

HOW LOCATION NAMES ARE USED IN END-TIME PROPHECIES

SECTION 1

USING LOCATION NAMES AS TYPES FOR SPIRITUAL MATURITY OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Why we are Using Location Names as Types

In the end-time prophecies that we will be studying, we will be using Mount Zion, Jerusalem, Judah, Israel, and Babylon, as symbolic types for the spiritual maturity of members in the body of Christ. The following are some examples of prophecies with location names that will be used.

“And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.” Zech 14:14.

“...these bones are the whole house of Israel,” Ezek 37:11.

“I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples.” Zech 12:2.

“The children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together; with continual weeping they shall come, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces toward it, saying, ‘come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that will not be forgotten.’” Jer 44:11-12.

At the outset, we point out that most of the prophecies in this study have a parallel twofold meaning. Firstly, they are relevant to the inhabitants of the locations at the time of the prophet’s ministry. For instance, Israel had been conquered by Assyria and banished to surrounding nations, and some prophecies were a source of comfort with their promise of restoration. Secondly, they are parallel prophecies that are relevant to the end-time Church, revealing God’s intended actions.

The reason we are allocating location names for types in this way is that obvious end-time prophecies of the latter rain bringing restoration, use location names that are now non-existent or relevant. As an example, this reading in Zechariah indicates that the latter rain will be manifested on Judah first, a type for the traditional Church. **“The Lord will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah.”** Zech 12:7.

In the following reading, Babylon is used in a prophetic warning to come out of the false church.

“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons...For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication... And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” Rev 18:2-4.

Using location types is helpful in unveiling unfulfilled prophecies of God’s restoration of the end-time Church.

BIBLICAL LOCATIONS USED AS TYPES IN END-TIME PROPHECIES

The membership of the Christian Church consists of all those who have made a confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, but not all have the same state of maturity as they progress in their Christian walk. We are not looking at types of Churches, but the different states of spiritual maturity of church members.

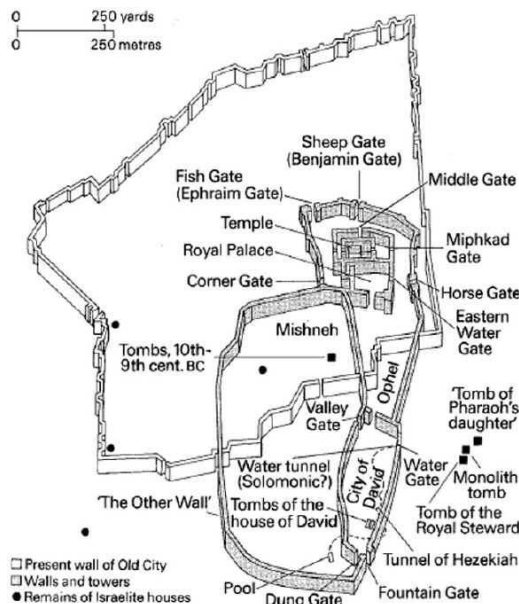
Mount Zion – Mount Zion will be used as a type for Christians throughout the Church who are perfected in their relationship with God. **Jerusalem** – This is a type for spiritually mature Christians who are entrusted to minister spiritual truths, **“Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth”** Zech 8:3. **Judah** – Is a type for Church members who practice traditional Christianity, that is, as in traditional Sunday worship services. **Israel** – Is a type for Church members who are backslidden and taken captive by the spirit of the world. **Babylon** – Is a type for those in the false church.

This first section will reveal how and why location names are used in the end-time prophecies we are studying.

MOUNT ZION A TYPE FOR PERFECTED CHRISTIANS

A Brief History of the Development of Mount Zion

Map showing old Jerusalem, the city of David also known as Mt Zion



David captured the Fortress of Zion from the Jebusites and renamed it the City of David. The fortress of Zion became known as ‘Mount Zion.’ It was on Mount Zion that David placed the Tabernacle, and because God’s presence was associated with the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, Mount Zion became revered as a holy site. For religious-minded Jews, Mount Zion has been revered as a sacred site, representing the presence of God in their midst.

For Christians, Mount Zion represents the fulfillment of our pilgrimage to spiritual perfection. In this study, Mount Zion represents a Christian who has been perfected by God’s workmanship during a long period of suffering refinement.

In Revelation, John received a vision showing perfected Christians standing with Jesus on Mount Zion.

Rev 14:1-5.

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.... These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

“one hundred and forty-four thousand” One hundred and forty-four thousand does not represent a literal number but symbolises those who are perfected in God’s reign.

In biblical numerology, the number twelve represents God’s governance: 12x12 complete governance. One thousand: ten symbolises perfection, and 10³ is God’s perfect governance, in this case of and in the Bride.

“His Father's name written on their foreheads” Indicates that they belong to God and have “the mind of Christ,” set free from the defilement of the world and the flesh, and they are guided by the Holy Spirit.

“they are virgins” This does not mean that they are physical virgins but they are spiritual virgins, being totally consecrated to God.

“Follow the Lamb wherever He goes” They are perfected in obedience.

“Firstfruits to God and to the Lamb” They are a manifestation of the Bride of Christ formed here on earth, the firstfruits of the Bride of Christ perfected in heaven.

“without fault before the throne of God.” It is not that they are sinless, but they are without fault in their commitment to God’s will in their pathway to holiness.

The Narrow Way Leading to Fulfillment in Zion and The Broad Way to Destruction

Jesus outlined two spiritual pathways for our ongoing Christian life after salvation. One is entered through a narrow gate that few find, and the other through a broad gate through which most traditional Christians enter.

After being saved, most new converts embark on a pathway of endeavouring to achieve accepted ethical standards of Christian living. They attend fellowship meetings, bible studies, and church programs. They endeavour to meet acceptable morality and behaviour, however, there is little evidence of genuine spiritual growth in overcoming the carnal nature and receiving the indwelling life of Jesus Christ. This is the broad way.

Many earnest Christians come to the realisation that there is a lack of genuine spiritual growth and they are motivated by the Spirit to embark on a new spiritual path, this path being the narrow way, generally known as ‘the path of the cross,’ or in the following reading referred to as our pilgrimage to Mount Zion.

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca [weeping] they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion. Ps 84:5-7.

The Narrow Way

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matt 7:13-14.

The above reading is not talking about entering into salvation, for we are all saved by grace and become new creations in Christ. This is talking about choosing a pathway of spiritual growth in the knowledge of Christ’s life indwelling us and ministering through us in our future Christian life.

The narrow way is to embark on the ‘path of the cross,’ or holiness. On this path, one chooses to obey the Lord’s command to consign our old or carnal man daily to the altar of the cross to be put to death by the Spirit.

“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?’” Luke 9:23-25.

“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.” Luke 14:33.

In essence, this describes a pathway of spiritual refinement leading to Mount Zion. This is a gradual lifelong process in which our carnal nature is put off daily and laid on the altar of the cross to be put to death by the Spirit. This is followed by clothing oneself with Jesus Christ, to the end that Jesus can dwell in us, and express His life and nature through us. Jesus described this union with Him with an analogy of a vine with its branches.

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:4-5.

To complete our consecration, we must surrender our whole nature to God, to be remade by His workmanship into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...” Col 3:9-10.

God undertakes a refining work throughout our lifetime that purges out our carnal nature and replaces it with that of Jesus Christ. Paul described this happening in his own life.

“... always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.” 2 Cor 4:10-11.

In our pilgrimage to spiritual fulfillment, our destiny is to Mount Zion, which results in a personal relationship with God, in which we know His abiding presence, and God and Jesus Christ are able to establish Their kingdom reign in us. Jesus can minister through the perfected ones without the interference of their carnal natures. Although the path of the cross is a pathway involving refining suffering, it leads to glorification with Jesus Christ.

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” Rom 8:16-17.

The Broad Way Leading to Destruction

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.” Matt 7:13.

The broad way is the path taken by most traditional Christians. Although they may engage in evangelism and good works, there is very little spiritual growth in holiness as they do not surrender their carnal natures into God’s hands to be put to death by the Spirit. Because they do not threaten Satan’s kingdom to the degree of those on the path of the cross, they do not encounter the degree of warfare and suffering, and in this respect, their living experience is not very different from the rest of the world. It is called a pathway to destruction because it often leads to complacency and backsliding.

What Makes Those on Mount Zion Perfected Christians

Perfected Christians are those who have allowed God to put to death their carnal natures, and their works are now righteous because they are initiated and empowered by Christ, without the interference of the flesh. They are perfected by their willingness to allow God to put to death their carnal self-natures.

John saw a vision of perfected ones clothed in fine linen. **“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife [the Bride of Christ, the 144 thousand,] has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”** Rev 19:7-8.

Notice that it is not the bride herself that is perfected in righteousness and holiness, as this would make her divine, but it is the acts or works that are righteous because they were initiated and empowered by Christ.

This is the goal that Paul is talking about in this following reading.

