?

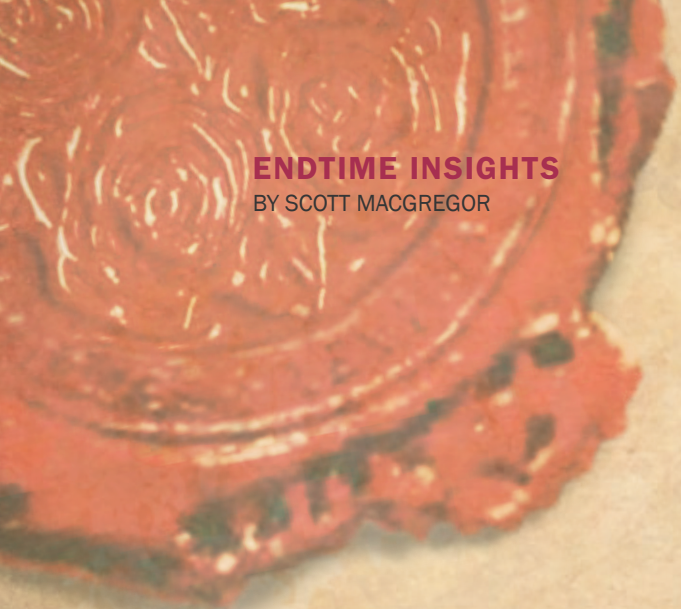
There are biblical precedents for people having special powers when they needed them. God backed up Moses' warnings to the Egyptians by sending

plagues until Pharaoh relented and let the Israelites leave Egypt (Exodus chapters 7–12). Elijah called down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice on the altar on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:17–39), and again, in an example of heavenly protection, to slay two companies of soldiers that had been sent by the wicked King Ahaziah to arrest him (2 Kings chapter 1). And when the King of Syria sent an army to capture Elisha, God sent a heavenly army in fiery chariots to protect him and to temporarily blind every man in the enemy army (2 Kings 6:8–23).

These demonstrations of power from on high weren't solely for the sakes of Moses and his fellow Hebrews in Egypt, or Elijah, or Elisha, or the others involved, we are told. "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

If God has done it before, why wouldn't He do the same again to protect those who love and serve Him in the treacherous time of the Great Tribulation ahead? It seems He will, because clearly there are going to be a lot of us still here when Jesus returns to take us home to Heaven in the Rapture, at the time of His Second Coming.

There is also a promise that is specifically made to Christians in the Tribulation period: "The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits" (Daniel 11:32). Jesus has a vested interest in each of us because He loves us, and He and all the forces of Heaven will be fighting for us. Even though they will for the most part be unseen, they will not let us down. The apostle Paul wrote, "For [Jesus] Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5–6). ◀



ENDTIME INSIGHTS

BY SCOTT MACGREGOR

SEALS AND SIGNS

I'VE READ BOTH MATTHEW 24 AND REVELATION 6 MANY TIMES, but it wasn't until the other day that I was struck by how the events foretold in those two chapters of the New Testament run in parallel.

[Jesus' disciples asked,] "What will be the sign of Your coming [return], and of the end of the age?"

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against

kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:3–14)

In Revelation chapters 4 and 5 the apostle John recounts how he had been transported in the spirit to God's throne room, where Jesus, represented as the Lamb of God, had been given a scroll sealed with seven seals. In chapter 6 these seals are opened.

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals. ... And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to Him, and He went out conquering and to conquer. (Revelation 6:1–2)

We believe this horseman to be none other than Jesus. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples and gave them what has come to be known as the Great Commission: "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere" (Mark 16:15 TLB). They and millions of Christians since have taken that Good News into all nations and led hundreds of millions, if not billions, to God. So through His followers, Jesus has

fulfilled and continues to fulfill this part of the prophetic vision. “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world” (Matthew 24:14).

Then the second seal is broken.

Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. (Revelation 6:4)

This red horse is clearly a war horse. The rider’s great sword represents armaments, and the horse’s red color is indicative of the blood shed through the centuries by the warmongers who have ridden it. In Matthew 24, Jesus tells His followers that these wars of man, as horrible and destructive as they are, do not signal the end of the world as we know it.

The third seal is broken.

I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice ... saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.” (Revelation 6:5–6)

Traditionally scales have been associated with two things: justice and commerce. Here they represent the latter. A denarius was a silver coin of the ancient Roman Empire and typically a laborer’s daily wage. However, historical records show that a denarius should have bought 15 to 20 times more wheat than the amount mentioned in the verse. Barley was regarded as an inferior grain and therefore considerably cheaper. That these staples were so expensive is indicative of scarcity—perhaps the famine of Matthew 24. Olive oil and wine were also

common commodities in John’s day, but why the voice said not to “harm” these is unclear.

The fourth seal is broken:

And behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:8)

Here we see death in several of its many forms, including war and famine again. In the second sentence of this verse, some translations render “death” as “plague” or “disease.” The souls of the dead pass into the unseen spiritual realm, which the ancient Greeks and Romans called Hades. “Famines and pestilences in various places” (Matthew 24:7).

Then the fifth seal was broken:

I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest

a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed (Revelation 6:9–11).

Certainly this goes along with Jesus' statement: "They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake" (Matthew 24:9). Christians have suffered persecution and martyrdom from the beginning, just as Jesus Himself did, and just as He said would happen to His followers: "'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake. (Revelation 6:12)

Like war, famine, and pestilence, there have been earthquakes both before and after Jesus' Endtime discourse in Matthew 24 and the vision He showed John in the book of Revelation. However, that this particular earthquake is represented by one of the seven seals would seem to indicate that it is special—perhaps the earthquake of all earthquakes that is described in Revelation chapters 11 and 16, which levels one tenth of Jerusalem and many other places in the time of God's wrath on the Antichrist and his forces, right before Armageddon.

