

HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT



CHRIST'S RETURN IS NEAR?

The cover image of this booklet is a stylized artist rendering of the message conveyed in this booklet that the time is short, as well as the words of Jesus in Luke 17:24: "For as the lightning that flashes out of one part of heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day."

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Introduction

It seems that Christians throughout history have commonly believed that Christ would return during their lifetime. The early New Testament apostles believed this until it became clear to them that His return would not occur that quickly.

Based on the upheaval at the time of Martin Luther, he believed that Christ would return soon, as did those who were plagued by the devastating Black Death. Strong earthquakes, heavenly occurrences, devastating natural disasters, famine, pestilences and great wars prompted many to believe that they would experience the soon-coming return of Christ. They all looked at certain signs and predictions, which were startling and frightening, but they did not look at the entire picture.

More recently, the *Worldwide Church of God* under its late human leader, Herbert W. Armstrong, who died in 1986, believed for a while that Christ might return in the 1970s, or even earlier. At that time, numerous prophecies seemed to indicate, convincingly, that the Day was near, but some end-time prophecies did not find their fulfillment then.

Why do we feel that it is any different today? What specific world developments lead us to believe that Christ's return is indeed near, and why are we confident that we are right at this point in time? What events must we consider, and what are the false and misleading signs that have no biblical bearing?

When Christ was asked by four of His disciples about the end of the age, He said:

“Now learn this parable from the *fig tree*: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, *this generation* will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:32–35).

It is clarified in the parallel Scripture in Luke 21:31 that Christ was speaking about His Second Coming and the establishment of the

Kingdom of God here on earth. The phrase “All these things” refers to the events that we are describing in this booklet. The Greek word for “generation;” i.e., *genea*, refers here to the people in the end time—not the entirety of mankind throughout many “generations.”

In Psalm 90:10, a generation is described as lasting 70–80 years. We also read in the Bible that God sometimes shortens or prolongs human life, and that bloodthirsty and deceitful men may not live out HALF their days (Psalm 55:23). We know that men will be so bloodthirsty and destructive in the end time that Christ will HAVE to SHORTEN the days of worldwide warfare, lest NO man would survive (Matthew 24:22)!

When we see the signs of the times, as discussed in this booklet, we KNOW that Christ’s return is near. We do not know the EXACT time of Christ’s return, but based on the parable of the fig tree, we CAN say that we ARE living today in the very last generation, and that Christ WILL return BEFORE this present generation has “passed away.”

Chapter 1

THE Sign of Christ's Return

As alluded to in the Introduction, Christ's disciples asked Him about the destruction of the Second Temple (which would occur in 70 A.D.), the sign of His Coming and the end of the world (compare Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21).

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Christ answered by beginning to describe the first four seals—the four horsemen of the Apocalypse—in the Book of Revelation, chapter 6. He referred to *religious deception* (the first seal), *wars and rumors of wars* (the second seal), *famines* due to severe shortage of food (the third seal), and *pestilences* which are oftentimes communicated by sick animals carrying deadly viruses (the fourth seal). The reference to wild beasts in Revelation 6:8 would be one of the consequences of war, famine, and pestilence. Lands would be depopulated and wild beasts would be multiplied.

Christ also spoke of *commotions* (Luke 21:9) and great or “big” *earthquakes* in various places (Luke 21:11; compare also Isaiah 24:19 and the culmination in Revelation 16:18). The Bible lists other *natural catastrophes* as well, which would include huge tsunamis (“the sea and the waves roaring,” Luke 21:25), volcanic eruptions and increasing destructive *wildfires*. In Isaiah 1:7, we read: “Your country is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire...” Ezekiel 20:47–48 says: “Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree and every dry tree in you; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be scorched by it. All flesh shall see that I, the LORD, have kindled it; it shall not be quenched.”

Christ also made it clear that these events alone were not proof that the end *had* come, but that they were the *beginning* of sorrows (Matthew 24:6, 8). These events must surely take place, and they will increase in strength and frequency, but they alone are not the sign of Christ's

Second Coming. On the other hand, if they were not to occur, His Coming would not be near.

We can also expect more and more *demonically inspired violent acts* committed by deranged people, as well as *governmental suppression* in many nations. The reason is because Satan has great wrath, knowing that his time is short. We read in Revelation 12:12: “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.”

Christ continued to speak about a time of great distress (the *Great Tribulation*—the fifth seal) and devastating *heavenly signs* (the sixth seal). Other Scriptures in the book of Revelation and elsewhere describe terrible events on the *Day of the Lord* (the seventh seal), which follow the heavenly signs, culminating in Christ’s Return.

Heavenly Signs

Following the beginning of the Great Tribulation, Christ warns in Matthew 24:29 of *heavenly signs*—“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.” The parallel account in Luke 21:25–26 adds that at that time, there will be “distress of nations” on this earth, “with perplexity, the sea and the waves” will be “roaring,” and “men’s hearts” will fail them “from fear and the expectation of those things” that will be “coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

Luke 21:11 also states that at that time, “*fearful sights and great signs from heaven*” will be observed. All of these events are depicted by the sixth seal in Revelation 6:12–14, picturing those “heavenly signs” or cosmic disturbances that are introduced by a great earthquake.

It appears however that certain *frightful signs* will already begin to occur right after the four horsemen of the Apocalypse have begun to ride and pestilences will be spread throughout the earth. Notice that Luke 21:11 is followed by a description of the Great Tribulation in verses 12–24, and then verse 25 continues to describe the terrible heavenly signs, after the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Unless we conclude that verses 11 and 25 refer to the same incident, it appears that certain “*fearful sights and great signs from heaven*” will occur even prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Notice, however, that

Christ speaks of FEARFUL signs and wonders. The solar eclipses and nice-looking “blood moons”—when the moon temporarily appears in a somewhat red light—would most certainly *not* constitute “fearful” signs and wonders.

THE Sign of Christ's Coming

We should note however, that the disciples asked for one particular SIGN of Christ's Coming (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:4), and Christ made it very clear what that sign would be. He pointed out that the *preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness in all the world and to all nations* MUST PRECEDE His Coming and the end of the age. He said in Matthew 24:14: “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.” He is quoted as saying in Mark 13:10 (*Authorized Version*): “And the gospel must first be published among all nations.”

That the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God in all the world was given as *THE SIGN* for Christ's Return shows that this gospel had NOT been preached to the world for a long time. Rather, a *false gospel* had been preached, which fact is alluded to in Galatians 1:6–7. Of course, “a” gospel was preached—the gospel “ABOUT” Christ (but it was many times a false Christ or a counterfeit; compare 2 Corinthians 11:3–4 and the reference to the first horseman of the Apocalypse).

However, the gospel OF Christ—of the Kingdom of God—would be preached at the time of Christ's Coming. It was the gospel that Christ preached, the gospel that originated with the Kingdom of God (which is the *Family of God*, consisting of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son). This true gospel includes the message that *God's government* will be restored on this earth when Christ returns, as well as the fact that true Christians will then be changed—resurrected to eternal life IN God's Kingdom. They will become immortal sons and daughters of God the Father and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, ruling on and over this earth under Christ for a thousand years. They will become born-again members of the God Family—God BEINGS in the KINGDOM of God.

It is an undeniable fact that the true gospel of the Kingdom of God was being preached to the world during the lifetime of Herbert W. Armstrong. It is likewise an undeniable fact that Mr. Armstrong

died in 1986, and that Christ has not yet returned. This means, then, that God's Church has the *continued obligation to preach the gospel* in all the world as a witness in order to fulfill THE Sign of Christ's Coming.

True Gospel Still To Be Preached Today

Christ made it very clear that the gospel would still be preached at the time of His Return. He told His disciples in Matthew 28:19–20 that He would be with them “always, even to the END of the age,” while they were “making disciples of all the nations” (a logical consequence of the Church's preaching of the gospel in all the world, compare Romans 10:14–15). Christ also said that those who would be doing God's Work of preaching His gospel would not have finished it, even in the cities of Israel, when He returns (Matthew 10:23).

Considering this fact, it is obvious that Christ could not have come back at the time of Martin Luther, as there was no practical way of fulfilling Christ's prophecy that His gospel would be preached in all the world and among all nations. The possibility to do so simply did not exist. Even in the last century, that possibility was somewhat limited with the available use of radio, TV [which was only accessible in certain countries] and the printing press.

But today, with the invention of the Internet and other technological opportunities, this prophecy *can be and is being fulfilled*—really for the first time in the history of man! Even though some autocratic and dictatorial countries, including certain radical Muslim countries, would like to limit or prevent their citizens' access to the Internet, they are unable to do so completely. And so, the gospel of the Kingdom of God is indeed reaching people in all countries—the sign which Christ gave for His Return is being fulfilled today.

Gospel Message Includes a Warning!

The preaching of the gospel (the good news of the Kingdom or Family of God) includes the task of *warning the world of impending disaster*. This aspect is also being fulfilled today.

We read in Zephaniah 1:2–3 (*Revised Standard Version*): “I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” says the LORD. ‘I will sweep away man and beast; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. I will overthrow the wicked; I will cut off

mankind from the face of the earth,' says the LORD."

Verse 18 adds (*Revised Standard Version*): "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the LORD. In the fire of his jealous wrath, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full, yea, sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth."

However, Zephaniah 3:12 adds that some will survive: "*Those who are left* will be the poor and the humble, and they will trust in the name of the Lord" (*Living Bible*).

Some Will Survive

When speaking about the time of the Great Tribulation, Christ also confirmed that even though this will be the most devastating time in the annals of human history, some will survive because Christ will come to shorten those terrible days. He told us in Matthew 24:21–22 (*New International Version*):

"For then there will be great distress (most translations say: "great tribulation"), unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect these days will be shortened."

The *Living Bible* writes: "... unless those days are shortened, all mankind will perish."

Isaiah 24:5–6 tells us something very similar: "The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And *few men are left.*"

Warning to the Lost Tribes

The Church of God warns all nations of these impending dangers (Isaiah 34:1–3), *especially the lost tribes of the house of Israel* (Ezekiel 3:17–21; 33:2–11). Emphasis is placed on the house of Israel because God will deal with them first, but a specific warning must also go out to all nations, because God will deal with them subsequently (Isaiah 24:5–6; 28:22). In addition, a warning message must even go out to members and prospective members of the Church of God (Colossians

1:28; Acts 20:31; 1 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).

This warning message is part of the proclamation of the gospel, as those who hear it are given the opportunity to repent so that they can be spared. We read in Luke 24:46–47: “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations...”

In order to warn the modern nations of the ancient house of Israel (and, by extension, the ancient house of Judah), it is necessary to know who they are today. And so, the Church of God has identified these nations—the lost tribes of the house of Israel—and it is proclaiming the warning to them as a witness or testimony against them.

Where the Lost Tribes Can Be Found Today

Those nations can be found today in the USA (where we find descendants of Manasseh, the first-born son of Joseph and grandson of Jacob or Israel); the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa (all descendants of Ephraim, the second son of Joseph); parts of France (descendants of Reuben, Jacob’s first-born son); Denmark and Ireland (descendants of Dan, one of Jacob’s twelve sons); Norway and Iceland (descendants of Benjamin, another one of Jacob’s twelve sons); The Netherlands (descendants of Zebulun, one of Jacob’s twelve sons); Finland (descendants of Issachar, one of Jacob’s twelve sons); Switzerland (descendants of Gad, one of Jacob’s twelve sons); Belgium and Luxembourg (descendants of Asher, one of Jacob’s twelve sons); and Sweden (descendants of Naphtali, one of Jacob’s twelve sons).

In addition, modern descendants of Jacob’s son Levi might be found today in Wales; and descendants of Simeon and Levi might also be found in Scotland. Furthermore, a warning message is going out to the modern descendants of the house of Judah—the Jewish people.

Warning to Non-Israelite Peoples as Well

But, as mentioned, the warning message is also reaching non-Israelite peoples, which would include powerful nations such as Germany and Austria (both constituting modern Assyria); Italy (in part descendants of the ancient Chaldeans and Babylonians); and

countries such as Russia, China, Japan, India, nations in the Middle East, Africa and South America.

The gospel of the Kingdom of God with all its different aspects is, in fact, being proclaimed and published today in all the world as a witness among all nations.

This PROVES to us that the Return of Christ is indeed near!

Chapter 2

The Great Tribulation

In the first chapter, we discussed *THE SIGN* of Christ's Coming—the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness among all nations. We also noted that Christ referred to several events that are prophesied to accompany that particular sign.

The event we will focus on in this chapter is commonly referred to as the “Great Tribulation.” We stated in Chapter 1 that those coming days would be so devastating that, unless they were cut short, no one would survive—ALL would perish (Matthew 24:21–22; Mark 13:19; Daniel 12:1–2). The very physical survival of mankind will be at stake! However, it has already been determined that those days *will* be shortened. Mark 13:20 reads, in the *New International Version*: “If the Lord had not cut short these days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he *has* shortened them.”

Christ will return to this earth to end those prophesied terrible times. He will come to a *world that is at war* in order to make wars cease on this planet (Psalm 46:9). Misguided and misled human ingenuities, experimentations and inventions have produced weapons of mass destruction that are capable of eradicating man from this earth many times over.

This shows that Christ could not have returned in previous generations, as the possibility that man could cause such *mass extinction* simply did not exist.

Only Now Possible

This scenario became reality with the development and use of atom bombs in World War II. Since then, man has been busy creating and assembling more and more powerful and highly sophisticated nuclear arsenals, advanced conventional war machines, and biological and chemical weapons with the obvious intention of using them when

the time comes. He has perhaps deceived himself in believing that the build-up of deadly ammunition will prevent the outbreak of war, as a country's enemies might be too afraid to attack. However, history shows that the weapons that were invented, were also used.

As Satan's wrath is great and he is determined to *destroy mankind*, he will see to it that those terrible weapons of mass destruction *will be activated*... in the very near future.

Satan's Wrath Against Physical Israel

The Great Tribulation has been correctly described as *Satan's wrath* against God's people—the physical descendants of Israel, as well as true Christians who are oftentimes referred to as *spiritual Jews* or *spiritual Israelites* (Romans 2:28–29; Galatians 6:16). Even though Satan's ultimate goal is to murder every human being on the face of the earth, he will focus in these end times, first and foremost, on *physical and spiritual Israel*.