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule let us be of the same mind.” Phil 3:12-16.

Paul encourages those on the Pilgrimage of Holiness to press on. He warns us not to get ahead of ourselves. If we endeavour to overcome the flesh ourselves and make ourselves righteous, God withdraws His hand until we again turn to Him. It is God’s work that tames the fleshly nature. Paul encourages obedience to walk in the degree of understanding that they have and trust in God as He will reveal truth to them.

THE JERUSALEM TYPE OF CHRISTIAN

Mount Zion was situated just outside the walls of Old Jerusalem, indicating the closeness of the relationship between Jerusalem and Zion, which are sometimes linked together in prophecies.

“For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you.” Isa 30:19-20.

“Again the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervour I am zealous for her.’ Thus says the Lord: ‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the Lord of hosts, the Holy Mountain.” Zech 8:1-3.

Jerusalem is a type for the Christians who have embarked on the path of the cross but have not yet attained the degree of refinement of Zion type Christians. They are Church members whose working and ministry are true to the pattern instigated by Christ and the apostles. They are not a visible Church, but they are evidenced in fellowships throughout the world.

Embarking on the path of the cross, they are consecrated to the Lord, daily laying their carnal natures on the altar of the cross to be put to death by the Spirit, and clothing themselves with Jesus Christ, to live in union with Him as His disciples. Jesus dwells in them and manifests His life through them and they are able to impart life and truth to others.

In the above prophecy, Jerusalem is called the **“city of truth.”** Although in their personal lives, these Christians are still being perfected, they have reached the state that Jesus is able to impart ministries of truth to them.

Ministries are Formed by the Lord's Workmanship

In the Fourth Chapter of Ephesians, we see that it is Jesus who forms ministries, and distributes them in His body as He wills. **“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...”** Eph 4:11-12.

Ministries are not based on academia or learning but are formed in a person by the Lord's workmanship. The preparation of a person by the Lord to receive a ministry may take many years until their flesh is dealt with.

Jerusalem, **“the city of truth”** is the main source of truth to the whole Church, being home to ministries like apostles, prophets, and pastors and teachers. It stands to reason that the main source of ministries directing truth operates from those in the membership of the Jerusalem type Christians.

JUDAH - A TYPE OF TRADITIONAL CHURCH MEMBERS

MAP SHOWING JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Babylon is situated further North East of this map.



Throughout history, Judah was a mixture of good and evil. She was host to King David, many of the prophets, and later to the Lord Jesus, but because of her many iniquities, she was consigned to seventy years of bondage in Babylon.

In this study, Judah represents members in the traditional Church with a mixture of flesh and Spirit. They are Christians, but have entered the wide gate and broad way **“that leads to destruction.”** (Matt 7:13). They have not stepped onto the path of the cross, allowing God to strip away their carnal natures with His refining workmanship, and so their Christian walk is a mixture of spiritual works and self-initiated works of the flesh. Because their carnal natures have not been dealt with, their spiritual discernment is lacking, and they are open to Antichrist's deceptions, opening the door to accepting false doctrines and teachings, and world precepts of things like homosexuality, equal rights, and moral liberty. When works are self-initiated, Jesus declares, **“Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”** Matt 7:22-23.

Jesus said, **“I never knew you,”** because He could not associate Himself with their fleshly works. Unfortunately, this often applies to Judah type Christians, in which there is a mixture of genuine spiritual works and works of the flesh.

ISRAEL TYPE CHRISTIANS

At the time of these end-time prophecies, the nation of Israel had been defeated by Assyria and dispersed among the unbelieving nations of the world. Relating this to the end-time Church, Israel is a type for backslidden members who have been taken captive by the spirit of the world. They have left their original commitment, stopped fellowshiping, reading the bible, and offering meaningful prayer, have yielded to the enticements of the world and they have stopped growing spiritually. Jesus warned the Church in Ephesus: **“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent.”** Rev 2:4-6.

And again, the Apostle John states in his first letter: **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world.”** 1 John 2:15-16.

The state of Israel-type members also results from pursuing the path of the board way catering to the desires of the flesh – the pathway that Jesus referred to as **“...for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction...”**

The apostle Paul gave this graphic picture of end-time Christians who have followed the pathway.

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.” 2 Tim 3:1-5.

At first glance, we may conclude that these people are not Christians, but then we see that they have **“a form of godliness but denying its power.”** This is the state of the backslidden church, now captivated by the world - outwardly showing a form of religiosity, but in fact catering to fleshly desires, harbouring worldly beliefs and false doctrines. Their spiritual walk is one of spiritual death, lacking spiritual vitality and growth. This is the state of those designated as Israel but we shall see that by the grace of God, they will be restored and their former commitment renewed.

BABYLON

Babylon is used as a symbol for the false church, so-called church organizations that are so doctrinally unsound that they have no spiritual warrant to be called a true Church. There are ‘churches’ like the Church of Scientology, Jehovah’s Witnesses, The Church of the Latter-Day Saints, and surprisingly, the main one being the Roman Catholic Church. They may have the appearance of virtue and power but are doctrinally unsound, and do not have a clear message of salvation through Jesus Christ. This does not mean that all those born into

Catholicism and all false churches cannot be saved, for God can reach all who have receptive hearts to receive the true message of salvation through Jesus Christ. The main problem is that the Catholic Church focuses more on being a good Catholic in obeying all of its ordinances as the basis for salvation, rather than the redeeming sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Below are just two of her many false edicts pronounced by Popes.

Salvation by Catholicism - *'Whoever refuses to enter and remain in the Catholic Church cannot be saved.'* Vatican 11 Lumen Gentium, 14.

Receiving the Holy Spirit - *'The Catholic Church alone is the body of Christ. Consequently those who are outside the Church have not the Holy Spirit.'* *'The Teaching of the Catholic Church - A Summary of Catholic Doctrine'*. Pg. 666.

Other false decrees promote the worship of created things, like the Pope and his Cardinals, Mary, religious relics, statues, and canonised saints. Mary is proclaimed as Mediatrix, encouraging prayers through her, despite the Scripture, **"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus..."** 1 Tim 2:4.

Prophecies in the bible consistently warn to **"come out of her."** [Babylon – all false religions]

"Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, For this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He shall recompense her." Jer 51:6.

"And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities." Rev 18:4-5.

SECTION 2

THE USE OF LOCATION NAMES IN END-TIME PROPHECIES

PROPHECIES PREDICTING THE RESTORATION OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

The basic theme of these end-time prophecies is restoration, brought about by the pouring out of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit. Because of her many iniquities, Judah had been captured by Babylon and had endured seventy years in bondage. Israel had been captured by Assyria and dispersed amongst pagan countries and ceased to exist as a nation.

Judah, (a type for the traditional Church members) and Israel, (backslidden members), with most of the rest of the end-time Church members, have been captivated in various degrees by the Antichrist, in accordance with this prophecy in Revelation. 13:7. **“It was granted to him (the beast or Antichrist) to make war with the saints and to overcome them.”** The Church in general has been taken captive by the spirit of Antichrist, making it an insipid likeness to the vitality of the Early Church.

The basic elements of the restoration of the Church are:

- Preparation to receive the Holy Spirit - the Church is brought to repentance, through the ministries of Jerusalem’s prophets, teachers, and those presenting spiritual truth as they expose Antichrist’s lies and deceptions. Repentance allows God to pour out the latter rain.
- In addressing an enquiring crowd after Christ’s ascension, Peter told them, **“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”** Acts 3:19-21.
- From Peter’s instruction, we see that repentance leads to **“times of refreshing,”** or revivals that have occurred throughout the ages.
- Finally, the latter rain of the Holy Spirit will be poured out on the Church bringing restoration and precipitating a huge harvest of souls brought into Christ’s Kingdom. This last revival and restoration, caused by the pouring out of the latter rain will be even greater than that of the former rain of Pentecost, that brought the Church into existence.

Restoration of Israel, or the Backslidden Church.

Ezekiel Chapters 36 and 37.

“Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: ‘Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds...So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged

them according to their ways and their deeds. When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name...But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went.

Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: ‘I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went...I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you [Spiritual truth], and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.’” Ezek 36:16-28.

God revealed the sorry state of Israel and prophesied of her restoration in the Thirty Sixth Chapter of Ezekiel. We are reminded that these are parallel prophecies that relate to the state of the nation of Israel and also to the end-time Church at the close of the age. Israel had been conquered by Assyria and settled in the surrounding pagan nations of the world, and to them, this prophecy was a source of comfort and reassurance. In parallel, Israel, representing backslidden Christians of the end-time Church have been taken captive by Antichrist, and enslaved by the enticements of the world. They have stopped fellowshipping with other Church members, and to all observation, seem to be lost to the Church. This prophecy should be a wake-up call to backslidden Christians to return to the Lord in repentance.

In Chapter 37, Ezekiel is taken to a valley of dry bones, which he was told, was a picture of the nation of Israel.