When Jesus described these things in Matthew 24, He explained that these are only the "beginning of sorrows." The Greek word translated as "sorrows" here is more precisely translated as "a pang or throe, especially of childbirth." Labor pains continue to intensify right up to the time of delivery, so we can expect things to get even worse before they get better. But they will get better.



It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains. ... He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; 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. (Isaiah 2:2,4)

The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked. ... The whole earth is at rest and quiet. (Isaiah 14:5,7)

At the end of this age, which isn't far off, Jesus will return to set things right and usher in a new age, the thousand-year period known as the Millennium, during which love and peace will reign supreme. ♦

If you haven't yet met the Prince of Peace, Jesus, you can right now by praying the following prayer:

Jesus, I want to know You personally, so I invite You to come into my heart. Thank You for dying for me, so I could be forgiven for my sins, find peace of heart and mind here and now, and receive God's gift of eternal life. Amen.

Activated: What do we know about the Antichrist, the future world dictator whose coming is foretold in the Bible? Is he living now and perhaps already working behind the scenes to bring about his plan for world economic and political domination?

Joseph Candel: Recent developments indicate that the Antichrist's system is already being set in place, based on technology that will allow him to achieve and enforce his near total control of the world and its people.

A key Bible passage about this is Revelation 13:16–17: The Antichrist's regime “causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [or “in”] their right hand or on [in] their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

Imagine what the apostle John must have thought when, in about AD 90, he saw a vision of this taking place in a futuristic world. People ever since have been baffled as to how such a universal, totalitarian economic system could be established or policed. But now the age of technology has arrived. With electronic money rapidly replacing cash,

and with virtually everything that is bought and sold being identified and tracked by bar codes, RFID chips, and other means, it is no longer inconceivable that the financial transactions of everyone in the world could one day be monitored by a central agency.

Most of the technology already exists, but before the Antichrist's plan can work, it needs to be more powerful, cheaper, and more widespread. It stands to reason, then, that the Antichrist would get behind research and development in such fields as microchip technology, biotechnology, and the Internet. Of course, those technologies in themselves are not necessarily bad. It's how they will be used that we need to worry about. In the Antichrist's case, passages such as Daniel 8:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 13:2–4, and Revelation 12:9 make it clear that he will be Satan-possessed, therefore his system will be far from benign.

Do you really think that people will accept the type of control you're describing? The Antichrist needs to sell the world on it. It appears that he's already busy at that, and he is not alone. He works

through others—mostly unwitting accomplices who are helping to further his agenda by developing and marketing the technology, including some of the world's brightest minds and biggest financial powers.

A scripture that goes along with that point is Daniel 11:21b (KJV): “He shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.” Some versions of the Bible translate this as “seize the kingdom by intrigue”—by secret scheming or plotting. Either way, it sounds as though the Antichrist is going to rise to power through cunning salesmanship rather than solely the strong-arm tactics that the leaders of most past empires depended on.

Can you be more specific about the technologies you see the Antichrist capitalizing on?

Let's start with surveillance technology. Video cameras now monitor and record our faces and movements in many stores and public places. We have learned to accept this intrusion into our lives because of the benefits. It discourages crime and helps apprehend criminals. Likewise, the monitoring of Internet communications helps curtail child pornography, terrorism, and other threats to our common good.

As electronic databases replace filing cabinets, more and more data about us is being collected, stored, cross-referenced, and shared. Now that nearly everything we do leaves behind a “data trail,” combining information from different sources can recreate a person's activities with astonishing accuracy and detail. This reservoir of personal information is especially helpful to marketers, and it is big business. Financial privacy has become a thing of the past, as financial institutions and others now routinely put the details of their clients' lives up for sale.

Other data-gathering technologies help



complete the mosaic of information that can be collected on individuals. For example, computerized “black boxes” are being built into cars, and GPS chips into cell phones and other electronic devices—innovations that consumers are being told are for their own good.

Surveillance cameras in public places are rapidly becoming the norm, with cities like London leading the way. London’s “Ring of Steel” makes use of nearly 2 million cameras to record the movements and activities of London’s approximately 7.5 million people. China’s “Golden Shield” comprehensive surveillance program, launched in major cities like Shenzhen, goes even further with systems that can even recognize faces.

New passports issued by the U.S. and more and more other countries now contain microchips, and China is adding microchips to the ID cards every citizen is required to carry. Microchip implants are the next logical step. They are already being implanted under the skin of pets for ID and tracking purposes, and pilot programs are already being done for Alzheimer’s patients and children. Other pioneer cases continue to make news. Mexico’s attorney general and members of his staff, for example, have joined the ranks of the chipped.

The examples of chipping are isolated cases—hardly indisputable evidence of the global takeover you say is coming.

Yes, they are isolated cases, but they are preparing the way by getting people familiar with the concept and selling them on its benefits. The Antichrist will not be able to fully set up his government until these technologies are pooled into an integrated network with universal standards—an obstacle that might *not* be an obstacle much

The apostle John would have rejoiced gathering recent newspaper clippings for his second book of the Apocalypse.

—Daniel Samper, Colombian journalist

longer. Governments and industry are setting boundaries and expanding their global electronic network by sharing information, services, and technology. As more countries turn to the latest technology to help solve their particular social and economic problems, they expand the network’s reach and capabilities. The level of technological development now varies greatly from nation to nation, but the whole system could be “online” in a relatively short time.