It is the responsibility of God's Church *to warn the modern descendants* of the ancient tribes of the physical house of Israel (especially the USA and the UK), as well as the Jewish people, of impending disaster and destruction, as they will be defeated in war and either killed or enslaved at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation. This warning message is being given today, *before* the Great Tribulation starts, and it will continue to be proclaimed during that time, especially through the testimony and prophecies of the "two witnesses" (Revelation 11:3–6).

God has revealed to His Church the understanding as to where the modern descendants of the ancient houses of Israel and Judah can be found today, and so it is able to pronounce the identity and fate of these nations who will be the targets of coming military attacks, commencing at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation. Christ leads and inspires His Church, and Christ's Spirit is a spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10; compare Amos 3:7–8; John 16:13; Isaiah 44:26; 1 Corinthians 13:2).

Terrible Destruction Coming

Many Scriptures show us that the modern descendants of the houses of Israel [also known as Jacob] and Judah will suffer unparalleled

destruction and gruesome captivity in World War III (Luke 21:20–24; Hosea 13:16; Amos 6:7; 7:17).

Jeremiah 30:4–7 gives us this frightening scenario:

“Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning *Israel* and Judah. For thus says the LORD: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of *Jacob’s* trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.’”

The modern house of Israel is also oftentimes referred to as *Ephraim* (mainly Great Britain and countries such as Canada and Australia) and *Manasseh* (the USA). We are told in Hosea 5:5, in the *Authorized Version*, that “Israel [here mainly a reference to Manasseh] and Ephraim” will “fall in their iniquity” and that “Judah also shall fall with them.” This is an end-time prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled. In the past, Israel and Judah (the Jews) “fell” at different times, but never together or at the same time. The *Tanakh* says: “Israel’s pride shall be humbled before his very eyes, As Israel and Ephraim fall because of their sin (And Judah falls with them).”

The signs of the time show us that the Great Tribulation is near!

Christ tells us in Luke 21:29–31:

“Then He spoke to them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near...’”

Weapons of mass destruction, which are capable of eradicating all human life, are available NOW; the warning message to the houses of Israel and Judah is going out; and we observe that especially the United Kingdom and the USA, as well as the state of Israel, are becoming more and more isolated on the world scene, preparing the way for a most devastating war against them.

America is hated more than ever before; the alienation between Great Britain and the EU is continuing; and anti-Semitism is on the rise. The Bible shows that at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, a European power bloc will attack, occupy and destroy the USA, Great Britain and the state of Israel in a coming nuclear World War.

Satan's Wrath Against Spiritual Israel

As mentioned, the Great Tribulation pictures military attacks against the physical Israelites and Jews, but it also describes Satan's wrath being directed at the same time against God's Church—spiritual Israel.

Christ warns that, prior to His Return, an organized and worldwide *martyrdom of true Christians* will occur. Matthew 24:9–10 describes this time in vivid terms (compare also Mark 13:11–13; Luke 21:12, 16–17). These events are part of the “Great Tribulation” and are also referred to as the fifth seal in Revelation 6:9–11. The fifth seal, following the first four seals of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, is a vision of slain souls under the altar:

“When He opened the fifth seal, 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.”

The *Nelson Study Bible* explains that the souls who were slain for the Word of God are pictured as resting under the altar, as “sacrificial blood was poured beside the base of the altar in the temple (see Ex. 29:12).”

The Souls Under the Altar

The “souls under the altar” are, of course, not alive (it is said that they need to “rest” a little bit longer), and they do not really cry to God with a loud voice. Neither did the “dry bones” in Ezekiel's vision in Ezekiel 37:11 really speak, nor did Abel's shed blood (Genesis 4:10). All of this is symbolic language. Notice what is said in Revelation 20:4, 6 about the “souls” of those who were killed for Christ:

“... I saw the souls of those who had been *beheaded* for their witness to Jesus and *for the word of God*, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads and on their hands. *And they lived* and reigned with Christ for a thousand years... Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first *resurrection*...”

This vision of the souls under the altar makes it clear that religious

persecution has occurred throughout the history of the true Church (compare Revelation 6:9–10), but that in the end time, a terrible and unparalleled persecution will happen once again (compare verse 11).

The Church of God—spiritual Israel—is viewed by most as a sect, or even a cult, and as a part of Judaism. As anti-Semitism rises, true Christians will be affected as well, and perhaps even more so, as they will be viewed as “traitors” toward orthodox Christianity. Not willing to submit to false religious concepts and unbiblical human traditions that have replaced God’s Word, they will be treated as enemies of the state and of the established and mandated state religion. We will later discuss in detail the identity of the “beast” and the “false prophet,” as well as the “fallen woman,” and their role regarding the persecution of the saints.

Martyrdom of the Saints

For now, we will quote several passages that describe the martyrdom of the saints during the Great Tribulation, which will last 3-½ years or less.

Daniel 7:21–22, 25 speaks about the time that will culminate in the Return of Christ and the establishment of God’s rule on earth:

“I was watching; and the same horn [a *religious* power] was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days 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 little horn] shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And *shall intend to change times and law*. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time [i.e., approximately 3-½ years].”

Revelation 13:5–6 speaks about the rule of the *beast* and his persecution of the saints during the time of the Great Tribulation:

“... he [the beast, to be explained later] was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months [approximately 3-½ years]. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.”

Revelation 16:4-6 describes a future time just prior to Christ’s

return, showing again that true Christians will be hated, betrayed, persecuted and killed:

“Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: ‘You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.’”

Revelation 17 speaks about a harlot or a fallen woman, called “Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.” The woman sits on a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns. Notice how she is described in these last days, just prior to the Return of Christ.

Revelation 17:6; 18:24 states very clearly:

“I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus... And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

We are approaching this time very soon! The beast, the false prophet, and Babylon the Great will manifest themselves in the near future, setting in motion the events that will lead to the Great Tribulation. *We are seeing the beginnings of these prophesied events, which show us that Christ’s Return is near!*

The Way of Escape

It is extremely important to heed Christ’s warning for the Church in these last days:

“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be *counted worthy to escape* all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:34–36).

God will provide the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). While many will have to endure persecution and martyrdom, some members of the true Church of God who have been counted worthy to escape such terrible fate will be protected during that time at a physical location or “place of safety” here on earth (Revelation 12:13–16; 3:10).

As we see devastating end-time events developing with enormous speed, we should make sure that God will *count us worthy* of His protection (1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5, 11; compare also Luke 20:35).

We have not yet seen the beginning of the Great Tribulation, but we know that it is the next major event to occur in our time.

Chapter 3

The False Prophet and the Falling Away

In this chapter, we will address the end-time manifestation of a *powerful religious leader* and the tragedy that, in light of religious persecution and other reasons, true Christians *will fall away from the Truth* and return to the world. The prophesied “falling away” from the Truth is to occur, in its fullest and most grievous extent, just prior to and during the Great Tribulation. We will know that Christ’s Return is imminent when these and other events happen at approximately the same time.

Loving the Truth

True Church members will fall away from the Truth because they did not receive the love of the Truth and did not believe the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thessalonians 2:10, 12). Because of lawlessness, the love within them will grow cold (Matthew 24:12; “love” in Greek is *agape*, describing the love of God, which only true Christians have; compare Romans 5:5). The *New International Version* says: “They refused to love the truth.”

As a consequence, they will become an easy target for Satan’s ministers (2 Corinthians 11:14–15) who will deceive them through their lying signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9, 11; Matthew 24:11, 24).

The Man of Sin

The *end-time falling away* from the Truth refers to *converted Christians*. It will reach its *climax* at the approximate time when *the man of sin* manifests himself, just prior to and during the Great Tribulation, claiming to be God and sitting in the Temple of God. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, Paul writes: “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [of Christ’s return] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and

exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, *showing himself that he is God.*"

The False Prophet

This "man of sin," who is also called "the lawless one" in verses 8 and 9, not only will claim to speak with godly authority, he will also say that he is God himself (maybe the Messiah). He is identified in the book of Revelation as "the false prophet" (compare, for example, Revelation 16:13; 19:20; see also, Revelation 13:13–14). He is also identified as the future prince of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:2–5), as well as the end-time representative of the "little horn" in Daniel 7:25, and of the "harlot" in Revelation 17 who rules from a *city* built on seven "hills" (Revelation 7:9; *New English Bible*; compare also Revelation 17:18).

This religious figure will deceive people through "*great signs*" (Revelation 13:13; 19:20). We read in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 that the coming of the lawless one is "according to the working of Satan, with all power, SIGNS and lying wonders." This false prophet will receive his powers to perform great signs from Satan and his demons (compare Revelation 16:13–14).

The Man of Sin Is NOT the Beast

Some believe that the man of sin is a reference to the end-time "beast"—a political military leader. This is not the case.

James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, under "Antichrist", says correctly that the "man of sin" in 2 Thessalonians refers to "a *false Messiah*, a prophet... the opponent of the true Messiah."

We also read that the returning Christ will consume the man of sin "with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Therefore, this man of sin *will exist at the time of Christ's return*. He will proclaim himself to be God, sitting in the Temple of God. It is highly unlikely that Paul was talking about the Church as the *spiritual* temple of God in this context. There is no biblical evidence that the false prophet will be sitting in God's *true* Church—the pillar and ground or foundation of the Truth (1 Timothy 3:15)—which continues to teach and practice the Truth. Instead, a *physical* temple will be built in Jerusalem just prior to Christ's Return.

Some have proposed that the coming end-time *falling away* refers to *traditional* Christianity, which will exert a more powerful influence on the world. While *false* Christianity *will* become more powerful in these last days, Paul's warning of a future "falling away" refers to *true* Christians.

Falling Away From the Truth

The context of these verses addresses a falling away (*apostasia* in Greek) *from the Truth*. The apostle Paul is addressing "brethren" (verse 1) about an apostasy, especially at the end time, just prior to Christ's Return when the man of sin is revealed.

An apostasy from the true gospel had already begun during the lifetime of Paul. In fact, he said that he marveled that so many in the Church of God *had turned to another* gospel (Galatians 1:6–7; compare also 2 Corinthians 11:4, saying that they had accepted *another Jesus* and *another spirit*).

Simon Magus

Even though numerous false doctrines were infiltrating the early church, including "Judaism," with its demands of physical circumcision and the observance of superseded ritual laws of the Old Testament, we can safely say that an important personality, *the Samaritan sorcerer, Simon Magus*, had tremendous influence on the introduction of false doctrines, which are still known and taught today in orthodox Christianity.

Simon Magus believed "the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus" (Acts 8:12–13). He was baptized, but never received the Holy Spirit because the apostles refused to lay hands on him, given the fact that he had not repented of his evil and wicked heart (compare Acts 8:18–24). Simon Magus went to Rome and was given the surname "Peter" as a religious title, meaning "father" or "interpreter."

In his book, *Mystery of the Ages*, Herbert W. Armstrong wrote on pages 51–53:

"It seems incredible that a being like Satan not only could have deceived the whole world, but also 'Christianity'—the very religion bearing Christ's name and supposed to be his true religion. Yet,

paradoxically, Satan did! He did it through his great false church, started A.D. 33 by Simon the Sorcerer...

"Simon proclaimed himself a Christian apostle... and called the pagan Babylonian mystery religion 'Christianity.' He accepted the doctrine of 'grace' for the forgiveness of sin (which the pagan religions had never had), but turned grace into license to disobey God (Jude 4). He aspired to turn his pagan religion, under the name 'Christianity,' into a universal religion..."

The *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, Vol. 4, p. 682, states: "[Simon] came to Rome in the days of Claudius Caesar (45 A.D.), and made such an impression by his magical powers, that he was *honored as a god*..."

A Rival Religion

Hasting's Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, volume 2, page 496, states: "But it need not be supposed that when Simon broke with the Christians he renounced all he had learned. It is more probable that he *carried some of the Christian ideas with him*, and that he wove these into a system of his own. This system is a *mixture of pagan ideas wrapped with Christian names and identities*."

The *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics* says that Simon was "a false Messiah, who practiced magical arts and subsequently attempted, by the aid and with the sanction of Christianity, to set up a *rival universal religion*" (*Apostolic Christianity*, volume 11, page 514).

In Revelation 17, the Apostle John is given a vision of a scarlet beast having seven heads and ten horns. The scarlet beast is ridden by a woman—a harlot. Revelation 17:5 identifies the woman as "mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth."

In biblical terminology, a religious entity is many times depicted as a woman. The true Church of God is identified as a woman (Revelation 12:6, 13–17); a virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2); and the wife of Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:7). Likewise, Christ's true followers are identified as "virgins" (Matthew 25:1; Revelation 14:4).

However, the woman who sits on the scarlet-colored beast is a **FALLEN** rich woman who has committed "fornication" with the inhabitants of the earth (Revelation 17:2; compare also verse 4, and Revelation 18:3, 9). She is identified as "the great harlot who corrupted

the earth with her fornication" (Revelation 19:2). In biblical terminology, she is a fallen church, pretending to be the true Church of God.

The woman is called, in Revelation 17, verse 5, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth." This fallen church is called the "Mother Church," which has "daughter churches."

Lehman Strauss writes in *The Book of the Revelation*," page 295: "The Babylon of the Revelation is an *apostate religious system* clearly identifiable with all of Christendom, with papal Rome taking the lead in its formation."

Simon Magus started the fallen church described in Revelation 17. As he was worshipped as a god or God, so the *final representative* of the harlot—the false prophet—will likewise claim to be God. A falling away from *true* Christianity did take place in the days of Simon Magus, and thereafter, when many who first believed the Truth of the Bible were swayed into accepting Simon's counterfeit apostate religion.

A Falling Away in Recent Times

More recently, another major falling away did take place at the time when a new administration came to power in the *Worldwide Church of God*, after the death of its human leader, Herbert Armstrong, in 1986. Gradually, the Truth was replaced with the false pagan doctrines of "orthodox" Christianity.

Catholic and Protestant churches have rejected, for nearly two millennia, the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days. The Catholic Church claims godly authority and it has admitted that it changed many biblical laws, including the ones regarding God's holy times—the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days (compare Daniel 7:25).