“these bones are the whole house of Israel.” Here the dry bones represent those who have backslidden and been taken captive by the spirit of the world. They have stopped engaging in normal Christian practices, and yet still nominate themselves as Christians.

The description of the dry bones commences in Verse 1.

“The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley, and indeed they were very dry.

Restoration

And He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ So I answered, ‘O Lord God, You know.’ Again He said to me, ‘Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones ‘Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.’”

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the

sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.”

The next stage of restoration was brought about by the imparting of the Holy Spirit, as will occur at the falling of the latter rain.

“Also He said to me, ‘Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord God: ‘Come from the four winds, O breath [Holy Spirit], and breathe on these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.’” This part of the prophecy concludes with the statement, **“Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel”** [or the backslidden members of the Church who have stopped growing or seeking the salvation of the Lord].” Ezek 37:10-12.

UNION OF JUDAH WITH ISRAEL

At the time of the following prophecy of Ezekiel, we are reminded that Judah had been unfaithful and had been taken captive and exiled to Babylon, where she had suffered seventy years of bondage. Judah was now to be restored to her native homeland. In the prophecy, Judah represents the state of traditional members of the Protestant denominational Churches.

Ezekiel is asked to prophesy for the unification of Judah and Israel - Judah, representing traditional church members, or those practicing a Christianity plagued with apostasies from Antichrist, and Israel representing those who have backslidden

“Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions...’” Ezek 37:15-16.

Like national Israel, who had been banished to pagan nations, their spiritual counterpart, the backslidden members of the Church, are taken captive by the spirit of Antichrist and become settled to their fate. **“They indeed say ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off.’”** Ezek 37:11. But they are reassured by the voice of prophecy that they would be restored to their own land or spiritual heritage.

Not only are Judah and Israel to be united but it is prophesied that they will become part of Christ’s everlasting kingdom.

Ezekiel prophesied, **“Thus says the Lord God: ‘Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.’”** Ezek 37:21-23. Those who have backslidden will return to Church fellowship and undergo a spiritual renewal.

God will Appeal to the Jews who have Rejected Jesus

Ezekiel is told to, **“...take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.’”** Ezek 37:16. This represents all descendants of Joseph and all associated with Israel - all those who had rejected Jesus as the

Messiah. Ezekiel is told to **“Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.”** Ezek 37:17.

The following prophecy foretells that God will pour out a spirit of grace and supplication on the Jews, causing them to mourn, and repent over their crucifixion of Jesus. As a result, many will turn to the Lord in repentance and be saved.

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem [“all the house of Israel”] the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” Zech 12:10. This Spirit of grace and supplication will prick the consciences of all the Jews who had rejected Jesus. **“And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves...all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.”** Zech 12:12-14.

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he declares how God desires to acknowledge Israel who He used as the vehicle for the revelation of God and His purposes, and for them to be grafted into the salvation of the Lord.

In the following prophecy, the olive tree is a symbol of National Israel, (a vine is the symbol of Spiritual Israel or the Church).

“And if some of the branches were broken off, and you [gentile Christians], being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,” [the blessings of Israel’s revelation of God] do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you...Because of unbelief they were broken off, ...You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?...blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

“The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.”

Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers...For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.” Romans 11:17-32.

WILL ALL ISRAEL BE SAVED?

In the Eleventh Chapter of Romans, Paul states that “all Israel will be saved.” **“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, ‘When I take away their sins’.”** Rom 11:26-27.

In this reading, who are the “all Israel”? We see the answer in these verses at the start of the Chapter.

“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ‘Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life’? But what does the divine response say to him? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” Romans 11:1-5.

Paul makes a distinction between those who are traditional national Jews and those who are true spiritual Jews, **“there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”**

This is also pointed out in the Third Chapter of Galatians and the Ninth Chapter of Romans: **“...Abraham ‘believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.”** Gal 3:6-7.

“But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.” Rom 9:6-8.

God has reserved a remnant of true spiritual Jews, who are consecrated to Him and believe in their hearts His promise of eternal salvation in Christ. It is the remnant of true Jews who are and will be committed to God rather than their national heritage, who will be saved.

What is the significance of ‘will be’ saved, that is, in the future tense? Previously, we quoted Zechariah as saying, **“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem [“all the house of Israel”] the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”** Zech 12:10.

This points to a time in the future, most likely the time of the latter rain, when God will pour out on unbelieving Jews His Spirit of grace and supplication. The previous blocks concerning a promised Messiah, who they anticipated would set up a national Israelite kingdom on earth, will be discarded, and their hearts will be opened to receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

RECEIVING THE LATTER RAIN OF THE SPIRIT

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

The promise of the Latter Rain of the Spirit for restoration was delivered by the prophet Joel.

“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month [of the agricultural season]. And the floors shall be full of wheat [spiritual nourishment], and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil [the Holy Spirit and joy].” Joel 2:23-25. KJV.

Pray for the Holy Spirit

Zechariah asked people to pray for the latter rain. **“Ask the Lord for rain In the time of the latter rain. The Lord will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, Grass in the field for everyone.” Zech 10:1.**

Returning to Ezekiel and the Dry Bones

“Also He said to me, ‘Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.” Ezek 37:9-10.

God will have pity on Judah and will bless the restoration.

After Judah has been prepared to understand truth by the falling of the Latter Rain, prophets and teachers in Jerusalem, or those of the true Church, will direct truth to Judah, and the lies and deceptions of Antichrist will be exposed and rejected. Jerusalem, as the source of liberating truth directed to Judah, will be a stumbling block to all who oppose Judah’s restoration as verified by Zechariah.

“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.” Zech 12:2-3.

“And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God.” Zech 12:5.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. Zech 12:9.

Even now, the liberating truth coming from prophets and teachers and those presenting truth is being hotly contested.

RESTORATION PRECIPITATED BY THE LATTER RAIN FALLING ON JUDAH

End-time revival and restoration will not come from the Charismatic Movement, mega-churches, or any man-centred initiatives. We will see that, by the sovereign will of God traditional denominational members of the Churches will be the most used in the revival. The Spirit of the Latter Rain will be most active in Judah or the Traditional Church members, where Antichrist has been most active, and consequently, this is the area most needing the working of Antichrist to be revealed and destroyed. It is in the Traditional Church that the Battle of Armageddon is most hotly contested, for it is there that Antichrist has taken most captives. But

it is these people who will now be liberated with enlightening truth. It is when truth is combined with the Spirit that revival and restoration will occur.

The truth will be dispensed from Jerusalem, the type of the True Church. We have seen that some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem have acquired the anointed ministries of apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, and they will have an important role in restoration.

THE LATTER RAIN WILL FALL ON JUDAH FIRST.

“The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.” Zech 12:7.

To show the inequality between Judah and Jerusalem, Zechariah compares the nomadic tribe of Judah with their simple tents, to Jerusalem, with its association with the glorious heritage of David.

Judah the type of the traditional Church members, has been infiltrated by the deceptions of the spirit of Antichrist. Jerusalem, a type of church member endowed with spiritual truths, will have an important role in ministering liberating truth to Judah. This will be seen as a sovereign work of God, as the weight of restoration and revival of the Church will rest on weaker Judah. Judah, the weaker one, is used to host the revival first because Judah has borne the brunt of Antichrist’s attack on the truth, Judah’s overcoming with the help of Jerusalem, will be seen as God’s initiation, and the result will be to His glory.

Preparation for the Latter Rain

In Judah, there will be a conviction of sin leading to repentance.

“I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse [war horses] of the people with blindness. And on the house of Judah I will open My eyes in pity and love and guidance...” Zechariah 12:4.

“I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah” - God will turn His attention to the needs of Judah, the traditional Church members.

“will smite every horse of the people with blindness” - Those opposing Judah’s revival. Horses symbolise warfare weaponry and being smitten with blindness means that those opposing Judah will be nullified by confusion.

“And on the house of Judah I will open My eyes in pity and love and guidance...” - God will extend compassion love and grace with guidance to Judah, that is, those who are a type of the traditional church.

Union of Restored Jews with the Church

It is God’s will that all believing Jews are united with believing Gentiles, making them all one in the body of Christ.

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And

if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”
Gal 3:26-29.

Biblical prophecies, as in Romans Chapter 11, predict that Israel will be restored, and returned to their own land, or former relationship with God. A common thought is that the prophecy of the restoration of Israel to her own land was fulfilled in 1948 when the state of Israel was recognised as a sovereign state, but this was part of a geopolitical Zionist manoeuvre to readjust strategic positions of nations. Spiritual Israel is not a nation armed with nuclear weapons.

The restoration of Israel to their own land means, to their spiritual heritage and acceptance by God as His children

SECTION 3

CLEANSING THE CHURCH FROM HER APOSTASIES

Chapters Thirty-Eight and Thirty-Nine of Ezekiel present us with a figurative account of the Battle of Armageddon, providing us with further insight into the nature of the cleansing of the Church.