You have to admit that these new technologies and cooperative efforts have positive features also. Think of the

convenience, security, lower costs, and improved quality, speed, and efficiency in the delivery of goods and services made possible by these advances.

Very true, but precious little is said about the negative aspects of this public intrusion into what were once private, personal affairs. Under the banner of science and technology, the governments of the world are rushing to complete the Antichrist’s economic and political system for him—the very system the Bible warns against.

If all that is true, what is a person’s best defense?

To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Arm yourself with the truth, and then you won’t fall for the clever propaganda of the AC system when it comes. If your spiritual eyes and ears are open, you’ll understand what’s happening and you won’t just follow the crowd. You won’t go off the cliff with the rest of the lemmings. Your best defense is to be knowledgeable and alert.

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WORLD GOVERNMENT

BY SCOTT MACGREGOR

The most outstanding and ominous sign of the end of the world as we know it, to which the Bible devotes numerous chapters, is the rise of a Devil-possessed tyrant known as the Antichrist, or “the Beast,” who is given authority “over every tribe, tongue, and nation” (Revelation 13:7). Is the world heading towards a global government, as this verse seems to imply?

The idea of a world government has been discussed since ancient Greek and Roman times, and in the last few hundred years by such notables as Dante, Hugo Grotius, Immanuel Kant, Victor Hugo, Karl Krause, Alfred Tennyson, H. G. Wells, Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill, Bertrand Russell, and Mahatma Gandhi. The decade or two after World War II is regarded as a sort of “golden age” of the movement for world government. Seventy-two million people died in that war, 47 million of them civilians, and a general revulsion against such barbarity led to many people embracing such things as the World Federalist Movement in the hope that a strong global body would not let the nations of the world go to war again like they had. The European Union (which now includes 27 nations, with more seeking admittance) had its beginnings at this time.

Now there is a European Parliament and a European Commission (which is in many ways similar to a cabinet), and if the EU reform treaty is ratified

there will be an elected President of the European Council. Many of these nations are also members of NATO and have a common and somewhat integrated military structure. Eighteen countries (three are not even in the European Union) have now adopted the euro as a common currency.

The African Union (which includes 53 African nations) was formed in 2001 and aims eventually to have a single currency, a single integrated defense force, as well as other institutions of state, including a cabinet for the AU Head of State.

In 2004 the nations of South America signed the Cuzco Declaration, a two-page statement of intent, announcing the foundation of the South American Community, modeled after the European Union, including a common currency, parliament, and passport. According to Allan Wagner, former Secretary General of the Andean Community, a complete union like that of the EU should be possible by 2019.

The stated aim of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (comprised of 30 Asian countries, including the mega states of Russia, China, and India) is to ultimately transform the Asian continent into an Asian Community.

And then of course there is the United Nations (which is the only truly global organization, with 192 member states). Although seemingly impotent on many fronts, it still is the hub for many organizations that affect our lives, such as the World Trade Organization, the World Health Organization, the

International Atomic Energy Commission, the International Labor Organization, UNESCO, the International Court of Justice (the World Court), the International Criminal Court, and the World Bank.

The globalization of the economy is now a reality, with each national economy—some to a very large extent—dependent on other nations' economies. The mass media is also global through satellite TV and the Internet. In fact, the Internet is a virtual global community, with millions of its users living vicariously as avatars in global online "lives" in places like Second Life, not to mention global social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace.

The idea of global governance is also getting enthusiastic support. Global governance isn't necessarily global government. In fact, its advocates will adamantly deny that global government is anywhere on their agenda. Their idea is that international agreements and protocols will govern international behavior. A good example of this approach is the United Nations Global Compact, which is an initiative to encourage businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies.

When you start looking into it, a multitude of international and supranational bodies, treaties, and protocols have at their core the idea of promoting regional and global cooperation and integration. Now even when taken as a whole, this all might seem to still be light years away from the formation of the world government that Revelation 13:7 implies. Consider, though, that as recently as 40 years ago few people took the idea of a European Union seriously. Some of those countries had been bitter enemies and fought untold wars for centuries, but look at them now. Perhaps a world government isn't so far away after all.

In addition, Europe is a region that students of Endtime prophecy look to for signs of change in the directions foretold in the Bible. This interest is primarily generated by the visions of the Old Testament prophet Daniel, especially the vision recorded in chapter 7 of the book that bears his

name. There he saw a dreadful ten-horned monster, which most Bible scholars agree symbolized the Roman Empire—ancient to us, but futuristic to Daniel. "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one [identified in other passages as the Antichrist], coming up among them" (Daniel 7:8). Geographically the Roman Empire included a big slice of Europe, but perhaps even more importantly, Rome's forms of government, law, heritage, and culture permeate that part of the world to this day. Those 10 horns make another appearance later in the Bible, on the last head of a seven-headed monster—the Beast of Revelation chapter 13. Could Europe be destined for such prominence in the Antichrist's scheme of things?

Back to a global government. Will it happen? The Bible seems to indicate that it will. However, it seems it will have trouble remaining cohesive, as the Bible describes the Antichrist waging a number of wars with rebel nations.

In any case, two things are certain: Whatever happens, God will take care of His own, and if you are on His side, you will be on the winning side when the Antichrist comes to his ignominious end and Jesus Christ establishes His kingdom of love and peace on Earth. Then we will have global government, but it will be the best one imaginable, where everyone can be truly happy. ✿

THE END AROUND THE BEND

BY CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER



“YOU HAVE TO HEAR about this book I just read!” My normally laid-back friend was quite worked up. “I tell you, it’s happening soon!”

“*What’s* happening soon?”