The Protestant Churches, even though they officially reject the authority of the Catholic Church to change the teachings of the Bible, nevertheless followed the lead of the Catholic Church and adopted Sunday worship, while rejecting the Sabbath.

Today, those who accepted the changes within the [now defunct] *Worldwide Church of God* have become part of the Babylonian religious system of a counterfeit Christianity [unless they forsook religion altogether], embracing its false doctrines such as Sunday, Christmas and Easter worship; the Trinity; the immortal soul; going to heaven

or hell upon death; and many more. At the same time, they have rejected the biblical Truth of the Sabbath, the Holy Days, abstaining from unclean meat; the true nature of God; and the potential of man, among many others.

A Future Falling Away

Note however, that the apostasy from the Truth *within the Church of God* will continue (Luke 8:13; 1 Timothy 4:1), and will reach its climax of accepting false teachings and practices, while rejecting the Truth, just prior to Christ's return.

The commentary of *Bengel's Gnomens* states: "Apostasy is a falling away *from the faith*... Some of those who *had received it* drew back [and departed] from the living God..."

The coming end-time apostasy does not refer to just a "handful" of people. It is true that the Bible does not use the term "GREAT" or "GREATER" falling away in 2 Thessalonians 2. However, it is also correct that it has been commonly understood that Paul had a GREAT apostasy in mind, which will be, relatively speaking, greater than prior apostasies. For instance, the headline of the *New King James Bible* for 2 Thessalonians 2 reads, "The Great Apostasy." The *Ryrie Study Bible* comments about the coming apostasy: "An aggressive and climactic revolt against God."

The *Benson Commentary* writes about the coming apostasy: "The article here is emphatical, denoting both that this was to be a *great* apostasy, *the* apostasy... and that the Thessalonians had been already apprised [sic] of its coming."

After all, Paul uses the end-time falling away from the Truth and the manifestation of the man of sin as important and critical visible signs for the arrival of the day of the Lord—the Return of Jesus Christ. If he had only a minor event in mind or just a few Christians who were to forsake the Truth, then this would hardly be an obvious and convincing sign for Christ's Return, as Christians have fallen away from the Truth as long as the Church of God has existed.

Two Separate Events at the Same Time

We must clearly keep in mind that *two different and separate end-time events* will happen at approximately the same time: The apostasy

or falling away of *true* Christians and the manifestation of the false prophet representing a false and apostate counterfeit “Christianity.”

The coming of the lawless one and the concept of lawlessness will remain a mystery to the world. God’s people are warned not to be deceived when the lawless one appears so that *they* don’t fall away from the Truth. The best protection against deception is to stay close to God and His Word, and while rejecting the pleasures of unrighteousness, to believe the Truth and receive and hold fast to the love of it (compare again 2 Thessalonians 2:10–12).

When we see the manifestation of the man of sin and the falling away from the Truth, in combination with other events already mentioned, and to be discussed later, *we know that Christ’s Return is near!*

Chapter 4

The Third Temple and Animal Sacrifices

In the last chapter, we alluded to the fact that the man of sin will sit as God in the *Temple of God*, pretending to be God Himself (2 Thessalonians 2:4). We also saw that this will happen just prior to the Return of Jesus Christ. This means, a *Third Temple* will be built in Jerusalem so that the man of sin *can* occupy it. *When we see that that Temple will be built, we will know that Christ's Return is imminent.*

The question arises as to why a Temple would be built in the first place. One answer is: To fulfill the desire of the Jews to bring *daily sacrifices* at the Temple Mount.

Animal Sacrifices Without a Temple?

Even though it is true that sacrifices can be brought before the foundation of the Temple has been laid and the erection of the Temple has been completed (compare Ezra 3:6, 11), it is also true that the Jews would not bring daily animal sacrifices unless the preparation of the Temple is underway (compare Ezra 3:8–10). We read in 1 Chronicles 21:26 that David built an altar and that sacrifices were offered on the site upon which Solomon built the First Temple.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary explains the passages in Ezra 3:6–11: "They could not at once have a temple, but they would not be without an altar... And they made *preparation for the building of the temple without delay...*"

Barnes Notes on the Bible adds: "They restored the old altar of burnt-offerings, which stood directly in front of the temple-porch, upon the old foundation." In other words, on the Temple Mount. *Soncino* writes to verse 8: "... 'house of God' probably denotes the site where the First Temple had stood on which they *planned* to erect the new Sanctuary."

We should also notice that the occurrences in Ezra 3 were unique, in that the Jews were allowed to leave their Babylonian captivity and

to return to Jerusalem *in order to build the Temple there* (Ezra 1:2–5; 2:68; compare also Ezra 4:1–3).

The *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* points out: “The burnt offerings were regularly made on the altar, although there was no Temple building, nor Temple worship. Such a thing would have been *almost incredible* to the Jew of later centuries.”

Future Daily Sacrifices to Be Suppressed

The Bible clearly prophesies that the Jews will bring *daily sacrifices*, which will subsequently be *suppressed* by an invading foreign power (Gentile nations under the leadership of a military commander, the “beast”). The sacrifices will be suppressed by that power for *2,300 evening-mornings* (Daniel 8:14) or *1,150 days* (as daily sacrifices were and will be brought *twice a day*, in the morning and in the evening, compare Exodus 29:38–39), until the sanctuary will be cleansed. The foreign power will also place there the abomination of desolation (compare Daniel 8:11–12; Daniel 11:31). All of this will happen *at the beginning of the Great Tribulation*.

It is important to understand the correct meaning of Daniel 8:13–14. A superficial reading might lead to the conclusion that animal sacrifices will be given for 2,300 evenings and mornings (1,150 days) until the foreign power invades Jerusalem and suppresses them, but that is not correct.

Ceasing for 1,150 Days

Rather, we are told that the daily sacrifices will begin at a given point and *will then cease for 1,150 days*. We are not told specifically when they will begin and for how long they will be given, but as other prophecies indicate, they will be given for only a short time until the foreign power will invade the Middle East, bringing about the Great Tribulation. This shows too that the building of the Third Temple will have to be completed or nearly completed when the foreign power invades and conquers Jerusalem and the man of sin will sit in the Temple.

The German Bible, *Hoffnung fuer Alle*, renders Daniel 8:13: “When will one be able to *give God again* the regular sacrifices? When will the rebellion against the Lord of Heaven and the terrible *sacrilege of the Temple* end?”

The *Revised English Bible* translates Daniel 8:13–14 as follows: "... 'How long will the period of this vision last? How long will the regular offering *be suppressed* and impiety cause desolation? How long will the Holy Place and the fairest of all lands be given over to be trodden down?' The answer came, 'For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings, then the Holy Place will be restored.'"

Notice carefully: 2,300 evenings and mornings *were to pass before the sanctuary would be cleansed or restored*. During this time span, the daily offerings would be suppressed; the "transgression of desolation" or the "abomination of desolation" would appear; and the Holy Place (or the sanctuary or the Temple) would be trodden down or trampled underfoot.

The 1,290 Days

In addition, Daniel 12:11 says that there will be *1,290 days AFTER* the daily sacrifices were taken away AND the abomination of desolation will have been set up.

Some say that Daniel is referring to the day of Christ's Return and tells us to count backwards, but if we were to count backwards from such an assumed day of Christ's Second Coming, then Daniel 8:13–14 would tell us that the daily sacrifices will be abolished *for 1,150 days before Christ's Return*, while Daniel 12:11 would tell us that the daily sacrifices will be abolished *for 1,290 days before Christ's Return*. Both statements could not be correct, as they would contradict each other. This shows that we must wait until God reveals to us the clear meaning of those days, as there is certainly importance attached to them.

The Abomination of Desolation

When Christ was asked by His disciples what would signify the end of the age (Matthew 24:3), He referred to the "great tribulation" (verse 21) and, at that same time, "*the abomination of desolation*," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in *the holy place*" (verse 15; compare, too, Mark 13:14, adding, "where it ought not").

In Luke 21:20, in the parallel account, Christ is quoted as saying, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near."

Daniel 11:31 refers to Antiochus Epiphanes as a *forerunner* for another

end-time fulfillment. When Antiochus set up the first “abomination of desolation,” he overran Jerusalem with armies; did away with the daily sacrifices, which were brought AT THE TEMPLE; and erected an image of Zeus (or Jupiter) in the “holy place” — the TEMPLE. He and his followers began offering pigs to their pagan deity in the Holy TEMPLE in Jerusalem.

A Speaking Image

Something similar will happen again when the end-time abomination of desolation occurs. This might include the *erection of an image* in the Temple, which could present a false Christ or a statue of the “Virgin Mary.” In addition, we read in Revelation 13:14–15 that a religious power will create “a speaking image” of the political and military beast power.

Some have suggested that “the false prophet will attempt to lead the people to finance the erection of a great image in Jerusalem... When the image speaks, Jews and Gentiles, Roman Catholics and Protestants, wherever they are, will worship the image or be killed if they refuse” (Lehman Strauss, *The Book of the Revelation*).

Finally, we also read that the false prophet will sit in the Temple of God and pretend to BE God, constituting the final and ultimate abomination of desolation in the *holy place*. It is very possible that he will be using the “speaking image” (perhaps a religious statue in the Temple) to “prove” his divinity while sitting in the Temple. The commentary of Jamieson, Fausset and Brown wrote: “Rome’s speaking images and winking pictures of the Virgin Mary and the saints are an earnest of the future demoniacal miracles of the false prophet in making the... image to speak.”

A Literal Physical Temple

Other passages confirm as well that a literal Temple will be built in Jerusalem just prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation. For instance, Revelation 11:1–2 says that an angel of God told John: “Rise and measure the *temple of God*, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will *tread* the holy city *underfoot* for forty-two months [or 3-1/2 years].”

We note that Gentiles (referring to European armies under a military leader, the “beast”) will tread the holy city underfoot for 3–1/2 years, and the court, which is outside the Temple, will be given to those Gentiles. Luke 21:24 prophesies that the Gentiles will *trample* or tread the holy city *underfoot* until “the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” We also read in Daniel 8:13 that “some of the host” will be *trampled underfoot* by a future Gentile ruler (the beast).

Notice again how the *Revised English Bible* renders Daniel 8:13: “... How long will the regular offering be suppressed and impiety cause desolation? How long will the Holy Place and the fairest of all lands be given over to *be trodden down*?”

Some have wondered whether a *Third Temple* will be built prior to Christ’s return, or whether the reference to the “Temple” refers to the Church of God, the spiritual Temple. We have addressed and rejected this concern in the previous chapter.

The Church of God, under its late human leader, Herbert W. Armstrong, has always and consistently identified the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2 as the false prophet. While the Church felt at times that the “temple” might be a reference to a spiritual Temple—the Church—it has also taught at other times that it is referring to a literal Temple.

In *Die Reine Wahrheit* of October 1967 (German edition of the *Worldwide Church of God’s* magazine, *The Plain Truth*), it was stated on page 10 (in the article, “2,300 Evenings and Mornings”): “Yes, a temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, as incredible as it may sound.”

In the *Worldwide Church of God’s The Good News* magazine, November–December 1987, the following was stated on page 12 in “A Sealed Prophecy,” *implying* the existence of a Temple *before* Christ’s return: “The ‘sanctuary’ is to be ‘trampled underfoot’... the taking away of daily sacrifices and trampling of a sanctuary underfoot is yet a future event. We are nearing the fulfillment of these amazing prophecies about the Temple Mount in Jerusalem...”

Herbert W. Armstrong wrote the following about the man of sin and the Third Temple, in the *Plain Truth* of June 1967:

“There will be a Jewish Temple built in Jerusalem, with animal sacrifices once again being offered... For a long time the Jewish people have had in mind the rebuilding of the Temple... And it must be built on the exact site of Solomon’s Temple... [Jesus said:] ‘When ye

therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the Holy Place ...—this ‘Holy Place’ has to be IN THE TEMPLE! And IN JERUSALEM!... before the second coming of Christ, a vile leader will stop the daily sacrifices being offered in the Temple (yet to be built) in Jerusalem, and will profane the Holy Place with an idol...

“There will very soon be a Temple in Jerusalem, with daily sacrifices once again being offered. But the ruler of the soon-coming resurrected ‘Holy Roman Empire’; a political-military union of ten European nations—will stop the daily sacrifices and profane the Holy Place in the Temple... Jerusalem will be surrounded and captured... by the... armies of the European Empire... They will invade Jerusalem, and take charge of the Temple.

“This European power, resurrecting for a VERY short while the Roman Empire, will take over the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:2.) They will take the Temple, and plant the palace of their headquarters there. With this coming military leader, pictured in Revelation 17 as the symbolic ‘beast,’ will be a supreme religious leader, called ‘the False Prophet,’ [Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10] and the ‘man of sin.’ So will you turn next to II Thessalonians 2:3–4: ‘Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day’ — the Day of the Lord, verse 2 — ‘shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and THAT MAN OF SIN be revealed, the SON OF PERDITION; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.’ So there will have to be the Temple there!”

We can clearly see now that the Bible speaks indeed of the building of a LITERAL Third Temple on the Temple Mount just prior to Christ’s Return, and that the false prophet will occupy that Temple, claiming to be God (perhaps in the Person of the Messiah—the returned Jesus Christ).

An additional passage which shows that the Jews will build an end-time Temple in Jerusalem, just prior to Christ’s Return, is Psalm 79:1–7. This is an end-time psalm, as verse 6 shows. God is asked to pour out His wrath on the nations—a reference to God’s pouring out of the end-time plagues of His wrath, as described in Revelation 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19. In this context, Psalm 79:1 says: “O God, the nations have

come into your inheritance; Your *holy temple* they have defiled. They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.”

Other prophetic end-time references to a future Temple in Jerusalem can be found in Ezekiel 8:5, 16, as well as in Ezekiel 9:1–7. These passages speak about a defilement within the Temple, an “*image of jealousy*” in the Temple, sunrise worship services in the Temple; and punishment of those who defile the Temple, which is also referred to as God’s sanctuary.

Anxious to Build the Temple

The Jewish community in the state of Israel, as well as fundamental Christians, are anxiously waiting for the building of the *Third Temple*. Contributions and gold have been received from national and international sponsors for the building of the Temple. A blueprint for the building of the Temple exists; and replicas of certain furnishings and utensils for the Temple have been prepared. They include the golden lampstand, the table of showbread, the altar of incense, the Ark of the Covenant, and the crown and ephod for the High Priest.