Ezekiel Chapters 38 & 39

In Ezekiel 38 and Revelation 20:8, **“Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal,”** refers to the ruler of a confederacy of nations that harassed ancient Israel, and consequently became a symbol of Antichrist and his confederacy. At the time of this prophecy, Israel had disappeared as a nation, having been conquered by Assyria and dispersed among the nations. This prophecy is addressed to Israel in general, or the whole Church. To many, the Church seems settled and without much conflict, but Jesus warned, **“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.”** Matt 24:24-25. The fact is the Church is plagued with error and apostasy.

The first part of the prophecy is directed to Gog, or Antichrist, predicting God’s intervention, and the destruction of Antichrist and his confederacy.

In these two chapters, Ezekiel figuratively describes the last great conflict between the forces of Antichrist and the Church. As the Church experiences the beginnings of restoration, Antichrist will endeavour to turn back those who have been restored to the Lord.

“In the latter years you [Antichrist] will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely.” Ezek 38:4.

Again, we are reminded that this is a spiritual battle in which Antichrist musters all of his powers of deceit and deception to distort truth and derail the newborn restoration. Firstly, we are shown that God draws Antichrist into this last conflict so that he and his forces will be destroyed forever.

“Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; and I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel.” Ezek 39:3-4.

The fate of Antichrist and his army is sealed because God has pronounced their utter destruction.

“You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.” Ezekiel 38:16.

God is hallowed because His righteous judgment of the Church will bring about repentance and restoration, which will be used to bring about the defeat of Antichrist.

Antichrist's Weapons are Destroyed by the Truth

The weapons Antichrist uses to combat the truth are false doctrines, false signs and wonders, false prophets, teachers, and ministries, and all manner of lies and deceptions. Ezekiel prophesied that when Antichrist's weapons are exposed, they will become the fuel used to destroy deceptions. The flaws of the apostasies and deceptions will be exposed when examined in the light of Scriptural truth, and this will provide the fuel for their rejection and destruction.

“Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons...they will make fires with them for seven years [seven symbolises the perfect time needed to accomplish God's purpose]. They will not take wood from the field nor cut down any from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons...” Ezekiel 39:9-10.

During the final stage of the Battle of Armageddon, the deceptiveness of all apostasies, false doctrines and false ministries in the Church will be exposed by ministries of truth, from those represented by Jerusalem. The truth will then be shared with the wider body of believers so that they will be enabled to take part in the cleansing of the Church.

The Burial of the Deceptions of Antichrist

In the following reading, Ezekiel uses the analogy of dead bodies and bones on the surface of the land, to represent the apostasies that are polluting the Church. A symbolic seven months (the complete time needed) is allotted to remove every trace of apostasy from the land, or Church. Everyone in the Church will be given the responsibility of ridding the Church of all the defilement of error and apostasy. Watchmen, such as elders and anointed teachers, will maintain a constant vigil to ensure that no 'bone' or residue of apostasy reappears.

“For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land [the Church]. Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified,” says the Lord GOD. **They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground [remaining evidence of Antichrist's influence], in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. The search party will pass through the land; and when anyone sees a man's bone [a residue of deception], he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers [e.g. elders] have buried it [by their testimonies]” Ezek 39:12-15.**

The danger is that Antichrist's apostasies will resurface, and again be entrenched in the Church. The whole Church will have the responsibility of maintaining a constant vigil so that any trace of apostasy will be brought to the attention of the appropriate watchmen, and buried permanently.

Jesus' purpose in cleansing the church is **“that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”** Eph 5:27.

False Prophets Revealed and Destroyed by the Truth

Cleansing the Church from Zechariah

Zechariah prophesied that the Lord will cleanse the land from idols, and expose and banish false prophets.

“It shall be in that day,’ says the Lord of hosts, “that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land...I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land...And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive [present an impression of religious infallibility].” Zech 13:2-6.

Most prophecies are presented in figurative language, and many false interpretations occur when biblical prophecies are interpreted literally instead of figuratively. An example is in the interpretation of Revelation 20:4, which is a foundational Premillennial Scripture.

“...Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” Rev 20:4.

Literal Interpretation

“The souls of those who had been beheaded”: Those who had been decapitated lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. An example of a false prophecy foretells the guillotine will be reinstated by a despotic world ruler governed by Antichrist, and those who did not disavow their Christian beliefs would have their heads cut off.

Figurative Interpretation

To be beheaded is to lose headship over their own lives. John’s attention was drawn to their souls because it was their souls that had governed them. The soul’s headship had now been dismantled and subjected to their Spirits. Jesus was now able to reign through them without the interference of soulish carnality.

Literal Interpretation

“For a thousand years” This means an actual period of one thousand years.

Figurative Interpretation

In the symbology of numbers, ten symbolises completeness. Ten by ten by ten, or one thousand, symbolises absolute completeness. This time period represents the Church age, which will finish by God’s determination of when the gospel truth has been presented throughout the whole world.

“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.” Matt 24:14.

As the Spirit falls, prophetic and teaching ministries that have been stagnant will come to life, and prophetic truth will be revealed, uncovering and destroying lies and deception. This is also revealed in the Eleventh Chapter of Revelation, where the ‘Two Witnesses,’ the ministry of teaching and prophecy symbolised by Moses and Elijah, had been lying dead in the street as the Church had been decimated by Antichrist. Now, as the latter rain of the Spirit falls, their ministry of prophecy and teaching is restored, breathing new life and truth into the Church.

“Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, [the two Witnesses] and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them...” Rev 11:11.

The combination of the falling of the Spirit with the Scriptural Word unleashes the power to destroy Antichrist’s works.

God’s Judgment of False Shepherds

Prophecy from Ezekiel

A shepherd is one who has a ministry of pastoral care from the Lord, however, all believers have a responsibility to care for one another, and so the prophecy we will be studying is addressed to all Israel or the whole Church. The title ‘shepherd,’ can be applied to ‘pastors and teachers,’ (or elders) listed amongst Christ’s gifts to the Churches in Ephesians 4:11. **“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers [elders], for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry...” Eph 4:11.** Christ’s gifted pastoral ministries are formed and equipped by the Lord, recognised by other elders, and set in the body. Most Churches select elders democratically for a 3 – 4 year term, but an elder formed by the Lord should be regarded as having a permanent ministry.

The prophecy we are studying exposes God’s judgment of false shepherds, described in the Thirty-fourth Chapter of Ezekiel.

“And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves” Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled...My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.” Ezek 34:1-6.

Feeding themselves rather than the flock refers to meeting their own needs rather than seeking and satisfying the needs of those under their care. An example of this may be seen in television ministries where large donations are sought on the grounds that donors will be blessed financially. These false shepherds have failed to minister the Life of Jesus to those in desperate need of ministry in these last days.

Ezekiel then pronounces God’s judgment **“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: “As I live”, says the Lord God, “surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock” — therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.’” Ezek 7-10.**

Jesus will be established as the True Shepherd, meeting all needs.

“For thus says the Lord God: ‘Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will

I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel [Places where the presence of God is manifested]. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,' says the Lord God. 'I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.'...I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David [Jesus Christ]. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken...I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing...Thus they shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are My people,' says the Lord God.'"

You are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God," says the Lord God." Ezek 34:11-31.

REFINEMENT BEFORE THE LATTER RAIN

The following reading from Zechariah is addressed to **“the house of David** (the Jewish nation). The first part predicts, **“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die...”** Zech 13:8.

Why has Israel suffered such a harsh judgment? We are reminded of the self-imposed curse the Jews had laid on the nation of Israel before the Lord’s crucifixion. Pilate had tried to release Jesus, but the multitude was persistent, crying out, **“His blood be on us and on our children.”**

“When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.’ And all the people answered and said, ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’” Matt 27:24-25.

History records the dire result of that curse. In the time between the Lord’s death and the destruction of Jerusalem, there were many uprisings against Rome, and the Roman army killed vast numbers of Jewish revolutionaries. In 70AD, Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed, much of its horrific destruction done by their own hands. In the Second World War, six million Jews were annihilated in the Holocaust.

In the second part of Zechariah’s prophecy, we are told that God will preserve a remnant, which will undergo the fire of refinement that will prepare them to receive the Lord’s salvation and to be used by God for his purposes.

“...but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.” Zech 13:8-9 KJV.

The refinement of the Jews has its parallel in the refinement of the Church explained in the Third Chapter of Malachi.

Refinement of the Church

In the Third Chapter of Malachi, the prophet warns those who seek for and delight in the Lord's coming to restore the temple (His Church). He warns them that He will come as a refiner, and purge them of their iniquities.

“Behold, I will send my messenger, [John the Baptist] and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi [such as those with anointed ministries], and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. Mal 3:1-4. KJV

“he shall purify the sons of Levi” Levites were priests who ministered truth and direction to the wider body. They were singled out by the Lord for refinement so that their ministry would be uncontaminated.

“the offering of Judah and Jerusalem” As we have previously stated, Judah will receive anointed truth from Jerusalem and it will now be used to present truth to the wider body.