“The end of the world as we know it!” My friend launched into a series of facts and statistics to try to convince me. “Did you know that over the past 20 years, the Arctic Ocean has been warming eight times faster than it did over the previous 100 years?”

I nodded. Global warming is in the news almost every day.

“World oil production has just about reached its peak, but demand is steadily growing, especially from the rapidly developing giants of China and India. Unless sufficient new reserves are discovered, we could run out of oil within a few decades. Then what? And overpopulation, along with deforestation, slash-and-burn farming, and other misuses of the world’s resources could eventually

cause famines and droughts of apocalyptic proportion.”

My friend was obviously full of his subject, but in fact I didn’t need to be convinced that the global outlook is grim. I believe we’re living in the era referred to in the Bible as the “time of the end” or the “last days,” and in the holy books of Islam, Hinduism, and other religions by various other names.

Jesus said that just as we can tell what kind of weather to expect by observing the sky, we can know what is about to happen in the world by watching world events and trends.¹ Current economic and environmental crises are sure signs that dire change is heading our way.

A generation ago, mentions of impending doom were routinely accompanied by cartoons of a disheveled, bearded crackpot holding a sign that read “THE END IS NEAR!” But that iconic doomsday character rarely makes

an appearance these days because his message is no longer a laughing matter or a fringe opinion. A growing number of prominent scholars, scientists, climatologists, and economists are now saying the same thing, and they have data to back it up.

In telling us to watch for signs of the end, Jesus wasn’t trying to strike fear or dread into our hearts, but rather to prepare us for what’s around the bend. No matter what happens, we have the assurance of His presence: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you,” He promises. “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”²

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¹Matthew 16:2–3

²John 14:27



THE SAFEST PLACE

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

WHEN THE WORLD goes to pieces, the best place to be is in the charmed circle of God's protection. "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.' Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror

by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you."¹

Even if there's turmoil and confusion all around, you can have inner peace through the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.² He never fails those who trust Him. So that's the secret: Live close to the Lord, in touch and in tune with Him and in step with His Word. It is His Word that makes you strong spiritually.³

One encouraging passage of Scripture regarding God's ability to protect and keep those who believe in and trust Him is the story of the harlot Rahab and the ancient city of Jericho. Because Rahab had faith and assisted two spies who were acting as God's agents, even at great peril to herself, when Jericho was later besieged by an invading army and destroyed, the only part of Jericho's city walls that didn't fall was the small section on which Rahab's house was built. She and her relatives survived and were spared by the conquerors.⁴

¹Psalm 91:1-7

²John 16:33; Isaiah 9:6; 26:3

³See Acts 20:32; Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

⁴Read the full story in Joshua chapters 2 and 6.

All things work together for good to those who love God.

When disaster strikes, whether it's natural or manmade, those who have been doing their best to live as they know God would have them live may find they receive His supernatural protection. "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations."⁵ That doesn't mean that He won't ever allow them to be harmed. He promises deliverance, but sometimes He knows that the best and most loving form of deliverance is to end their suffering by taking them home to heaven. So if you've received Jesus as your Savior, the "worst" thing that can happen to you is that you die and go to heaven that much sooner. You really don't have anything to worry about, because either way, whether here or there, you're in His loving care.

And remember, whenever anything bad happens to those who love God, He can and wants to bring about some good through it. "All things work together for good to those who love God."⁶ Don't worry when times of trouble and testing come, thinking that God doesn't love you or that He's finished with you. What you feel is God's

tender hand upon you, using the situation to make you into the person He knows you can be, or working other things in your favor. As hard as it may be to see the good that will come out of it, that's His goal and His promise to you.

You're in His hands, so "be confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."⁷ These tests are only for a time, and meanwhile you are safe with Him! ✠



AFTER THE DARKEST NIGHT in world history, we are going to have the brightest dawn. The fast approaching night is going to be the nightmare of the great tribulation (a 3 ½-year period during which the world will be ruled by an iron-fisted dictator known as the Antichrist), and the dawn, the coming of Christ. Things have got to get worse before they can get better, but in spite of the horrors of the growing darkness of this world, we know that it's all going to work out right in the end. The darkest hour is just before dawn, and the faster it gets worse, the sooner it's going to get better!

We have to go through a dark place of trials and tribulations, but then we're going to come out into the sunshine on the other side and all of these things will be blotted out like an evil dream! One of these days Jesus is going to stop the world and we're going to get off, away from all this suffering and confusion and into the peace and quiet and beauty and love and wonder of that wonderland beyond in heavenly places with Him! Just a little longer, then dawns His glorious morn! ✠

⁵2 Peter 2:9

⁶Romans 8:28

⁷Philippians 1:6

FAST FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

From Now to Eternity

BY SCOTT MACGREGOR

Have you ever been reading a suspenseful book and peeked at the last page to find out how it ended, or have you ever fast-forwarded a movie to see how the plot was going to develop? Have you ever wished you could do that with time itself—fast forward to find out what’s in store for this world of ours? Well, you can.

The Bible contains hundreds of prophetic glimpses into the future that describe specific people, places, times, events, and world conditions.¹ Many of these prophecies are about the time in which we are now living—a period referred to as the end time.

Here is a brief summary of what the Bible indicates is ahead, in chronological order:

Where we are now

1. Signs of the times

The Bible gives numerous signs to watch for so we will know when Jesus’ return is drawing close. These signs include the gospel being preached throughout the world,² dramatic increases in international travel and scientific knowledge,³ and a great falling away from the true God⁴ as ungodliness and perversions proliferate.⁵ All of this results in “distress of nations,” with “men’s hearts failing them from fear” of the future.⁶ Clearly these signs are being seen today.