Many articles have been published over the years, clearly proving the conviction of many Jews and Christians that a Third Temple will be built PRIOR to the arrival of the Messiah. We are setting forth some recent representative samples.

JTA wrote on May 14, 2018:

“The United States dedicated its newly established embassy in Jerusalem in a high-profile ceremony attended by prominent Trump administration officials... The Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, which passed both houses of Congress by overwhelming votes, recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and called for relocating the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem...”

“Several of the speakers... reminded the audience that exactly 70 years ago, nearly to the moment of the ceremony, the United States under President Harry Truman became the first country to recognize the new state of Israel.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a remarkable speech during the opening of the US embassy, which clearly alluded to the building of the Third Temple. He said, as quoted by the *Times of Israel*, dated May 14, 2018:

“In Jerusalem, King David established our capital three thousand years ago. In Jerusalem, King Solomon built our Temple, which stood for many centuries. In Jerusalem, Jewish exiles from Babylon rebuilt the Temple, which stood for many more centuries. In Jerusalem, the Maccabees rededicated that Temple and restored Jewish sovereignty in this land.

“And it was here in Jerusalem some two thousand years later that the soldiers of Israel spoke three immortal words... [*‘Har ha’bayit be’yadeinu’*] ‘The Temple Mount is in our hands,’ words that lifted the spirit of the entire nation. We are in Jerusalem and we are here to stay...

“May the opening of this embassy in this city spread the truth far and wide, and may the truth advance a lasting peace between Israel and all our neighbors. God bless the United States of America and God bless Jerusalem, the eternal, undivided capital of Israel.”

The Red Heifer

The *Daily Star* wrote on September 8, 2018:

“The Temple Institute announced the birth of an entirely red female calf that ‘brings the promise of reinstating Biblical purity to the world’. The cow’s birth and sacrifice is said to proceed the construction of the Third Temple in Jerusalem. And the *Third Temple’s construction* – following the destruction of the previous two – heralds the arrival of the Jewish Messiah...

“Rabbi Chaim Richman, director of the Temple Institute, hailed the red heifer’s birth as suggestions the time could be right for the Third Temple...

“Evangelical Christians believe the construction of the *Third Temple* will herald their own end times prophecy...”

The Bible does not necessitate or prophesy the appearance of a red heifer (note Hebrews 9:11–14 in reference to the abolished need for the ashes of a red heifer; also compare Hebrews 10:8–10, 18; Hebrews 8:13). However, it is very likely that some Jewish clerics may insist that the sacrifice of such a heifer for the purpose of producing the ashes for the water of purification of the Temple Mount, and the Temple itself, will be essential for the reconstruction of the Temple and the coming of the Messiah. But this is NOT to say that other clerics or many Jews will abide by the interpretation of some, and that they will not begin

with the construction of the Temple and the offering of daily animal sacrifices before they “find” such a red heifer.

The Nascent Sanhedrin Speaks Out

Breaking Israel News wrote on November 8, 2018:

“Jerusalem will have a new mayor next week and more than any other election this year will decide the religious nature of Israel’s capital. The nascent Sanhedrin has addressed a letter to the two candidates emphasizing the role of the Third Temple in municipal current policy... ‘We call on the candidates as well as the voters to make choices based on truth and on the main aspect of Jerusalem, which is the building of the Temple.’

“The Sanhedrin wrote a similar letter [in November of 2016] to U.S. President Donald Trump after he won the election, calling on him to take a role in building the Third Temple just as Persian King Cyrus helped the Jews build the Second Temple after the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BCE...

“The Sanhedrin has already begun working toward this end, holding full-dress reenactments of the Temple service before the Biblical feasts...”

There is great momentum for the beginning of daily animal sacrifices and the building of the Third Temple. This momentum will intensify. We will know that *Christ’s Return is near when the Jews begin to bring daily animal sacrifices in connection with building the Third Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem!*

Chapter 5

The Last Revival of the Ancient Holy Roman Empire

One of the most striking and convincing events proving that Christ's Return is indeed very near, is the last European revival of the ancient Roman Empire, which is happening today, in front of our very eyes.

The book of Daniel describes four world-ruling empires, identified as Babylon (compare Daniel 2:38; 7:17), Medo-Persia (compare Daniel 2:39; 7:17; 8:20), Greece (compare Daniel 2:39; 7:17; 8:21) and Rome (compare Daniel 2:40–43; 7:17).

John's description of a beast in Revelation 13:1 parallels the four beasts that Daniel saw in Daniel 7—the first beast in Daniel's vision was like a lion, the second like a bear and the third like a leopard. Here John sees only one beast, but it has combined elements of all the beasts that Daniel saw—a lion, a bear, and a leopard. In addition, John's beast had seven heads. Taken together, Daniel's beasts had seven heads too—that of a lion, of a bear, four heads of the leopard (Daniel 7:6), and the head of the fourth beast. John's beast had ten horns, and the fourth beast Daniel saw in Daniel 7:7 had ten horns as well.

John's beast represents the Roman Empire. He saw it as one composite beast, as it had swallowed up the previous three kingdoms. The Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Greek empires had already come and gone, but their territory and characteristics had been absorbed by Rome.

The Roman Empire was to be divided into Eastern and Western Rome, and the Western part would fall, but it was to be revived ten times and would endure until the time of Jesus Christ's Return.

When the Roman Empire fell, the world believed it would never rise again (symbolized by the deadly wound of John's beast, compare Revelation 13:3). But it was to be revived ten times, symbolized by the ten horns of John's beast.

According to Daniel 7:24, ten kings were to arise from or out of the ancient Roman Empire. The beast or the Roman Empire would

have ten successive resurrections or revivals. Revelation 17:8 confirms this—the beast described there, which is similar to the beast of Revelation 13, is described as one that “was, and is not, and will ascend...,” showing the successive nature of the revivals.

The Ancient Roman Empire Revived

After the destruction of Rome, three so-called “barbarian” powers who were all followers of unorthodox Arianism, revived the Roman Empire, constituting its first three resurrections. This happened under King Gaiseric of the Vandals, under King Odoacer of the Heruli, and under King Theodoric of the Ostrogoths. These are the first three horns of the fourth beast in Daniel 7 (compare Daniel 7:7–8, 24) and of the beast in Revelation 13.

The fourth resurrection occurred under Justinian in A.D. 554. Known in history as the Imperial Restoration, this is the biblical “healing of the deadly wound” (compare Revelation 13:3) the Roman Empire had received from the barbarian powers.

The fifth resurrection occurred under Charlemagne (Charles the Great) in A.D. 800; the sixth under Otto the Great in A.D. 962; the seventh under Charles V of Hapsburg in 1530; the eighth under Napoleon Bonaparte (ruling from 1804 until 1814); and the ninth under Mussolini and Hitler. Mussolini declared publicly that he had revived the ancient Roman Empire, saying: “Raise on high your emblems, your arms and your hearts to salute, after fifteen centuries, the reappearance of the Empire on the fateful hills of Rome.” What is happening right now in Europe is leading to the *tenth and final resurrection of that same Roman Empire*.

Core Europe

This tenth resurrection will be a collaborating entity, commonly referred to as “core Europe,” consisting of ten European nations or groups of nations which will only exist for a very short time. They might have different ideas, but they will be a strong unified *military* power, and they will be united in their rebellion against God.

In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream a great image with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and with feet partly of iron and partly of clay. He also saw in that dream that a stone (symbolizing the returning Jesus Christ) struck

the image on its feet or its ten toes. These ten toes are identical with the ten horns or ten kings in Revelation 17:3, 7, 12–14. They will rule together at the very end before the Return of Christ and will attempt to fight Him, but Christ will, of course, defeat them.

Out of the current EU (consisting of more than two dozen member states or “countries”) and out of the current Eurozone member states (consisting of 19 “countries,” which have adopted the euro), ten nations or groups of nations will emerge. They will receive authority for one prophetic hour (Revelation 17:12) together with the end-time “beast”—a charismatic political and military leader. In the Bible, the “beast” can refer to the political and military power bloc and/or to the end-time leader of that bloc.

When that political leader manifests himself, THEN the ten kings receive power at the same time, which they will then turn over to the beast. The mighty and powerful Babylonian system—“Babylon the Great”—will continue to exist, and so will the euro—the common European currency which glues the Eurozone states together. The concept is biblically untenable that the euro will fail and that the European core nations will return to individual national currencies.

The Bible speaks of ten horns or kings in the book of Revelation and ten toes in the book of Daniel. These kings, kingdoms or toes (powers) do not have to correspond to humanly devised geographical borders, designed by political ambitions. That is why we refer to ten nations or groups of nations.

Currently, as of April 2019, the 19 Eurozone member states are designated as follows:

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

God is not viewing some of those “countries” as single and independent entities. Some of the “countries” might be grouped together and are to be viewed as “one” in biblical terminology. For instance, Germany and Austria would be one entity or one group, even though man lists them as two nations. Little islands like Malta or Cyprus (if they were among the final ten “kings” or “kingdoms”) would not constitute individual countries or nations in God’s eyes; in all likelihood, Malta would be considered as part of either Italy or France,

and Cyprus might be viewed as part of Greece. (This is not to say that the current Eurozone configuration constitutes the prophesied ten nations or groups of nations.)

Some European Countries May Leave

Some Israelite nations in Europe might leave the Eurozone and even the EU. Some Nordic countries (modern descendants of the ancient house of Israel) might form a trading bloc in competition to the Eurozone.

Religious Revival

In addition to the political and military revival of the ancient Roman Empire, note should be taken of the fact that the last seven of those ten revivals will also see and include a revival of a religious power, which will work together with the political power.

In Revelation 17, John is given a vision of a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns. It is ridden by a fallen woman—a harlot. Revelation 17:5 identifies the woman as “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth.” This woman is depicted in verse 6 as “drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” In verse 18, the woman is also identified as “that great city that reigns over the kings of the earth,” the city that is built and sits on seven mountains or hills (verse 9)—Rome.

The heads of the beast in Revelation 17 depict the *seven last resurrections* of the ancient Roman Empire. The fallen woman sits on these last seven resurrections of the beast. The first three revivals of the ancient Roman Empire occurred under leaders with a different religion, that of Arianism, which was labeled a heresy by the Roman Catholic Church.

As we will recall, the first of the seven last resurrections of the Roman Empire occurred under Justinian in A.D. 527. He was mainly responsible for wiping out the barbarian tribes, but he did so at the behest of a succession of Roman popes. At that time, lands of the old West Roman Empire were taken back. Justinian also restored the rule of “orthodox” Roman Catholicism to the West.

The second of the seven last resurrections occurred under Christian Emperor Charlemagne or Charles the Great, who was crowned in A.D. 800 by Pope Leo III, and who is commonly referred to as the “European Unifier.”

The third of the seven last resurrections occurred under Otto the Great, under whose name the “Roman Empire of the German Nation” was coined. He was crowned in 962 by Pope John XII. The fourth of the seven last resurrections occurred under Charles V Habsburg, who was crowned in 1530 by Pope Clement VII. By this time, the name “Holy Roman Empire” was in popular usage because of the close contact between the state and the so-called Holy Roman Church. The fifth of the last seven resurrections occurred under Napoleon Bonaparte, who was also crowned by a pope.

The sixth of the last seven resurrections occurred under Hitler and Mussolini, both Catholics. Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty with the papacy in 1929, establishing papal sovereignty over Vatican City. This event affirmed Roman Catholicism as the only religion of Italy and, in turn, the papacy officially recognized Mussolini as the rightful Italian governor. Also, the Vatican signed a concordat with Hitler in 1933, protecting the rights of the church under the Nazi regime. This gave Hitler’s government an outward semblance of legitimacy.

The seventh and last resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire is already beginning. As with the previous six resurrections, the woman—the papal city of Rome—will “ride” or work with, and to an extent, direct the activities of the seventh resurrection as well.

Was and Is Not

We read in Revelation 17:11 that the beast “that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.” The phrase, “is not” refers to the short-lived *ninth resurrection* of the ancient Roman Empire under Mussolini and Hitler. Even though “it was” (verse 8: “... is not, and yet is”), it really was not, by comparison, such an all-encompassing and consequential revival as the previous ones, and as the tenth and last revival will be.

The Eighth, and of the Seven

Verse 11 tells us that the beast himself is the “*eighth, and is of the seven.*” This could be a reference to the individual beast—the end-time military leader who will rule and be a part of the seventh revival of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Little Horn

The influencing power of the Roman Catholic Church was prophesied in Daniel's vision of the four beasts in Daniel 7—with the fourth beast having ten horns. The ten horns picture the ten resurrections of the ancient Roman Empire. Daniel 7:7 deals with the first three of these resurrections. Then, in verse 8, Daniel says, "I was considering the [ten] horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up *among* them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots." Verse 24 says that the little horn will rise "*after* them"—that is, after the first three horns.

An angel explained in verse 24 that the little (religious) horn, which would be different from the other (political) horns, would "subdue three kings." This little horn, the religious power synonymous with the woman in Revelation 17, riding the scarlet beast, would also change times and law, or rather, change the law regarding holy times.

We saw earlier that the beast (the political and military leader of the European power bloc) will persecute the saints. In Revelation 17, we are told that the woman riding the beast power will participate in the persecution of the saints. It will be a combined joint effort between church and state, which it has been so many times before.

The Mark of the Beast

We read in Revelation 13:16–17 that the second (religious) beast will cause people to accept "a mark" of the first (political) beast "on their right hand" or "on their foreheads." Without it, they cannot buy or sell (compare Revelation 14:9). The mark of the beast means general participation in the worship system of the revived Roman Empire.

In particular, it is clearly associated with the violation of God's weekly and annual Sabbath commandments [the time from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, and during the times of seven annual Holy Days, which likewise begin at sunset]. In the Bible, the "right hand" is associated with work (Psalm 137:5). The "forehead" is the seat of thoughts (Ezekiel 3:8; 9:4; Revelation 7:3). God has commanded us to keep certain times holy and, during these holy times, one is not to concentrate on and engage in commercial activities.