“as in the days of old, and as in former years” These are the years before the contaminating influence of Antichrist.

SECTION 4

ANTICHRIST'S ATTACK ON JERUSALEM – THE MATURE CHRISTIANS ENLIGHTENED WITH THE TRUTH

ATTACK ON JERUSALEM IN THE LAST DAYS

The Fourteenth Chapter of Zechariah

The Fourteenth Chapter of Zechariah provides us with a figurative account of the final stages of the Battle of Armageddon. The Chapter begins with the Antichrist's despoiling of Jerusalem, which is a type for mature Christians invested with spiritual truth.

Zech 14:1-2.

“Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.”

“The day of the Lord” The day of the Lord speaks of the last days when Jesus will enter into the conflict and overthrow His enemies. In the climax of the Battle of Armageddon, Jerusalem, or mature Christians endowed with spiritual truth, will be under siege from all of the forces of the Antichrist.

“I will gather all nations to battle against Jerusalem.” Antichrist will muster all those under his power to oppose and destroy the ministries of Christians who present a threat to his kingdom. The spirit of the Antichrist will endeavour to undermine truth with widespread deception.

“the city shall be taken.” We may ask, ‘How would it be possible for Antichrist to have such a devastating effect on members of the true Church? Paul issued this warning: **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”** 2 Cor 11:13-15. Likewise, Jesus warned, **“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”** Matt 24:24.

The following are just some examples of widely accepted false teachings that have taken people captive, even mature Christians, well-equipped with spiritual truth.

- **The False Doctrine of Premillennialism** Premillennialism has varied versions, but in essence states that the Church will not have to face the tribulation, but will be raptured to be with Christ during the tribulation period. After the tribulation, the saints will return with Jesus, who will establish a thousand-year utopian kingdom on earth. This will be followed by the final rapture and judgment. This was not taught by Jesus or His apostles, and Jesus denied this when He said, **“My kingdom is not of this world...”** John 18:36. Despite the many flaws in the Premillennial doctrine, it has been embraced with acceptance throughout much of the world.

- **Acceptance of Homosexuality** Perhaps the clearest passage of condemnation of homosexuality is in the First Chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them...they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools...**Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,...For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.**" Rom 1:26-27.

Organisations such as the LGBT are well organised and attract participation in their celebrations like Mardi Gras and gay marches. In many quarters their endeavours are so persuasive that their beliefs are accepted by many Christians, even in the true Church.

- **The Alpha Course** originated from the Holy Trinity Brompton Anglican Church in London. It was introduced in the late 1970s. Nicky Gumble, an Anglican Curate, took over the running of the course in the 1990s. It was during this time that Nicky Gumble visited the 'Toronto Blessing,' an event that began at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church in 1994. This charismatic outpouring was accompanied by phenomena such as being 'slain in the spirit', uncontrolled laughter, people rolling on the floor, and people making animal noises. Nicky Gumble gave this movement his approval and it was after his return from that visit that the Alpha course took off, spreading rapidly throughout the world. It is now reported that approximately twenty million people have used the course in over one hundred and seventy countries, and it is used in most Christian denominations.

The question is, was this a genuine outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Do these happenings glorify Jesus?

In His wisdom, God has subjected the operation of the Holy Spirit to the oversight of the other members of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit never acts on His own initiative. Jesus said, "... when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for **He will not speak on His own authority**, but whatever He hears [from Jesus] **He will speak**; and He will tell you things to come. **He will glorify Me**, for He will take of **what is Mine** and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you." John 16:13-15.

Clearly, many of the manifestations do not glorify Jesus. If the calling down of the Spirit is without reference to Jesus, or not initiated by Jesus, it is not valid, and the spirit that falls is a counterfeit spirit of the Antichrist.

The true Gifts of the Spirit are certainly from God, but all things must be tested. "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. **Test all things**; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." 1 Thess 5:19-22.

The Alpha course has received a worldwide promotion and unfortunately has invested many unsuspecting people with a spirit from the Antichrist.

Resuming Zech 14:1-2.

“The women ravished:” They are not ravished physically but spiritually. This happens when their primary role as homemakers and nurturers of God-fearing children is placed second to the worldly pursuit of equal rights, where women seek to adopt roles of headship previously undertaken by men.

Women have the capacity to fulfill vital roles in society, and quite often have more spiritual discernment than men, but they do not have the same capacity as men in headship because Christ is the head of man, and oversees his headship.

“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” 1 Cor 11:3-4.

Women’s quest for headship violates the God-given ordinance of male headship.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” Eph 5:22-24.

This ordinance was first presented to Eve after her disobedience to God by her acceptance of Satan’s lie. Satan was able to beguile Eve into accepting the lie and then she drew Adam into the disobedience that resulted in the fall of mankind.

God’s judgment of Eve is a warning to all women.

“Your desire shall be for your husband [your husband’s authority], and he shall rule over you.” Gen 3:16.

This proclamation of male headship is repeated throughout the Scriptures. Headship is not an indication of superiority, but a role allotted by God for the functioning and well-being of families and church fellowships. Paul declared, “...**there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**” Gal 3:28.

Throughout history, there has been an inherent desire in women to assert authority which, in our present age has been exacerbated by economic circumstances, requiring most women to enter the workforce to supplement the husband’s income, whilst children are placed in child-care centres.

Having been incorporated into the world system, women are confronted by strident women’s rights advocates, with coordinated efforts to establish women in headship positions in companies, heads of state, and even countries.

The Church at Thyatira was commended by Jesus for her faithfulness and good works, and so we may liken her to Jerusalem, or the True Church.

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, “These things says the Son of God, ...I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.” Rev 2:18-19.

Despite this commendation, Thyatira was confronted with a sombre warning of the operation of a spirit of witchcraft in her midst.

“Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death [spiritual death], and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.” Rev 2:20-23.

Jezebel is a title that refers to a Jezebel spirit, or spirit of witchcraft, which entices captives to assume authority they are not entitled to, in this case, a prophetess. This Jezebel spirit, or spirit of witchcraft, was named after Queen Jezebel, who, as an example, put on her husband’s ring of authority to gain ownership of a man’s inherited vineyard. (2 Kings 1:1-16.)

The woman at Thyatira claimed unauthorized authority as a prophetess. By her witchcraft, she seduced vulnerable Christians to engage in unauthorised activities. As a result, they were subject to sickness, great tribulation, and spiritual death. Such is the destructive power of the operation of witchcraft in a Church. This can be taken as a stern warning about allowing women to adopt positions of false authority.

“to commit sexual immorality” Sexual immorality is often called harlotry in the bible and can be equated with not being obedient to the one true God.

“eat things sacrificed to idols” Partaking of things initiated by demon spirits: e.g. taking part in gay rights initiatives.

Returning to Zech 14:1-2

“Half of the city shall go forth into captivity.” Before Christ’s intervention and restoration, half of those of Jerusalem or those members of the true Church will have their spiritual truth and understanding compromised. Their integrity will be damaged by partaking of the world's acceptance of things like homosexuality, women undertaking unauthorised authority, acceptance of false doctrines, false prophets, false ministries, etc., and so they are declared to be “taken into captivity” (by the Spirit of the Antichrist).

“The remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” This half will not be swayed by Antichrist’s attacks, and will not allow truth to be compromised.

Zech 14:3.

“Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle.”

There are two fronts to the battle of Armageddon. The first front, the heavenly battle, is portrayed in Revelation 19 where Jesus is pictured riding forth on a white horse.

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him [Jesus Christ] was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His

name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven [angels and the called chosen and faithful (Rev 17-14) with Christ in Heaven], **clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword** [the sword of the Spirit - the word of God, Christ's chief weapon], **that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule** [literally shepherd] **them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**" Rev 19:11-16.

"a robe dipped in blood" Many consider this to be His own redemptive blood, but Isaiah makes it clear that this is the blood of His enemies. **"Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?...Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come."** Isa 63:2-4.

On the second front, in the battle on the earth, ministers of truth are enlivened by the Holy Spirit. The two witnesses stand on their feet and prophetic teaching by the word of God is resumed. Jerusalem or those of the true church will have a prominent role in receiving and presenting Spiritual truth to the whole church.

Zech 14:4.

"And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south."

"in that day his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives," His feet standing on the mount of Olives indicates that it is not His whole being, but a manifestation of His presence by His Spirit to enter into the battle of the restoration of the Church. We have a similar example of God's Spirit being present when He stood on the rock of Horeb. God said to Moses, **"Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink."** Ex 17:6.

When the Lord enters the conflict in the Battle of Armageddon, it will not be in His physical presence, but by His Spirit.

"...and the mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south."

We are reminded that this is a spiritual battle in which Antichrist is attempting to oppose truth from Jerusalem from entering the rest of the Church and the whole world.

If we adopt a literal interpretation, a common view is that the actual mountain would be split, creating a valley as a way of escape. But as we have pointed out, these prophecies are to be viewed figuratively, and if figurative, the Mount of Olives symbolises a hindrance to be overcome by the power of God, as in these readings.