¹Amos 3:7

²Matthew 24:14

³Daniel 12:4

⁴2 Thessalonians 2:3

⁵2 Timothy 3:1–4,13

⁶Luke 21:25–26



The coming world government

2. The Antichrist

One of the most momentous signs of the end time will be the rise of a godless world government, led by a man whom biblical prophets described in various terms but who is now commonly referred to as the “Antichrist.”⁷ At first many will regard him as a savior because he will appear to solve some of the world’s most pressing problems, such as the inequitable distribution of wealth and consumption of resources; long-standing hostilities between nations, ideologies, and religions; exploitation of the poor; and economic instability. He will come to power through intrigue and nonbelligerent means,⁸ but is in fact a man of war.⁹ He will be in league with Satan, and in the end will become the embodiment of evil.¹⁰

3. The covenant

The Antichrist will either initiate or be directly involved in an agreement—a “holy covenant,” as the Bible calls it—that will temporarily bring a measure of peace and security to the world.¹¹ The signing of this covenant will signal the start of the last seven years of man’s dominion.¹²

Approximately three and a half years into the agreement, after surviving what sounds like an assassination attempt,¹³ the megalomaniacal Antichrist will break the covenant, declare himself God, and abolish all other religious worship.¹⁴

4. The image of the Beast

When the Antichrist breaks the covenant, the mysterious “abomination of desolation” will be erected in the precincts of the rebuilt Jewish temple.¹⁵ In the book of Revelation, the

⁷2 Thessalonians 2:3–4; 1 John 2:18

⁸Daniel 11:21,24

⁹Daniel 8:23–25

¹⁰2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:4–8

¹¹Daniel 9:27a

¹²Revelation 11:15

¹³Revelation 13:1,3

¹⁴Daniel 9:27b; 11:23,28,30b,32,36

¹⁵Daniel 11:31

abomination of desolation is called the “image of the Beast,” and it has “power to both speak and cause those that do not worship it to be killed.”¹⁶ However, those who willingly comply will be doomed along with the Antichrist upon Christ’s return.¹⁷

Could this image be some sort of cybernetic representation of the Antichrist that is endowed with artificial intelligence?

Big trouble ahead

5. The great tribulation

Jesus said, “When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ... then there will be great tribulation such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”¹⁸ We know from other passages that the great tribulation will last for three and a half years, or 42 months, or 1260 days (measuring months and years by the ancient standard used in the Bible’s original manuscripts: 30 days per month; 360 days per year).¹⁹

A monetary system will be put in place under which no one will be able to buy or sell without a personal account number, the “mark of the Beast,” in their hand or forehead—the infamous “666” of the Bible’s book of Revelation.²⁰

This system could have been in place earlier, but it’s at this time that participation is made mandatory, perhaps tied in with a universal ID system. The mark of the Beast could be issued in the form of a microchip implant containing the individual’s personal data, similar to those already being used to tag people in high security jobs.

The Antichrist will become possessed by Satan, and his government will persecute those who refuse

to yield to his dictates.²¹ But God will help those who resist the Antichrist, and in their defense will unleash horrific pestilences and plagues on the Antichrist and his followers.²² Two of God’s end time prophets will perform miracles and publicly defy the Antichrist,²³ and other believers could have similar powers.²⁴

6. Nuclear war

At some point, probably near the end of the great tribulation, the Antichrist and 10 “kings” who join forces with him will destroy the mysterious “Babylon the great” in what sounds like a nuclear holocaust.²⁵ Scripture indicates that this Babylon is not the ancient city or empire by that name, but rather the worldwide capitalistic and materialistic system.²⁶ Today that system is epitomized and led by the USA. Visions received by the prophet Daniel indicate that the 10 kings who join with the Antichrist emerge from the ancient Roman Empire and thus could be from Europe.²⁷

Reversal of fortunes

7. The second coming of Jesus Christ

At the end of the great tribulation—“immediately *after* the tribulation of those days”—Jesus will return “on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” to rescue those who have received Him as their Savior, commonly referred to as “the saved.”²⁸ The Antichrist’s forces will be shocked as they see the saved from ages past resurrected in new immortal bodies,²⁹ and “then we [saved] who are alive and

¹⁶Revelation 13:14–15

¹⁷Revelation 14:9–10

¹⁸Matthew 24:15,21

¹⁹Daniel 12:7; Revelation 13:5; 11:2–3; 12:6,14

²⁰Revelation 13:16–18

²¹Daniel 7:25; Revelation 12:17

²²Revelation 9:1–6

²³Revelation 11:3,5–6

²⁴Daniel 11:32b

²⁵Revelation 17:3,5,12–13,16–18

²⁶Revelation 18:2,8–11,19

²⁷Daniel 2:40–43; 7:24

²⁸Matthew 24:29–31; Revelation 14:14–16

²⁹1 Corinthians 15:51–52

remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”³⁰ This event is known as the “rapture.”