Changing God's Holy Times?

The little horn in Daniel 7:25 persecuted God's people who did not accept its change from God's weekly Sabbath and His annual Holy Days to man-made holidays, such as Sunday, Christmas and Easter. Under the Code of Justinian, who constituted the first resurrection of the "Holy" Roman Empire, orthodox Christianity became the only lawful religion.

It acknowledged the ecclesiastical leadership of the Roman Church, and ordered all Christian groups to submit to her authority. Those who were not orthodox Catholics were forbidden from buying and selling; i.e., conducting business. Indeed, those branded "heretics" faced a death sentence. In general, Christians were many times branded by orthodox Christianity as those who were "Judaizing," and they were put to death for such practice.

The little horn changed the holy times ordained by God and replaced them with times designated by man to be holy. Today, most Christians follow human traditions, rather than godly injunctions. The little horn, the woman riding the beast, will cause people to accept the mark of the beast under pain of death.

As in the past, the woman, under its coming leader, the "false prophet," will influence the political power of the revived Roman Empire to command people, via "legislation," to work during God's holy times, while prohibiting work at times proclaimed by her to be "holy." As true Christians cannot and will not abide by the political power's legislative demands, the woman, by her influence and her teaching, will "cause" the death of true Christians (compare Revelation 13:15).

When the final revival of the ancient Holy Roman Empire is manifesting itself in Europe— a mighty power bloc of ten nations or groups of nations under the leadership of a political and military leader (the beast) in collaboration with a religious leader (the false prophet)—then we will know that Christ's Return is imminent!

Chapter 6

Great Britain and Continental Europe in Prophecy

The Bible has prophesied for many centuries that Great Britain would leave the EU. The Church of God has been proclaiming for many years that Great Britain will not be a part of the European unification *in its final configuration*. The main reason for this warning has been that the Bible predicts a *devastating war* between Great Britain (as well as the USA) and continental Europe.

Many falsely believe that the house of Israel and the Jewish people are one and the same. But Judah, from whom the Jewish people descended, was just one tribe of the descendants of Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel (Genesis 35:10). They separated from their Israelite brothers and, along with the tribes of Levi and some of Benjamin, formed the “house of Judah.” The other tribes became known as the “house of Israel.” The “house of Israel” went into captivity first, never to return to the “Promised Land.” Today, they are called the “lost ten tribes.” The “house of Judah” also went into captivity but did eventually return to Palestine. Many descendants of the house of Judah are living today in the state of Israel.

In due time, as history and archeology reveal, the lost ten tribes of the house of Israel migrated to and settled in Europe and the British Isles. One tribe in particular, the descendants of *Manasseh*—the older son of Joseph—migrated from there to the *United States of America*, where they still are today. The descendants of *Ephraim*—the younger son of Joseph—can be found in *Great Britain* and in some of today’s *Commonwealth nations* [once known as the British Commonwealth], including Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

Coming Slavery

The Bible shows that just prior to the Return of Christ, the United States and Great Britain, as well as some of the other Commonwealth

nations, will be overthrown and enslaved by a mighty European power bloc, constituting the last revival of the ancient Roman Empire. *When we see that hostile relationships continue to develop between continental Europe and the USA, Great Britain and the state of Israel, and that these hostilities are escalating toward outright military confrontations, we know that Christ's Return is imminent!*

Dismissal of Three Shepherds

A remarkable prophecy for our time can be found in Zechariah 11, which is directed against the USA, the United Kingdom and to some of the Commonwealth nations, as well as the state of Israel. The passage refers specifically to three powerful religious and/or political leaders: "(8) I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me... (14) Then I cut in two my other staff... that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel."

This indicates that in the times just ahead of us, the close relationship between the USA and Great Britain on the one hand, and the state of Israel on the other hand, will cease. We will soon know for sure who the three shepherds or *human leaders* over these three nations are, or will be, who will be "dismissed" "in one month."

That the relationship between the USA, the UK and the state of Israel will deteriorate, just prior to Europe's attack on these powers, is confirmed in Isaiah 9:20–21, which tells us: "... Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm. Manasseh (USA) shall devour Ephraim (UK), and Ephraim Manasseh, Together they shall be against Judah. For all this His anger is not turned away, But his hand is stretched out still."

Modern Assyria

The Germans will be the dominant people of the coming united Europe, which will attack and conquer both the United States of America and Great Britain, as well as the state of Israel. Isaiah 10:5 describes the person who will launch the world into a devastating war, stating: "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation." God will use Assyria to punish Israel and Judah, but afterward, He will deal with Assyria as well.

The Church of God has recognized for a long time that the modern

Assyrians can be found today in large parts of *Austria* and *Germany* (especially the southern part and perhaps the eastern part of Germany). At least three leaders (the German Otto the Great, the Austrian Charles V and the Austrian Adolf Hitler), and possibly as many as seven leaders (the three Germanic Barbarian tribes and Charlemagne or Charles the Great) of the various revivals of the ancient Roman Empire, were descendants of the Assyrians. The last leader, called the king of the North, the beast, the king of Assyria and King Jareb, will also be an Assyrian. *This means that the "beast" will be of German or Austrian descent.*

There currently still exists a superficial friendly alliance between Germany and the state of Israel, the United States and Great Britain. However, recent events have shaken that alliance considerably, at least between Europe and the USA and the UK, mostly due to the controversial leadership of President Donald Trump and the Brexit disaster between the UK and the EU.

Help from Assyria?

The time will soon arrive when any friendly relationship between Europe and the USA, the UK and the state of Israel will come to a complete end. The days of calamity are looming, when the United States, Great Britain and the modern state of Israel will *seek the help* of the modern Assyrians, but will not receive it.

We read God's words in Hosea 5:9–14: "Ephraim [modern Great Britain and possibly here, by extension, the USA] shall be desolate in the day of rebuke; Among the tribes of Israel I make known what is sure. The princes of Judah [modern leaders in the state of Israel] are like those who remove a landmark; I will pour out My wrath on them like water. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, Because he willingly walked by human precept.

"Therefore I will be to Ephraim like a moth, And to the house of Judah like rotteness. When Ephraim saw his sickness, And Judah saw his wound [a military defeat in war and lingering consequences], Then Ephraim went to Assyria... [the German *Menge* Bible and the *New American Bible* add: "...and Judah..."] sent to King Jareb [the "beast"—note that the *Elberfelder* Bible explains that "Jareb" means, "fighter; or one who seeks quarrels"]; Yet he cannot cure you, Nor heal you of your wound. For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, And like

a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away; I will take them away, and no one shall rescue."

Ephraim and Judah will attempt, unsuccessfully, to obtain help from Assyria, perhaps pursuant to a *covenant* or a treaty that Ephraim and Assyria had entered into (Hosea 12:1). Only later, after they had to experience their terrible destruction through the Assyrians, all of "Israel" will come to recognize reality and turn to God, as Hosea 14:1–3 states:

"O Israel, return to the LORD your God, For you stumbled because of your iniquity... Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; Receive us graciously, For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips. Assyria shall not save us, We will not ride on horses, Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, "You are our gods." For in You the fatherless finds mercy."

Considering the former greatness of the British Empire and comparing it with today's British Isles, we can see how accurate the following descriptions are in Hosea 7:8–9, 11–12. We read in verse 8: "Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake unturned..."

The *Nelson Study Bible* has the following interesting annotation: "Instead of depending on the Lord for political stability, Israel formed alliances with surrounding nations. The destructive outcome of this policy is compared to a cake that has been placed over a fire and left unturned."

Captives in Assyria

Modern Israelites and modern Jews will try in vain, at their time of distress, to obtain assistance from Assyria. But quite to the contrary, the Assyrians will fight against modern Israel and Judah. Enslavement and mass deportation of peoples will be the result. Assyria, which will invade the territories of the modern Israelites and the Jewish state, will bring some of the prisoners into its own country (as in the Second World War many of the imprisoned Poles and Yugoslavs were deported to Germany as forced laborers).

Hosea 9:3 tells us: "They shall not dwell in the LORD's land, But Ephraim shall return to Egypt [not to the land of Egypt, but to "Egyptian" captivity and slavery, as they had endured it in Egypt], And shall eat unclean things in Assyria." Hosea 11:5 adds: "He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king."

What all of this means is that the relationship between Europe and the USA, the UK and the state of Israel will deteriorate more and more. Finally, the last European revival of the ancient Roman Empire will attack the USA, the UK and the state of Israel with nuclear and bio-chemical weapons of mass destruction.

Conduct of European Nations

That war may not only be directed against the state of Israel, Great Britain and some of the Commonwealth nations (such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand), as well as the USA, but also against *some of the Israelite nations in Europe* (Israelite nations in Europe can be found today in Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden and the northern part of Germany).

On the other hand, the name of Israel should rest specifically on the descendants of Joseph (Genesis 48:16), the father of Ephraim (the UK) and Manasseh (the USA), and biblical prophecies about the modern house of Israel are mainly directed toward them. Therefore, *a departure of other Israelite nations from the EU or even the Eurozone is possible*, as we pointed out in the last chapter, but it is not compelling. It is also possible that many or all of the Israelite nations in Europe (apart from the UK) will remain as members of the EU—in the case of France, Belgium, Luxembourg or Ireland, as well as those living in the northern part of Germany, this is very likely.

For instance, none of the descendants of Dan in today's Ireland are mentioned in the book of Revelation as part of the 144,000 who will be sealed to receive special protection from the awesome plagues of the terrible "Day of the Lord" (see Revelation 7:4–8), perhaps because of their ongoing idolatry and their alliance with or being part of core European nations. Therefore, the possibility exists that some of these Israelite nations will be part of the European power bloc so that they will participate in fighting against the UK and the USA, as well as the state of Israel. Historically, there have been many times when Israelite nations fought against each other.

We read in Zechariah 14:14 that "Judah"—that is, some or many of the Jews from around the world—will fight not only "at," but also *against* Jerusalem. (Compare *Revised Standard Version*; *New American*

Bible; *New Jerusalem Bible* and the *Moffat* translation; as well as the German *Elberfelder Bible*; the *Luther Bible 1891*; the *Luther Bible 1984*; the new *Luther Bible 2009*; the *Luther Bible 2017*; the *Menge Bible*; and the *Zuercher Bible*.)

In addition, other Israelite nations outside “core Europe” might not actively participate in the fighting, but they may not do anything to protect or defend the USA, the UK or the state of Israel. They may stay “neutral,” as the Israelite nation of Switzerland has famously done many times throughout its history, thereby clandestinely supporting both sides.

Core Europe—Not as United as One Might Think

We also need to understand correctly the *nature of the ten kings or kingdoms* that are forming a coming core Europe. They will not be as united as some may think. They are described in Daniel 2:40–43, as follows:

“And the fourth kingdom [the ancient Roman Empire] 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. 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 [the last revival of the Roman Empire] shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom [the Kingdom of God] 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.”

This last revival will be very strong militarily. This military might is also described in Daniel 7:7, 23. But it will also be morally corrupt and brutal, and the ten core European nations or groups of nations, under their leaders, will have their own ideas and philosophies. They will have a strong unity regarding military matters, perhaps due to perceived or real threats and dangers from foreign countries; but they will

have a rather fragile “unity” in regard to moral and immoral matters.

The appearance of the patchwork of a perceived but rather weak unity might be supported by marriages between the leaders and their relatives of some of those European nations, but those marriages will not bring about unity of mind.

The *New Living Translation* renders Daniel 2:43 in this way: “This mixture of iron and clay also shows that these kingdoms will try to strengthen themselves by forming alliances with each other through intermarriage.” Literally, it says, through “mixtures of human seeds.”

Since the toes consist of iron and clay, the thought is also conveyed that some of their leaders will be *strong*, while others will be *weak*. Still, the military unification will be very powerful, and the present desire for a strong and “real” *European army* points in that direction. *All of this shows us that the Return of Christ is near!*

The next major development will be the revelation and manifestation of the “beast”—King Jareb of Assyria—at the same time that ten European nations or groups of nations unite powerfully economically, politically and militarily. Very shortly thereafter, the European power bloc will attack the USA and Great Britain, and the newly created unified European army will invade the Middle East and Jerusalem to suppress the daily sacrifices and to occupy the Third Temple. *When ten nations or groups of nations establish themselves as the leading core European nations and give their power and authority to the beast (who will only rule for a very short time), we know that Christ’s Return is imminent!*

Chapter 7

The Beast Identified

Revelation 13 describes the ancient Roman Empire and its ten European revivals. It also refers to the *person*—the end-time military *leader*—who is called the “beast” as well (Revelation 13:8; compare also Revelation 16:13; 19:19–20). We already saw that the person who is also identified as the modern king of Assyria or King Jareb (meaning “the contentious fighter”), is revealed as being of German or Austrian descent.

We have also pointed out that the *mark of the beast* that will be enforced on people, describes the general acceptance of the worship system of the revived Holy Roman Empire, and that it is clearly associated with the violation of God’s weekly Sabbath and His annual Holy Days, and it includes the observance of manmade pagan holidays. The mark of the beast is not a visible sign or a microchip, but it symbolizes allegiance.

The Number of His Name

In addition, Revelation 13:17 tells us that no one will be able to buy or sell if he does not have the mark or the *name of the beast*, or the *number of his name*. Verse 18 reveals that the famous “number of the beast” is the “number of a man.” We are told to “calculate” the number, which is 666. King Lateinos was the founder of Rome. In the Greek, every letter has a numerical value. The numerical value for “Lateinos” is 666. Therefore, the beast is identified as the Roman Empire—the number 666 identifying the founder of the Roman Empire—Lateinos.

In the Greek, L stands for 30, A for 1, T for 300, E for 5, I for 10, N for 50, O for 70, and S for 200. These total 666.

Since the designation of the word “beast” can also refer to the end-time *representative or ruler* of the final revival of that Empire, it is likely that the numerical value of the “name” of that final human leader of

the revived Roman Empire will also be 666. The NAME can refer to a literal name, to an adopted name, or to a well-known expression associated with or describing the beast (such as “Heil Hitler” or “Il Duce”). In addition, when people accept his name, they accept what he stands for and what he does.