"O great mountain, thou shalt become a plain" Zech 4:7.

"Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." Isa 40:4.

Figuratively, a mountain is an obstruction, in this case hindering liberating truth from the prophetic and teaching ministries of Jerusalem, or those of the true Church, from extending to the full Church and the outside world.

“a very large valley” When Jesus sets His feet on the Mount of Olives and enters into the conflict, the mountain of obstruction will be figuratively split in two. The very large valley that is created will allow the truth to flow out from Jerusalem to the rest of the church and the whole world.

In brief, the splitting of the mountain of obstruction coincides with the glory of the Lord entering the Church, (Ezekiel chapter 43), the falling of the latter rain, and the re-empowering of ministries of truth.

Zech 14:5.

“Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You.”

“Then you shall flee through My mountain valley” Christians will escape from Antichrist’s bondage by rejecting the deceptions that held them captive. This releasing of the truth from the Antichrist’s restraint will be accelerated by the glory of the Lord re-entering the Church by His Spirit, the falling of the latter rain, and the two witnesses being revived and resuming their ministry.

“Thus the Lord my God [God the Father] will come, and all the saints with You [Jesus Christ].” The unusual structure of this sentence emphasises the involvement of both God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son in releasing truth into the Church. “...all the saints” are those with ministries of truth that the Lord can use.

The Lord will enter the conflict, and the beleaguered saints in the Church will be delivered by the truth.

Zech 14:6-7.

“It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; the lights will diminish. It shall be one day which is known to the Lord — Neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light.”

“the lights will diminish” In literal terms, there would be no consistent light in the world. Natural light will diminish from morning to evening, but figuratively, the spiritual light of truth will not wane.

Zech 14:8.

“And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur”.

“half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea” The living waters of truth, without diminishing, will flow from Jerusalem, those of the true Church, to the seas east and west, the seas representing the nations of the world.

Zech 14:9.

“And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be — “The Lord is one,” And His name one.”

“The Lord is one” The Lord’s sovereignty will be established throughout Christendom.

Zech 14:10.

“All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses.”

“All the land shall be turned into a plain” All obstacles hindering the truth being presented will be cast down.

“Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place” The spiritual integrity of Jerusalem or those of the true Church will be recognized and attract many seeking end-time truth.

Zech 14:11.

“The people shall dwell in it; and no longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”

This is a picture of the total restoration of the Church, with its inhabitants living comfortably in peace. Jerusalem will be made as a plain, with no obstructions causing destruction. All will be united under the headship of Jesus Christ as Lord.

Zech 14:12.

“And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.”

“Their flesh shall dissolve (& eyes, & tongues)” The faculties of those opposing the Church are to be nullified.

Zech 14:13.

“It shall come to pass in that day that a great panic from the Lord will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbour, and raise his hand against his neighbour's hand;” allowing opponents to fall into disunity. Self-destruction is a common form of God's judgment on those opposing His work.

Zech 14:14.

“Judah also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together: Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.”

“Judah also will fight at Jerusalem” Judah, or those of the traditional Church who are a mixture of flesh and spirit, will be anointed and united with Jerusalem in engaging in war against Antichrist in exposing and eliminating all deceit and deception.

“the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together” When the latter rain of the Spirit falls, nations will be motivated to support revival and restoration, even to support it with their wealth, as shown in this prophecy by Isaiah.

“The multitude of camels shall cover your land, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall proclaim the praises of the Lord.” Isa 60:6-7.

Zech 14:16-17.

“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain.”

“everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem” Opposition will have been eliminated, and so those who are left will be converted and worship the Lord.

“the Feast of Tabernacles” is a celebration of God’s provision, held at the time of harvest.

“whichever of the families...do not come up to Jerusalem to worship...on them there will be no rain.” These people will not receive the latter rain of the Holy Spirit.

Zech 14:20-21.

“In that day “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.”

“In that day “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” shall be engraved on the bells of the horses” Holiness to the Lord means a total consecration – in this case, all possessions even to the bells of the horses will be sanctified for the Lord’s use.

“In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite [merchant] in the house of the Lord of hosts.” Where most versions state that there will **“no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts,”** Young’s Literal Translation translates ‘Canaanite’ as ‘merchant.’ This seems more pertinent because, in Ezekiel 28, Satan is aligned with the King of Tyre, who was famed for his wealth from trading. In Revelation 17, Antichrist has an alliance with the Ten Kings, who are the controllers of the finances of the world. At this time, they have succeeded in controlling the economies of most nations and implanting on everyone the ‘mark of the Beast,’ or reliance on buying and selling for their provision rather than God.

All reliance on the world’s provision will be replaced by a trust in God to provide.

SECTION 5

THE LAST DAYS ACCORDING TO ISAIAH

CONDEMNATION OF JUDAH, OR TYPE FOR TRADITIONAL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

The first five chapters of Isaiah may be considered to relate to the state of the Church in the last days. For instance, in Chapter 2 we read in verse 2 **“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days...”**

The first three chapters of Isaiah describe the state of the Church that we as Christians attend on Sundays. The following are some examples from Isaiah's vision in Chapter 1 concerning Judah and Jerusalem, types of the end-time Church.

Most people view the Church as a place where people meet on Sunday to worship the Lord in a set pattern of music, prayer, and a sermon by the minister. This pattern in itself appears without much fault, however, when we read Isaiah's criticism of the whole church in Isaiah chapter 1, we see that much is wanting.

Isa 1:5-6.

“The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; [symbols of spiritual and social disorder] they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment.”

“The whole head is sick” The whole head or organisational leadership is much the same as that of worldly organisations. In most cases, positions of authority are allotted by standards of recognised academic qualifications.

“the whole heart faints” The Lord is the heart of the Church and He ministers through it by the Spirit. The heart faints because much of the ministering is done by the flesh rather than the Spirit.

“wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; [Speak of apostacies in the Church] they have not been closed or bound up” The many apostasies and fleshly works continue to exist because of compliancy, parishioners regularly attending but not questioning the state of the Church.

Isa 1:7.

“Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence; and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.”

“Your country” [the Church] is **“desolate”** being devoid of all attributes that are incorporated in the true Church. The **“fire”** is the fire of God's judgment, as Satan is given his just right to afflict those who have embraced the world rather than God. The Church itself suffers judgment as it allows **“strangers”** or people without anointed ministries to take false authority.

Isa 1:8.

“So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a hut in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city”

“the daughter of Zion” is Jerusalem, which is called the city of truth (Zach 8:3) because its members are entrusted with the ministry such as prophecy and teaching.

“left as a booth in a vineyard, as a hut in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city” This means that genuine anointed ministries are ignored and isolated.

Finally, there is a fearful warning – the faithful Church is likened to a harlot.

Isa 1:21.

“How the faithful city has become a harlot!” The traditional churches are full of idolatry and apostasy.

God promises to intervene and restore,

Isa 1:24-28.

“Therefore the Lord says, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel,” Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, and take vengeance on My enemies. I will turn My hand against you, and thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy [impurities spoiling all genuine consecration]. I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counsellors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.”

Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness. The destruction of transgressors and of sinners shall be together and those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed.”

Restoration of the Kingdom of God by Zion and Jerusalem

Isa 2:1-4.

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

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house [the Church] shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law [truth from God], and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem [God’s chosen vessel to dispense the truth]. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

“in the latter days” Isaiah Chapter 2 confirms that these first chapters refer to the last days.

The mountains and hills are used here as symbols of status. The members of the true Church will be exalted above all. When the latter rain of the Spirit falls, Zion (the perfected Church or Bride of Christ) and Jerusalem, (members of the true Church) will have the important

role of imparting spiritual truth to the rest of the Church, precipitating restoration. Many people will recognise that the dispensed truth is from God, and draw others with them into the Church. The true state of the world will be revealed and in conjunction with God's working, the horror of war, and its destruction of the whole earth will be made evident, and warmongering will finally cease.

Warning of Apostacies and an Appeal to Return to the Lord

Isa 2:5-11.

“O house of Jacob [All Israel - Potential Christians], come and let us walk in the light of the Lord. For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with eastern ways; [acceptance and engagement in forbidden occultist activities] They are soothsayers like the Philistines, And they are pleased with the children of foreigners. [They have accepted unanointed ministries] Their land is also full of silver and gold, [preoccupied with wealth which is accepted as a mark of success] and there is no end to their treasures; Their land is also full of horses, and there is no end to their chariots. [symbols of warfare indicating internal bickering and unrest] Their land is also full of idols; They worship the work of their own hands, That which their own fingers have made [carnal fleshly works]. People bow down, and each man humbles himself [demeans himself by bowing down to idols]; therefore do not forgive them.

Haughtiness Condemned

Enter into the rock – [the Lord], and hide in the dust, from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

“For the day of the Lord of hosts shall come upon everything proud and lofty, upon everything lifted up — and it shall be brought low — upon all the cedars of Lebanon [the pride of man's achievements] that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan [symbolizing pride]; upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up; upon every high tower, and upon every fortified wall; upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all the beautiful sloops [commercial prosperity]. The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day, but the idols He shall utterly abolish.