8. The marriage supper

Immediately after the rapture, the grandest celebration ever, “the marriage supper of the Lamb,” will be held in heaven.³¹ The “Lamb” is Jesus,³² and His “bride” is the saved from all ages—those He has just rescued and those He has resurrected, collectively.³³ At the judgment seat of Christ, they will each be rewarded according to what they did with their lives.³⁴

9. The wrath of God

While the marriage supper of the Lamb is happening in heaven, a number of devastating plagues described in the Bible as the “wrath of God” will be happening here, and the Antichrist and his forces will be the targets.³⁵

10. The battle of Armageddon

Then, on a plain in what is now northern Israel, the Antichrist will muster his armed forces for his final campaign against the nations that still oppose him. This is the famous “battle of Armageddon,” in which Jesus will return with His heavenly army to defeat and utterly destroy the Antichrist’s forces and deliver those who have opposed his tyranny.³⁶

The Antichrist and his leading henchman, the False Prophet, will both be cast alive into the lake

of fire, a place of punishment,³⁷ and Satan will be imprisoned in the “bottomless pit.”³⁸

Order restored

11. The millennium

Jesus will set up His kingdom on Earth and rule for 1,000 years over those who have survived the battle of Armageddon and the cataclysms surrounding it—people who were neither followers of the Antichrist nor saved and rescued by Jesus at His return.³⁹ The resurrected saved from throughout the ages will govern with Jesus,⁴⁰ and restoration of the war-damaged world will begin. All wars will cease,⁴¹ the world will at last be governed justly,⁴² love for God and others will be the rule of the day,⁴³ and Garden of Eden-like peace and harmony will be restored.⁴⁴ This period is known as the “millennium.”

Judgment day

12. The battle of Gog and Magog

At the end of the millennium, Satan will be released from the bottomless pit.⁴⁵ There will not have been any unbelievers during the millennium, because everyone will have been able to see Jesus,⁴⁶ however, there will be those who refuse to receive Jesus as their Savior and submit to His benign but

³⁰1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

³¹Revelation 19:6–9

³²John 1:29

³³Romans 7:4

³⁴Matthew 16:27; Romans 14:10b,12; 1 Corinthians 3:13–15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10b

³⁵Revelation 11:18; 15:6; 16:2–4,8–12,17

³⁶Zechariah 14:3–5; Revelation 16:14,16–17; 19:11,14,16

³⁷Revelation 19:19–21

³⁸Revelation 20:1–3

³⁹Daniel 2:44; Revelation 11:15

⁴⁰Daniel 7:18,22,27; Revelation 20:4,6

⁴¹Isaiah 2:4_ ⁴²Psalms 67:4; 72:3–4; 98:8–9

⁴³Matthew 22:37–39

⁴⁴Isaiah 11:6–9; 14:7; 65:25; 43:19–20; Hosea 2:18

⁴⁵Revelation 20:3

⁴⁶Habakkuk 2:14; Hebrews 8:11

firm rule,⁴⁷ and they will join Satan in an open rebellion that will culminate in the catastrophic battle of Gog and Magog. There the rebel forces will be obliterated,⁴⁸ and Earth's entire surface and atmosphere will be purified by fire.⁴⁹

13. The great white throne judgment

Then all of the people from the beginning of time who did not know about or believe in Jesus will be resurrected to stand before God's throne and be judged. They will be either rewarded or punished according to their works, and will be assigned to their respective stations in the hereafter.⁵⁰ Satan will be cast into the lake of fire.⁵¹

Eternity!

14. A new Earth

Earth's surface and atmospheric heavens, which were burned up in the battle of Gog and Magog, will then be beautifully recreated, even better than before—truly heaven on earth, “in which righteousness dwells.”⁵²

15. The heavenly city

God's golden heavenly city, the dimensions of which are an astonishing 2,200 km [about 1,400 mi] square at the base and 2,200 km high, will then descend to the recreated Earth.⁵³ It is referred to in the Bible as the “mountain of God” and the “tabernacle of God,” suggesting that it is pyramidal.⁵⁴ God and Jesus will dwell in that city with those who love and serve Them.⁵⁵ Read the Bible's grand finale, Revelation chapters 21 and 22, for a full description.

And that is the happy ending! Although there are dark days in the near future, we can take heart in knowing that God is in control and a bright, beautiful, eternal tomorrow is not very far away.

FOR MORE DETAILED EXPLANATIONS OF THE END TIME AND BEYOND, ORDER *THE FUTURE FORETOLD*, *THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ANTICHRIST*, AND *FROM THE END TO ETERNITY* FROM ONE OF THE ADDRESSES LISTED ON PAGE 2. ✨

A BRIGHT, BEAUTIFUL, ETERNAL TOMORROW IS NOT VERY FAR AWAY.



⁴⁷Isaiah 26:10

⁴⁸Revelation 20:7–9

⁴⁹2 Peter 3:10–12; Revelation 6:14

⁵⁰Revelation 20:11–13; 21:5–6a

⁵¹Revelation 20:10

⁵²2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1

⁵³Revelation 21:2; 15–17

⁵⁴Zechariah 8:3; Revelation 21:3a

⁵⁵Revelation 21:3,7,22; 22:3



THREE DOWN, ONE TO GO

BY MARTIN MCTEG

WHY HAVEN'T I EVER heard about these things before? I wondered. *Why isn't this common knowledge?* It was soon after I had accepted Jesus as my Savior, and I was hearing about Bible prophecy, the book of Revelation, the end time, and the Antichrist all for the first time.

The most fascinating class, “The 70 Weeks of Daniel,” explained a prophecy foretelling these four events:

1. That the prophet Daniel’s people, the Jews, who had been conquered and taken captive by the Babylonians in 586 BC, would be allowed to return to and rebuild Jerusalem, which the Babylonians had destroyed

2. That the Messiah would be killed 483 years (measured in ancient years of 360 days, equal to 476 modern years) after the wall was built

3. That the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed after the death of the Messiah

4. That the Messiah would return seven years after a despot, identified elsewhere in the Bible as the “Beast” and the “Son of Hell” but more commonly called the Antichrist, masterminds an accord involving Jerusalem and possibly Middle East peace

As I listened to this class, I learned that:

1. The Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem, after 70 years in captivity.
2. The Messiah, Jesus, was killed (and rose from the dead) in the very year Daniel had prophesied.
3. The rebuilt temple was destroyed by the Roman army 40 years after Jesus’ death.