The number 666 has great meaning in the Bible. In the Greek, this number is written as 600 and 60 and 6. The number 6 is the number of a man who is far from God or alienated from Him. The combination of the number 6 in 666 stands for total separation from God and the unconditional submission to Satan the Devil. Most people will be so deceived that they will worship Satan and his human instruments—the beast and the false prophet—while rejecting the true God and His Law.

The sixth commandment forbids murder in all of its different forms (Exodus 20:13), but man, separated from God, thinks that some kinds of murder are permitted, such as killing in war. Those who will worship and follow the beast and the false prophet will be so deceived that they will not only want to fight against other human beings in war (compare Revelation 13:4), but they are even willing to fight the returning Jesus Christ, thinking perhaps that He is an Alien or “the Antichrist” (compare Revelation 19:17–21; Zechariah 14:1–5, 12–15).

The Beast a Male

Notice that the beast is referred to as a *MAN* (compare again Revelation 13:18). In other words, the reference is to a male and not to a female. Even though the term “man” could refer to a human being in general (male or female), this is not the meaning in Revelation 13. We read in Revelation 13:8: “All who dwell on the earth will worship HIM whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

If the reference in Revelation 13:8 were strictly to the Roman Empire, then one would expect a statement to the effect that the people would worship IT—the Empire or the beast power. But in the Greek, it says “him” in verse 8. The *Zuercher* Bible points out that one would expect the statement that people would worship “IT”—rather than “HIM.” But saying that all the earth will worship HIM indicates that a MALE person is meant.

We will recall that the ancient Roman Empire received a deadly

wound which was healed (compare Revelation 13:3). We find an interesting expression in Revelation 13:14 where reference is made to the “beast WHO [not “which”] was *wounded* by the sword and lived.” This might also indicate the fact that not only the Roman *Empire* received a deadly wound and was healed, but also, that the end-time *human leader* (“the beast”) will suffer a political defeat (so that one may think he has no future), but that he then will arise again from the historical abyss, so that many will marvel and follow him (compare again verse 3).

The *Elberfelder Bible* confirms in two footnotes their understanding that in verses 8 and 14, a MALE person is meant, as the pronoun is masculine (“he”), not feminine (“she”) or neuter (“it”).

The accuracy of these observations is confirmed by the *Literal Translation of The Englishman’s Greek New Testament; giving the Greek Text of Stephens 1150*. It says “which” in the text in Revelation 13:14, with the footnote: “os—who.” There is a similar footnote to Revelation 13:8.

Beast Will Be Worshipped

In Revelation 13:1–4, 8, 11–12, we are told that it is Satan who will give power to the beast (the system as well as the end-time leader), and that the false prophet, who deceives the nations, causes the nations to *worship* the beast (Revelation 14:9; compare 20:4). This reminds us of past Greek, Roman and European leaders who were literally worshipped and looked upon as God or a god, and this will also be true for the final military leader. Hitler was perceived by many as a messiah, or the “Messiah,” while Mussolini was worshipped as a god by many Italians.

Antiochus a Forerunner

We read in Daniel 8:23–25 that a *fierce king* or a king “having fierce features” (verse 23); i.e., Antiochus, would arise with sinister schemes and cunning and deceit; and that he would be broken without human means. The *New International Version* says: “... a stern-faced king, a master of intrigues.” The *Revised Standard Version* says: “a king of bold countenance, one who understands riddles.” The *Authorized Version* says: “... understanding dark sentences.” The *Living Bible* interprets this as “an angry king... with great shrewdness and intelligence.”

The Beast with Fierce Features and Intrigue

Antiochus was a forerunner of the end-time beast. Antiochus died suddenly of a disease, but since this is a dual prophecy, it also refers to the death of the end-time beast by the hand of Jesus Christ, when the beast will be thrown alive into a burning lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). To point out a parallel with the king having *fierce features* in Daniel 8:23, we read in Deuteronomy 28:50 that the end-time army which will occupy the Middle East is described as a “nation of fierce countenance.”

Daniel 11:21–23 describes Antiochus Epiphanes as having supplanted the ruler and having come into power through intrigue. The end-time beast will act in a similar way. He might also obtain his rule over the ten nations or groups of nations through “*intrigue*” or “*flattery*.” In the *Living Bible*, Daniel 8:25 reads: “He will be a master of deception, defeating many by catching them off guard as they bask in false security.”

The *duality* of the prophecies in the book of Daniel has been clearly explained by Jesus Christ Himself. We already saw that the beast (also called the King of the North) will invade the Middle East and, together with the false prophet, he will suppress the daily sacrifices and bring about the abomination of desolation. Jesus Christ confirmed that the abomination of desolation, which Antiochus set up in the Temple (Daniel 11:31), will be set up again (Matthew 24:15). The abomination of desolation has been understood as describing a devastating army occupying Jerusalem as well as the erection of an idol, a statue or an “*image*,” an ungodly presence such as the man of sin sitting in the Temple of God, or pagan worship services in the Temple.

Anti-Semitic, Anti-American and Anti-British

The beast will be deeply *anti-Semitic, anti-American and anti-British*. Antiochus, a forerunner of the end-time beast, hated the Jewish religion and tried to ridicule it (by offering swine’s blood on the Jewish altar) and attempted to wipe it out completely. The beast will try to do likewise.

We read in Psalm 83:4–9 about an alliance or a confederacy between Arabic nations and modern Assyria so that “the name of Israel may be remembered no more” (verse 4). The name of Israel would apply to both the modern descendants of the ancient house of Israel

(mainly the USA and the UK) as well as the Jewish people. But God will view this as a confederacy against Him (verse 5).

We also read in Luke 21:20–24 that the beast and his armies will attack Jerusalem with wrath against the people of Judah.

No Love Toward Women

Another statement about the King of the North is worthy of consideration. We read that he “does not regard the *desire of women*” (Daniel 11:37).

The old *Luther Bible* of 1964 translates that he does not care for the love of or have love toward women (“Frauenliebe”). This could be a reference to other than normal sexual preferences. The commentary of *Henry* speaks of “unnatural lust” in this context. This might indicate that the beast will be homosexual (compare Romans 1:24–28). If the reference is to the homosexual nature of the end-time beast, we could think, as a forerunner, of Emperor Hadrian who massacred the Jews. He was married, but he was also homosexual. The beast could very well be married and still be homosexual, or he might be living in self-imposed celibacy.

The German *Schlachter Study Bible* says: “*Desire of Women* could mean that the [beast] is homosexual, but it surely means that he has no normal interest in women such as for example someone who lives in celibacy.”

Acknowledging a Foreign God

Daniel 11:36–39 also states: “Then the king 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. But in their place *he shall honor a god of fortresses*; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. Thus he 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.”

We read earlier that people will worship the beast and the false prophet. In the above-quoted passage in Daniel 11:36–39, we read that the beast will invite such worship. He will exalt himself mightily, above every god (compare Revelation 13:6). At the same time, he will honor with gold, silver, precious stones and pleasant things *a god* which his fathers did not know (Daniel 11:38), and he will act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god which he will acknowledge and advance its glory (Daniel 11:39).

This might be a reference to the false prophet whom his fathers did not know and who will proclaim to be God. (Please note that we do not read that the *beast* will *proclaim* to be God.) The beast will rely on his cooperation and psychological support in war by giving him much fortune, pretending to accept him as a god who will give victory in war—while at the same time, the false prophet will influence the masses to worship the beast (Revelation 13:12).

It is also implied that the beast will place much confidence in his own military capabilities. People will follow him and glorify him for his war-making abilities (compare again Revelation 13:4).

Coinciding with the Preaching of the Gospel

The Bible shows that the final resurrection of the Roman Empire and the manifestation of the beast will *coincide* with the *end-time preaching of the gospel*.

Habakkuk 1:5–10 reads as follows: “Look among the nations and watch—Be utterly astonished! For *I will work a work in your days* Which you would not believe, though it were told you. For indeed I am raising up the *Chaldeans*, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful... They all come for violence... They gather captives like sand. They scoff at kings...”

Isaiah 23:13 tells us that the ancient Assyrians founded the land of the Chaldeans. It will be the modern Assyrians—mainly the German-speaking peoples—who will lead the final resurrection of the “*Holy Roman Empire*.” In ancient times, the Chaldeans were Babylon’s *religious* leaders, astrologers and magicians.

Habakkuk’s prophecy of Babylonian warfare is clearly awaiting an end-time fulfillment.

Paul later quoted these words and applied them as a warning to people who would reject the *gospel* message. We read in Acts 13:32–41: “And we declare to you *glad tidings*—that promise which was made to the fathers... let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man [Jesus Christ] is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. BEWARE therefore, lest what has been spoken in the *prophets* COME UPON YOU [quoting Habakkuk 1:5]: ‘Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For *I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.*’”

God said that His Work, the end-time preaching of the gospel, would be powerful, but short. Romans 9:28 states: “For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a SHORT WORK upon the earth.”

The Bible prophesies that at the time when the powerful preaching of the gospel message is being revived, modern Chaldeans or modern Babylon will rise once again in Europe as the seventh and very SHORT-lived resurrection of the ancient “Holy Roman Empire”—a combination between Church and State.

God will use modern Babylon in a literal SWIFT blitzkrieg to punish the modern houses of Israel and Judah for their transgressions (compare also Isaiah 29:13–14, referring indirectly to Habakkuk 1:5). But God will then punish modern Babylon (Habakkuk 2:8)—a system less righteous than modern Israel and Judah (compare Habakkuk 1:12–13).

Demonic Possession

In this context, we read in Habakkuk 1:11 that after the modern Babylonian/Assyrian leader—the beast—has come to power, *his mind will change*. This term could be a reference to *demonic possession*. *Barnes’ Notes on the Bible* says it could describe the invisible presence of a spirit (compare Job 4:15; the word for “passed” in that passage is the same word as for “change” in Habakkuk). We know, of course, from passages such as Revelation 16:13–14, that the beast (as well as the false prophet) will be demonically possessed, but this passage in Habakkuk seems to indicate that the possession will occur *after* he has received his authority and power from the ten core nations or groups of nations.

Daniel 8:24 says that: "His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power." The *Living Bible* interprets this to mean: "His power shall be mighty, but it will be satanic strength and not his own."

However, we would not expect that his entire personality and his way of thinking will change in that he will become anti-Semitic or anti-American/British even though he had been pro-Jewish and pro-American/British before. His latent hostile feelings towards Jews, Americans and Brits had been there all along. But when the demonic possession occurs, these feelings will magnify and lead to extremely violent conduct.

For instance, Judas Iscariot was always a thief, craving for money; Satan used this problem and influenced and possessed him to betray Christ for money. The point is, Judas was not originally a giving person and only changed into a greedy thief, when Satan possessed him.

When we see the rise of modern Babylon, the preaching of the gospel and the manifestation of the beast with the characteristics and features as described herein, we will know that Christ's Return is imminent!

Chapter 8

The False Prophet Identified

When the end-time beast arises and comes to power, then an influential religious leader will accompany him and will collaborate with him. He is called the “false prophet” in the Bible (Revelation 19:20). We know that Christ’s Return is near *when these two leaders manifest themselves on the world scene.*

The End-Time Religious System

We already saw that the false prophet will arise within the religious Babylonian mystery system. He is also referred to as someone who claims to be “God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4); the “lawless one” (2 Thessalonians 2:8); and the “prince of Tyre” (Ezekiel 28:1–10). The religion that he represents is described as “the great harlot” (Revelation 17:1); “the mother of harlots” (Revelation 17:5); and “that great and mighty city” (Revelation 17:18; 18:10).

This city is built on seven *hills* (Revelation 17:9; compare the *New English Bible*; the *Revised English Bible*; the *New International Version*; the *New American Bible*; the *Moffat Translation of the Bible*; the *Jewish New Testament*, by David Stern; the *New Jerusalem Bible*; the *Living Bible*; and German Bibles such as *Die Gute Nachricht* and *Hoffnung fuer alle*).

It is the almost unanimous conclusion of biblical commentaries that the city referred to is *Rome*. Indeed, any honest evaluation of Revelation 17:9 must admit that John is describing, in prophetic terms, an end-time religious system which is centered in the seven-hilled city of papal Rome, and which influences and dominates the peoples of this world.

Zechariah 5:5–11 contains another reference to the end-time religious system and its ultimate demise, describing it as “the woman in the basket.” The time will come when Jesus Christ will make an end to the woman’s wickedness. God WILL remember modern Babylon’s

iniquities (Revelation 18:5). We read that God will judge “the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He [will avenge] on her the blood of His servants shed by her” (Revelation 19:2).

The False Prophet—a Powerful Sorcerer

We also read in Revelation 18:23 that by the woman’s “sorcery all the nations were deceived.” The implication is that the representatives of that religious system are engaging in sorcery in its different forms and applications. We read that the end-time false prophet, arising out of the religious Babylonian system, will be a *powerful sorcerer* who will apply magical “arts” and who will work lying signs and wonders with the help of Satan the Devil, thereby deceiving the masses.

The final false prophet had several historical forerunners. The most famous one was perhaps the sorcerer, Simon Magus, who, as we saw, re-established the ancient Babylonian system at the time of the early apostles by giving it a “Christian mantle.”

Another famous sorcerer was Pope Silvester II, who lived at the end of the first century. It is said that he regularly conversed with the Devil, possessed a “brazen head” that spoke to him, and that he could prophesy future events. Pope John XII, who became Pope in 955 A.D. and who in 962 A.D. crowned Otto I as the “Holy Roman Emperor of the German Nation,” was also an extremely sinful person. In addition to the myriads of horrible sexual sins and murders, which he committed, he was an addicted gambler; and during gambling sessions, he called on pagan gods or goddesses to grant him luck when rolling the dice.

Other popes who, because of their immorality, were described as “a demon from hell in the disguise of a priest” or who claimed to be a god, were, respectively, Benedict IX, who was born in 1012; and Pope Alexander who was crowned in 1492.

Declaring to Be God

As we saw already, the false prophet will even sit in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, *declaring to BE God*. The *Ryrie Study Bible* comments that he “will desecrate the rebuilt Jewish temple in Jerusalem by placing himself there to be worshipped. This will be the climax of man’s great sin of self-deification, in open defiance of God” and, as the *Nelson Study Bible* put it, he will personify “the ultimate fulfillment

of the 'abomination of desolation' spoken of by Daniel."