Seeking Protection to Escape God's Judgment When He Shakes the Earth Mightily

This section describes man's efforts to escape God's end-time judgmental shaking.

“They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth [the many ways man will adopt to escape God's judgment e.g. Isolation from civilisation and stockpiling provisions], from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily.” Isa 2:19.

In Haggai (2:21-22) and Hebrews, God prophesies that in the end times, He will shake the earth mightily.

Heb 12:26-27.

“...but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven [shaking spiritual beliefs]." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made [all things by man's self-effort], that the things which cannot be shaken may remain [those things initiated and empowered by the Lord].”

At this present time, the earth is being shaken violently to test man's alliance to God.

Removal of the Stock and the Store

Isa 3:1-3.

Verses 1 to 3 reveal that God will remove all worldly things man depends on for his satisfaction rather than trusting God to supply his needs.

“For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store [things for their wellbeing], the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water [things considered vital for their existence] the mighty man and the man of war [military power], the judge [justice system] and the prophet [worldly predictors of the future], and the diviner and the elder [occultist practitioners]; the captain of fifty [bureaucrats] and the honourable man [with worldly acclaim], the counselor [gifted speakers] and the skillful artisans [acclaimed artists, actors, etc.], and the expert enchanter [captivating speakers].

Man will Lose his Honour his Headship and Authority

Isa 3:4-5 and 12.

“I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. The people will be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor; the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable.”...As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you [worldly ministries] cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths.”

Worldly Qualifications are Inadequate in Presenting Truth

Isa 3:6-7.

Despite having religious qualifications, ministers will be unable to understand how to address the situation that confronts them. **“When a man takes hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, ‘you have clothing [qualifications]; you be our ruler, and let these ruins be under your power,’ In that day he will protest, saying ‘I cannot cure your ills, for in my house is neither food [truth to minister] nor clothing [true spiritual qualifications]; do not make me a ruler of the people.”**

Isa 3:8-9. **“For Jerusalem [members equipped with truth] stumbled and Judah [members with mixture] is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory [they are bereft of the Spirit’s leading and have walked after the flesh]. The look on their countenance witnesses against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom; [their dishonour is evident to all] they do not hide it. Woe to their soul! for they have brought evil upon themselves.”**

Assurance to the Righteous

Isa 3:10-11.

“Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

God’s Judgment of Haughty Women

Isa 3:16-26.

The fulfillment of the following part of Isaiah’s prophecy is reflected in the current trend of worldwide advancement of women's rights and demands for so-called equality.

Isaiah’s prophecy highlights several areas where women are vulnerable to attacks from Satan. The first area under judgment is directed at haughty women who flaunt their femininity in a seductive, brazen, and wanton manner, to promote an aura of femininity and sexuality that has worldly approval. **“Moreover the Lord says: “Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet...”** Isaiah then declares God’s judgment. **“Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will uncover their secret parts [hidden sins].”** A woman’s hair crowns her with an aura of feminine softness and beauty. To **“strike with a scab the crown of the head,”** is to replace this aura of feminine softness with a sense of artificiality and hardness. The uncovering of their secret parts refers to the disclosure of hidden sins, previously hidden from public view. **“In that day the Lord will take away the finery: the jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; the headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; the perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings; the nose jewels, the festal apparel, and the mantles; the outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors; the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.”** It is not the items mentioned that are under God’s judgment, but the preoccupation with clothing fashions, footwear, beauty aids, and artificial female adornments. Peter advised women, **“Do not let your adornment be merely outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”** [1 Peter 3:3-4]. In the next part of Isaiah’s prophecy, we see a list of judgments that should provoke the removal of haughtiness, the flaunting of unnatural femininity, and an unwarranted desire for authority and power. **“And so it shall be: instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench.”** The fragrance of perfumes that promote an aura of femininity and gentleness will fail to produce their desired effect, and instead, there will be an aura of artificiality and hardness. **“instead of a sash, a rope;”** Instead of the sash, an ornament to promote beauty, there will be a rope, symbolising servitude. **“instead of well-set hair, baldness;”** Well-set hair expresses nobility, and baldness in this case, low social status. **“instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth;”** Instead of social prominence and sophistication, there will be sorrow and debasement. **“and branding instead of beauty.”** Instead of people seeing beauty, they will see sullied womanhood. **“Her gates shall lament and mourn, and she being desolate shall sit on the ground.”** Gates are a symbol of headship, for it is there that the elders of Israel congregated to carry out their positions of authority.

Instead of being established in positions of headship, she shall sit on the ground, meaning that she will be stripped of all authority.

VINDICATION AND RESTORATION OF ZION AND JERUSALEM

Isaiah Chapters 60 – 66.

These chapters relate to the end-time restoration of the Church and the establishment of Christ's spiritual reign on earth.

The Latter Rain and the Glory of the Lord

The world with its population will be emersed in spiritual darkness, but in this time of gloom and seeming devastation, the prophet announces the Spirit of the Lord falling and encompassing the whole earth with the power and glory of the Lord, as His Spirit falls and heralds His coming triumph over Satan. All Christians are invited to arise out of their despair about the state of the world and engage in the coming worldwide restoration of the Church.

“Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. Isa 1:1-2.

There will be a huge flood of Gentile converts entering the Church, converted by the light of spiritual truth.

They will bring considerable wealth into the Church that can be used to alleviate world poverty. Former children who had departed from their ranks will return, and everyone will be overshadowed with great joy.

Isa 60:3-7.

“The Gentiles [those who are unsaved] shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. "Lift up your eyes all around, and see they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters [sons and daughters are former spiritual children who have backslidden and settled in the world] shall be nursed at your side. Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea [nations] shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you...They shall bring gold and incense, and they shall proclaim the praises of the Lord...They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, And I will glorify the house of My glory.”

The Commission of the Lord will be Reestablished

At this time, the Lord confirms the continuation of the commission stated in Luke's gospel.

Isa 61:1-6.

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who

mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness [or depression]; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

Those who have been restored to the Lord are commissioned to revive the Church from the damage caused by former generations.

“And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.” Isa 61:4.

Zion the Perfected Members of the Church and Jerusalem Members of the True Church will be Restored by God

God promises not to rest until He has restored Zion and Jerusalem, and made them a lamp of righteousness that will attract previous unbelievers into their midst.

“For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no longer be termed forsaken, nor shall your land anymore be termed Desolate...” Isa 62:1-4.

The Lord will Vindicate Zion and Jerusalem

“Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at His word: ‘Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake, said, “Let the Lord be glorified, that we may see your joy. But they shall be ashamed.” The sound of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the Lord, who fully repays His enemies!

"Before she was in labour, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labour, she gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the Lord. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God. "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; That you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom, that you may drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.”

For thus says the Lord:

"Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. when you shall feed; on her sides shall you be carried, and be dandled on her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” Isa 66:5-13.

The Indignation and Reign of God

“When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass; the hand of the Lord shall be known to His servants, and His indignation to His enemies. For behold, the Lord will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind and render

His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the Lord will judge all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, to go to the gardens after an idol in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together,' says the Lord. 'For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see My glory. ...And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,' says the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites,' says the Lord. 'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,' says the Lord, 'So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,' says the Lord. 'And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me, for their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.'" Isa 66:14 -24.

REVELATION – The Last Days

Worldwide Opposition Destroyed by God's Intervention

As in other prophecies, when the Church is being assaulted by the forces of Antichrist, God intervenes, and brings about Antichrist's utter destruction.

Rev 20:7-10.

"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog [the Confederacy of Antichrist], to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city [Jerusalem or the true Church]. And fire [not literal fire, but judgmental opposition from God] came down from God out of heaven and devoured them [destroyed their opposition]. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

THE HOLY SPIRIT FLOWS OUT FROM THE THRONE OF GOD

Rev 22:2-3.

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life [the Holy Spirit], clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him."

THE SPIRIT PRODUCES NEW LIFE AND GROWTH

Jerusalem becomes New Jerusalem or The Bride of Christ and Mount Zion,

“He who overcomes...I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God...” Rev 3:12.

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Rev 21:2. The bride is manifested on earth as she is formed by God.

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...” Heb 12:22.

The new life and growth produced by the Spirit are not automatic, being limited to those who genuinely desire to see their self-life, conformed to Christ's death, and be replaced by His reigning in and through them.

Rev 22:9.

An angel told John, **“He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still...”** This is not a matter of punishment, but justice, giving to all according to the state of their hearts.

God will Destroy the Harlot or False Church

Rev 17:15-18.

“Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw [the nations of the whole world], where the harlot sits [the false church - the Roman Catholic Church], are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, [the ten kings - the rulers of the world's finances] these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is that great city [In John's day it would be understood that the harlot or false church would be aligned with Rome] which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

Rev 22:12

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ‘I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches...”