Daniel gave this prophecy in 538 BC, almost 100 years before any part of it was fulfilled. All of the fulfillments thus far are well-documented historical fact—Bible prophecy fulfilled with 100% accuracy! It stands to reason, therefore, that the last of the four events—the seven-year reign of the Antichrist—will also be fulfilled just as accurately.

If Daniel had told a skeptic about his prophecy, I imagine their conversation going something like this:

“Our people will return to and rebuild Jerusalem.”

“It will never happen!”

“This is when the Messiah will be killed.”

“I don’t believe you!”

“After that, the temple will be destroyed again!”

“You’re crazy!”

Now whenever I hear a skeptic say he doesn’t believe that a dictatorial leader known as the Antichrist will come to power and rule the world for the last seven years before Jesus returns and puts a stop to him, I just smile and say, “You will when it happens!”

Unlike the already fulfilled parts of Daniel’s prophecy that foretold exact dates, we don’t yet know what year the Antichrist will come to power, but when he initiates a seven-year peace accord, those who are in the know will recognize him for who he is, if they haven’t already. When that happens, it will be seven years until Jesus returns to put a stop to the Antichrist and establish His own righteous rule on earth.

Three down, one to go.

(LEARN MORE ABOUT “THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL CHAPTER 9” AT: [HTTP://ACTIVATED.ORG/BOOKS/CHAPTER.PHP?ID=18.15](http://ACTIVATED.ORG/BOOKS/CHAPTER.PHP?ID=18.15))

MARTIN MCTEG IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN THE U.S. ✚

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

FAQs about the end time



Q: Is it really the end time? People have been saying that the end is near for thousands of years, but we're still here.

A: TRUE, BUT WE'RE NOW SEEING some signs of the end that weren't seen in previous generations. For example, technology has suddenly advanced to the point that implementing and enforcing the mark of the Beast are within the realm of possibility. Only now is it possible that every sign of the end that hasn't already been fulfilled could be fulfilled in a matter of years.

Q: What practical steps can I take to prepare for what's ahead?

A: THE GREATEST ASSET in times of crisis is strong faith in God, because faith gives you the confidence that God will help you through whatever life throws at you.¹ Where do you get faith?—From God's Word. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."²

Make it a habit to read and study the Bible and Bible-based publications, like *Activated*, for example, for 15–30 minutes each day, or more if you can. Making time for that may be difficult at first, but the more you do it, the more you'll want to do it and the easier it will become.

God has promised many times in His Word to work on the behalf of those who turn to Him in time of need, but most of His promises are contingent on us doing our part. So the next thing you can do to prepare for the future is learn to use those promises. Become familiar with them, first of all, by making that one of the focuses of your daily Word time. Make note of the promises you come across, and even memorize the ones that stand out to you most. (See "Feeding Reading" on the opposite page for a starter list.) Then practice fulfilling the conditions of those promises. As you do, you'll see God work and your faith will grow. Then

when you need bigger faith to meet bigger challenges that are to come, you'll have it.

Take Psalm 91:15, for example: "He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble." If you're in the habit of trying to sort out your own problems, start making a conscious effort to take your problems to Jesus in prayer and receive His solutions. Tap into His power, which is infinitely greater than your own.

Or take Isaiah 26:3 for another example: "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Practice turning your thoughts toward Jesus and His promises whenever you feel stressed or confused, and it will be much easier to find that place of inner peace when the situation around you gets even worse. ✝

¹Mark 9:23; 10:27

²Romans 10:17

ENDTIME INSIGHTS

The Spitting Image of the Antichrist

BY SCOTT MACGREGOR

FROM TIME TO TIME, this column on Endtime events revisits the subject of the “image of the Beast.” Recently I was looking at a photo of a gold-plated colossus of a recently deceased dictator, and it got me thinking. It seems dictators really like having giant statues of themselves erected, and it looks like the worst tyrant the world will ever know is going to follow in the tradition of his predecessors. That tyrant, of course, would be the Antichrist, whom the apostle John, in the Bible’s final book, Revelation, called “the Beast.” According to John, a character called the “False Prophet,” one of the Beast’s chief accomplices, “deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the Beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the Beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.”¹

This “image of the Beast” is generally believed to be the same thing that Daniel, in the book of the Bible that bears his name, several times called the “abomination.” “He will set up an abomination that causes desolation.”² “They shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.”³ “The daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up.”⁴

Jesus also spoke of the abomination, and in dire terms. “When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand) ... then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”⁵

What exactly is this abomination of desolation? An abomination is a hated thing, and it’s obvious why plenty of people will have plenty of reason to hate this one. According to John, it will cause the death of anyone who doesn’t worship

it. "He [the False Prophet] was granted power to give breath to the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the Beast to be killed."⁶

I have been impressed lately with how the book of Revelation relates a vision, not a prophecy. John saw it all. Some of the book is the record of conversations he had with different characters in the vision, but it largely describes what he saw during that amazing revelatory vision nearly 2,000 years ago on the little Aegean island of Patmos. Prophecies are often more enigmatic than visions. The prophet Daniel was only told about the thing that he (and later Jesus) called the abomination of desolation. Daniel had a number of visions that are described in detail in the Bible, but the passages that refer to the abomination were messages given to him in verbal form by spiritual envoys. In contrast, John actually saw the character who he called the False Prophet erect this "image of the Beast" and then cause it to have life. The image was animated and it spoke.