The false prophet might use a speaking *image or statue* of perhaps the "Virgin Mary" or a false "Christ" to back up his claims of divinity and holiness. He will receive power to do "miracles" from Satan himself (compare Revelation 19:20), performing "great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (Revelation 13:13–14).

The Prince of Tyre

We also read about the false prophet in Ezekiel 28:2, where he is identified as the "*prince of Tyre*": "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord GOD: ... your heart is lifted up, And you say, I am a god [or, God], I sit in the seat of gods, In the midst of the seas, Yet you are a man, and not a god [or, God], Though you set your heart as the heart of a god [or, God]."

The false prophet or "the man of sin" will be slain by Christ Himself. Christ will throw him alive, together with the military leader—the "beast"—into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). God asks this religious leader (the prince of Tyre) in Ezekiel 28:9, "Will you still say before him [better, "Him," Jesus Christ] who slays you, I am a god? [better, "I am God?"]. But you shall be a man, and not a god [or, "God"], In the hand of him [better, "Him"] who slays you."

Ezekiel 28:8 explains that the "prince of Tyre" or the "false prophet" will be thrown into the pit—the abyss. His influence on the nations will cease and he will die the deaths of those that are slain in the midst of the seas. As they die, so he will die. He will die in disgrace (verse 10), as the uncircumcised do when they die by the hands of strangers.

Great Harmony between the Woman and the Beast?

Sometimes, we might get a wrong perception about the *woman riding the beast*, thinking that throughout their existence, there was always great harmony between these two powers. That is not the case, and we find that in the very end, the political beast power (the State) will fight against the Roman Catholic Church and those religious organizations (the "daughters" of the "mother" church) which have become a part of it.

We read that the ten end-time kings or kingdoms—the coming

core Europe—will ultimately revolt against and persecute the religious Babylonian system, making it “desolate” (Revelation 17:16), apparently confiscating its property. One possibility for their conduct might be that they feel betrayed by that Church, as she had been promising them peace on earth and invulnerability. When they see, instead, that they themselves are going to be overrun by Asiatic hordes and especially the modern Medes (Isaiah 13:17; the Medes are today’s Russians and Ukrainians—part of the “kings of the east”), they might change their minds about that Church. In any event, we are told that it is God who will move their hearts to fulfill His purpose (Revelation 17:17).

It appears that before or while moving toward the place called Armageddon in the Middle East, at least parts of the armies of the “kings of the east” will sweep through Europe, creating devastating havoc there. At that time, the beast and the false prophet will be dwelling in Jerusalem, so they will not be personally affected by these attacks on Europe. Neither will the ten kings and their armies who will also be in or move toward Jerusalem, as they will fight with the beast against the returning Christ (compare again Revelation 17:14).

As we saw, the ten European military leaders will not destroy nor kill the false prophet. Jesus Christ will do this Himself. They may find enough courage to use that part of their armies that is still stationed in Europe to attack the city of Rome and burn her with fire (Revelation 17:16, 18), yet lacking courage to attack the false prophet (who will have the power to work “miracles”).

Struggles Between Kings and Popes

But even historically, as *Wikipedia Encyclopedia* brings out, the “struggle between kings and popes shaped the western world... After the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century, there emerged no single powerful secular government in the West. There was however a central ecclesiastical power in Rome, the Catholic Church. In this power vacuum, the Church rose to become the dominant power in the West. The Church expanded in the beginning of the 10th century, and as secular kingdoms gained power at the same time, there naturally arose the conditions for a power struggle between Church and Kingdom over ultimate authority...

“The conflict between Church and State was in many ways a uniquely

Western phenomenon... throughout the Middle Ages the Pope claimed the right to depose the Catholic kings of Western Europe, and tried to exercise it, sometimes successfully (see the investiture controversy), sometimes not, as with Henry VIII of England and Henry III of Navarre..."

At other times, a strong alliance between Church and State existed—especially during the periods of the Holy Roman Empire under Justinian and Charlemagne and its subsequent revivals under Otto the Great and Charles V. In the future, the coming, initially strong, European alliance between Church and State will crumble. Ultimately, the religious and economic European system of modern Babylon will end, and so will the city of Rome (Revelation 17:9, 18), which will be destroyed in one day (Revelation 18:8) and in one hour (verse 17).

The Bible does not say whether the strong collaboration between the beast and the false prophet will ultimately lead to hostility and animosity from the *beast* and even the *false prophet toward the Catholic Church*, but it is possible. Historically, when focusing on the *Pope*, great disputes occurred between the Pope and his Church, or between popes themselves. There were times, when the Catholic Church had two or even three simultaneous popes who were all fighting each other.

Attacks on the Catholic Church by Hitler and Mussolini

Considering recent historical *military leaders*, we may recall that Adolph Hitler was persecuting the institutions and the personnel of the Catholic Church in Germany, as well as in occupied countries, and so did Mussolini, but they did not fight directly against the popes, even though their animosity toward them was well-known.

Wikipedia Encyclopedia states that "Mussolini made vitriolic attacks against... the Catholic Church. Despite making such attacks, Mussolini would try to win popular support by appeasing the Catholic majority in Italy... On 11 February 1929, he signed a concordat and treaty with the Roman Catholic Church... After the concordat, Mussolini reportedly came close to being excommunicated from the Catholic Church."

Before his death, Hitler had repeatedly denounced the Catholic Church while announcing his intention to destroy Christianity and replace it with a pagan religion. His Nuremberg rallies were actually an invocation of Mars, the pagan god of war, with Hitler being the High Priest.

A Pope... But Who?

When focusing on the false prophet, we learn that he will be *possessed* by a powerful demon (Revelation 16:13). Since there is a close association between the false prophet and the woman, we conclude that he will be a pope—even though we are NOT told in the Bible that he will be black, or that his name will be Peter, or that he will only have one eye. These are concepts, that are not contained in Scripture—rather, they are “prophecies” from questionable and, in all likelihood, demonic sources.

It is not entirely clear whether the false prophet will be the particular Pope who will be elected by the majority of the Catholic cardinals to be in power at the time of the manifestation of the beast. There is much conflict going on in the Roman Catholic Church today between the Pope and the Vatican and between bishops and cardinals belonging to conservative and liberal factions —as has been the case many times in previous decades and centuries. It might therefore be conceivable that a strong “competitor” to the “duly elected” Pope within the Catholic Church might arise, claiming the title and office of Pope and performing satanic miracles. What we do know for certain is that the false prophet will belong to the religious Babylonian system—he will not arise from Islam or other non-“Christian” religions.

The Bible does not tell us the *ancestry* of the false prophet. While we are clearly told that the beast will be of Assyrian descent, nothing is mentioned regarding the false prophet. What we need to watch for is a mighty religious “Christian” figure who will begin to perform “miracles,” working together with a charismatic political leader—the beast—and ultimately moving to Jerusalem at the time when the Third Temple is being built or completed. *When these events occur, we know that Christ’s Return is near!*

Chapter 9

Europe and Arab Nations

The last European revival of the ancient Roman Empire and the powerful military leader (the beast) will cause the Great Tribulation. Just prior to that time, they will begin, at first, to temporarily collaborate, to an extent, with *Arab nations* (including Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Jordan) and *Turkey* in their common goal of destroying “Israel” (Psalm 83:1–8). This collaboration might not endure until the Return of Christ.

No Seven-Year Contract

However, there is no biblical suggestion that a *seven-year contract* will be entered into between the “beast” and those or other Arab nations, which will allegedly be broken after 3-½ years.

The passage that is sometimes quoted for the false proposition of a seven-year contract (Daniel 9:27) does not refer to such an end-time physical covenant. Rather, it addresses the death of Jesus Christ in the middle of the week (Wednesday, when He was crucified) after His 3-½ year long public ministry. His death did away with or “brought to an end” the *sacrificial system of animal sacrifices* and “confirmed” the spiritual New Covenant with His people for one prophetic week or seven years (Christ will fulfill the remaining 3-½ years of His seven year long ministry when He returns).

It is revealed however that the European invasion of the Holy Land will occur when animal sacrifices will be brought there by the Jews, apparently during or after the completed construction of the Third Temple on the Temple Mount (Daniel 8:11–14; 11:31; 12:11–12). The beast will invade the Holy Land and conquer countries such as Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia (Daniel 11:41–43).

But note that the countries mentioned in Daniel 11:41–43 are NOT the same as the countries mentioned in Psalm 83 with which the beast will have a *temporary alliance*. In fact, Daniel 11 specifically

mentions that those countries (mentioned in Psalm 83) will “escape” the hands of the beast.

A Mahdi Before Christ’s Return?

Many believe, based on prophecies contained in the 11th chapter of the book of Daniel, that immediately before the Return of Jesus Christ, a powerful Arab leader— a religious “Mullah” or Mahdi, many times imagined to be the “*king of the South*”—will arise in the Middle East. Daniel 11:40–41 says: “At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack [or: push at] him [the king of the North]; 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. He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown...”

Historically, and reviewing the entire biblical prophecy in the 11th chapter of the book of Daniel, we can determine that at the time described in verse 40, the king of the North constituted the *ninth resurrection* of the ancient Roman Empire, or the sixth resurrection of the “Holy” Roman Empire, led by Mussolini and Hitler.

At that time, the modern remnant of the “king of the South” of this prophecy was Ethiopia. The prophecy in Daniel 11:40 WAS FULFILLED in 1896, when King Menelik II of Ethiopia “pushed at” the Italians and defeated Italy at Aduwa. In 1935, Mussolini responded when the king of the South was Emperor Haile Selassie. Mussolini came against Ethiopia like a whirlwind, using airplanes, and conquered it.

But, what about today, or the immediate future? Will there occur another conflict between the king of the North—the final LEADER of the 10th resurrection of the ancient Roman Empire, or the 7th resurrection of the “Holy” Roman Empire—and a king of the South, a final LEADER in the Middle East? *Perhaps—but not necessarily so.*

Let us first address the concept of a future religious figure, a *Mahdi*, who will allegedly unite many Muslim nations and attempt to establish the Muslim religion in all the world. This is strictly a Muslim concept. The Bible nowhere says that a Muslim Mahdi will appear in the Middle East or elsewhere, in an attempt to unite Arab and Muslim nations (which would also require healing the long-time animosity between Shias and Sunnis) and to establish a power bloc, ruled by the Muslim religion.

A Future King of the South?

In addition, we need to emphasize that the prophecy in Daniel 11:40 has ALREADY BEEN FULFILLED, and verse 40 is the LAST TIME that the king of the South is mentioned! Beginning with the second half of verse 40, we read exclusively about the king of the North and his activities, and, in verse 44, about rumors from the east and the west.

Some point out that Daniel 11:40 speaks specifically about the *time of the end*, and that therefore a future king of the South must still arise just prior to Christ's Return. However, the book of Daniel includes several examples where the terms "the last days" or the "time of the end" are used, without necessarily referring to just a few years prior to Christ's Return.

For instance, we read in Daniel 2:28 that a dream about a statue was to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar "what will be in the latter days." The dream described four successive world empires that would arise on the world scene, and the fourth empire (the Roman Empire) would survive (through ten successive revivals) until the Return of Christ. Much of the dream related to events a long time prior to the last revival of the Roman Empire with ten kings at the time of Christ's Return—the "stone" or Rock which would smite and destroy the ten toes of the statue (verse 44–45).

Something similar can be found in Daniel 8:17, 19, which talks about "the time of the end" and the "latter time of the indignation." The entire passage starts with the time of ancient Media and Persia, followed by Alexander the Great and, sometime later, Antiochus Epiphanes, then culminating in certain events which apparently end with the last King of the North at the time of Christ's Return. (We understand of course the dual application of this prophecy, as we discussed earlier.)

When reading Daniel 12:4, 9, we are told that the book of Daniel would be sealed "until the time of the end," but that then "knowledge" in general and the right understanding of the book would increase. This most certainly started to occur under the late Herbert W. Armstrong (the human leader of the now-defunct *Worldwide Church of God*) who died in 1986.

Viewing Daniel 11:40 and the historical events in this light, we note that there DOES NOT HAVE TO BE ANOTHER end-time king

of the South. If one were to arise, following the historical and biblical records as set forth in the 11th chapter of the book of Daniel, it would have to be, mainly, modern Ethiopia.

But ALL THAT STILL NEEDS TO BE FULFILLED (and which the previous king of the North—Mussolini—did NOT fulfill), is the invasion of the Glorious Land by the future and final king of the North (verse 41), including Jerusalem (verse 45), as well as the overthrow of “many countries” (verse 41), including Egypt, while the “Libyans and Ethiopians” will follow at his heels (verse 43).

It is entirely possible that the prophecy in verse 40 is dual and a type of future events to be repeated—but it DOES NOT HAVE TO BE this way. It is NOT necessary, based on biblical prophecy, that there will still arise an end-time “king of the South,” attacking or pushing at the end-time king of the North. *Christ could return without such an event having to occur first.*

Also, a final king of the South would not be from *Egypt*, and he would not constitute a confederacy of Arab nations *led by Egypt*. Rather, *Ethiopia* would be the only possible government that could be the final king of the South.

Until Mussolini, Ethiopia was the only country in all East Africa that continued to stay independent from the Roman Empire throughout history, and that had a government and kingdom dating back before the Roman Empire. It was the southern part of the ancient kingdom of the South. It was the only possible government to be the king of the South under Mussolini, and it would therefore be the only possible government for a final appearance of a king of the South.

Ethiopia in Collaboration With Other Arab Nations?

Of course, Ethiopia could be a leading nation *in collaboration with* Arab nations. We read an interesting prophecy in Ezekiel 30:1–9, 18–19 for the time of the “day of the LORD” (a reference to the end time).

IF some of the nations mentioned there refer to Ethiopia and Libya (but note the next chapter of this booklet), then we would be told that the sword will come upon Egypt, as well as on additional countries like Ethiopia (Cush), Libya (Put), and Lydia (or Lud; compare Jeremiah 46:8–9, which would show that Egypt, Ethiopia, Lydia and Libya would be allies at that time of the end; note that the *New King James*

Bible translates Cush as “the Ethiopians” and Put as “the Libyans”).