“I am coming quickly.” This does not mean in a short space of time, but His work to bring it about will be hastened – as in this reading **“Also your people shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time.”** Isa 60:21.22.

“to give to every one according to his work” Everyone who is saved must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be rewarded according to what he has done during his lifetime on earth.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” 2 Cor 5:10.

Rev 22:17.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life [the Holy Spirit] freely.” Verse 17 extends a wide invitation to all who hear the truth, who thirst and desire for an infilling of the Holy Spirit.

A Dreadful Warning

The importance of the final prophecies presented in ‘The Revelation,’ is stressed in this dire warning that its words may not be interfered with. We may explain the meaning of the text in our own words, but the text itself must not be interfered with by adding to or subtracting from it.

Rev 22:18-19.

“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Jesus concludes by issuing this invitation. **“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”**

Rev 22:21.

Finally, we are blessed with John extending the grace of Christ to us. **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”**

PRESENT-DAY EVENTS FORESHADOWING THE FINAL RAPTURE

The Shaking of the Whole World

Heb 12:22-29.

But you have come to Mount Zion [the fulfillment of our spiritual pilgrimage of God’s reign in us] **and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem** [the Bride of Christ], **to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn** [the first fruits of the Bride of Christ] **who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.**

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks [God speaking through the Holy Spirit to end-time Christians]. **For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth** [to Moses on Mount Sinai], **much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks**

from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.’ Now this, ‘Yet once more,’ indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.’”

At this present time, the whole earth, with all of its institutions and activities, is being tested by a violent shaking, in which all works of the flesh are being exposed, and will not survive God’s judgmental shaking. Only things of the Spirit will be accepted in heaven.

SECTION 6

SIGNS OF THE TIMES AND THE END OF THE AGE

The Twenty Fourth Chapter of Matthew

Matt 24:1-3.

“Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

The Disciples ask Three Questions

The reading above describes the disciples coming to Jesus to show Him the temple buildings in Jerusalem. These buildings were the focal point of Jewish religion and national life. The disciples were probably taken aback by Jesus’ response that **“not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”** Later they sought Him out and asked Him three quite distinct questions. The first was **“when will these things be?”** which referred to Jesus’ prediction of the physical destruction of the temple. The second and third questions were **“what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”**

Chapter 24 contains Christ’s answer to these questions, but it does not present them in strictly sequential order. This has led to a lot of confusion, and to the common but erroneous belief that the Great Tribulation refers to the Last Judgment but in fact, it refers to the time of the casting down of the temple which occurred in AD 70 and has already taken place.

Christ’s specific answer to the first question of **“when will these things be?”** referred directly to the destruction of the temple.

Matt 24;15-22.

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” Matt 24:15-22.

The Abomination of Desolation and Great Tribulation

Jesus provided the disciples with a clear indication of the timing of the destruction of the temple. It was **“when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place.”** Matthew 24:15. This warning was made directly to the

Jewish Christians. **“Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”** Matthew 24:16. When the Jewish Christians recognised the abomination in **“the holy place”** they were to **“flee to the mountains.”**

The only reference to what the **“abomination of desolation,”** would be is found in Luke’s gospel.

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...” Luke 21:20-21.

Historical Account

In 66 AD Vespasian was ordered by Nero to conduct a military campaign in Judea and restore Roman authority. Vespasian duly laid siege to the important city of Jerusalem. In 69 AD Vespasian was suddenly recalled to Rome to be proclaimed emperor. This sudden relaxation of the siege reminded Christians of Christ’s warning to His disciples, **“Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”** Matthew 24:16. They realised that this was their opportunity to escape, and so they fled across the Jordan or into the hills.

Later, the siege was resumed led by Titus, the son of Vespasian. And this time the siege was not to end before God’s terrible judgment had been worked out on the Jews of the old covenant.

Between the time that Vespasian withdrew and the time that Titus returned, there fell a Passover festival in Jerusalem. It is estimated that 3,000,000 Jews were in the city when the siege was resumed. With such an unnaturally large population within the walls, the effects of starvation were quickly felt. People were reduced to eating their children because of their acute hunger. Under great stress, the Jews began turning on each other, with Zealots killing pacifists, and rebels killing Zealots.

The result was an horrendous slaughter. In 70AD, when the Roman soldiers finally entered Jerusalem, they found an estimated one-and-a-half million Jews killed by their countrymen. The historian Josephus reported that the temple was awash with blood. When Titus entered the city, it was reported that he uttered the words, ‘Bear me witness, I did not do this!’

The temple was burned and the city was sacked. Thousands of Jews were taken into captivity as slaves and were dispersed among foreign nations.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF TRIBULATION DURING THE CHURCH AGE

Jesus dealt with the questions **“what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”** Verses 4 to 14, describe general tribulation during the Church age, and again verses 23 to 31, relate more to the signs heralding the close of the age.

The first part of Christ’s answer is a general description of the tribulation Christians must endure during the Church age, from the time of Christ’s death to the final judgment.

Matt 24:3-14.

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

of the age?" And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

History records that many of these signs have already occurred. Millions have been martyred as in the Roman arenas, the Spanish Inquisition, and mock trials and persecution of those who would not disavow their faith. Most persecutions occurred within the bounds of the false church rather than from the world itself. Even at this present age, the Church is defiled with false prophets and teachers and all manner of apostasies.

SIGNS PREDICTING THE FINAL COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

Matt 24:29-51.

In the following three verses, Christ describes the events that will occur "Immediately after the tribulation of those days (the sacking of Jerusalem). Apostasies will increase throughout the Church age until Christ returns in "great glory".

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days [the sacking of Jerusalem] the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

"the sun will be darkened" The sun is a symbol of truth coming from God – spiritual truth given by the Holy Spirit being darkened means that it will be interfered with and made unreliable.

"the moon will not give its light" The moon symbolises reflected light – in this case, spiritually discerned truth from ministries in the Church. At the present time, the truth that is being dispensed is more likely to come from academic learning, rather than from spiritual discernment. Present-day Christians are left bewildered and perplexed at what is happening now and of the prospects of things to come.

"the stars will fall from heaven The stars usually refer to angels or messengers of God. In this case, stars refer to people with world-acclaimed ministries who haven't received a genuine calling and anointing from the Lord. Their ministries, which often amass exorbitant wealth, will be exposed as false, and will 'fall' like stars from heaven.

“The heavens will be shaken” It will be heavenly callings that will be shaken. **“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling...”** Heb 3:1. There will be a shaking of those professing to have a heavenly calling. As the Holy Spirit exposes all false ministries, those with a genuine calling will stand.

Matt 24:30.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven” The disciples had asked, **“what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”** Matt 24:3. In other words, ‘what will be the manifested sign heralding your coming?’ Answering the question, the next verse states, **“And He will send His angels “with a great sound of a trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.””** Matt 24:31.

“...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” 1 Cor 15:52-53.

The manifested sign heralding His coming will be **“a great sound of a trumpet”** which will be heard by everyone throughout the whole earth.

“then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” - ”

When the trumpet sounds there will be universal mourning by those who are unsaved as they realise that they have delayed seeking the salvation of the Lord for too long.

The Parable of the Fig Tree and the Actual Time of Christ’s Coming

Matt 24:32-33.

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer [the end of the season] is near. So you also, when you see all these things, [the signs already mentioned] know that it [the end of the age] is near — at the doors!”

Matt 24:34.

“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.”

“This generation will by no means pass away” The Jews and the Gentiles will remain as distinct entities until all the prophetic signs mentioned by Christ are fulfilled.

Matt 24:35.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” Christ’s words are timeless.

Matt 24:36.

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.” If even Jesus did not know the time of the end of all things, we can be assured that all those predicting a certain date or time are false prophets.

Matt 24:37-39.

“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” Some predict that the coming of the Lord will be foreshadowed by catastrophic events, and then the Lord will appear to save His people from annihilation. But this reading tells us otherwise. In Noah’s day, people watched Noah building the Ark but afforded it little attention, until the flood came and swept them away. Jesus warned us that the same circumstances would occur before His second coming. People will ignore the prophetic warnings and the predicted signs, and go on living normally until the sound of the trumpet heralding the Lord’s second coming. The Lord will come in the clouds with His Angels to take all Christians to the New Earth and Heavens He has already prepared.

Matt 24:40-44.

“Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. “But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” This is a stern warning to heed the prophetic warnings throughout the scriptures. The warning is repeated to emphasise its importance.

A Warning to Maintain Ministries

Matt 24:45-46.

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.” This is a warning to carry on with our ministries whilst the Lord grants us life and strength to do so.

Matt 24:47.

“Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.” We are reminded that all who are saved must appear at the judgment seat of Christ to receive reward for their earthly works. **‘For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.’** 2 Cor 5:10.

Matt 24:48-51.

“But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“will cut him in two” Figuratively - severely punished.

A Final Invitation from Revelation

Rev 22:12-17.

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city..."I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.