I don't know if you would have seen on BBC some time ago a news item regarding a Japanese robotics scientist who has created an android in his own likeness. The android "breathes" and talks and even has a range of facial movements. The scientist, Hiroshi Ishiguro, envisions it as an alter ego of sorts, as well as the telephone of the future. The scientist could be in one place and talk through the android in another, and it would almost be like the scientist was there in person. Ishiguro envisions business meetings where androids and humans sit down together and hammer out deals. "Sometimes it's easy to forget that he's not human," Ishiguro says. (See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_6590000/newsid_6592200/6592251.stm?bw=nbandmp=rm.)

Exactly what form the image of the Beast will take is still speculation, but looking at that android that is the spitting image of its creator brought home to me just how close humanity is to being able to build an image of the Beast that breathes and talks and acts just like the Antichrist it represents. ✂

OUTLOOK AND UPLOOK

After the darkest night in world history, we are going to have the brightest dawn. The fast-approaching night is going to be the nightmare of the Great Tribulation,⁷ and the day, the coming of Christ. Things have got to get worse before they can get better, but in spite of the horrors of the growing darkness of this world, we know that it's all going to work out right in the end. The darkest hour is just before dawn. The faster things get worse, the sooner they're going to get better. The outlook for this poor world could hardly be any darker, but the "uplook" could hardly be any brighter or more glorious, so keep looking up!

—David Brandt Berg

¹Revelation 13:14

²Daniel 9:27 NIV

³Daniel 11:31

⁴Daniel 12:11

⁵Matthew 24:15,21

⁶Revelation 13:15

⁷the three-and-a-half-year period before Jesus returns

PRINCE OF PEACE

“LET NOT YOUR HEART be troubled,” Jesus tells us. “You believe in God, believe also in Me.”¹ “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”²

He wants to be with you always, through every disappointment and every hardship. He wants to protect you from harm. Even when there is trouble on every side, you won’t need to worry or fear.

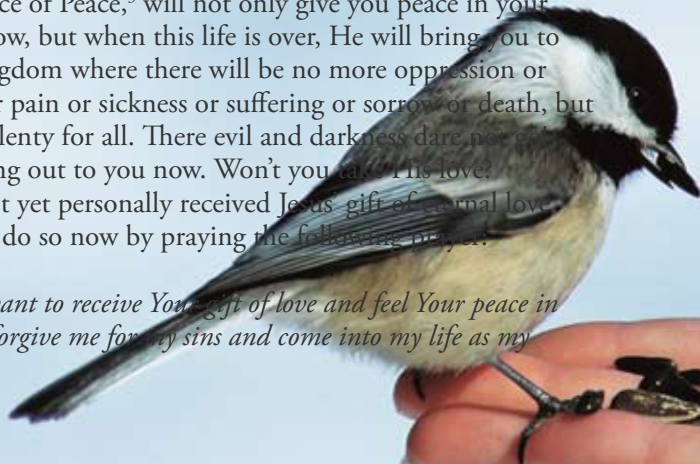
Jesus will be your closest and dearest friend. You will be able to talk to Him anywhere, anytime, and He will answer. He will speak to your heart and guide you through the storms of life.

Jesus, the Prince of Peace,³ will not only give you peace in your heart here and now, but when this life is over, He will bring you to His heavenly kingdom where there will be no more oppression or war or poverty or pain or sickness or suffering or sorrow or death, but only peace and plenty for all. There evil and darkness dare not go.

Jesus is reaching out to you now. Won’t you take His love?

If you have not yet personally received Jesus’ gift of eternal love and life, you can do so now by praying the following prayer:

Dear Jesus, I want to receive Your gift of love and feel Your peace in my heart. Please forgive me for my sins and come into my life as my Savior. Amen. ✠



FEEDING READING Help in times of trouble

Material supply

Psalms 34:10
Matthew 6:33
Romans 8:32
Philippians 4:19

Protection

Deuteronomy 33:27a
Nahum 1:7
Psalm 46:1
Psalm 91:9–10
2 Timothy 4:18a

Freedom from fear

Isaiah 12:2
Isaiah 41:10
Psalm 23:4
Psalm 27:1
Psalm 112:7

Inner strength

Psalms 84:5a,7
Isaiah 40:31
Philippians 4:13

Comfort

Psalms 71:21
Isaiah 51:12a
Psalm 103:13–14
Psalm 138:7a
2 Corinthians 1:4

Guidance

Isaiah 42:16
Isaiah 30:21
Proverbs 3:5–6
Jeremiah 33:3
James 1:5

Miracles

Matthew 17:20b
Mark 9:23
John 14:12
John 14:14

¹John 14:1

²John 16:33

³Isaiah 9:6



My miracle-working power is yours

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

I have promised miracles to those who love and follow Me, and I can deliver on that promise. My power is limitless. According to your need and the situation, I will do wondrous things for you and through you.

In order to see these manifestations of My power, only one thing is required of you: faith. You must believe that I am able to work the miracle and ask Me to do it, and then expect that I will. When you ask in faith, I am bound by My word to give you what you need. It might not always be what you *think* you need, but I will always rescue, protect, supply for you, or resolve the problem some other way, as I know is best. Sometimes it will be an overt miracle, where there is no doubt that I have answered your prayer, but other times it won't be so obvious.

I manifest My power most freely on behalf of those who follow Me closest, who do their best to live according to the principles of My Word and what they believe is My will for them personally, but anyone who calls on Me in faith will get the help they need, according to My will.

Remember this when the days darken and you find yourself in what seem like hopeless situations: Nothing is impossible for Me, so anything is possible for you when you ask in faith for Me to intervene. I always reward faith, My power is always at the ready, and I put Myself at your beck and call—all because I love you.