Verses 4–5 refer to Chub, which is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture; the passage could also read, “and ALL (Chub) the men of the lands who were allied...” We also read specifically in verse 18 that at that time of the “day of the LORD”, Egyptians will go into captivity (through the king of the North, compare Daniel 11:42).

Even though Ezekiel 30 does not refer to those nations as being the king of the South, they seem to describe a power bloc in opposition to the final European revival of the ancient Roman Empire, under Assyrian (German or Austrian) leadership. None of these countries referred to in Ezekiel 30 are mentioned in Psalm 83:1–8. It appears, then, that the countries mentioned in Psalm 83, which are allied WITH Assyria, are different from the countries, mentioned in Ezekiel 30, which are apparently allied AGAINST Assyria.

As the ninth revival of the ancient Roman Empire, under Mussolini, was comprised of several nations and powers, including Hitler’s Germany, and as the final revival of the king of the North will consist of ten European nations or groups of nations, under Assyrian leadership, so if there is to be a future king of the South, he might very well constitute a *coalition* of Middle Eastern nations, *under Ethiopian leadership.*

When wanting to consider prophesied end-time events in the Middle East, we must foremost look at Europe under German leadership and the final revival of the Roman Empire. When we see modern Assyria (Germany) form an alliance with certain Muslim nations against Israel; when we see ten European nations or groups of nations transfer their power to the beast—a military leader of German or Austrian descent—and when we see that the beast will shortly thereafter invade the Middle East and fight against the state of Israel and other Arab nations, *then we know that the Return of Jesus Christ will be imminent!*

Chapter 10

The Kings of the East—a Far Eastern Power Bloc

The Bible tells us that in the near future, a military power bloc in the Far East will form which will be hostile toward continental Europe. This power bloc is referred to in Scripture as the *kings of the East*.

The 200 Million “Horsemen”

We are first introduced to the kings of the East and their powerful armies and weapons in *Revelation 9:13–21*, which describes the appearance of 200 million “horsemen” from the east (*Revelation 9:14, 16*).

We should note that *Revelation 9:16* *literally* says, “... and the number of armies of the cavalry two myriads of myriads...” The word for “horsemen” or “cavalry” is *hippicon*, which is derived from *hippos*, meaning “horse.” The *New Bible Commentary: Revised* explains: “... the horsemen seem to be of little account; it is the horses that terrify and destroy.”

Some claim the reference of the huge number is strictly symbolic; others state that the army describes a force of 200 million demons. But since the emphasis is on the “horses” or tanks and other deadly weaponry, the thought should be considered that the tanks are not directed by human beings, but by robots. Far Eastern nations, especially, are already heavily engaged in creating and cloning artificial intelligence (AI) machines. Regardless, what is prophesied pictures massively armed military forces.

Coming War Between Europe and Far Eastern Nations

The attack of the kings of the East on Europe will occur shortly *after Europe’s invasion of the Middle East* and Europe’s attack on the kings of the East (*Daniel 11:41–45*). This attack is described in *Revelation 9:1–12*.

This first phase of the coming war between Europe and Asia is also alluded to in *Daniel 11:44*.

The European forces will attack the kings of the East—Russia, China, Japan and other Asian countries—after rumors from those areas will have disturbed the “beast” (the coming European military leader), perhaps indicating that these Asian nations are planning an attack on Europe and the Middle East. Interestingly enough, the European nations will use weapons that will not kill, but only torment the Asian peoples for five months (Revelation 9:5). They will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them (verse 6). These weapons will not destroy the grass of the earth, nor any green thing or any tree (verse 4). Based on this description, it is apparent that the European forces (described as flying locusts, verses 3, 7, 9) will not use nuclear or conventional weapons, but that they will engage in some kind of *biological or chemical warfare*.

Far Eastern Nations Will Retaliate

The kings of the East will fight Europe *in retaliation* for the attack of the European power bloc. The tormented Asian nations will respond with a *counter attack* (compare also Revelation 9:17 with Joel 2:4), but their actions will be ruthless and merciless. They will use *nuclear weapons* of mass destruction and kill “a third of mankind” (Revelation 9:15), showing that the effect of their actions will kill many Europeans, although it will not be limited to just European nations. Other passages tell us that ultimately, Europe will be destroyed by these Asian nations, and the beginning of this destruction will undoubtedly commence with this counter attack, but additional attacks will follow.

Shortly before Christ’s Return, at least parts of the armies of the kings of the East—mainly the modern Russians and Ukrainians—will apparently sweep through Europe and create devastating havoc there. Jeremiah 51:27–28 refers to *horses* as coming up against Babylon like bristling locusts, indicating that they will use some of their tanks and their air force to destroy modern Babylon.

The Modern Medes

The Bible shows that after the ten European nations, under the authority of a modern Assyrian leader of German or Austrian descent, subdue and conquer many nations, including the USA and the UK, they themselves will be defeated in war by the modern Medes. Compare

Isaiah 13:17, which describes the destruction of modern “Babylon” through the hand of the modern “Medes” or Russians and Ukrainians. Verses 6, 9 and 13 designate the timing as occurring during the “day of the LORD.” Compare also Isaiah 21:2.

In ancient times, the Medes lived in present-day Iran. Originally under Assyrian rule, they revolted against and expelled the Assyrians and imposed their rule over the Persians. They then attacked Nineveh and overthrew the Assyrian Empire. Under Cyrus the Great, the Medes and the Persians were considered as one people. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (ed.1959) points out that at least some of the Medes were not Iranians or Indo-Europeans, but perhaps connected with the numerous tribes of the Caucasus. The modern Medes, then, are to be found in modern Russia and surrounding areas, including Ukraine.

Assembling at Armageddon

At the same time or shortly after their final attack on Europe, the kings from the East will be crossing the dried-up river Euphrates to move their armies and equipment to a place called “Armageddon” in the Middle East (Revelation 16:12, 16). “Armageddon” or the “hill of Megiddo” (“har” meaning “hill” in Hebrew; in German, the word is *Harmageddon*) is about 55 miles or 90 kilometers north of Jerusalem, and about 15 miles or 25 kilometers inland from the Mediterranean Sea.

Megiddo is a huge mound with a commanding view of the long and fertile valley of Jezreel—an ideal place for armies to gather. The kings from the East, as well as all of the other kings of the earth, will be influenced by Satan and the demonically possessed beast and the false prophet to assemble there together (Revelation 16:13–14), to combine their forces with the beast’s armies to fight the returning Christ.

We do not read that there will be a battle *at* Armageddon—the “battle” will be fought farther south in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which is called today the “Kidron Valley,” which borders Jerusalem on the east. That “battle” as described in the 19th chapter of the book of Revelation and in the 14th chapter of the book of Zechariah, pictures the Return of Jesus Christ. Christ will supernaturally destroy and wipe out those armies trying to fight Him (Revelation 19:15, 21; Zechariah 14:12, 15), and the beast and the false prophet will be thrown, through the “breath” or word “of His mouth” (2 Thessalonians 2:8), into the

lake of fire (Revelation 19:20) to be consumed and burned up there.

Some claim that the army that Christ will destroy at His return will consist of “two hundred million” human beings. However, even if the reference in Revelation 9:16 to 200 million “horsemen” refers to human soldiers at that prior time, the Bible does not say that the kings from the East will again move two hundred million Asian soldiers to the Middle East and Armageddon. We do not know how many soldiers will be present at Armageddon and at the subsequent battle in the Kidron Valley.

No Russian Attack on America and Israel Prior to Christ’s Return

Some feel that the kings of the East or the Asiatic hordes will also attack the descendants of the ancient houses of Israel and Judah—including America, Great Britain and the state of Israel—before Christ returns. They refer to *Ezekiel 38 and 39* in this context.

However, these events will occur AT THE VERY BEGINNING of the Millennium—shortly AFTER Christ has returned. (We learned earlier that prior to the return of Christ, the modern descendants of the ancient houses of Israel and Judah will be attacked and conquered by the modern Babylonian system of Europe—not by the Asiatic hordes.)

Ezekiel 38:8 emphasizes that the Asiatic hordes will attack Israel and Judah when those living in the Promised Land have been “*brought back from the sword* and gathered from among many people.” It is emphasized that they are THEN dwelling “safely.” Verse 12 also reiterates that these former “waste places” are “again inhabited,” and that the people of Israel, who were gathered from the nations, “have acquired livestock and goods.”

We read in Ezekiel 38:11 that the people of Israel will live in “unwalled villages;” that they are a “peaceful people, who dwell safely,” “without walls, and having neither bars nor gates.” This shows that the events will not occur PRIOR to Christ’s Return, as the modern descendants of the houses of Israel and Judah do not live in peace today, and they will not live in peace, without walls, bars or gates, prior to Christ’s Return.

Also, Ezekiel 38:8 refers to the “mountains of Israel” where the modern house of Israel will live at that time (compare Ezekiel 39:12, 22, 23, 29)—but the modern house of Israel does not presently reside

there at all, nor will they live there prior to Christ's Return.

Far Eastern Nations Identified

Ezekiel 38 identifies the Asiatic nations and armies. This gives us a clue as to who the nations of the kings of the East will be that will attack Europe and that will invade the Middle East prior to Christ's Return. *Therefore, we will observe a growing military collaboration between those nations in the near future, and when we do, we know that Christ's Return is near!*

Ezekiel 38:2–3, 5, 6 speaks of "Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal," as well as "Persia, Ethiopia and Libya," "Gomer and... the house of Togarmah."

"Gog" means "mountain" or "high" and seems to be a reference to a commander (compare also verse 7). As he is called "Gog of the land of Magog," and also "the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal," it appears that at that time the leader of the future kings of the East and the nations under his command will be Chinese.

Magog has been understood as a reference to the Mongols—or more generally, China. "Rosh," meaning "blond," is a reference to the White Russians or Ukrainians. "Meshech" is another designation for the city of Moscow, and "Tubal" for the city of Tobolsk. Meshech and Tubal, being sons of Japheth—the father of the Eurasian peoples—and brothers of Gomer and Magog (compare Genesis 10:2), seem to refer here to the Great Russians. Included in this entire description are the vast regions in northern Eurasia extending from the Baltic to the Pacific.

Persia designates modern Iran; and Ethiopia (*Cush* in Hebrew) includes the people of Ethiopia, *but also peoples in Central and Southern India and parts of Sri Lanka*. Cush's sons, Seba and Raamah (Genesis 10:7), and Raamah's son Sheba (same verse), were later worshipped by Hindus as the gods Shiva and Ramah.

Libya (*Put* in Hebrew) includes the people of the state of Libya, *as well as people from Northern and Central India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*.

As we read earlier that Ethiopia and Libya will be conquered by the beast *prior* to Christ's return, they will not be part of the kings of the East at that time, but they might become part of that collaboration *after* Christ's return, *unless* in Ezekiel 38, *Cush* and *Put* refer exclusively to the peoples of Southern India, Sri Lanka, Northern and Central

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Gomer seems to designate the peoples from the Asian steppes and deserts, including people from the region of Mongolia. Finally, the reference to “Togarmah from the far north” (Ezekiel 38:6) has been understood as a reference to the people living in Siberia.

We note that certain other Far Eastern countries are not mentioned in Ezekiel 38, such as Japan and Korea, but it is highly likely that they will be part of the kings of the East *prior* to Christ’s Return.

We read in the 38th and 39th chapters of the book of Ezekiel that God will supernaturally intervene and destroy those Asian warring nations.

Another Attack at the End of the Millennium

In passing, a similar final attack on Jerusalem will occur when the Millennium *is ending* and Satan is “released from his prison” for a short while. He will “go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea” (Revelation 20:7–8).

We know that this is *not* the same incident as the one described in Ezekiel 38 and 39, as major differences are listed. For instance, Revelation 20:8 speaks of the hostile nations which are in “the four corners of the earth,” while Ezekiel 38:15 and Ezekiel 39:2 say that they come from “the far north.”

Also, the nations referred to in Revelation 20 are not necessarily identical with those mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39, but they are mentioned symbolically in the book of Revelation to signify those who are opposing God and following Satan. They will try to conquer Jerusalem, but God will supernaturally destroy them (Revelation 20:9). This will be the very last time that man will try to fight in war.

When we see that Far Eastern nations, including Russia, China, Japan, Korea, India and Pakistan, are *forming a military power bloc at approximately the same time as a core European military power bloc of ten nations or groups of nations is forming*, we know that *Christ’s Return is near!*

Conclusion

God gave His Church the commission to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God in all the world as a witness. When this occurs, we know that Christ's Return is near, as the proclamation of the true gospel of the Kingdom of God in all the world as a witness is the **ONLY SIGN** which Christ gave for the end of this present evil society; His imminent Second Coming; and the establishment of God's Government on this earth.

We have explained in this booklet that the gospel includes a *warning* message of events that *WILL* occur during the Great Tribulation, showing that the warning must logically *PRECEDE* the time of the beginning of the Great Tribulation!

Not Far Off

We do not set any dates, but we can tell from the signs of the times that Christ's Return cannot be that far off (compare Matthew 24:32–33). It is therefore very important not to fall into the self-destructive trap of some who claim that their Lord delays His coming (Matthew 24:48) and that He will not come for a long time. The Bible clearly warns against such an attitude.

Peter told us in 2 Peter 3:3–4 that in our time, “scoffers will come in the last days... and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’” Peter continued to tell us that they “willfully forget” that God has patience with us (verse 9), but that His patience will run out, stating, “the day of the Lord **WILL COME** as a thief in the night” (verse 10).

Ezekiel 12:21–28 adds this pronouncement for us today, and we had better take it to heart:

“And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, what is this proverb that you people have about the land of Israel, which says, ‘The days are prolonged, and every vision fails’? Tell them therefore, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘I will lay this proverb to rest, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel.’”

“But say to them, *“The days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision. For no more shall there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am the LORD. I speak, and the word which I speak WILL COME TO PASS; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it,”* says the Lord God.”

“Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, look, the house of Israel is saying, *“The vision that he sees is for many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off.”* Therefore say to them, *“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘None of My words will be postponed any more, but the word which I speak WILL BE DONE,’* says the Lord GOD.””

In this booklet, we have described major prophetic end-time events that are surely coming to pass. As you see the fulfillment of these developments, you KNOW that Christ’s Return is indeed very near!

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